

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO**  
**TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG**



# **KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP**

**NGÀNH : NGÔN NGỮ ANH – NHẬT**

**Sinh viên : Lưu Thị Thùy Dung**

**HẢI PHÒNG – 2023**

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TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG**

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**A STUDY ON THE FIRST YEAR ENGLISH MAJORS'  
DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING LEXICAL  
COLLOCATIONS AT HAI PHONG MANAGEMENT  
AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY**

**KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP ĐẠI HỌC HỆ CHÍNH QUY  
NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH – NHẬT**

**Sinh viên : Lưu Thị Thùy Dung  
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**TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG**

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Tên đề tài: A study on the first year English majors' difficulties in learning lexical collocations at Hai Phong Management and Technology University.

# NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI

## 1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

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## 2. Các tài liệu, số liệu cần thiết

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## 3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp

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## CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

**Họ và tên** : Đặng Thị Vân

**Học hàm, học vị** : Thạc Sĩ

**Cơ quan công tác** : Trường Đại học Quản lý và Công nghệ Hải Phòng

**Nội dung hướng dẫn**: A study on the first year English majors' difficulties in learning lexical collocations at Hai Phong Management and Technology University.

Đề tài tốt nghiệp được giao ngày 07 tháng 11 năm 2022

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*Sinh viên*

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*Giảng viên hướng dẫn*

Lưu Thị Thuỳ Dung

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*Hải Phòng, ngày 24 tháng 02 năm 2023*

**XÁC NHẬN CỦA KHOA**

CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM

**Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc**

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**PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN HƯỚNG DẪN TỐT NGHIỆP**

Họ và tên giảng viên: Đặng Thị Vân  
Đơn vị công tác: Trường Đại Học Quản lý và Công nghệ Hải Phòng  
Họ và tên sinh viên: Lưu Thị Thuỳ Dung  
Chuyên ngành: Ngôn ngữ Anh – Nhật  
Nội dung hướng dẫn: A study on the first year English majors' difficulties in learning lexical collocations at Hai Phong Management and Technology University.

**1. Tinh thần thái độ của sinh viên trong quá trình làm đề tài tốt nghiệp**

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**2. Đánh giá chất lượng của đề án/khóa luận (so với nội dung yêu cầu đã đề ra trong nhiệm vụ Đ.T. T.N trên các mặt lý luận, thực tiễn, tính toán số liệu...)**

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**3. Ý kiến của giảng viên hướng dẫn tốt nghiệp**

Được bảo vệ  Không được bảo vệ  Điểm hướng dẫn

*Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm .....*

**Giảng viên hướng dẫn**

*(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)*

CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM

**Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc**

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**PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIÁO VIÊN CHĂM PHẢN BIỆN**

Họ và tên giảng viên: .....

Đơn vị công tác: Trường Đại học Công nghệ và Quản lý Hải Phòng

Họ và tên sinh viên: Lru Thị Thuỳ Dung

Chuyên ngành: Ngôn ngữ Anh – Nhật

Đề tài tốt nghiệp: A study on the first year English majors' difficulties in learning lexical collocations at Hai Phong Management and Technology University.

**1. Phần nhận xét của giáo viên chăm phản biện**

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**2. Những mặt còn hạn chế**

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**3. Ý kiến của giảng viên chăm phản biện**

Được bảo vệ  Không được bảo vệ  Điểm hướng dẫn

*Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm .....*

**Giảng viên chăm phản biện**

*(Ký và ghi rõ tên)*

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of learning a lexical collocation is to enrich vocabulary and to learn English better. So, we have to take the context into consideration in which a collocation is used to guess the meaning of a lexical collocation and use them correctly. In this research, the researcher focused on " *A study on the first year English majors' difficulties in learning lexical collocations at Hai Phong Management and Technology University* ". The subjects of this study were the first-year English major students from Hai Phong University of Management and Technology. The researcher used the main data collection instrument is a questionnaire to find out the difficulties of learning English collocations, which will help the first year English majors students find the right method to improve their vocabulary.



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Hai Phong, February, 2023  
Student

**LU'U THỊ THUY' DUNG**

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## **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Rationale of the study**

Nowadays, with the development of the international relationship among countries, learning English is playing a more and more important role in the world. People use English for communication and discussion in world forums and in different aspects of life. In Vietnam, English is also very essential for work place. Thus, learning English has become more important than ever.

However, there are still some problems today about the learning English, particularly at Hai Phong Management and Technology University, there is a fact that the English Majors at Hai Phong Management and Technology University, especially the first year English majors at Hai Phong Management and Technology University are not active in learning. Furthermore, they feel reluctant to get involved in English lessons. Therefore, their English ability is often low and very few of them can communicate in English fluently, write or read in English well. One of the major reasons is the lack of vocabulary. It is known that collocation is one of the most problematic areas in second language learning and it seems that if one wants to improve his/her communication in another language, the collocational competence should be improved. Furthermore, students often have a problem combining words together. Foreign language students struggle more with making their speaking sound natural. This may be due to their ignorance of collocations and the interference of the mother tongue or even the second language.

Obviously, it is high time teachers chose the appropriate method to solve the problem. This study will focus on finding out the difficulties students often deal with during the time they learn English collocations and then the researcher will suggest some ways of learning collocations which help students enhance their English collocations. Therefore, the researcher has decided to this study with the title: “A study on the first year English majors’ difficulties in learning lexical collocations at Hai Phong Management and Technology University” with the hope of expanding students' knowledge of words and increasing their accuracy and fluency in English language.

## **2. Aims of the study**

The aim of this study is to find out the difficulties students often deal with during the time they learn English collocations and give them suggestions for better ways of learning lexical collocations. The researcher wants to change the students' attitude on speaking English and let them find English speaking more interesting, especially learning collocation. The expectation is that the first year English majors at Hai Phong Management and Technology University can consider learning English collocations and speaking English as their favorite activities.

- Finding out the difficulties in learning English collocations made by first year at Hai Phong Management and Technology University.
- Finding some suggested ways and effective solutions to learn Collocation for the first year English major at Hai Phong Management and Technology University.

## **3. Scope of the study**

The present study focuses on finding out the difficulties students often deal with during the time they learn English collocation. In fact, there are various aspects of studying English collocations. It requires much of time and effort. However, due to the limitation of time, resources and knowledge of mine as well as some other conditions, this study was carried out to find out the reality of teaching and learning English collocations for the first year English majors and to find out the difficulties students often deals with during the time they learn English collocations as well as offering some learning methods to help the English majors enhance their English collocations. Thus, the results of this study is limited only to those students participating in this study and these findings may impact the generalization to the larger population of all students and they can also be the references for anyone who wants to know more about English collocations.

Once this survey is completed, we will have a better understanding of the causes of the difficulties in learning collocations at Hai Phong Management and Technology University. And how does the effective method to learn Collocation that I give help them?

## **4. Method of the study**

The research is carried out on the basis of quantitative research methods including questionnaires designed as a means to make the researcher's survey

more objective. In research, the questionnaire is used as a primary tool to collect the required quantitative data as it is considered an easy tool to summarize, analyze, report the collected data and find out the cause and give you a solution.

To complete this study, a variety of methods have been employed:

- Concerned materials including reference books on teaching methodology have been carefully studied and analyzed.
- A survey questionnaire was conducted to the first year English majors at Hai Phong Management and Technology University to gather information and evidence for the study.

All the comments, remarks, recommendations and conclusions provided in the study were based on the data analysis of the study. In addition, the information needed for the study was collected through other methods such as informal interviews and discussions with teachers for students at Hai Phong Management and Technology University.

## **5. Design of the study**

This research comprises three parts:

**Part I: Introduction**, includes the rationale for the study. It also includes the aims of the study, the research questions, the scope of the study. Next, the design of the study is also presented.

