

A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF NONCANONICAL EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter we will analyse a good number of ready-made expressions which can rarely be learnt or translated literally. The ideas of collocation, idiomacity, and such are extremely far-reaching, capricious and depend on internal and external conditions of the world the speaker/writer, subject to their use, controls or is controlled by. In this way, we can easily justify that not everything can simply and literally be analysed, even though there are ways of explaining their formal and semantic behaviour.

RESUMEN

En este capítulo analizaremos un buen número de expresiones hechas que rara vez pueden ser aprendidas o traducidas literalmente. Las ideas de 'colocación', 'idiomacidad', etc., son de gran repercusión, caprichosas, y dependen de las condiciones internas y externas del mundo que el hablante/escritor, sometido a su uso, controla o es controlado por ellas. De esta forma, podemos fácilmente justificar que no todo se puede analizar sencilla y literalmente, a pesar de que existen formas de explicar su conducta formal y semántica.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans ce chapitre on analysera un bon nombre d'*expressions faites* que rarement peuvent être appris ou traduites littéralement. Les idées de 'colocation', 'idiomacité', etc., ont une grande importance, capricieuse, et elles dépendent des conditions internes et externes du monde que le parleur/écrivain, soumis à son usage, contrôle ou est contrôlé par elles. C'est comme ça, qu'on peut facilement justifier que ce n'est pas possible de tout analyser simple et littéralement, désormais qu'il existent des formes d'expliquer sa conduite formel et sémantique.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The interpretation of the dependence of language upon human cognition acquires its climax, perhaps, when Chomsky (1968) purports that linguistics is after all a field concerned with human cognition and that linguistics are in that sense really cognitive psycholinguistics. The systematic approach, advocated by Bever¹ (1970) and Slobin (1973), with their suggestion of a cognitive commitment for linguistic structures has become a paradigm for cognitive orientation, rejecting the centrality and independence of grammar. At least in principle, nowadays the task of cognitive description is considered to be a state of transition (see Rieber and Voyat, 1981).

Within this general framework, cognitive principles are to be incorporated in to linguistic explanatory interpretation as well, because they must govern both the acquisition of language and provide for later use of linguistic structures. For the acquisition of any concrete manifestation of language is usually considered to be the result of the interaction between linguistic and other behavioural systems related to language development.

If as Kess (1991) signals, linguistic theory ceases to have an influence and linguistics no longer supplies psycholinguistic' units, models and methodologies, in the exclusive way that it did for the decade of the sixties, we then are nearly ready to propose that it is necessary to delimit in what way all the approaches about the study of language and its concrete manifestations are to be integrated.

Furthermore, if we were testing hypothesis concerning the influence of the language of the mind upon general linguistic behaviour, it is most likely that we would use subjective samples of language, which would demonstrate the fact that non purist linguistic approaches to the study of language attempt the domain of the aspectual and behavioural core of conduct.

As Feuer (1953, p. 86)² states unequivocally,

"Linguistic relativity is the doctrine of untranslatability in modern guise".

¹ Bever, T. G. (1970). "The cognitive basis for linguistic structures", in J. R. Hayes (ed.), *Cognition and the Development of Language*, New York, Wiley, pp. 279-362.

² Feuer, Lewis S. (1953). "Sociological Aspects of the Relation between Languages and Philosophy", *Philosophy of Science*, 20, pp. 85-100.

The product of one culture communicable to the members of the same culture in their own language, through the varied categories of meaning and formal devices, entails the supposed relativity of such constructions as something highly dubious. Following this line of action, there is no doubt that all external objects, ideas and world understanding have precise semantic representations, in spite of the use of formal differences and specific semantic orientations. If this were not so, information about a certain 'X' world representation would be referred to with semantic deviations of such variance that messages would be somewhat, or even completely, different for individuals of the same speech community. For example, whereas the majority of British speakers would use the phonetic chain /wɔrə /, some Americans would use /wɔ:tə / (this cannot be over-generalised as some people in the Northern States tend to pronounce the /t/ as do females and so do females more than people from the South or men), but both phonological items denote the well-known H₂O world object referent. Maybe better examples are lexical items: lift/elevator; pants/trousers, where 'pants' means something completely different for the British. This shows lexical items and items in combination used by all languages, especially when they form part of canonical expressions or they refer to well-known referents express identical meanings for all communities. Thus, there is no need to enlarge meaning's distance to reality, if all linguistic levels devoted to the study of languages are being paid attention *enough* from a contrastive aspect.

Phonological and lexical differences give rise to a certain semantic diversity to which the speaker of language must adapt himself in order to be linguistically and perhaps socially integrated. As general aspects of 'Constructio' or 'Grammar' do follow formal identical behaviour on most occasions, differences must be considered as proper characteristics of language development.

Bertalanffy (1955, p. 22)³ suggests that our cognitive categories may not be relative to our respective linguistic categories. That means that there could be a gap between real facts and the way we use linguistic constituents in order to interact communicatively with the hearer/reader. Consequently, the translated version, either internal or external frequently enlarges the distance of linguistic performance/understanding process

³ Bertalanffy, L. (1955). "An essay on the Relativity of Categories", *Philosophy of Science*, 22, pp. 243-263. From a formal point of view, cf. any of the various books dealing with false friends and specific realisations of language.

to reality. In this sense if the same physical evidence does not lead all observers to the same picture of the universe, then how can different speakers of the same language or speakers of different languages can reflect on words that physical evidence?

Of course, this hypothesis must be phrased somewhat less strongly for some of the variables analysed here, since it does not apply in an equal manner to all; In some cases it must be attenuated in order to soften the assertion.

Thus, one might assume that statements reflecting cultural differences in its various forms are largely less extreme statements of comparative meaning in linguistics than the various sorts of lexical items (such as 'collocations', 'idioms', 'clichés' or 'noncanonical expressions'), which through the various patterns of meaning, together with the elemental lexical items, make up a linguistic and cultural reality.

Nevertheless, we accept that what may easily be adapted from one language expression to another are those descriptions of phenomena where tangible reality is clear; it is only by considering language and thought to be identical in different communities that different versions are able to be made compatible.

However, if focalisation is different, then the interpretation of the message may be incomplete or somewhat distorted. It is very common in analysing English and other languages in context to come across many items, which may be morphologically identical but may differ in terms of meaning equivalence in different situations. It is, then, fundamental to identify the precise variables of the meaning each word is involved in (i.e. conceptual or basic, stylistic, thematic, connotative, collocative, etc.); Otherwise, the focus of a particular sentence, a paragraph or even the whole text may be partly or totally diverted.

It is also important to realise that the undefined scope of linguistic differences in the large sphere of the use of English are to incite conscious speakers to pay attention to the analyses of regional differences. Meanings of the same word may be changed or different words may be used to express a very similar meaning. Items which are cognitively synonymous may give rise to very different emotional responses, for instance: '*conceal*' and '*politician*' imply less approval than '*hide*' and '*statesman*' respectively; or '*die*' and '*kick the bucket*' and '*pass away*' imply different emotional responses. Sometimes a language indicates the way certain lexical items take. Apart from word borrowings or loans which may often have the possibility of substituting well generated, though not necessarily fossilised, lexical items, both syntax and se-

mantic approaches agree on the significant influence of other languages. This influence is inevitable due to technological advances in communication. The adaptation of semantics might also produce an increase in the use of alternative terms, which are unconsciously produced at early stages of language development. They initially take a position in the language use of well-educated people and gradually are incorporated into the discourse of mass-media.

On the other hand, as lexical items cannot be thought of as just a piece of meaning in a given language, grammatical potentialities, the connection with other lexical items and the variety of meanings must be considered as well as part of the interactive contextualisation. Besides, this varied production may also modify the meaning of a particular item. Thus, associative meaning may be impervious to reasoning, due to subjectiveness of thought.

Taking this into account, if we agree with the fact that we can totally isolate the influence from other categories, the probabilistic relationship between words is not absolutely grammatically inevitable. This explains why concrete mixtures of lexical items may not be easily interpretable in an exactly identical manner by looking at the individual meaning of the items forming the whole.

Even though there are no absolute rules, ready-made expressions can rarely be learnt literally. The ideas of collocation, idiomacity, and such are extremely far-reaching, capricious and depend on internal and external conditions of the world the speaker/writer, subject to their use, controls or is controlled by. In this way, we can easily justify that not everything can simply and literally be analysed, even though there are ways of explaining their formal and semantic behaviour. Deviations, generally occur when members of the same community influenced by different modes of thought through cultural and religious patterns need to develop special linguistic structural combinations, which may be considered unique for a situation, needed for specific purposes, or to form part of the private production of a particular individual or community. This diversity, produced internally, gives rise to dialects and idiolects.

In general, language has not only a mental but also a physical aspect. Language uses constituents to perform concrete physical representations and the user of any concrete manifestation of language must interact linguistic samples with reality. In one's production the stream of thought moves much faster than speech; Hence, unconscious ambiguous situations and internal conditioning to understand certain sentences

or even whole paragraphs in an unilateral way may force a language user to produce deviations from the canonical procedure. These deviations can be considered typical and atypical:

- Typical deviations are those in which one term or expression, although not with a vague meaning, embraces some conception of reality or abstraction (hence, understandable but imprecise).
- Atypical deviations might be produced when one term or expression, due to new proposals, is being uttered following interpretable patterns far from normal usage.

However, if communication cannot alter the content of representations each individual will create his own world of ideas and, as Whitney states in his doctrine, each individual learns his own language. Thus, language, which is usually unconsciously modified through the acquisition and performance of everyday use, can as well be changed through individual manipulation and mental conditioning and this may lead to relevant changes in normal use and usage.

