

## A CLASSIFICATION OF COLLOCATIONS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THOSE USED IN BUSINESS ENGLISH

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Words that usually go together in a language are referred to as collocations. Some linguists prefer to call these combinations word partnerships [1]. In Romanian linguistic research, a study devoted to collocations in general English was published by Professor Dumitru Chitoran [2, p.655-667]. He considers collocations as recurrent word combinations. In a collocation two or several words coexist. They follow each other and can be said to be in a syntagmatic relation. These words should belong to different groups/classes also called series. Words from the same series are opposed to each other and cannot be used together, as they are mutually exclusive. Such words can be said to be in a paradigmatic relation with each other. To illustrate, let us take the collocation "to meet a demand." The words "meet" and "demand" coexist in the collocation. "Meet" belongs to the verb series with the connotation "satisfying something." In the same series we can use "cover," "fill," "satisfy." The latter mentioned words are in a paradigmatic relation. On the other hand, the noun "demand" is in a paradigmatic relation with "needs," "requirements," "orders." Mention should be made that the meaning of a lexical unit does not change when collocating with the members of the same series. Thus "meet" in the above mentioned series means "to satisfy." When "meet" collocates with names of persons, or common nouns standing for a person its meaning changes to "become acquainted with." Examples in this respect are: Meet Mr. Jones/ my friend, etc.

A classification of types of collocations has been suggested in *The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English* [3]. The classification divides collocations into grammatical and lexical ones. In our study we shall deal with lexical collocations alone. What is, however, debatable in this classification is the mixing of structural criteria with semantic ones. To supply but one example, in the chapter on lexical collocations, two different categories L1 and L2 are suggested for the same structural pattern Verb + Noun/Pronoun, on

account of the fact that some verbs denote creation or activation (L1), while others (L2) designate eradication and/or nullification. For the sake of consistency of criteria we shall treat both categories as a single one from the point of view of structure. We shall also deal with a category consisting of a Preposition + Verb, which in the above mentioned book is included among grammatical collocations. *The LTP Dictionary of Selected Collocations* [4] restricts its attention to only five main categories without going into a detailed analysis of possible types.

Our illustrations will focus on business English collocations as a distinct sphere in the field of collocations, since many of these contexts are found only in economic language. In the following we are going to suggest a classification of collocations based on structural criteria alone, differing, in this way, from the above-mentioned *BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English* and being more extensive than the one found in *The LTP Dictionary of Selected Collocations*.

### Type 1

#### Transitive Verb+ Noun

Some of the verbs denote creation (meaning the act of bringing something new into existence), others denote activation ( meaning that the process has started), others show eradication or nullification.

Examples:

*to sign/ conclude/ enter into a contract/ agreement*  
*to carry out/ implement/execute a contract/agreement*  
*to cancel/ annul/ abrogate/ terminate a contract /agreement*

*to place/ give/ entrust/ make out/ write out an order*  
*to fill/ perform/carry out/execute an order*  
*to refuse/reject/ cancel/turn down an order*  
*to lodge/ file/ make/ bring a complaint*  
*to deal with/ investigate a complaint*  
*to ignore/disregard/reject a complaint*

*to raise/ enter file/ lodge/ put forward/ put in/ make a claim*  
*to settle a claim*

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to set/establish a *deadline*  
to meet/ to extend a *deadline*  
to miss a *deadline*

to take on/ hire an *employee*  
to dismiss/ fire/ sack/ pay off/ lay off/ make redundant  
an *employee*

to set up/establish/found a *company*  
to manage/run a *company*  
to wind up/ liquidate/ close down a *company*

to set/ establish/ fix/ quote a *price*  
to increase/ mark up/ raise/ freeze/ maintain/ hold  
down/ keep down/bring down/ undercut/ slash/ roll  
back *prices*

to draw/ make/ prepare a *draft*  
to accept/ make payment of / honour/ negotiate/  
endorse/cash/ discount a *draft*  
to dishonour/ refuse/ protest a *draft*

to open/keep/hold an *account*  
to overdraw an *account*  
to close an *account*

to grant/ issue/receive / apply for a *licence*  
to revoke/withdraw a *licence*

to take out/ to make out a *bill of lading*  
to endorse/ negotiate/tender a *bill of lading*

to run into/ run up/ incur/ contract *debts*  
to recover/collect/pay off/ service/roll over/ reschedule  
*debts*  
to cancel/wipe out/ write off/ default on a *debt*