**Part II: The Development:** consists of three chapters:

**Chapter 1: Literature review:** presents a review of related literature that provides the definition of collocations, the importance of collocations in context, classification of collocations. Furthermore, approaches to collocations are also stated.

**Chapter 2: The study on learning English collocations:** focuses on difficulties students often deal with during the time they learn English collocations, the survey in which the objectives of the survey, the subjects, and the methods of the study are studied. Chapter 2 also studies the findings and data analysis, the findings and discussion of the findings, as well as the recommendations for improving students' learning English collocation.

**Chapter 3: Some suggested ways to learn collocations for the first year English majors at Hai Phong Management and Technology University.**

Research subjects: English majors at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology.

**Part III: Conclusions:** in the difficulties of learning collocations are made; some limitations and suggestions for further research are stated. The last are references, the appendixes that include all the documents relating to the study.



## **PART II: DEVELOPMENT**

### **CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **1. Definition of Collocations**

Collocation is a way of combining words together to form phrases according to the habits of native speakers and it will help our speaking and writing become more natural, more like native speakers. The origin of the term collocation is the Latin verb *collocare*, which means to set in order/to arrange. The word collocation itself can be traced as far back as the 17th century when it was used by Francis Bacon in his *Natural History* from 1627, but not as a linguistic term.

However, Palmer, H. (1933; 1938) was perhaps the first linguist to draw attention to the special significance of collocation in verbal communication. He used it to denote "units of words that are more than single words". Instead of sufficing with referring to the importance of 'grammar' in learning a language, Palmer (*ibid.*) sees that every word has its own grammar. In fact, it is true that "The polysemy of the word is disambiguated by the representation of its collocates" According to Lewis (1997: 8), collocation is defined as "the readily observable phenomenon whereby certain words co-occur in natural text with greater than random frequency".

Benson, Benson, and Ilson (1986) categorized collocations into two major groups: Lexical collocations, and grammatical collocations. Lexical collocations do not contain prepositions, infinitives, or relative clauses, but consist of various combinations of nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. Grammatical collocations consist of the main word (a noun, an adjective, a verb) with a preposition. So, the first six above categories are usually called lexical collocations and the other four are grammatical collocations. Collocation is a group of words that are connected together in the correct order and always appear together when talking about something. We cannot randomly combine words together; they must be combined so that they are natural, in the right sequence, and combined according to the habit of using the language of native speakers.

The definition of collocation is not a matter of serious controversy. According to Palmer (1976:94), he argued that "you shall know a word by the company it keeps," and he gave the example of the company of the English word "ass," which occurred in a limited set of contexts and in the company of a limited

set of adjectives silly, obstinate, stupid, and awful. In an article on modes of meaning published back in 1951, Firth introduced his often-quoted definition of collocation as "the company words keep." He maintains that "meaning by collocation is an abstraction at the syntagmatic level and is not directly concerned with the conceptual or idea approach to the meaning of words." He gives the example of the word night where one of its meanings involves its collocability with dark. In discussing seven differentiated types of meanings, Leech (1974:20) discusses what he calls "collocative meaning" which "consists of the associations a word acquires on account of the meaning of words which tend to occur in its environment." This definition is almost a replica of Firth's definition and instead of "ass," Leech gives the examples of pretty and handsome and the collocates of each. The words pretty and handsome share the common general meaning of "good-looking," but they are distinguished by the range of nouns with which they are likely to co-occur. He also gives the example of "quasi-synonymous" verbs like wander-stroll, and tremble-quiver, where each keeps a different company from the other. Benson, Benson, and Wilson (1986) try to develop criteria for defining collocations. They proposed the dual criteria of relative fixedness and non-idiomaticity and they use recurrent combinations and fixed combinations for collocations.

## **2. The Importance of Collocations**

Learners should know importance of collocations for the language acquisition and communicative competence. Despite the lack of a common definition, the literature on collocations shows an agreement among researchers and language pedagogues as to the importance of collocations for second/foreign language learning. It has been suggested that an increase in the students' knowledge of collocations will result in an improvement in their speaking skills, listening comprehension, and reading speed (Brown, 1974: 1-11). Collocational knowledge could also help students overcome problems of vocabulary usage and style, while it has also been considered especially effective in sentence generation. James Carl (1998) stated that using collocations correctly "contributes greatly to one's idiomaticity and nativelikeness." Lewis stated that "fluency is based on the acquisition of a large store of fixed or semi-fixed prefabricated items." Sonaiya (1988) went even further, saying that "lexical errors are more serious because effective communication depends on the choice of words." According to Applied

linguistics scholars, ‘A key element of natural fluency in English is mastery of collocations in both their oral and written forms.’ Collocations are a class of idiomatic expressions, containing two or more words that commonly, and for arbitrary reasons, occur together as a standard unit of meaning, such as ‘heavy rain’ but not strong rain and ‘many thanks’ but not several thanks. Collocations are important since they make the English language sound natural and native-like.

### 3. Classification of Collocations

A number of linguists have proposed certain criteria so far for distinguishing different kinds of collocations. The current study has adopted Benson, Benson, & Ilson (1997)’s collocation classification: lexical collocations and grammatical collocations because the model provides a thorough explanation of the classification criteria and easy-to-follow examples.

#### 3.1 Lexical Collocation

##### 3.1.1 Definition

A lexical collocation is a type of construction where a verb, noun, adjective or adverb forms a predictable connection with another word. According to Benson (1986) defined lexical collocations as phrases consisting of dominant words (noun, adjective, verb and a preposition). Noun is a word to state a person, place, things, or ideas. They are in contrast to grammatical collocations, and normally do not contain prepositions, infinitives, or clauses.

##### 3.1.2 Common lexical collocations

###### a. Type 1 (Adjective + Noun)

The adjective is a word which describes or modifies a noun or pronoun. Beautiful *girl*, Handsome *boy*, Good *job*, Sweet *orange*, Heavy *smoker*, Curry *favor*, High *probability*, Stale *food*, Tall *body*, American *people*, hard *life*, hard *time*,

Example : He has been a **heavy smoker** and drinker all his adult life. They have a **hard life** and worked for a **hard time**. We don’t have **hard evidence** that they had used **hard drugs**.

###### b. Type 2 (Verb + Noun)

This lexical collocation combination is called EN (eradication and or nullification) collocation. For example: reject an appeal, revoke a license, annul a marriage, and withdraw an offer.

Some verbs denoting similar meaning and that can be used with large number nouns are considered as free combination. For example: the verb destroy can combine with almost any nouns denoting physical objects: village, school, document, etc.

c. Type 3 ( Noun + Verb )

The verb names an action characteristic of the person/things designated by the noun.

Example: lions roar, cooks crow, bees' sting, baby sucks, hens hats, ball rolls.

d. Type 4 ( Adverb + Adjective)

These are examples of adverbs modifying adjectives :

- Absolutely wrong                      —————>      That is **absolutely wrong** opinion.
- Completely disappointed           —————>      She looks **completely disappointed**.
- Extremely difficult                   —————>      The text was **extremely difficult**.

e. Type 5 ( Verb + Adverb)

There are examples of verb and adverb collocation :

- She dresses beautifully
- He drives dangerously
- Thoroughly disapprove
- Fully understand

f. Type 6 ( Noun + Noun )

Noun and noun collocation is a kind of word combination that sound nature to native speakers. The phrase “food *stamp*” does not sound natural for people who speak English all theist love. The correct one will be “*food coupon*”

- World capital                              - Blood vessel
- Ticket seller                                - Animal fat
- Food chain                                    - Life cycle
- Food coupon                                 - Research project

<https://tinyurl.com/2q5bfts4>

## 3.2 Grammatical collocations

### 3.2.1 Definition

Grammatical collocations refer to combinations comprising a content word and a function word, which is usually a preposition, as illustrated below:

### 3.2.2 Common grammatical collocation

According to Benson and Ilson (1986) in their introduction to their *The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English* grammatical collocations fall into the following combinations: Noun + Preposition, Noun + To-Infinitive, Noun + That-Clause, Preposition + Noun, Adjective + Preposition, Adjective + To-Infinitive, Adjective + That-Clause.