Of course, these principles in isolation do inevitably introduce an element of distortion in language interpretation and through the activity of individual thought we can associate certain complexes of representations acquired through experience. These associations cannot be equated with grammatical categories abstracted through conscious reflection. This does not mean that all the expressions belonging to the field of the GA's in a given language do not have their exact canonical equivalent, but it is true that the conceptual meaning of most words is not identically lexicalised on most occasions. This aspect of continuous change through semantic and phonological linkage entails that not all expressions can follow established patterns in every contextualisation. Moreover, conceptual meaning of lexical items needed might be associated with the conceptual meaning of another term, being, thus, the use of one of them a meaning realisation beyond its basic or conceptual meaning or even a different semantic word.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE CORPORA AND TABLES OF FREQUENCY

The corpora in GAs, have been taken from two mediums and annotated at various levels in order to enhance their value for linguistic research.

Mediums:

The spoken level:

- Casual conversations.
- Academic lectures.
- TV programmes.

(Only a few samples have been recorded for this purpose; they were transcribed directly)

The written level:

- Reportages from Internet: The Sunday Times and other internet sources.
- Prose and poetry literary texts.
- Students' essays.

Annotations include the following types of non-canonical pieces of language inserted in canonical texts and they are tagged for word class, as follows:

- Non-canonical expressions proper or inner terms (ITE).
- Collocations (CO).
- Idioms (I).
- Transparent (T).
- Opaque (O).
- Extended from or in relation to a Canonical referent (ECR).
- Clichés (CL).

The tagset is largely based on the way Quirk *et al.* (1985) *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* has presented canonical expressions, and previous work on statistical data, as well as those of Cofer (1975), Oro (1987, 1988, 1989) and Biber *et al.* (1999) *The Longman Grammar of English*.

Put at its simplest, the data, object of this study, were the result of an exhaustive and contrastive reading as well as of the analysis of different textual sources. Examples for this study were culled from daily press, Mass Media and oral sources chosen at random initially:

- following the hypothesis that morphological and syntactic linguistic blocking distinguishes specific principles from general ones and/or rules,
- supporting this hypothesis but paying attention to the contradictory occurrences, which could reject this hypothesis.

The main intention is to describe the actual state of the types of the GAs of language, mainly in the written medium offered by Internet and with this, interpret some of the inherent features of this type of expressions. Both the unscripted data to be analysed thoroughly in order to make them scripted data and the scripted data were selected at random in order to avoid subjectivity and conditioning. An example such as 49 taken from <http://www.sundaytimes.co.uk/news/pages/SundayTimes/frontpage.html?999> is illustrated in table 1 and 2 as follows:

1. (...) that there were “no more skeletons in the closet”⁴.
2. [Usually, every family has a sleleton in the cupboard]

Table I.

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| No More Skeletons In The Closet | I (not included in the D) ECR |
|--|----------------------------------|

Table II. Sampling of morphological and syntactic information

| | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| No More Skeletons In The Closet | PRON (univ. pl.) NUM (univ. pl.) N (coun, Pl.) PREP (pl) DET (d) N (coun, sing) | D N (pre, n) H M (pp, q) |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|

This and other examples have also been submitted to data banks, in order to find out the frequency of the words with which these pieces of language are made up. For instance to the [Java.sun.com. (The source for Java Technology).

Phrases can be submitted to this bank of data in order to find out their frequency including language produced in the following specific fields.

⁴ [Results for: No more skeletons in the closet
Document count No (79,655) more (54,260) skeletons (896) in (236,222) the (238,513) closet (27)]

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[Area(s):

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Entire Site | Docs |
| Training | Technical Articles |
| Knowledge Base | Forums |
| Bug Reports | Industry News |
| Marketplace | Case Studies] |

These sources will provide us with the number of occurrences out of the documents mentioned. This allows us to establish the frequency of the phrase and that of the words that compose the phrase. At this initial step, I have submitted some to the entire passage, due to emphasis on the theoretical background but also the specific interest on its application for tuition purposes.

Contrasting this with the usual realisation British would use 'there are no more skeletons in the cupboard' and the use of *closet* in instances of the type 'he was a closet socialist' would account for a slow incorporation of certain items from one variety of English into another.

In the simple example above, we could perform the necessary arguments by focusing either only on the function or on the form, depending on which one we wanted to describe. A more challenging problem is describing a bit more of the surrounding territory of the pattern, which we want to focus on.

Suppose we have a file of sampling containing both canonical and non-canonical phrases as part of a GA unit in scientific treatment and we wish to concentrate on the constituents that make it to be non-canonical, then we could set up a table of frequencies to find out the data.

The corpus contains samples of speech and writing by both males and females, and it includes a wide range of age groups.

Due to the above consideration and to the fact that this is the result of individual work the aim is not to show the representative proportions in the population as a whole, between men and women

- in different professions
- or at different movements in history

since, in spite of its interest, this belongs more to the sociolinguistic field of studies. We are aware that women are not equally represented in professions such as technology, politics and law, and so do not produce equal amounts of discourse in these fields. In a similar way, various age groups are not equally represented among students or academic authors.

The documents, which our data have been taken from, range from 1998 to the present moment, although I have been dealing with data of this type for more than ten years from a comparative point of view.

2.1. *Methodological patterns followed*

Due to the complexity of these types of expressions either from their formal appearance or their semantic result, I felt interested in this area of language. Some of the concepts that this area of language deals with (for example there are whole solid books about idioms, sayings and proverbs) have been treated in some way or other, but as a whole one often feels resigned to provide adequate explanations of meaning. Inherent features often block general morphological and syntactic principles; thus providing, an exceptional field of study to motivate creativeness.

In this sense, our central core of research is the morphological, syntactic and semantic blocking of general principles applied to canonical expressions in English, or as it might be called in traditional focuses on grammatical behaviour 'the breaking off the rules'.

This field in general, is not under a state of an exhaustive analysis: as for it has been kept separate as something that has to be learnt by heart. This is probably true, due to the fact that attention has been paid to form, and to internal meaning deciphering, but not to internal grammatical understanding. It is our purpose to provide new ways to focus on their treatment.

I have followed the necessary, analytic steps for a descriptive analysis and a synchronic description of the actual state of these samples of language.

- Searching for real data in Mass Media (both written and oral data).
- Recording oral spontaneous data, lectures, and TV material.
- Discovering linguistic behaviour of data on different linguistic levels with analytic procedures and some of the main ways of approaching them.
- Discriminating their linguistic behaviour through hypothesis.
- Obtaining numerical and percentual results of their frequency (i.e. by visiting banks of data).
- Incorporating them under general or specific principles.
- And concluding, whether or not they block or are blocked by general principles.

2.2. *Data from text categories*

The text categories and the number of occurrences in each of the component GA corpora are shown below (Tables III-VI).

The figures in brackets indicate occurrences out of 100 for items in texts of various lengths, from each category selected for this study.

Table III. Collocations.

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Non-academic writing (scripted) (218) | Reportage and informative writing (Daily Press) (209) | Grammatical collocations | (RI) Daily Press (11) (INS) Daily Press (0) (INS) Internet (0) (RI) Internet (0) |
| | | Lexical/grammatical collocations (set phrases) | (RI) Daily Press (3) (INS) Daily Press (1) (INS) Internet (0) (RI) Internet (0) |
| | Instructional writing (Daily Press) (9) | Lexical collocations (noun phrases out of lexical items proper) | (RI) Daily Press (80) (INS) Daily Press (4) (INS) Internet (9) (RI) Internet (4) |
| | | Verb + Lexical items or Particles | (RI) Daily Press (20) (INS) Daily Press (3) (INS) Internet (3) (RI) Internet (2) |
| Non-academic writing (scripted) (45) | Instructional writing (Daily Press) (37) | Words and prepositions | (RI) Daily Press (27) (INS) Daily Press (0) (INS) Internet (6) (RI) Internet (0) |
| | Reportage and informative writing (Internet language) (9) | Adverbs in collocations | (RI) Daily Press (8) (INS) Daily Press (0) (INS) Internet (1) (RI) Internet (0) |
| | | Article plus adjectival form | (RI) Daily Press (15) (INS) Daily Press (0) (INS) Internet (0) (RI) Internet (0) |
| | | Set phrases considered to be unique | (RI) Daily Press (29) (INS) Daily Press (0) (INS) Internet (1) (RI) Internet (3) |
| | | Potential collocations (out of the last 100 examples) | (RI) Daily Press (16) (INS) Daily Press (0) (INS) Internet (14) (RI) Internet (0) |

Table IV. Clichés & inner terms.

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Spoken texts (70) | Dialogues (20) | Private (10) | Face-to-face conversations (10) |
| | | Public (10) | Classroom lessons (10) Broadcast discussions (10) |
| | Monologues (50) | Unscripted (20) | Spontaneous commentaries (0) Demonstrations (35) |
| | | Scripted (30) | Broadcast news (0) Broadcast talks (10) Non-broadcast speeches (10) |
| Written texts (430) | Non-printed (30) | Non-professional writing (30) | Student essays (15) Student examination scripts (15) |
| | Printed (100) - Reportage and informative writing (Daily Press & Internet) Instructional writing (Daily Press & Internet) | Academic writing (20) | Humanities (10) Social Science (10) |
| | | Non-academic writing (20) | |
| | | Clichés | (RI) Daily Press (18) (RI) Internet (12) (INS) Daily Press (7) (INS) Internet (0) |
| | | Inner terms | (RI) Daily Press (16) (RI) Internet (3) (INS) Daily Press (34) (INS) Internet (37) |
| | | Creative writing (11) | Clichés (9) Inner terms (2) |

Table V. Idioms.