**Type 2**  
**Adjective(or Noun used attributively)+Noun**  
Examples:

capital/ circulating/ current/ fixed/ floating/ frozen/  
hidden/ intangible/ liquid/ net / tangible /wasting  
*assets*

limited/unlimited *liability*  
chief/ certified/ certified public/ chartered / cost /  
management/ tax *accountant*

bad/ doubtful/ outstanding/ unsettled *debt*  
bargain/ cash/ current/ elastic/ exercise/ factory/ firm/  
futures/ historical/ list/ market/ minimum/ net/  
reasonable/ recommended/reserve/ retail/ spot/ strike/  
total unit/ wholesale *price*

best/ bottom/ lowest/ most advantageous/ competitive/  
rock-bottom/keenest *price*

a cloused/ clean/ dirty/ foul/ on board/ qualified *bill of lading*

bitter/ cutthroat/ fair/ fierce/ keen/ stiff/ strong/ unfair/  
unfettered *competition*

trade/ cash/ quantity *discount*

bulk/ emergency/ repeat/ trial *order*

book/ current/ replacement/ market *value*

**Type 3**  
**Noun + Noun**

In this type the noun which collocates with a series is placed in front position.

Examples:

*price cut/ pressure/ rise/ reduction/increase/war/ sensitivity*

*market forces/ forecast/ leader/ research/ trends*

*consumer advertising/ behaviour/ boycott/ credit/ durables/ market/ panel /preference/ profile/ protection*

*cost accountant/ centre/ effectiveness/ minimization*

*discount broker/ house/ market/ rate*

*pay cheque/ desk/ negotiations/ rise/ slip*

**Type 4**

It consists of **Noun +Verb** the latter naming an action usually associated with the noun.

Examples:

*A plane crashes/ cruises/ flies/ lands/ takes off/ taxis(along the runway).*

*A train arrives/ derails/ leaves/ pulls in/ pulls out (of the station).*

*A vessel/ ship/ boat anchors/ berths/ is moored/ pitches/ rolls/ sails/ sets sail.*

*A company is set up/ is established/ is founded/ is wound up/ fails.*

*An employer hires/ takes on/ dismisses/ discharges/ lays off/ fires/ sacks/ makes redundant (staff).*

*A competitor outbids/ outsells/ undercuts.*

*Business is booming/ brisk/ flourishing/ slack/ thriving.*

*A draft falls due/ matures/ is accepted/ is discounted/is drawn/ is honoured/ is dishonoured.*

**Type 5**

**Verb of incomplete predication +Adjective**

Examples:

*to be short of*

*to be/run/ come short of*

*to go bankrupt/ broke/ bust*

*to be/ lie/ stand idle*

**Type 6**  
**Verb +Adverb**  
Examples:

*to invest/ lose/ rely heavily*  
*to increase/ rise/ climb steeply/ abruptly/*  
*dramatically/ substantially/considerably/*  
*moderately/steadily*

**Type 7**  
**Adverb+Adjective**  
Examples:

*fully/ keenly /painfully very much aware*  
*fiercely/ keenly competitive*

A variant of this is **Adverb+Verb-ed**  
Examples:

*heavily fined/ subsidised/ taxed*  
*severely undercapitalized*  
*slightly/ partly/ badly/ entirely/ somewhat damaged/*  
*broken/ torn/ spoilt/ stained/ soaked/ dented/*  
*tarnished*

**Type 8**  
**Preposition + Noun**  
Examples:

*in the red*  
*in the black*  
*over the counter*  
*at/ after sight*  
*at call*  
*after date*  
*off the shelf*

**Conclusions**

In business English, collocations are often very specialised. For example, when referring to adjectives/nouns collocating with 'goods', we can supply *broken, damaged, missing, oversupplied, short-shipped, wrong goods*, which are used when writing complaints. Whereas another series of collocations with the same noun: *capital, consumer, dry, soft, durable, manufactured, perishable goods* will be acceptable in other fields of business, such as finance, trading, transportation, therefore their range of use is much wider.

We have noticed that a certain lexical element collocates with certain elements that form a series. If the same lexical element, on its face, collocates with other elements, then it must be a homonym or a polysemantic word. An example in this respect is "account": when meaning 'statement of money paid out or paid in' it has an accounting connotation and collocates with a series including "profit and loss", etc., while when collocating with "deposit" it has a financial meaning, i.e. 'money held in a bank'. This proves that the collocation of a word with certain lexical elements helps us identify the contextual meaning of a polysemantic word.

The list of collocations for each type we considered could by no means be exhaustive, as such a task means compiling a dictionary on the subject. It can, however, raise the learners' awareness to the subject and make them receptive to such combinations when reading economic texts or in oral and written communication in business.

**REFERENCES**

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