#### a. Type 1 (Noun + Preposition)

Not all noun + preposition combinations can be considered collocations due to the highly predictable meaning of some prepositions, such as *of* and *by*. So, noun + *of/by* combinations are considered free combinations. The following phrases are examples of noun + preposition collocations:

- An increase in
- Account for
- Ability in
- Problem to

#### b. Type 2 (Verb + Preposition)

- Look For
- Look Into
- Agree With
- Look up
- Look after
- Belong to

#### c. Type 3 (Adjective + Preposition)

Some adjectives are followed by a prepositional phrase. The adjective + preposition combination that is considered collocational is the one that occurs in the predicate (verbless clause). However, the past participial adjective followed by the preposition *by* is not considered collocational because this construction is regular and predictable. For example:

- They are angry at the children.
- They are hungry for news.

#### d. Type 4 (Preposition + Noun)

Any combination of prepositions and nouns can fall into this category, however, the choice of the preposition with a certain noun is not at random. For example: *by accident, in advance, in agony, etc.*

- On purpose
- On duty
- On foot
- Under review

#### e. Type 5 (Noun + To + Infinitive)

There are five syntactic patterns in which Noun + To + Infinitive construction is most frequently encountered:

- It was a pleasure ( a problem, a struggle) to do it.

- They had the foresight (instructions, an obligation, permission) to do it.
- They felt a compulsion (an impulse, a need) to do it.
- They made an attempt (an effort, a promise, a vow) to do it.
- He was a fool (a genius, an idiot) to do it.

f. Type 6 (Adjective + To + Infinitive)

These adjectives occur in two basic constructions with infinitives:

- Adjectives with dummy subject "It" such as It was necessary to work; also possible It was necessary for him to work (the insertion of prepositional phrase)
- Adjectives with the real and animate subject, such as: She is ready to go; or with the inanimate subjects, such as : It (the bomb) is designed to explode at certain temperatures, or with either animate or inanimate subject: She was bound to find out or It (the accident) was bound to happen.

g. Type 7 (Adjective + That clause)

Some adjectives can be followed by that clause. For example:

- She was afraid that she would fail her examination

Several adjectives followed by present subjunctive in formal English are collocational, such as: It was imperative that we be there.

<https://tinyurl.com/2ht7tyob>

#### 4 Mental Processes in understanding and Translating Collocations

The development of word lists based on frequency counts for English directed the attention of teachers, practitioners and curriculum specialists alike to the upper ends of these lists at the expense of the lower ends on the premise that mastering the upper ends would be adequate for the development of a good measure of proficiency in the language, and the upper end can be efficiently exploited for learning the phonology and syntax of the language. This view of the vocabulary, besides its notional inaccuracy from a statistical point of view as will be shown in the next section, has led to learners' lexical deficiency and inability to function in real-life situations. Judd (1978) rightly states that "upon leaving the sheltered atmosphere of the classroom, students often find themselves at a literal loss for words in the uncontrolled English speaking environment which they encounter in the normal American university. He suggests that more emphasis should be given to direct vocabulary teaching. This view is strongly supported by Wilkins (1972) who firmly asserts that "...there is not much value either in being

able to produce grammatical sentences if one has not got the vocabulary that is needed to convey what one wishes to say.

It seems that the difficulty level of collocations depends largely on the use of the primary and non-primary sense of the component words. Collocations in which the words are used in their primary sense are easily understood and translated. Many authors do not even consider them collocations (Newmark, 1988:149). Understanding and translating collocations becomes more and more problematic when one or both of the component words depart from their primary sense. The word which is used in its primary sense acts as a clue for the translator to guess the meaning of the unknown or less transparent element, and consequently plays a major role in helping the translator retrieve the word. In fact, the word in the primary sense helps a translator form a mental image, and this works as a context in which the less transparent word must be used. As a result, the number of possible candidates to fill the slot or to be used as a collocate is limited. Thus it may be claimed that the type of collocations in which no element is expressed in its primary sense will cause more problems for the translator than other types of collocations in which the expected equivalent for one of the elements is missing or is considered redundant, the translator will unconsciously be inclined to include a word for the missing element. In processing collocations, grammatical competence will not be of considerable help. Relations between lexical items in a collocation, and also between collocations and their equivalents are independent of grammatical considerations.

In the absence of bilingual dictionaries tailored to the needs of a translator, and without proper exercises on dealing with collocations, the learner/translator can only rely on contextual clues and his competence to solve problems.

## **5 Definition plus Collocation in Vocabulary Teaching and Learning**

Definition and collocation are both important in vocabulary learning and teaching. The definition is concerned with establishing a single word's meaning, whereas collocation takes definition for granted and is concerned with the words that typically appear with any particular word: the verbs that might occur with a noun, for example. Such collocational information often enables a word to be used.

## **5.1. Statements**

When our focus is on definition, we might explain a noun like a dream as follows: "A dream is like a film in your head that you sometimes have when you are asleep."

When learners hear a statement based on definition, their main purpose is to decode the stream of words with the goal of matching an translation equivalent to the new word in their minds. They are less likely to notice and retain a collocating verb, and afterward, they are unlikely to come up with collocating adjectives like bad or scary on their own, much less with an expression like, "Sweet dreams!"

When our focus is on collocation, we might say something like the following: "An important verb for the dream is "have". Two frequently appearing modifiers for the dream are bad and recurrent, and two prepositions that often occur with the dream are about and in: 'I had a dream about... and 'In my dream, I was ...' In addition, dream can be used as a modifier in words like a dream catcher and the dream diary. When we put a child to bed at night, we often say, 'Sweet dreams!'"

Both the definition and collocation have their limitations. A statement based only on collocation might enable a student to say, "I had a bad dream," but not know what they are saying. And a statement based solely on definition would allow a student to match an translation to dream, but perhaps not be able to use it. Definition plus collocation, on the other hand, makes for a complete statement that allows for meaning and use.

## **5.2. Dictionaries**

To find a word's definition, teachers and students can look it up in any number of definition-based dictionaries. In addition, there are bilingual dictionaries that provide translations, and picture dictionaries that supply pictures. Bilingual electronic dictionaries exist that will not only provide a translation but pronounce the word and save it for download to a computer later. Using such resources, students can look up a word and find a definition, translation, or picture, and even hear the word pronounced.

To find a word's collocates, teachers can look it up in dictionaries of collocations such as the Dictionary of Selected Collocations (Hill and Lewis), or the Oxford Collocations Dictionary (2002). And this is a very good thing because



we are simply not very good at coming up with a word's collocates off the top of our heads (Fox).

#### **5.4 Explaining Words**

When our focus is on the definition of single words, we commonly do things like provide a picture of a word, bring realia to class to show students the object itself, or mention a synonym, opposite, or superordinate (Gairns and Redman). Or we might explain it by saying, "Best is the superlative of good." We might ask students to learn "word families" like grow, growth, and grower in the hope that this will spur rapid acquisition. (DeCarrico). When our emphasis is on collocation, we immediately encounter some problems with the above practices.

At the end, chapter 1 showed about how many types collocations. This was used to demonstrate the students that lexical collocation was important to be taught or learnt at school. Moreover, as the previous explanation, actually collocation or especially lexical collocation is important to increase students' fluency in not only speaking, but also their listening and reading skills.