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Spoken texts (15) | Dialogues (20) | Private – | Face-To-Face Conversations – |
| | | Public – | Classroom Lessons (10) Broadcast Discussions – |
| | Monologues (50) | Unscripted – | Spontaneous commentaries – Demonstrations – |
| | | Scripted – | Broadcast Film (6) Broadcast Talks – Non-Broadcast Speeches – |
| Written texts (269) | Non-printed (30) | Non-professional writing (30) | Student essays (15) Student examination scripts (15) Internet mail (15) |
| | Printed (100) Non-academic writing Reportages The Sunday Times and Internet sources (239) | Idioms at clause level (73) | (RI) Daily Press (26) (RI) Internet (47) (INS) Daily Press (0) (INS) Internet (0) |
| | | Idioms at word level (6) | (RI) Daily Press (3) (RI) Internet (3) (INS) Daily Press (0) (INS) Internet (0) |
| | | Idioms at phrase level (24) | (RI) Daily Press (24) (RI) Internet (0) (INS) Daily Press (0) (INS) Internet (0) |
| | | I Verbs & Particles (86) | (RI) Daily Press (66) (RI) Internet (14) (INS) Daily Press (0) (INS) Internet (16) |
| | Crying of a lot Prairie sketches | Creative writing (20) | Idioms at clause level (10) Idioms at word level (0) Idioms at phrase level (10) |

Table VI. Inner terms.

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Spoken texts (6) | Dialogues (20) | Private – | Face-to-face conversations – |
| | | Public – | Classroom lessons – Broadcast discussions – |
| | Monologues (50) | Unscripted – | Spontaneous commentaries – Demonstrations – |
| | | Scripted – | Broadcast film (6) Broadcast talks (10) Non-broadcast speeches (10) |
| Written texts (269) | Non-printed (30) | Non-professional writing (30) | Student essays (15) Student examination scripts (15) Internet mail (15) |
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| | | Creative writing (20) | Idioms at clause level (10) Idioms at word level (0) Idioms at phrase level (10) |
| | | | |

3. FROM NON-CANONICITY TO CANONICITY

Whereas canonical expressions follow normal formal patterns of 'constructio' (for example, the SVO pattern in clauses), a non-canonical expression of any kind of idiomatic nature, matching a single unit of meaning, may be included under the following syntactic levels and a distinction can often be made regarding their semi-transparent and opaque nature:

The Nominal Phrases within the phrase:

- a) Some accept optional modifiers and others do not
 - 3. Run up a(n) (enormous) bill.
 - 4. Kick the bucket.
- b) They do not accept determiners variability
 - 5. Be in the doghouse.
 - 6. Be in *a doghouse.
 - 7. A red letter day.
 - 8. *The red letter day.
- c) Plurals take 0 article
 - 9. Heads and tails.
- d) Numeratives may be nominalized
 - 10. At sixes and sevens.

3.1.1. Non-canonical expressions proper or inner terms

By non-canonical expressions proper, or inner terms, we understand those that are the result of a formal atypical deviation from the canonical patterns a normal English construction would require.

These linguistic realisations are a type of grammatical kind of formulae that shows a marked behaviour in connection with the non-literal use of language⁵. They may occur in any language but some of them are rather difficult to translate from one language to another. These expressions do not generally follow one of the canonical sentence forms in

⁵ They show salient deviations from normal linguistic patterns and as Quirk and Startvik (1966) indicate, they do not form part of a 'linguistic core'. In spite of being grammatically peripheral and somewhat or completely idiomatic, they form part of language and probably need a proper grammar for their comprehension.

English. By canonical, we understand the normal English sentence pattern (SPC). Thus, they may be considered as rather minor sentence forms.

Nevertheless, a complete dictionary should include this type of expressions especially due to their specific behaviour. The problem is that dictionaries cannot have in, all the information that is found in the head of the language users; a great number of pages would be needed, and this would make dictionaries of a tedious and unworkable use.

Thus, some of the types of these expressions are to be considered lexical items as a whole; the combination of items, often of restricted occurrence, follow a very specific behaviour which has to be treated independently.

In this category exist very common expressions, of which some can be considered completely non-canonical as far as their structural behaviour is concerned. Others are to be taken in such a way from the point of view of some of the constituents that are representative of unusual constructions in some way or other.

As complete formal deviations, we can include the following:

- Expressions of the 'what about' type? as in 11 and 12, in which the basic structural elements of an English sentence are not represented in surface structure.
 11. What about my cup of tea?
 12. What about the financial assistance?
- Expressions which block the general syntactic principles in relation to canonical expressions, as in
 13. Historians will look back on this project as *most important* thing we did (S.T. Chronicle Future, p. 12).
 14. (...) but it is a fraud on a **consumers** (S.T. 26th December).
 15. One hundred **years ago** [many years before], *The Times* pondered on *the Empire* and Britain's future thus: *The New Year* is not unlikely to mark a **turning point** [stage where things change and begin again].

3.2. *Partial non-canonical expressions*

- Expressions like 'If only.....', as in 16, in which only one tense is required, the present perfect blocks in this way the possibilities of performance of other verbal forms. Here, one needs a type of tense control, but one is free to fill in the gaps rather freely.
 16. If only we hadn't lost our way.

The words 'if' and 'only' make a dodgy combination. No matter how you mix them, you get a tense sentence. 'If only' implies wistfulness and 'only if' suggests inflexibility. If 'I think' is true then I have a possibility.

- Expressions like 'The more (...) the more', whereas, certainly you expects a comparative form as the second constituent as in (pp. 57-59).
17. The more you ask the less you get.
 18. Better for women better for men (S.T. Title of the article: Teen girls urged to admire Role Model Spice).
 19.
 - a) Mum, I need *buying some comics for the weekend.
 - b) Shut up! the more you ask the less you get.
 - a) It its not fair, I've studied hard.
 - b) Oh! Don't worry, be happy (a mother and her child walking in the street).

This is a kind of lexical construction, in which there is morphological blocking because you cannot say *lesser or *gooder, and, in addition, you can fill in the gaps freely. It is non-canonical in the sense that in the second part of the statement, certainly you can only expect another comparative form. Besides, they stand for superlative *constructio justa* forms [What is the best thing for women, is the best thing for everyone; Better for me, better for you; Better for the professor, better for the student's].

Thus, listing one you list them all. Due to the preference in use of constructions with the determiner: [the more you ask, the less you get; the more, the merrier, etc.].

The general rule is also syntactically blocked in surface structure, though it is not blocked in their deep structure representation, since it is the result of linguistic involution. As Professor Alcaráz would probably say, it is the product of contextualised elliptical elements and further reduction under the principle of economy of speech. [What is better for you is better for me; That is better for you and is better for me; That is good for you and is good for me; *That is gooder for you, and gooder for you].

This means that blocking can be dual; language can be interpreted in a dyadic way in many instances: [The better chances/ The best; The better].

GA example 17 and, interpretations, block the general principle saying that comparative forms are used to compare related things or people that are separated from each other, both syntactically and se-

matically. They also block the general principle of the use of superlative forms in these situations.

The grammatical rules applied, determine their meaning and make them precise communicative messages if there exists some kind of connection between the user and addressee. Words and expressions carry their meaning with them. They have a grammatical body behind them, which show that their meaning cannot be something else; but this may not be known, since they do not carry their grammatical rules with them.

If we consider non-canonical expressions from a semantic approach, some collocations like those in 17 and 18 can be considered to be non-canonical, as for they are selected in place of common expressions. Generally speaking, some would say that when a converse infinitive as in 17 or split infinitive as in 19 and 20-33, occur, its pragmatic function is to call attention to an 'out-of-place' something and thus it emphasises a certain meaning.

20. Some teenagers are *at risk (in danger)* of social exclusion (...) (S.T.: Teenagers, 23, p. 1).

21. To really understand.

(is condemned as a split infinitive).

22. To have really understood, and

23. To be really understood

(are certainly not split infinitives).

24. To have suddenly resigned my job is perfectly Ok.

[The cleft would be perceived if 'suddenly came between 'to' and 'have' (For me to suddenly resign my job)].

25. She *ought to seriously consider her position, in spite of generations of disapproval from stylists and knowalls.*

26. Well, you ought to at least try.

27. As soon as you give the word, I'm going to really hurry.

28. For your safety and comfort we do ask you *to please stay* in your seats until the 'fasten your seatbelts' sign has been switched off (British airlines).

29. a) Your task is to really understand your students' problems.

b) I do try to truly understand.

30. Kate has that '*take-me-as I am*' attitude to body image, which is impressive.

31. Kate has that attitude to body image, (you know,) of 'take me as I am', which is impressive
32. Kate has that body image attitude of 'take me as I am', which is impressive.
33. Kate has that body image attitude of 'taking me as I am', which is impressive.

Inverted commas disambiguate the possible double interpretation in transformations.

4. NON-CANONICAL EXPRESSIONS WITH CANONICAL FORM BUT MEANING DEVIATION

4.1. Collocations⁶

In linguistics such problematic terms as deep structure, logical form, phoneme, grammar and even rule and exceptions are being used from different approaches. A problematic linguistic term is 'collocation' a nominalization or verbalization of two lexical and/or grammatical items put together.

The concept of collocation, which plays an important role in British linguistics where it originated, seems to be vague and neutral *in dealing with* word classes and to which element acts as to modifier or head. This term, however, is one of the key concepts of functional grammar proposed by Firth⁷ and developed by Halliday. Probably we could, even

⁶ Its complexity has shown some interest throughout the history. Firth is said to have invented the term, with examples such as *capa nera* and *capa categorica*, taken from medieval studies. At this moment in history one could say *black shoes* but one could not say *hypothetical shoes*. This, however, attempts against linguistic creativity. For in many cases and for many people, if taken to its extreme, *shoes* in spite of *being black* or *brown* can also be *hypothetical*, even though the use of it would block the general principle of the basic meaning of both *shoes* and *hypothetical*. Alcaráz & Martínez (1997) use the term COLOCACIÓN in their dictionary, and referring to Halliday (1973, p. 23) define this process as: se emplea el término 'colocación' para aludir a la CONCURRENCIA o tendencia que tienen nombres y verbos, y determinados nombres y adjetivos a 'co-aparecer' en construcciones semánticas, como ladrar y perro, relinchar y caballo, talar y árbol, etc. Estas estructuras forman conjuntos de palabras, que Halliday llamó conjuntos léxicos (...).

⁷ Even though the invention of the term collocation as applied in linguistics was attributed to Firth and extended by Halliday, the process itself has worried many scholars as mentioned above since classical times.

Mellville, A. (1946). *Spoken English. An Idiomatic Grammar for foreign students*, Edimburg, Oliver and Boyd (originally designed as a manual of English Grammar for Dutch students), includes a good number of examples with collocates:

say that it has its origins in word-association of the syntactic type *in spite of* the class, *due to the fact that* they are paradigmatically linked by this process.

According to Firth, it *seems to be* the case that we know a word by the company it keeps and he considers collocation to this 'relationship between words', to be part of its meaning (see, Palmer, 1976, 94ff; Carter, 1987, 36ff and 48ff.)

The concept, though very valuable, in this sense is vague and imprecise, and can even be over-generalised as in Lipka's (1990) findings. He also makes rough assumptions in his previous work *as well as* other linguists do.

Probably almost everybody would agree with Lipka that full words may substitute *each other*, i.e. they may be in apposition, or they may combine with each other. But it is hard to say, as Lipka 1990 has signalled that collocations are syntagmatic **lexical relations**, but not necessarily **semantic relations**; an idea that can be deduced if one only *pays attention to* the basic scheme from which this process has originated; the necessary basic associations which would allow two words in combination to produce a specific meaning. *First of all*, not only lexical items form collocations conform to a rule. Secondly, it would have to be extended, for example, to the relation of verbs, pronouns, and such, in combination.

In this sense, it would be useful to distinguish between normal grammatical associations and collocations in which the meaning has to be perceived 'as a whole'. The fact that not all become opaque is due to the fact that the bipartite association keeps its natural double reference theory. Syntax would explain them through syntactic association of the constituents involved in the process.

The argument that Lipka (1971, p. 214 and 1990) provides showing that word class and syntactic structure are also irrelevant for collocations, analyses the following examples:

- a) His argument was strong and
- b) He argued wrongly],

I have never seen him so *out of temper* (angry).

The violinist is *out of the tune* (discordant, not in harmony).

In fact he concentrates on collocates of various kinds, combined with prepositions, compound conjunctions and verb combinations. Neither must one forget the non-canonicity of certain verbs in English, commonly known as irregulars.

it has much more to do with the meaningful grammatical relation between words in association than with collocations themselves, since any theory of semantics would include them under the properties of sense relations and Chomsky himself as free combinations since they are constituted of elements which freely allow substitution.

Collocations are considered by Halliday & Hassan (1976, pp. 284-288), as

'the most problematical part of lexical cohesion, cohesion that is achieved through the association of lexical items that regularly co-occur'.

However, in this sense, both scholars are extending the term collocation to include the co-occurrence of opposites or in Lyon's classification 'complementarity', and this would exclude grammatical items in combination with lexical ones.

We will be dealing with more straightforward collocations further on. In the original sense Firth, taking the conception from Thomas of Erfurt, has made reference to them, but restricted the use for those terms put together that acquire a specific meaning as a result of their combination. We will consider the others as looser associations between words which tend to go together.

In the study of languages, the fact that some words do not collocate with others may confuse the situation between use and usage in certain circumstances. The speaker and the addressee must not defy the probabilities of co-occurrence in any language as the creations of rare combinations might or might not produce, precise pragmatic interactive meaning.

For example, it is said that in English *strong tea* and *heavy drinker* are clear samples of collocations⁸ and so are too, *so as to* or *by acci-*

⁸ (Cf. Oro, 1992) This is best illustrated through an example of combinations. Let's think of a group of nouns denoting a bad situation, such as: *conflict, gaps, problem, decease*; in order to match them with a group of verbs that mean 'to correct the bad situation or to put the bad or unpleasant situation right', such as *reconcile, fill in, solve, resolve, cure*. Where, if we say *reconcile a conflict*, it works well, but if we say **reconcile the gaps*; there is a problem, and what do we do with *problem - solve a problem, cure/ decease*, etc. There might be choices, but the speaker must be confident enough to use the most probable word. When translating expressions of this type into Spanish or any other language one must make sure he chooses the correct lexical units which make up that meaning, since languages are capricious in their selection of lexical items in combination. Benson and Ilson (1986, p. 253) refer to them as 'loosely fixed combinations'. Lipka (1972) mentions that the idiomaticity of collocations is such

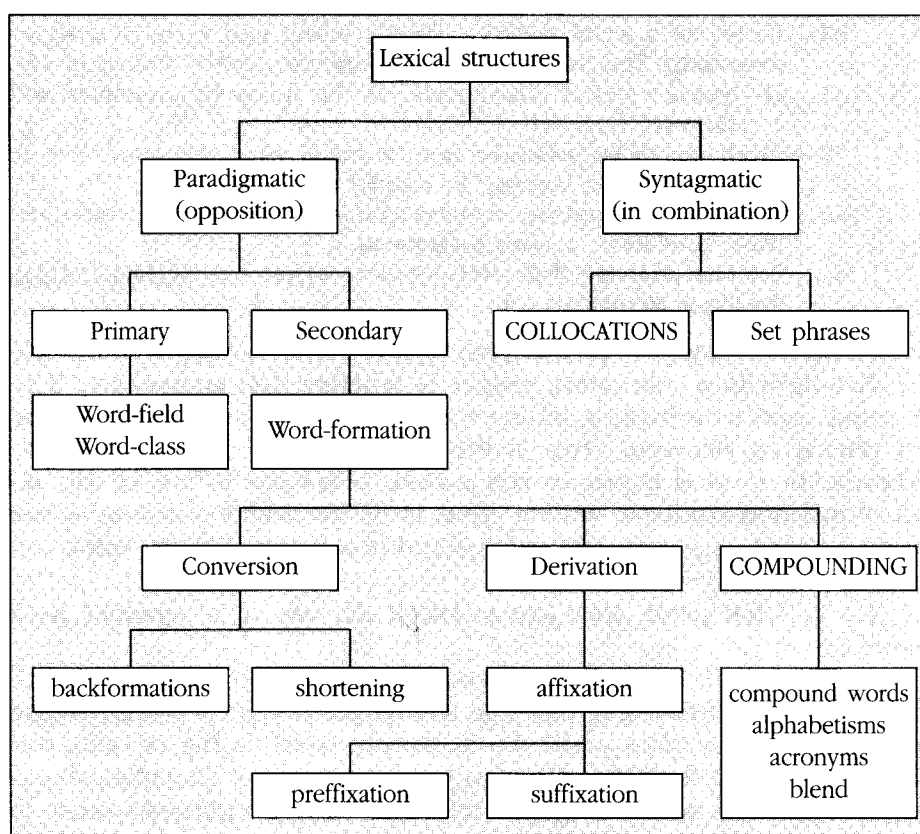
dent. Languages, however, are very capricious in the admittance of lexical interrelations and though the speakers tend to recognise words that go together, there are no absolute rules. Nevertheless, the speakers of a language are sensitive to these probabilities and they tend to recognise words capable of going together. Besides, the idea of collocation is extremely far reaching, and furthermore, the users must realise that some language is deliberately eccentric and creative in that kind of way. Not all languages would use the same formal correlates to represent these semantic lexical units. For internal or external linguistic activities one has to be sensitive to these probabilistic relationships in any concrete manifestation of language. As can be seen in the following examples, these expressions occur frequently. In spite of the fact that probable applicability and/or grammaticality of certain items might deviate their formal appearance in one way or other, they may be combined in certain contexts in order to allow individuals to show their creative linguistic power. Thus, the danger in language can apply both to over-generalising and to over-specifying.

For a long while the Lexical Structural Process was based upon paradigmatic (in apposition) and syntagmatic (in combination) relations. Collocations are syntagmatic combinations which are combinatorial at the first encounter, but later on they become bipartite as follows:

Under the Sintagmatic Relational Procedure they tend to make up - set phrases: (i.e. the collocations proper, of which some last while others only enjoy a certain amount of time, and then, they either disappear or become compounds (a process of word-formation, categorised as a paradigmatic relation). The following scheme illustrates its relational procedure and their position within the lexicon. Some tend to make up normal associations keeping their conceptual meaning first and expanding it from basic interrelations of concepts to other more complex which range from denotations to theme or style.

that some scholars have chosen to include them as a subtype of idiom. However, it seems that whereas, *heavy drinker*, *by accident* and *so as* are clear examples of set phrases, *strong tea* and *so as to are not* necessarily collocations but normal associations of words in combinations. For example you can paraphrase *strong tea*, by *tea* which is strong, but you can paraphrase *heavy drinker* as *a drinker who is heavy*, though drinkers, usually are; and if you paraphrase it as *a drinker who drinks heavily*, the result will be almost the same.

Table VII. Lexical structural relational process.



The process of lexical association causes a parallel between the two, since those lexical units combine to denote bipartite meaning. Put at its simplest, composition results from joining two words together. In English, this process takes a long time. As a general rule, this process is shown in spelling; first they are written as two words (collocations), then a hyphen may be inserted and finally they are written together. The graphemic process normally lasts a good while:

34. [well known ⇒ Well-known ⇒ Wellknown].