## **CHAPTER 2. THE STUDY ON LEARNING COLLOCATIONS AT HAI PHONG MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY.**

### **I. The reality of learning collocations at Hai Phong Management and Technology University**

#### **1. The teaching staff**

All of the teachers in the Department of Foreign Languages at Hai Phong Management and Technology University are not just highly qualified, responsible, and passionate. They also have a professional teaching style, are extremely pleasant, and understand the students. Talking and sharing their experiences with the students assist both professors and students to have a deeper understanding and improve the quality of the lectures. Another important factor is the attendance in English lessons of foreign lecturers. Students have the opportunity to practice with native speakers in order to improve their English skills if they know how to take advantage of these chances.

Through each class, teachers will have different teaching methods. That has created a very high efficiency in learning, helping students easily absorb knowledge and have all the expected learning results. Moreover, outside of class time, lecturers are always ready to listen and answer all questions of students. This has created a sustainable teaching staff, which is a place to put the trust of students, especially the first year students, who are still surprised by a completely new learning environment.

#### **2. The researcher**

I'm a final year student at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology, having gone through a period of not knowing how to start studying effectively, knowing that the first year English majors are also having many concerns like me, so I have made this research to highlight the difficulties of first-year students when learning English collocations and give them some suggested ways to help improve learning English collocations.

#### **3. The students**

A total of 22 first-year English majors have been selected for this study. Some of the evidence is unfortunately showing that many of the students who have just finished high schools are really passive in their learning process. They appear to be used to listening to the lectures and writing down what the teachers

read aloud or copying what is written on the board. Particularly, for English majors, a big number of them are really reluctant their learning English speaking or paragraph writing proven by the fact that they only focus on trying to understand words and grammar structures in the given textbook so they can only write simple sentences and very few can speak English in the class. We know that if students want to improve their grammar and vocabulary, they need to raise their awareness of the importance of learning English collocation.

#### **4. English teaching and learning conditions at Hai Phong Management and Technology University**

The conditions for teaching and learning English for teachers and students are very good with modern facilities for students learning and teaching, each room has a projector, air-conditioner or smart TV suitable for learning besides, clean and spacious classrooms create a learning environment that arouses a passion for learning, especially for first-year English majors at Hai Phong University of Management Technology, who have just entered a new learning environment.

Moreover, teachers frequently hold English competitions to encourage students to demonstrate their talents. Moreover, there are many useful activities such as organizing some small festivals such as Christmas, Valentine's... to play together, exchange knowledge and relax. Sometimes, they have many chances to talk and study with foreigners.

It can be claimed that the study circumstances are enough and convenient for students to efficiently study English. These characteristics have a significant impact on student's grades in general, and first-year English major students in particular. Outside of class time, the teachers are always ready to provide enthusiastic guidance and give the best advice to students, which helps to increase the passion for learning.

## **II. The survey questionnaires.**

The purpose of this part is to introduce the methods used in this study, especially the survey questionnaire.

### **1. Survey research**

One of the most important methods used in survey research. The survey research is defined clearly on the website is “*Survey research is the collection of data attained by asking individuals questions either in person, on paper, by phone or online. Conducting surveys is one form of primary research, which is gathering*

*data first-hand from its source. The information collected may also be accessed subsequently by other parties in secondary research”.*

### **1.1 The stages to conduct a survey.**

In the progress of a survey, the researcher needs to make or specify to determine, steps to progress the survey. These may include four steps consisting of defining participants, organizing survey forms, methods of collecting data, and data analysis.

#### **a. Defining participants**

The first step is to choose participants. They can be a group of people, students, workers who know or work in the field carried out in this survey. And in this survey, the objects are the first-year English major students at Hai Phong Management and Technology University.

#### **b. Organizing survey form**

After deciding on participants for the survey, the researcher needs to organize the survey form and what questions can be used in this survey. It means questionnaire which is the most important part and method of collecting data.

#### **c. Methods of collecting data**

To collect data from the first-year English major students at Hai Phong Management and Technology University, there are some choices including using questionnaires, conducting interviews to observe directly, and recording to find out the difficulties in learning Collocation.

#### **d. Data analysis**

Data analysis is defined as a process of cleaning, transforming, and modeling data to discover useful information for business decision-making. The purpose of data analysis is to extract useful information from data and take the decision based upon the data analysis.

### **1.2 The design of the survey questionnaires**

The questionnaires include 6 questions as follows:

Question 1 gives information on students' English learning time. The author wants to have a further understanding of students' bonding time with English. Based on this understanding, the author can get the right information about them. Question 2 is about the time students spend learning English collocations. By understanding exactly the time students spend on learning English collocations

the author can help them to strengthen their passion for studying English collocations.

Question 3 gets information on the difficulties in learning English collocations, which is a very important information to the study.

Question 4 is about the ways of learning English collocations that students like most. This can bring more specific information and help the researcher understands more about the students.

Question 5 gets information on how students think about the importance of English collocations. The researcher wants to know about students' opinions on this matter.

Question 6 the students' expectation of learning English collocations which can help teachers to satisfy their students' requirements and make them love English collocations more.

## **2. The data analysis**

### **2.1. The result of the student's English learning time**

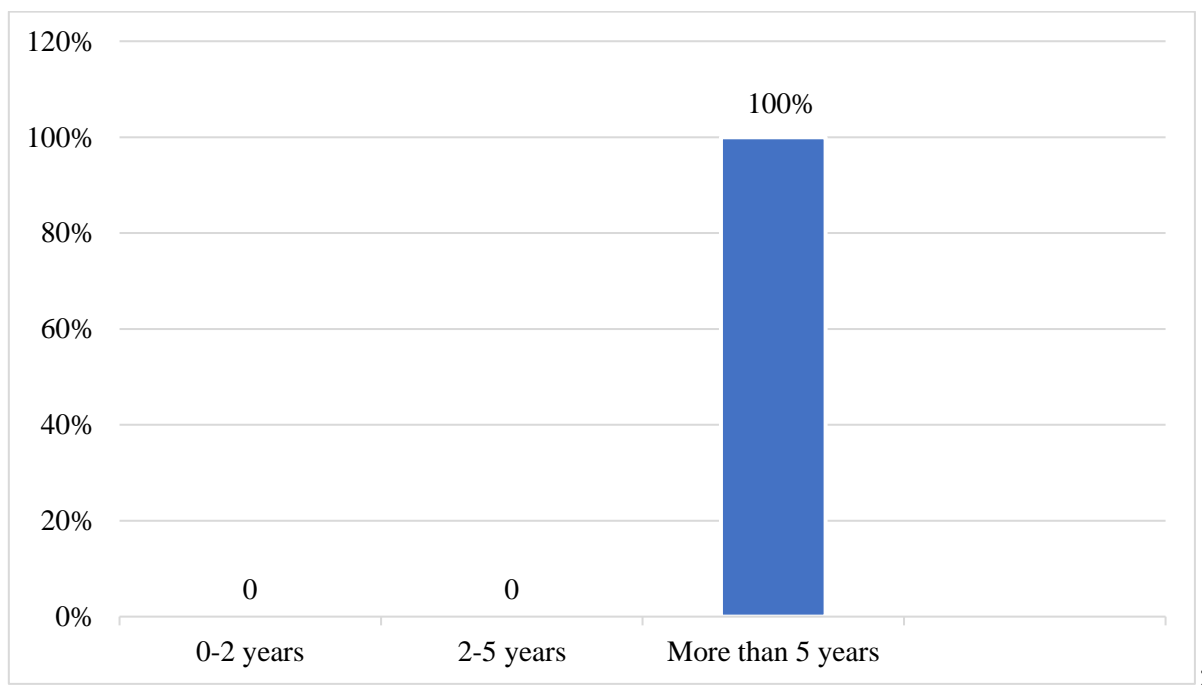


Chart 1: The students' English learning time (Question 1)

Chart 1 shows that 100% of students responded that they had learned English for more than 5 years which is quite a long time for each student and this is proved that learning English has become a great concern for everyone and attracts a great number of students. Moreover, it is a compulsory subject in most schools from primary schools to universities as well. Thus, they are fully aware

of the fact that English is really important and necessary for them.

## 2.2. The result of the time students spend learning English collocations every day.

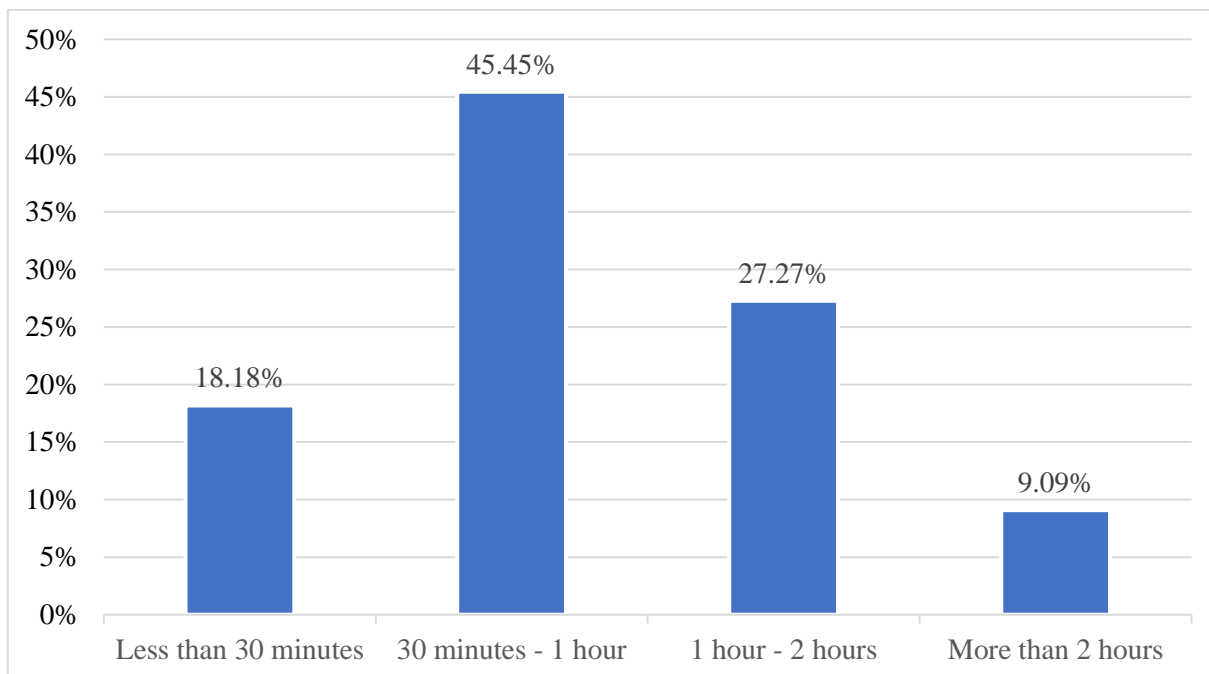


Chart 2: The time students spend learning English collocations every day.  
(Question 2)

The data from Chart 2 are expressed by the time students spend learning English out of class. 45.45% of students learn English collocations for 30 minutes-1 hour, which means they want to know more about English collocations; 27.27% of them spend 1- 2 hours on it, which implies they are very hard-working and want to be good at English collocations; only 18.18% students spend less than 30 minutes learning English and they cannot improve their collocations quickly. In this table, it is easy to find a phenomenon that in this class, very few students (9.09%) devote themselves to English collocations.

### 2.3. The result of the difficulties in learning English collocations.

The difficulties in learning English collocations	Students agreed		Students disagreed	
	Students	Percentage	Students	Percentage
Many types of lexical collocations	20	90.9%	2	9.1%
Difficult to remember “Adjective + Noun”	8	36.36%	14	63.64%
Difficult to remember “Adverb + Adjective”	13	59.1%	9	40.9 %
Difficult to remember collocation “Verb + Noun” eg: collocation with take, make, have, catch...	20	90.9%	2	9.1%
The development of English collocations	4	18.18%	18	81.81%
Negative transfer from the mother tongue	20	90.9%	2	9.1%
Learning method	13	59.1%	9	40.9 %
Other difficulties “Noun + Noun”; ....	11	50%	11	50%

Table 3: The difficulties in learning English collocations. (Question 3)

Table 3 shows that there are many difficulties for students in learning English collocations. According to survey data, 90.9% of students agreed that there are 3 main difficulties in studying collocations as follows: many types of

lexical collocations, collocations with “Verb + Noun” and the negative transfer from the mother tongue. Besides, 59,1% found learning methods and collocations with “Adverb + Adjective” difficult. However, not many of them found the development of English collocations (18,18%) or collocations with “Adjective + Noun” (36,36%) difficult. Moreover, half of the students who participated in the survey agreed that learning collocation causes difficulties due to other difficulties “Noun + Noun”; ....

#### **2.4. The result about the ways of learning English collocations that students like most.**

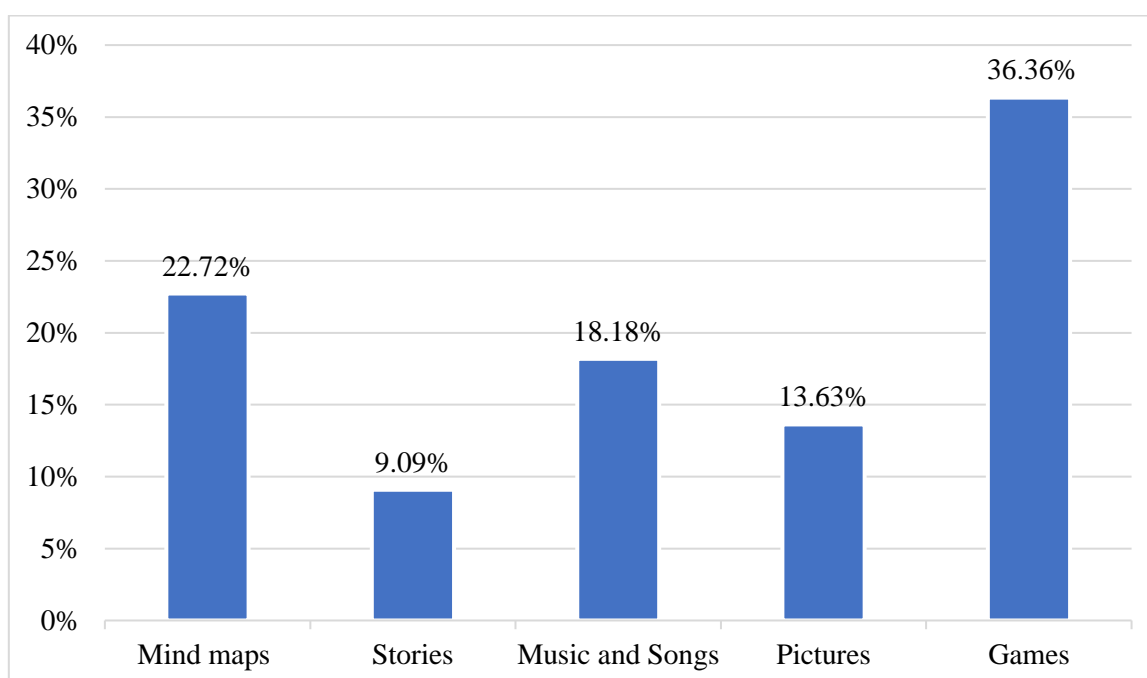


Chart 4: The ways of learning English collocations that students like most.  
(Question 4)

Chart 4 shows that students like all 5 ways of learning collocation. Of all methods, the method is learning collocations through mind maps accounting for 22.72%, this method stimulates the thinking system, and makes it easy for students to remember. In addition, Learning Collocations through Music and Songs accounted for 18.18% of the student’s interest, this method is quite common. Besides, learning collocations through Stories accounts for only 09.09%, this method requires learners to focus and have a passion for reading. The most favorable method is learning collocations through games accounting for 36.36% which shows games are a fun way to practise English, it can be a really motivating



way to learn a language. Games are also great for children who are shy or worried about making mistakes. It can give them an opportunity to communicate in English in a safe and fun way.