Some of them did become fixed collocations following diverse types of co-occurrence from a formal point of view; with a general formal interpretation we can distinguish two types:

35. D) Those that contain lexical and grammatical constituents.
36. Baroness Jay doesn't understand *the point of* eating disorders (...).
37. To be, *in a word*, superior. [briefly, using one word to describe something] The Sunday Times (Tomorrow's News Today, p. 16).
38. a) lexical + lexical constituents, as the following examples will show).
39. check out [leave officially from a hotel] what the stars have in store [in stock, in reserve, in supply] for your (...).
40. A personal relationship requires you to make a firm decision [decisive resolution, relative judgement].
41. The final *outcome* of the situation is up to you (...) LifeMinders.com@mailgate.lifeminders.com.

In fact, an analysis of this type allows us to decide whether we are dealing with a collocation proper or whether one grammatical item is being used to provide reinforcement by extension or misuse of the set phrase or viceversa. This is the case of *check out* and *in store*. Whereas *in store* is a proper collocation, *check out* is not in this instructional non-academic writing. Thus in 37 the addition of 'out' is not being justified as a meaning additive and it is being used by extension as a decorative element.

Up to what point does syntax block the use of a sentence as a modifier?

In principle, from a formal impression there are selectional restrictions, but following the principle that one should predict one's syntax on the basis of one's semantics under the isomorphic relationship of both, this secondary formal function of sentences and clauses is grammatical and might supply the lack of linguistic inference some constituents show to express a concrete idea. As in 40,

42. Kate has that '*take-me-as I am*' attitude to body image, which is impressive (Kate goes around asking *to be taken as she is*).

As a matter of fact, 40 is blocked by the Non-tangling principle, if extended to functions, which states that in surface structure no dependencies should tangle with each other, i.e. dependency lines must not cross. As for, the function of a whole sentence (this one a compound of the clause type) is not to work as a modifier. Although some tangling is permitted by the grammar as in *I kept Bill talking*, grammar does not permit * *I black like coffee*, in spite of the fact that some would say that this would allow two different readings if taking *black* as an afterthought. Besides this type of rare formations involve some sort of idiomacity that make then unusual collocations

Although it is said that in English there are a lot of collocations and some of them are offered in dictionaries as independent lexical items, consider, for example, *egg and compounds*, the real situation is that there are words that allow more combinations than others and they are associated with referents in a bipartite dimension, for example *eggcup* denotes *a type of cup suitable to eat boiled eggs out of*. In fact, languages try to find the suitable words to make reference to images, thoughts or ideas of reality, in spite of the distance that there might exist between the image, the linguistic referent and the reality.

As far as collocations are concerned, generally speaking in former representations of compounding, there is a head and a modifier (often referred to in linguistics as the node and the collocater, keyword and collocator), in which the meaning of the head is being restricted to one particular direction. This, however, does not always happen. Sinclair (1974, pp. 16-17, and 1988) suggests that in **dispel fear** [*disperse/drive away*] **fear** [*fright/horror*] both elements can be the node on which word is the object of attention. Even though, *dispel* collocates with *fear*, in the same way that *fill in* collocates with *gaps*, those would represent a different type of lexical combinations, in the sense that they do not form compounds. At times, there exists a certain kind of lexical resistance between the two members. In certain situations one of the members dominates the unit, in such a way that it shows the class by itself producing a reduced collocation, especially with nouns denoting a class, of the m+∅ type, such as *the poor*, *the rich*, *the meek*, etc.

43. (...) and made famous all over the world by **educated**.

Besides, in syntax, plain collocations offer a double interpretation of functions when they are being used in a secondary function, and whether they are to be taken as a whole or as separate constituents has not been demonstrated yet. Arguments and counter-arguments are possible since they perform a dyadic interpretation of the world referent to a greater and lesser extent. Thus, from a formal appearance they should be taken as two modifiers and from a semantic again two possibilities are opened: one for those with a fixed image of the world (Eiffel tower, eggcup) and one for those with a dyadic reference. Reduced collocations, such as (OTAN, UNESCO, UN, and such, on the other hand, do not present this problem from a formal view, although it is always possible to base analysis on their deep structure. In the following compounds one observes whether they are the result of associations to denote conceptual meanings added together or, on the

contrary if they result from idiomatic collocations, and thus, belong to the non-literal use of language.

44. a) Eggcup [a cup where you eat boiled eggs].
- b) Egghead [Intellectual].
- c) Eggplant [A.E]: Type of nonsweet fruit eaten as a vegetable = B) Aubergine].
- d) Eggshell [Shell of egg].

Whereas a) and d) belong to the literal use of language b) and c) do not and thus its meaning cannot be deduced out of the meaning of their separate parts. In fact, the understanding depends on knowledge of the exterior world, i.e. of the user's knowledge of vegetables and on the linguistic referents a community adopts to refer to them.

All of them suffered a kind of collocational process before, being converted into compound words, either with a transparent meaning (i.e. *eggcup*) or with an opaque meaning provided by an extension of similar world referents similarity (i.e. *eggplant*): [type of nonsweet fruit eaten as a vegetable].

Therefore, the question is:

Do they range from the transparent to the opaque or from cultural simplicity to a widened or educated one?

It is convenient to mention that speakers of a language from different status and communities are more familiar with some world referents than with others. For instance, for a vegetable eater a term such as, eggplant (plant of the egg form) can be as familiar as the term eggcup (cup shaped for eating boiled eggs)

To be more accurate –as this subtype of non-canonical semantic expressions deserve–, a more detailed subcategorisation will be provided for along the lines given with the following labels and examples.

Lexical collocations of a minor degree, as marked in 83 and 84, in which 'lexical and/ or grammatical items' are put together to perform a different meaning from that of the parts in isolation.

45. (...) to masters such as [like, as an example, like for example] Michelangelo, it has attracted more than [greater, larger than] 4m visitors (S.T. n° 9,097, 3rd January 1999).
46. (...) educational facilities such as [Like, as an example of] a lecture theatre (S.T. n° 9,097, 3rd January 1999).

a) Lexical collocations

- Full lexical collocations: (PP)
 47. We have been offered nothing in return. [in exchange (for), as a reaction (to)] (S.T. Chronicle of the future).
 48. The cities, destroyed according to [under, in accord with] the Bible by a rain of 'brimstone and fire' (S.T. Chronicle Future, p. 4).
 49. (...) an object on the wall in front of [before, located at the front of] them (S.T. Chronicle Future, p. 8).
- Lexical collocations: (Adv.P)
 50. "we were worried we were going to have to *fight the Hundred Years war* all over [from every direction, everywhere] again" (S.T. Chronicle Future).
 51. Worry no more [not again, anymore, not anymore] (S.T. Chronicle Future, p. 8).
 52. (...) threatening an all-out crisis in the Russian economy.
 53. If you feel there may be too many obstacles in your path, try not to worry. The universe is actually telling you something (http://www.sunday-times.co.uk/cgi_bin/BackIssue?999).
 54. His method ignores what is known as [everyone knows this person to be] "junk" (S.T. Chronicle Future, p. 12).
- Lexical collocations: (NP's)

Table VII. Usual combinations.

| <i>NP (n + n)</i> | <i>NP (Adj + n)</i> | <i>NP (d + n)</i> |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| See 37, 45 | See 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46 | 26 |

55. The gallery will be open the whole year and *entrance fees* [payment made to gain admission into an establishment or place] will be kept low (S.T. n° 9,097, 3rd January 1999).
56. (...) the world's landmarks were focal points for carousing (S.T. Chronicle of the future).
57. In the Californian desert, 2.5m revellers raved all night (S.T. Chronicle of the future).
58. The media noted two dozen armed conflicts raging around the world as the new year (S.T. Chronicle of the future).
59. BUSINESS PAID the highest price for the biggest party the world has seen: (...) (S.T. Chronicle of the future).
60. As the millennium [the days of the Messiah, the days of the apocalypse] dawned most of [majority of, large part of] the world put aside its troubles (S.T. Chronicle of the future).

61. Worry no more. [not again, anymore, not anymore] (S.T. Chronicle Future, p. 8).
62. (...) by the Far East [region which includes the countries of eastern Asia] Region military commander, [military chief, military ruler, military leader] (S.T. Chronicle Future, p. 10).
63. (...) and announced itself the standard-bearer [leader, example, model] of the Empire [British Empire].
64. Its pages reinforced an ageing readership's suspicions of all things beyond the English Channel (...) (S.T. Chronicle Future, pp. 3, 4).
65. One hundred **years ago**, The Times pondered on the Empire and Britain's future thus: The New Year is not unlikely to mark a turning point.

b) Lexical collocations (VP's)

Table VIII. Usual combinations.

| <i>V + NP (d/h)</i> | <i>V + NP (P/h)</i> | <i>V + NP (pronoun as h)</i> | <i>V + Adj</i> | <i>V + Adj + p</i> |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| See 43 | See 44 | See 45 | See 47 | See 49 |

66. I led the way [guided or conducted at the head of] to the United Nations. (...) <http://www.sunday-times.co.uk/cgi-bin/BackIssue?999> (S.T. 12th September, 1999).
67. (...) and fuel for the pump that drew water **from the well** was running low.
68. One of the luckiest to make it [succeed, arrive on time, get out of it] there was Aida Ramos (S.T. 12th September, 1999).
69. Listen is the **keyword**. To avoid misunderstandings, make sure [make certain, verify] that you hear what people are saying before you respond.
70. You may **feel restless** because the Moon is in Aries, but your interests will be better served if you **stay true** to your Taurean sensibilities and (...).
71. (...) spend quiet time taking care of business.
72. Some of them, such as 110 and 111, can be included under the field of Lyons' complementarity terms and they stand out as exclusive by means of oppositeness.
73. (...) when they played a **married couple** in the Channel 4 (...) (S.T. 26th december, 1999).
74. Cave women wore **evening gowns** (S.T. 26th december, 1999).
75. (...), minister for school standards, (...) (S.T. 26th december, 1999).
76. "Historians will **look back** on this project as most important thing we did" (S.T. Chronicle Future, p. 12).