## 2.5. The result from students' perceived importance of learning English collocations.

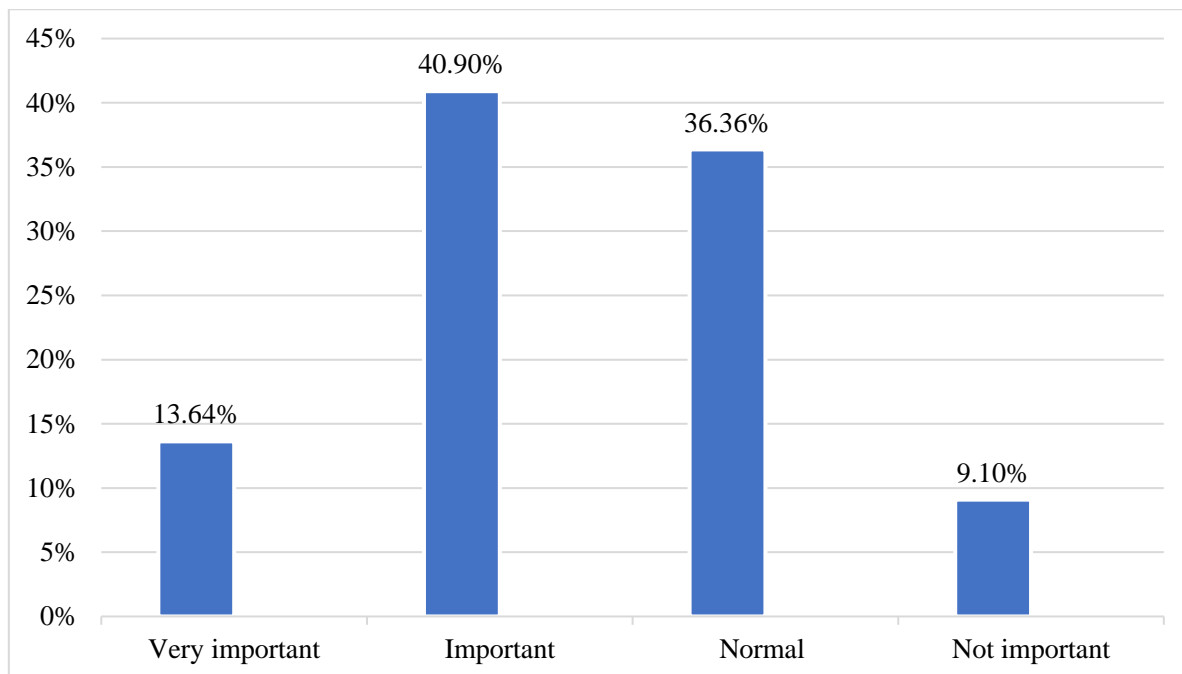


Chart 5: Students' perceived importance of learning English collocations.  
(Question 5)

The information in Chart 5 shows that 40.9% of students think that learning collocation is important, which proves that they are interested in collocation and understand its essentials. Besides, 36.36% think that learning collocation is normal, they don't think that collocation is necessary for studying English. In addition, 9.1% of students think that learning collocation is not important, which shows that students are still indifferent to collocation, leading to low learning outcomes and poor communication.

## 2.6. The result from students' expectations of learning English collocations.

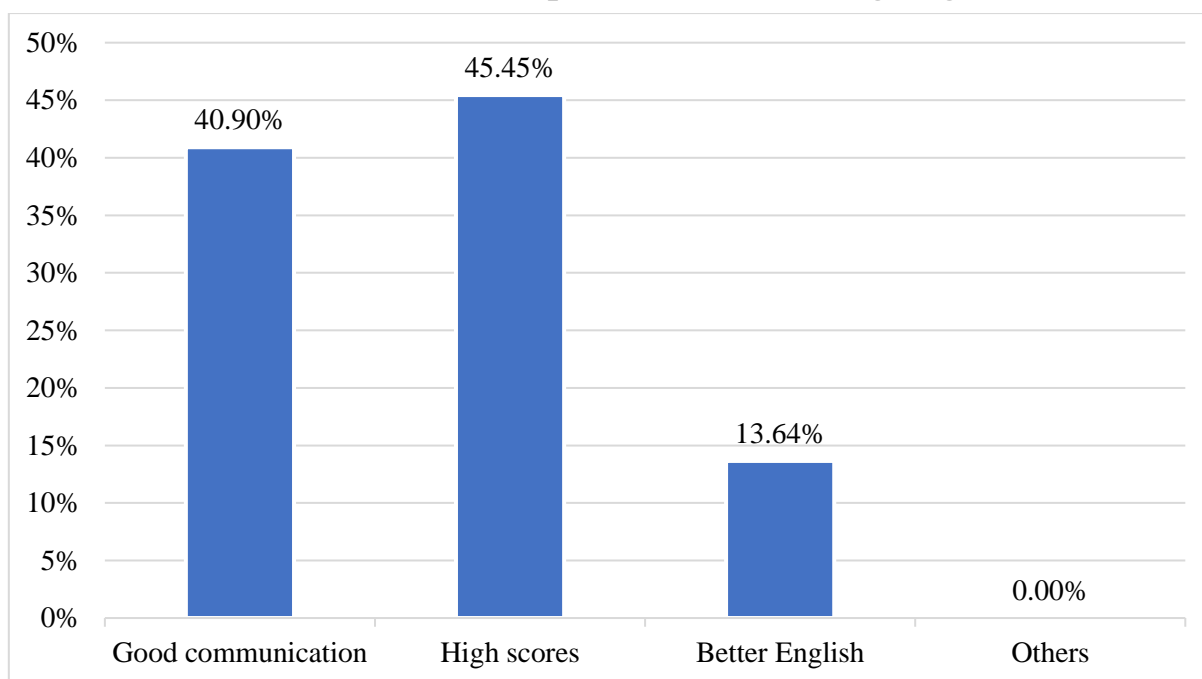


Chart 6: Students' expectations of learning English collocations (Question 6)

Chart 6 shows that the number of students who study collocation mainly for high scores is 45.45%, this shows that they only study English to get good marks, not really love to improve collocations. However, 40.9% of students want to enhance English collocations for good communication and 13.64% of them want to learn English better with the use of collocations.

## 2 Findings and discussions of findings.

As the survey was answered by only 22 students, the result cannot reflect the whole situation of learning English collocations at Hai Phong Management and Technology University. However, it is partially useful for learning collocations.

All of the students (100%) have been learning English for over 5 years. This is an advantage because the time of learning is long enough for the students to attain a certain level of English. Many of them (40.9%) admit the importance and the necessity of learning English collocations. Moreover, they all think that learning English collocations is an essential part of learning English, and learning collocations is an indispensable part of learning a language. This means the students are seriously learning English collocations with a full understanding of their importance and necessity. However, many of them (90,9%) find English collocations difficult, especially since there are various types of collocations, collocations with "Verbs + Nouns", the negative transfer from the mother tongue.