In this sense one could say that associations would be the linguistic process affecting both levels of syntax and word-formation, but collocations would only derive in compounds and set phrases production. Due to their vagueness and neutrality, the concepts of association and collocations tend to be confused in certain situations such as *solve a problem*, *cure a disease*, etc., for which I would use a term taken from Lipka as a synonym 'contextual partner', or that used by Chomsky 'close construction'. Contextual partners likely to have been collocations derive in one way or another and can be combined freely. However, at certain times, the sense comes out from emotional responses.

Thus the results of collocational analysis has been plagued by a chicken-and-egg problem: whether collocation is a theoretical primitive property of language or whether it can be reduced to some other independent property or set of properties, is difficult to say.

Many possible results of collocations entail or imply a set of correlations between compounding/set phrases and conceptuality and idiomacity, involving other properties such as contextual interaction, frequency, differentiation and so on. In descriptive linguistics the collocation process can be applied to grammatical rules, lexical formation, and abstract parameters as surface structure or concrete parameters such as markedness or unmarkedness. Lehman (1989) proposes that grammaticalization is unmarked and lexicalization is a marked.

In continually expanding and reshaping the collocational process, Halliday and Lipka, among others have produced a cluster of overlapping ideas that range from the normal description of language to its acquisition.

4.1.1. Clichés

Clichés' are ready-made expressions but not necessarily idiomatic. From a formal point of view they are usually built up with canonical constituents; However, some are non-canonical expressions in the sense that they block the general principles of grammar (see 114 and 115, though it can be argued that *quote* is common in AE, where they don't say *cite*).

77. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing [knowledge for learning].
78. The Devil can quote Scripture for his purpose [quote for cite].

In this sense a normal canonical expression, or a minor sentence can very easily become clichés when they lose their conceptual meaning and they are applied for a different purpose as in 79 and 80,

- 79. Can I help you?
- 80. Good morning.

80 is a formal canonical expression from a formal, it is not an idiom, and it is formed perfectly. However, when it is used by a shop-keeper, loses its conceptual canonical meaning and becomes a formulaic expression, as those from 81 to 84 show:

- 81. 'yes, sir',
- 82. 'the time is had by all',
- 83. 'you can't win' or
- 84. 'semi-natural'.

Thus, it is important to notice in order to understand language, and especially when one is dealing with his second language, that some clichés have identical world representations in certain languages, while in other languages they can not be translated literally. It is this deviation from the conceptual meaning that makes their internal markedness, unmarked as far as semantics can interpret.

Clichés are expressions, far from the meaning of the conversational topic of discourse; They are often used as oral linking features within the topic itself or as separators when changing from one topic to another, or at the end of a situation. Some of these expressions do represent their conceptual meaning in appropriate contexts. They have been semantically extended beyond their basic meaning to express attitudinal use with different connotations, which users might or might not be aware of.

In relation to the simple idea that a cliché is just something that lots of people say, it is, but it should convey some sort of idea or message otherwise its contribution to the interactive message, would be useless.

In general, a cliché is a metaphor characterised by its overuse. However, in certain situations the meaning conveyed might not provoke the reaction expected on the addressee's side and in that sense there are many possibilities to use meaningful expressions. They are really abundant in English and other languages, do denote certain attitude on the part of the speaker and a list is being offered, amongst other places and books, at the following [www: http://utopia.knoware.nl/users/sybev/cliche/](http://utopia.knoware.nl/users/sybev/cliche/).

Those originally referred to as proverbs (popular short saying, with words of advice or warning), or old sayings are generally characterised by their brevity, though a few are long:

85. A stitch in time saves nine
86. Easy come, easy go
87. Boys will be boys,
88. Better late than never
89. Let sleeping dogs lie.

They are common realisations of language, which have been taken up and have won acceptance to the extent that they now form part of popular consciousness. Their origin is not important for the purpose of this study, even though its source can sometimes be traced.

This type of expression covers a wide field of attitudes, from useful advise to cynicism, according to the philosophy of the speaker or the social class from which it emerged. Thus, whereas Keat's 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever' would introduce the participants into the world of dream and fantasy, Hamlet's 'To be or not to be, or 'Browning's: 'The best is just to be' would drive us into dramatic existentialism. Besides, one is to consider this very tentatively because the degree of looseness of conceptual meaning depends on the speaker's intention and his/her complicity with the hearer, and also on the context of situation. Thus, it is here where the user of the language has to use his ability to distinguish the situation, which he is immersed in. As all other co-hyponyms these idiomatic realisations of language share a bipartite function in language, which, in general, depends on the participants attitudes to language. However, knowing the meaning of the words that compose this saying or quotation and/or proverb does not make you aware of the inherent wisdom that it might carry. In that sense these realisations are linguistically cross-cultured.

They can be used in various senses, as for example:

For instance, *Always look at the bright sight of life or Don't worry, be happy!* would carry an inherent intention of being positive and optimistic. Others, such as, *Live and learn; C'est la vie; Que sera, sera; Today is the first day of the rest of your life; Carpe diem;* etc., can either be used with negative or positive connotations. When one feels desperate or exhausted or is talking to someone close, one may use one of the following, within or without a canonical context: *Behind the clouds; the sun is shining; It could be worse; Feeling bad is just a new sensation; Tomorrow is another day; I will survive;* A different kind of hopeless-

ness, that is produced when one gets physically or psychologically tired of waiting or waiting for something to happen, may be expressed as follows: *All good things come to those that wait; Time is a cure; One day I will wake up; and it will all fit together; The waiting is the hardest part; Some day my ship will come in; No news is good news.* Not-finding out the truth might conduct us to utter the following: *Wisdom is not truth; There are lies, damned lies and statistics; Who cares about reasoning anyway; Truth is relative.*

A good number of them are also used to denote how difficult it is to survive in this world, such as: *It is a good experience; it makes me stronger; Life is hard/unfair; Life is not hard; it only needs some positive thinking; Of course life is hard; that's why they pay you the big bucks; Life is a series of disappointments, followed by death; When God/life gives you lemons, make lemonade.*

Subcategorising clichés is not our main purpose and neither it is to concentrate in their origin, though these fields would constitute a good area of prospective research and they would offer both interesting linguistic and socio-cultural tuition alternatives for discussion.

Having a go at English Literature, we can say that some of them were probably coined by well-known literature writers, and made famous all over the world by educated to show off distance from the mass. They start being used as quotations to remark on wisdom, and while some remain and others do not it is difficult to say. It is probably enough to mention the following:

- Shakespeare's 'To be or not to be' (Hamlet), 'When shall we three meet again', 'Countrymen', 'Brevity is the soul of wit' (Hamlet), 'Cowards die many times before their deaths' (Julius Caesar).
- Huxley's 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing'.
- Gray's 'When Ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise'; Nowadays shorten to: 'Ignorance is bliss'.
- Keat's thing of beauty, 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever'.

The majority of them range either from:

- idiomatic phrases, which are often doublets and that have been so indiscriminately overused that their points have been blunted and they have become clichés, such as: *far and wide* [all over, everywhere], or *by hook or by crook* [at any price].
- to alliterations, as *null and void* [cancelled and revoked], the meaning of which is difficult to deduce out of the meanings of the

components (cf. Null = nil, invalid, nullified and void = emptiness, space vacuity).

- battered similes⁹, for example, *as cool as cucumbers* [very composed, indifferent], *as fit as fiddle* [in good shape], *as large as life*, *as rich as Croesus*, *as old as the hills*, *as thick as thieves*, *as steady as a rock*.
- And hackneyed proverbs, *falling off the lips with a dull clitch that makes no echoes, such as: as rich as Croesus* [very rich], *as old as the hills [ancient]*, *as steady as a rock* [firmly convinced].

Examples culled from our corpora, will show that this type of occurrences do not necessarily imply that some are fossilised expressions. Some are, but others are not. They do not provide part of the meaning of the message, and they are there to give you time to think in the spoken medium. In the written medium however one should avoid using this type of expressions. Currently, most of them are being substituted in general conversation by introductory items such as: yes, yeah, etc.

90. I mean for God's sake, if this did this to the men (...) everybody would think it was ridiculous (Margaret, 6, pp. 7-11).

Formally, you can fill in the gaps very freely [I mean for Peter's sake, I mean for my own sake], acquiring the conceptual meaning of the original meaning. On the contrary, with the loss of faith, *for God's sake*, has lost the conceptual meaning that it used to have, in the sense that Alcaráz (1997), pointed out the dull character of expressions of this kind and described them as 'palabras, frases, o expresiones fosilizadas gastadas por el uso'.

In fact, it seems to be that most of these expressions are at times being used as conceptualisations. Therefore, it is a good field for pragmatics research to settle principles and decide whether they are used in one way or the other. However, the speakers of a language are sensible to this kind of interaction and they do not find it difficult to discover the situation they are immersed in. They are aware of this bipartite situation; moreover the context also clarifies the point.

⁹ According to Howard (1984, pp. 87-90) "as cool as cucumber(s)", appears in *Beaumont and Fletcher's Cupid's revenge* (first played in 1615). Charmingly, 'young Maids were as cold as Cowcubmers', 'Croesus was a simile for riches as early as 1577', 'The hills were said to be old in 1500', 'Thieves were said to be thick in 1833'.

According to Gerald Brenan (quoted from Howard, 1984, pp. 87-90) ' clichés are dead poetry'¹⁰. He affirms:

'that English being the language of an imaginative race, abounds in clichés, so that English literature is always in danger of being poisoned by its own secretions'.

Crystal (1986, p. 12) signals that ' clichés have a job to do in Modern English. They do communicate meaning –though it is often a different kind of meaning than many people expect'. As he states, constructions of this type are governed by rules of English grammar, just like any other piece of sentence construction (15). In fact Crystal means that they are formally canonical, but semantically, they block the general principle of the conceptual meaning of the syntactic realisations of both major and minor clauses (Just a minute, good morning, can I help (you)?).

As is commonly known human beings and languages are full of clichés. So many millions of people have spoken and written so intensively since very ancient times, that it is almost impossible to find ideas and phrases that have not been used by others before. This might explain that expressions often used as quotations, are incorporated in daily use with loss of initial meaning as almost every person has his own favourite quotations.

Language does not stop to incorporate clichés, including collocations, idioms, and non-canonical expressions, as part of these pieces of language. Along this line some are incorporated by society in general and others may have that inherent complicity only for particular social classes.

Example n° 128, a headline of a weekly article, which appears in the Evening Standard, is often used as a joke in a friendly or an unfriendly manner to refer to troublemakers.

91. A spin-doctor writes (...) [speaks].

From 79 to 84, the following titles of current books are often quoted for pleasure. They form part of lexicon and constitute the rewarded pa-

¹⁰ According to Howard a cliché is a stereotyped expression or a hackneyed phrase that has been used so many billions of times that it comes out of the mouth or the typewriter without causing a ripple in the mind of the speaker, or the typist, or the listener, or the reader.

It was originally a word of the technical jargon of the French printing trade in the 19th century. It was a stereotype block, the past participle used as a noun of the verb *clicher*, to stereotype.

role of the educated to show off their knowledge. In certain social scales and whether they become fossilised, remained as collocations or might become as well fixed clichés it will depend on both linguistic evolution and social enhancement. Some are over-generalised and others are restricted to people fond of the concepts they represent. Whereas 79 is overgeneralised and extended from an idiomatic phrase. 82, made up in a different way, and of application for believers can be considered as clichés, the rest are straightforward collocations realised differently.

92. How to win friends and influence people.
93. The mind and the way (Buddhist reflection of life).
94. Countrymusic.
95. Behind the Crystallball.
96. The Stock Market.
97. Cf. Pocketful of dreams.

4.1.2. Idioms

'Idioms' are ready-made expressions. Apart from the meaning of the term 'idiom' the linguistic connotation is that they are independent units in the sense that in most occurrences one cannot deduce the meaning of the whole adding together the meanings of the parts. Thus, the whole expression has a lexically independent existence apart from the parts with which it is made up. A great number of them are found in the field of phrasal verbs, such as to give up (to stop), to account for (to explain), to look into (to examine), etc.

Here, as well, there is a kind of formula, a lexical formula with slots or variables in it, which the speaker has got to be confident with, in order to be able to fill it in freely according to what he is referring. To do that, apart from linguistic competence, socio-linguistic competence is also needed. There is a verb, a nominal phrase and a prepositional phrase. Of course, there may be some variation. There might be another preposition there, though *over* is the more common. Or consider '*Take after*', the meaning of which cannot be deduced out of the meanings of *take* and *after*. Idioms in English follow normal limits regarding word order, the uses of voice, the use of degrees of comparison and they usually follow normal and canonical structural patterns. Though they are restricted as far as exchanging, taking determiners or accepting or modifiers, according to their transparent or opaque nature, as 98 and 99 show.

Thus, for example, in

- 98. Stand head and shoulders over¹¹.
- 99. kick the bucket¹², *kick the enormous bucket.
- 100. C.f., Run up a bill and *run up a big bill*.

Of a semitransparent nature, admitting modifiers.

The use of idioms depends particularly on style. Thus, they are more frequently found in the spoken medium of the language and they show imprecise inherent linguistic features, which make their overall meaning difficult to be decoded literally; they present more difficulties for their translation into other languages.

In a way, this type of expression can be considered as a formal deviation with a certain semantic independence of the literal meaning of the words which compose those pieces of language.

Communities have adopted, adopt and will adopt individual thoughts considered to be wise for human understanding as well as for distinguishing correct and bad behavioural attitudes to their own development and to their survival needs. As a matter of fact, due to their inherent semantic properties they are to be considered as formal complex lexical items proper in spite of being composed by more than one lexical item or by a combination of lexical and grammatical units. As far as grammar is concerned, they might follow a canonical construction but their meaning, very often, constitutes one unit ranging from simple ideas to more complex ones. They have certain or total lexical autonomy which ranges from the transparent to the totally opaque. This means that they have to be acquired or incorporated within the individual's lexicon, independently from the rules of formation applied to single lexical units. Frequently, one cannot deduce the meaning of the whole out of the separate parts that compose that piece of language.

¹¹ [after submitting this example to the following sub-corpora of the cobuild data bank: British books, ephemera, radio, newspapers, magazines (26m words); American books, ephemera and radio (9m words); British transcribed speech (10m words).

The Cobuild bank of data answer was: There were no instances of your search pattern found in the corpora you selected. Thus, one can deduce that it is the sort of expression which appears more frequently in the spoken than in the written medium.

¹² [Sample of Query Results: NOTE: no more than 40 lines will be displayed here, since a threshold has been implemented. If there were more than 40 instances found, a random selection will have been applied. Rest assured –she won't *kick the bucket*. [p] [h] Simply Red; Fashion [/h], the old girl is about to *kick the bucket* anyway got some sort of kidney, All I'll have to do then is *kick the bucket* by mid-December to have a sure-fire], in which no modifiers are inserted.

Word, sentence and textual examples for this research have, are and will be taken at random from several sources including, newspapers, jokes, literature, everyday conversations, Internet sources and banks of data corpora of English. The overall aim is to highlight how ordinary these types of constructions involving non-canonicity in oral everyday use are? How they have extended to the written medium, and how the notion of linguistic creativity in relation to this wide and complex range of discourses, in certain situations, widens their field of action to canonicity.

These examples were culled from written data (Sunday Times and Internet language both at instructional and reported levels).

Data culled from the Sunday Times and Internet sites show a great number of occurrences of this type both at the word, phrase and at clause level.

Storage of idioms in the Lexicon can be either carried out in morphology or in syntax.

4.2. *At word or phrase level*

101. Will set up an advisory group of female **highflyers** to act as role models to teenage girls (Teen., 3, pp. 2-3).
102. At 6ft tall, Baroness Jay **towers above**¹³ most members of her sex (Margaret, 2, pp. 11-12).
103. (...) the Daily Mail called her a **man-eater**¹⁴ (Margaret, 6, pp. 3-4).
104. That tiger's a man-eater! [CDI].
105. There was a news report of a **man-eating tiger**.
106. Lady jay wants to replace old style feminism with an attempt to tackle **bread-and butter** issues that concern women, such as income, health and education (Teen., 9, pp. 1-5) [Know which side

¹³ [Query Results: NOTE: no more than 40 lines will be displayed here, since a threshold has been implemented. If there were more than 40 instances found, a random selection will have been applied.stop to investigate. Castelnau ruins *tower above* us, and enchanted chateaux; mountains in the Himalayas which *tower above* 8,000 metres –is a lifelong; boots and a rifle butt of a soldier *tower above*, dividing the picture into; later stages again. [p] [h] London *tower above* domestic rivals; Basketball; Phil Davies and Gareth Llewellyn will *tower above* Redman –but both know t].

¹⁴ [*a man-eater*; informal: a woman who attracts men very easily and has many relationships; She had a reputation as *a man-eater*; CDI; (humorous) *A man-eater* is a woman who uses men to have a series of sexual relationships without really loving them. See also *man-eater* at man (PERSON); *A man-eater* is an animal that can kill and eat a person].

your bread is *battered (on)*; to be careful not to upset people who you know can help you).

107. Ollie won't refuse to come with us. He knows which **side his bread is battered [battered on]** [Sb's bread and butter; informal: A job or activity that provides you with the money you need to live] [to live on] [basic human needs].
108. Teaching at the local college is **his bread and butter** [Bread and butter; A bread and butter subject or problem is about things that people need in order to live, such as money and jobs].
109. Unemployment and taxes are **the bread and butter issues** of this campaign [CDI].

From 101 to 109 there are apparently 9 normal words from a formal point of view. They appear as compounds written together, with a hyphen, or as two separate items as per regular parameters of composition (i.e., adj. plus noun, verb plus particle, noun plus noun, co-ordinating two nouns). Examples 103 to 105 from the *Cambridge Dictionary* explain creativeness by extension of number 103.

An acceptable scheme for the lexical representation of man-eater (cf. Bresnan 1982, Coopmans and Everaert 1988), following the right principle would be <eat man> er>.

Semantics: Nymphomaniac

Thus, they are non-canonical from a semantic point of view in the sense that, even though one can add together the meanings of the parts, if one is not able to have external knowledge of the world, one is not able to deduce the meaning of the whole. If this happened, the information stored in a Lexicon and in one's Lexicon would be reduced to a minimum.

– AT CLAUSE LEVEL

110. (...) its feminism's perceived to be about separateness, **putting up a brick wall between** men and women (S.T. teen., 10, pp. 5-7).

If you come/find yourself up against a brick wall you are unable to get any further with a plan, argument, etc. because something prevents you from doing so.

111. In its campaign to prevent the building, the department **found itself up against a brick wall** [CDI].
112. We should build on it rather than **fight the old fight** (S.T. Margaret, 7, pp. 8-10).