In addition, 59,1% found learning methods and collocations with “Adverb + Adjective” difficult. Besides, studying English collocations through games helps them obtain knowledge more rapidly. The result of the questionnaire shows that when we find out the difficulties of learning collocations, students will have more chances to learn English collocations better.

Chapter 2 focuses on difficulties students often deal with during the time they learn English collocations, the survey in which the objectives of the survey, the subjects, and the methods of the study are studied. Chapter 2 also studies the findings and data analysis, the findings and discussion of the findings, as well as the recommendations for improving students’ learning English collocation.

## **CHAPTER 3: SOME SUGGESTED WAYS TO LEARN COLLOCATIONS FOR THE FIRST-YEAR ENGLISH MAJORS AT HAI PHONG MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY.**

### **1. Learning Collocations through Topics**

#### **1.1 Collocation about sports**

- *Be in good/bad condition*: Nếu một người ở trong trạng thái sức khỏe tốt và cường tráng.

Example: After resting, I was then in good condition and ready to compete again.

- *Keep/stay fit*: Giữ gìn một sức khỏe tốt và lành mạnh thông qua các hoạt động như tập thể thao, ăn uống dinh dưỡng,...

Example: Besides exercising regularly, a sound diet can also help me keep fit.

- *Take up a sport/an exercise*: Bắt đầu tham gia một môn thể thao hay một bài tập thể dục nào đó.

Example: My brother was eager to take up a new sport, so I recommended chess to him.

- *Sports facilities*: Địa điểm nơi một người có thể vận động và chơi/xem thể thao nói chung, bao gồm phòng gym, sân vận động, hồ bơi, phòng bi-da, bowling,...

Example: Having sports facilities in a university campus can benefit students' comprehensive development.

- *Have/suffer from an injury*: Chấn thương.

Example: Kathy has to retire after suffering from that severe ligament injury.

- *A feast for the eyes/ears*: một pha thi đấu đẹp mắt, đã tai.

Example: With the talented instruction of Mr. Park, U23 Vietnam's techniques were totally a feast for the eyes.

- *Performance-enhancing drugs*: Những loại thuốc kích thích.

Example: Athletes using performance-enhancing drugs are believed to have an advantage over their opponents.

- *Fail a drug test*: Sử dụng chất kích thích trong thi đấu

Example: Much as she wanted to join the match, she was banned from competing because of failing the drug test.

- *Break a record/Set a record*: Phá vỡ kỷ lục.

Example: Having reached the speed of 44.72km/h in the 60-80m stretch, Usain Bolt has set the world record of being the fastest runner in the world

- *Neck and neck*: Ngang sức.

Example: The two teams were neck and neck in the final round and drew. Then, a tiebreaker was called in.

( <https://lingoconnector.edu.vn/collocation-chu-de-sports/> )



## 1.2 Collocation about family

- *Immediate family* : Gia đình ruột thịt (gồm bố mẹ và anh chị em của bạn).

Example: There are four people in my immediate family.

- *Extended family* : Gia đình mở rộng (gồm ông, bà, cô, chú, bác).

Example: I see my extended family once a year, during our annual family vacation.

- *Family tree* : Sơ đồ gia đình (gia phả).

Example: My son is making a diagram of our family tree for a school project.

- *Family members* : Các thành viên trong gia đình.

Example: My husband doesn't get along with a few of my family members.

- *Loving family = close-knit family* : Gia đình êm ấm.

Example: I was raised in a very loving family, in which everyone helped each other.

- *Carefree childhood* : Tuổi thơ êm đềm, không phải lo lắng gì cả.

Example: John has a carefree childhood, growing up with happily married parents and three brothers.

- *Troubled childhood* : Tuổi thơ khó khăn (nghèo khó, bị lạm dụng).

Example: Teenagers who had a troubled childhood often have behavior problems in school.

- *Bitter divorce* : Ly thân do vấn đề tình cảm.

Example: After a bitter divorce from his wife of 20 years, the actor married a woman young enough to be his daughter.

- *Messy divorce* : Ly thân, xảy ra tranh chấp tài sản.

Example: My aunt's going through a messy divorce; she's paying a fortune in legal fees.

- *Divorce settlement* : Giải quyết các vấn đề ly hôn.

Example: The divorce settlement awarded the wife \$500,000.

( <https://nativespeaker.vn/hoc-tieng-anh-giao-tiep-collocations-chu-de-Family.html> )



### 1.3 Collocation about health

- *Health inspectors/Health experts*: Chuyên gia về sức khỏe.

Example: We should seek advice from health inspectors as they provide a credible and reliable source of information.

- *Make a speedy recovery*: Hồi phục nhanh.

Example: Patients ought to take sound advice given by health experts to make a speedy recovery.

- *To be addicted to sth*: nghiện cái gì.

Example: More specialist clinics, offering treatment and advice, are required to help people who are addicted to drugs.

- *To carry more potential health risks*: mang tới nhiều rủi ro tiềm tàng về sức khỏe.

Example: Getting pregnant after 35 years of age carries more potential health risks.

- *To cause serious mental health problems*: gây ra những vấn đề sức khỏe tinh thần nghiêm trọng.

Example: Too many hours spent on Facebook may cause serious mental health problems in kids, studies show.

- *To maintain a healthy body*: duy trì một cơ thể khỏe mạnh.

Example: Regular exercise is essential in maintaining a healthy body.

- *To adopt/follow/have/eat a balanced diet*: có một chế độ ăn cân bằng.

Example: People can reduce their risk of chronic diseases by exercising and by adopting/following/having/eating a balanced diet.

( <https://lingoconnector.edu.vn/collocation-chu-de-health-trong-ielts/> )



#### 1.4 Collocation about food

- *A light meal*: bữa ăn nhẹ.

Example: Our light meals and dinner recipes are perfect if you fancy a light lunch or maybe even a quick snack.

- *A heavy meal*: bữa ăn chính.

Example: After a heavy meal, you should take a little more rest than usual.

- *Mashed potatoes*: khoai tây nghiền.

Example: Potatoes are blended with warmed butter and milk to create those perfect, smooth mashed potatoes everyone loves.

- *Take-away*: đồ mang về từ nhà hàng.

Example: More and more take-away coffee brands, both domestic and foreign, have appeared on the market, creating a new tendency of enjoying coffee among the youth.

- *Bread and butter*: điều gì đó cần cho sự sống hay kế sinh nhai.

Example: The voters are worried about bread and butter issues like jobs and taxes.

- *Fish and chips*: thức ăn mang về truyền thống, phổ biến tại anh quốc.

Example: Fish and chips is a hot dish of English origin consisting of fried battered fish and hot chips.

- *Home-cooked food*: đồ ăn nấu ở nhà.

Example: Many families have stopped sitting down for meals together despite the fact home-cooked food offers both social and health benefits.

- *Convenience food = processed food*: thức ăn chế biến sẵn.

Example: It's nice to get a bit of home-cooked food after all that convenience food.

- *Make your mouth water*: làm cho bạn thấy rất đói, thèm ăn.

Example: The smell of that bacon cooking is making my mouth water.

- *Raise one's glasses*: nâng li lên để chúc mừng.

Example: Let's raise our glasses and drink a toast to the happy couple!

( <https://lingoconnector.edu.vn/20-collocation-chu-de-food-va-drinks/> )



## 1.5 Collocation about education

- *Give out homework*: giao bài tập về nhà.

Example: Our teacher always gives out homework before holiday.

- *Deliver a speech/lecture = Make a presentation*: thuyết trình.

Example: We will deliver a speech about how to protect endangered species next Friday.

- *Fall behind with studies*: không theo kịp việc học ở trường.

Example: Anna fell behind with studies in college because she spent most of her time on playing video games.

- *Play truant/truancy*: trốn học.

Example: He was expelled from school because of playing truant regularly.