113. By the time she was an adviser to health authorities (...) **her children had flown the nest** (S.T. Margaret, 10, pp. 8-11) [Flow from sth: To be the result of a particular situation or event (CDI)].
114. Problems **flowing from** his recent illness have made the family's life very difficult (CIDPH).
115. At the moment, she says, all Saints **are flavour of the week** (S.T. Teen., 8-9, p. 11).

[The flavour of the month British & Australian, American & Australian Someone or something that has suddenly become very popular, but may not remain popular for long].

116. Role-playing games are suddenly **the flavour of the month** [CDGE].
117. If you **put people on a pedestal** there is always the horrible possibility that they will fall off (S.T. Teen., 5, pp. 18-20).

Whereas in number 117 *put up* is listed, *a brick wall* is not; the nature of the first two constituents is opaque whereas the nature of the second part is transparent. In number 109 *fight the old fight* is listed and it has to be listed because it constitutes a lexical item in its own right.

Number 113 *to fly the nest or to fly from the nest*, is not listed either under *fly*, or under *nest*, as the meaning can naturally be deduced from the parts that compose this unit. The same happens with number 115 '*flavour of the week*', as the second entry of the dictionary would justify its meaning. On the contrary, number 117 '*put people on a pedestal*' is listed; although it is canonical as far as form is concerned, we have a subject, a predicate, and a prepositional phrase. Semantically speaking it means to admire people. Neither morphology nor syntax blocks the general forms but semantic specificity blocks basic or conceptual meaning provided by the number of components that constitute that piece of language.

Therefore, the elsewhere condition which explains that a general rule A is blocked where a more specific rule B can apply (cf. Anderson, 1969 and Kiparsky, 1973) can also be referred to semantics, especially in the case of the GAs of language denoting meaning opacity.

Idioms such as

- come battling back,
- Bright and breezy,
- War paint in place,

- With friends like these (who needs enemies),
- Clever bunny (what a clever boy),
- Straight from the horses mouth', etc.,

show the abundance of occurrences in daily language of the press. Some of them are the result of cultural situations. They are mainly used in informal situations; Others are incomplete due to their popularity. Although they block the general principles of formal style, they are well-constructed; they do not break either morphological or syntactic rules but they block semantic principles and, hence constitute lexical units in their own right.

For example, in 118 at least two of them can be found: two idioms at word and clause level resulting from linking two collocations, in which a nest egg is not a next egg and the result of the combination results in a saying.

118. If you have worked hard all your life and managed to **put away a nest egg**, you could end up losing most of your life savings because of exorbitant nursing homes fees that the State won't pay (Daily Mail, 1999, pp. 9-67) in Hurry... it's your only CHANCE! [a nest egg an amount of money that you have saved. Regular investment of small amounts of money is an excellent way of building *a nest egg*] [CDI].

This type of expressions are often extended, through combination of sememes, due to confusion of items that are usually performed under a different canonical form, as the one marked in bold in 119:

119. "She **potters about** in her garden and she grows apples and she makes jam. She's a little old lady" (S.T) [potter/A.E. putter (to move about without hurrying and in a relaxed and pleasant way), more commonly used as a noun; here is a verb: one who makes ceramic objects].

As a normal combination to potter collocates with around and along, but there also exists the expression that covers to spend time in an uninteresting manner, such as to wander about. In 119 she wanders about in the garden [she moves about without hurrying and in a relaxed and pleasant manner], but why not pottering, i.e. preparing pot plants, and whether an alternative form using pot as a verb should be used is not a question of discussion here. However extension and arrangement seems to proceed on the other way round. I.e. from denotative to conceptual or basic.

4.3. *Spoken data*

Up to very recently, studies on language were based more on written evidence than on spoken evidence. It seems clear that spoken exemplification usually shows a different grammar involving particular patterns involving:

- Repetition of sounds.
- Grammatical devices.
- Lexical innovation.
- Idiomatic abundance.
- Metaphorical.

This wide range of processes involving:

- reinforcement,
- reformulation and creative extension,
- and repetition reinforcing the symmetry of the encounter,

provide us with a surface linguistic marker of convergence and lead us to settle down general principles to provide grammatical evidence of how written patterns are distinguished from oral patterns. This constitutes a new tendency to present grammatical studies as for it would provide the tools necessary for communicative purposes [see Biber's *et al.* grammar (1999), which closely following Quirk *et al.* (1985) provides full descriptions of grammatical features and structural variants of any significance].

These types of utterances in spoken discourse and, casually, in written discourse, constitute interesting instances of creating discourse. In spoken discourse, except when it is direct, the majority of propositions are normally used metaphorically. For example, simple units, such as 'up' and 'down' are being used with the sense of optimism and pessimism respectively; under in *under the table* with a percentage of its basic meaning and so on (cf. *Under-pressure, undercontrol*, etc.), which often have a metaphorical sense. Thus, evaluation involves the whole discourse.

It seems that all these expressions belonging to the GAS of language are numerous and very frequent daily exchanges in spoken discourse. Probably, with the exception of clichés, in certain contexts they are not merely decorative, but are also functional and, as a general rule, some kind of judgement comes out as a result of the pragmatic interaction involved between the speaker and the addressee.

When you find 'idiomatic expressions' or other features belonging to the GAs of language you feel motivated enough to think that you are dealing with a very different kind of language.

I would like to suggest that the following are common patterns of oral production. Whether or not they come to be used normally in the written medium is something that will take time to discover. Moreover, whether they will be commonly used in spoken discourse, or not, is also difficult to assure, as most of these items cannot be classed together under one general label, though they share a common feature: semantic idiomacity. However, these patterns are being produced and they provide us, as scholars, with the possibility of opening a new via of linguistic interpretation. The following common patterns, and up-to date examples from everyday conversations, have been transcribed and annotated from January to March 1999 in London:

120. a) He's not short of a *bob* or two.
 b) Yes, he must have a *bob* or two.
 a) *Bob's* your uncle.
 b) He's quite a lot of money earned tied up in property and things. He's got a finger in all kinds of pies and houses and stuff (Two female colleagues at the Oxford & Cambridge University Club).

As a general rule, patterns of parallels (sounding parallelism) are produced very commonly in conversation. The emphasis is put on sounding rather than on meaning content or perhaps meaning content is being emphasised by sound contrast.

As a matter of fact, it is well known that political speeches and some TV programmes, for example, have become more and more informal and more and more affected. It is an explainable fact that people enjoy these *speeches* very much for leisure and pleasure, because of the echoes, repetition, reinforcement, and so on.

Thus, there are grammatical choices and lexical choices. It is a fact that E-mail writings are becoming more and more informal, they do normally contain a lot of repetitions. A grammar of affect is normally being used. Caution must be recommended not only at early stages of learning, since there exists an element of risk when creating discourse. Nonetheless, it helps to maintain tension. If it fails, it means that it is not the right context. However, people do take risks when they create or invent.

Moreover, in spoken language there are options which, depending on the linguistic formation of the speaker, move from simple to com-

plex. However, one must distinguish between language performed spontaneously and that written to be performed or acted, as in 121.

121. Frankie, **come on**, let's **get out of** here! **Come on**, we've got to move it now! [THE DEVIL'S OWN (La sombra del diablo)].

Expressions such as *get out of*, commonly referred to as phrasal prepositional verbs, are usually formed out of two collocations and very often referred to as set phrases.

Combinations of collocations may occur in spite of the grammarians 'advice' 'not to use metaphorical meaning in combination', if contradictory meaning of the opaque nature and other features of language with idiomacity imperfect is not made patent. It is in that sense that numerous scholars agree that collocations are to play a very important role in both oral and written literature.

5. CONCLUSION

On the basis of this empirical research, yet in a state of development, taking into account the data analysed, we can conclude that only some of these expressions are to be considered lexical items proper. The majority of them follow normal formal canonical patterns and meaning may rouse raving from the transparent or semitransparent of the constituents to the totally opaque, or they keep on going with the conceptual meaning.

I) Transparent realisations

- from the separate parts that constitute these pieces of language,
- from the separate parts that constitute these pieces of language,
- [take care/ care],
- from an already fixed idiomatic expression by extension [her children had flown the nest/ Flow from one place to another],
- from the expansion of a canonical term (...) *towers above* (*One computer manufacturer towers above (= is bigger and more successful than) all the rest*). [*I usually + adv/prep*],
- from sociocultural undefined interrelations (nest egg).

II) Opaque realisations

- they can't be deduced adding together the meaning of the parts, [put away/put something where it belongs/imprison/kill],

- they can't be deduced linguistically, as the meaning goes beyond its conceptual meaning,
- some can't be deduced through sociocultural understanding [bat-tling windmills],
- they probably have to be learnt as separate lexical units, by heart and the meaning goes back to dyachronic meaning of at least that of one of the parts that compose the whole.

Results show that the collocational process is a general Linguistic process in Language behaviour that can be splitted into:

- A) The associational process.
- B) Proper collocations or idiomatic phrases, normally set phrases, but other processes of language are as well involved in.
- C) A previous step for compounding, i.e., the movement from syntagmatic relations of language to a paradigmatic state or function.

In general one can assume that those expressions are to be treated independently both for theoretical analysis and for tuition purposes.

My focus will be on phrases that are popular in British and American English. In certain situations the behaviour of both standardised forms have been mixed up, perhaps due to communication facilities, in the way that is happening within synchronic development.

Important keywords employed in developing this proposal are the following: collocate and partner, loose associations and free combinations, compounding, set phrases, head and modifier, extension and arrangement, paradigmatic and syntagmatic, conceptual and denotative meaning.

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Cambridge American Dictionary of English
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Cambridge International Dictionary of Phrasal verbs.

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