- *Intensive course*: khóa học chuyên sâu.

Example: She was forced into enrolling in an intensive course about technology.

- *Vocational course*: khóa học nghề.

Example: Instead of going straight to university, she decided to take a vocational course.

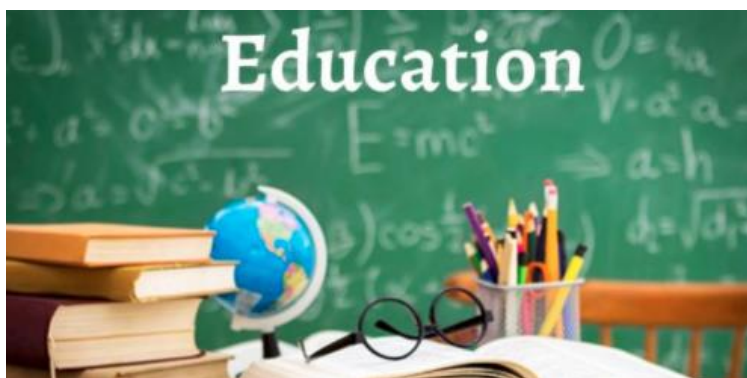
- *Comprehensive education*: giáo dục toàn diện.

Example: Comprehensive education is designed for students of different abilities.

- *Win a scholarship*: dành được học bổng.

Example: She won a scholarship to study at New York University.

( <https://langgo.edu.vn/bo-tui-40-collocation-chu-de-education-sieu-chat-luong-nang-band-ielts> )

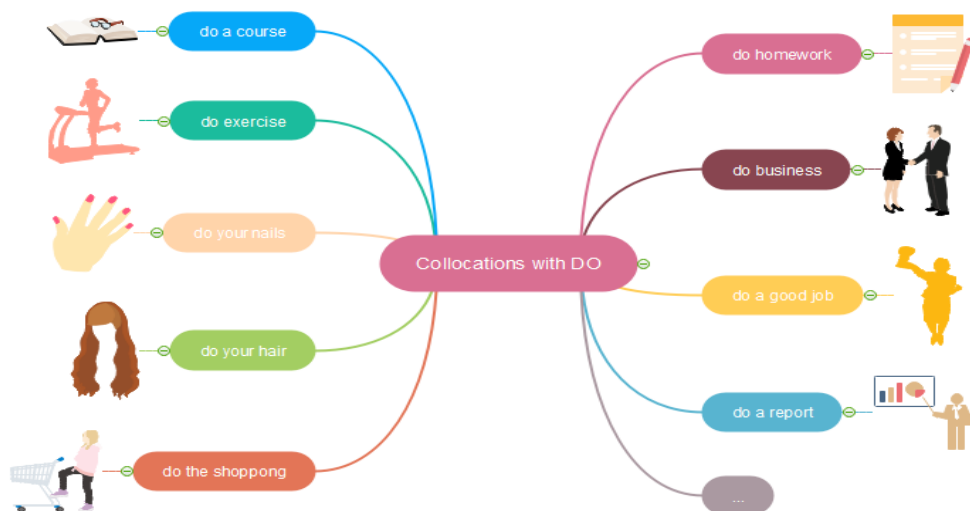


## 2. Learning Collocations through Mind map

Learning Collocation is the source of knowledge. However, it's not always easy to remember words of your mother tongue, not to mention learning vocabulary in a second language. With the help of mind map, you can create maps of word groups in different themes and add new words to corresponding groups at any time. The radiant structure of a mind map suits the way the human brain works in diverging an idea.

Create a vocabulary mind map and allows you to insert images, notes and hyperlinks into a mind map to add detailed information and strengthen visual memory. Definitions, sample sentences, comments, audio and video can be added as attachments to a vocabulary mind map. The following is a mind map of English collocations with "DO", through the map, it's easy to see and remember the

collocations at one glance. Detailed information and more examples can be added to the existing word map at anytime.



Try the best way to make a mind map and check out this tutorial of this powerful mind mapping tool!

### 3. Learning Collocations through Music and songs

When using collocations with “music”, your language will be more natural and more easily understood. You will have alternative and richer ways of expressing yourself. It is easier for our brains to remember and use language in chunks or blocks such as common Collocations with “music” rather than as single words. Be aware of collocations with music , and try to recognize them when you see or hear them. Treat collocations as single blocks of language. When you learn a new word , write down other words that collocate with it. Read as much as possible. Reading is an excellent way to learn vocabulary and collocations of “music” in context and naturally. Practice using new collocations with “music” in context as soon as possible after learning them. Learn collocations with “music” in groups that work for you. You could learn them by topic (time, number, weather, money, family) or by a particular word (take action, take a chance, take an exam), for example:

## Song: High Hopes by *Panic! At the Disco*.

[Chorus]

Had to have high, **high hopes** for a living;  
Shooting for the stars when I couldn't **make a killing**

Didn't have a dime but I always had a vision;  
Always had high, **high hopes**.

Had to have high, **high hopes** for a living  
Didn't know how but I always had a feeling  
I was \*gonna be that **one in a million**; (\*going to)  
Always had high **high hopes**.

[Verse 1]

Mama said "Fulfill the prophecy  
Be something greater  
Go make a legacy  
**Manifest destiny.**"

Black in the days,  
We wanted everything.  
Mama said "Burn your biographies  
Rewrite your history  
Light up your wildest dreams,  
Museum victories."  
Everyday, We wanted everything.



#### 4. Learning Collocations through Stories

The programmed story is entitled: **The Lion Who Wanted to Zoom** by James Thurber.

There was once a lion who would have given everything for an eagle's wings. So he sent a message to the eagle, asking the great bird to come and see the king of beasts. When the eagle landed in front of the lion's den, the latter said, "Let's make a bargain. I give you my mane for your wings." "Keep talking, brother," said the eagle. "Without my wings I could no longer fly." "So what?" said the lion. "I can't fly now, but that does not prevent me from being king of beasts. I became king of beasts on account of 88 my magnificent mane." "All

right,” said the eagle, “but give me your mane first.” The eagle came closer and the lion threw a huge paw at him, pinning him to the ground. “Now give me those wings immediately!” he growled angrily. So the lion took the eagle’s wings but kept his own mane. For a while the eagle was very hopeless and discouraged, but then he had an idea. “I bet you can’t fly off the top of that great rock over there;” said the eagle. “Who, me?” asked the lion, and he walked to the top of the rock and took off. His weight was too great for the eagle’s wings to support him, and besides he did not know how to fly, never having tried it before. So he crashed at the foot of the rock. The eagle hastily climbed down to him and regained his wings and took off the lion’s mane, which he put about his own neck and shoulders. Flying back to the rocky nest where he lived with his mate, he decided to have some fun with her. So, covered with the lion’s mane, he poked his head into the nest and in a deep, awful voice he cried, “Harrroooo!” His mate, who was very nervous anyway, grabbed a pistol from a bureau drawer and shot him dead, thinking he was a lion.



( <http://www.english-on-the-web.de/download/lionzoom.pdf> )

\*Tasks:

First, students were introduced to the terms "story", "fable" and "novel". Then, the difficult words were explained in order to make the story clear. The main focus is to make the learners acquainted with vocabulary and thus all the collocations in the story should be noticed and underlined. After that, the story is interpreted working on the students' writing skills. They are asked to:

- 1: Give the meaning of some words using their own words.
- 2: Give synonyms and opposites of some words.
- 3: Formulate the lion’s trick in their own words.
- 4: Describe why the eagle is mean.
- 5: Write any good commentary on some lines of this story.

-> Answer the question: What does this fable teach us in your opinion?

Consequently, the students will learn how to deal with a story and gain more knowledge of vocabulary through the teaching of collocations. Due to the

length of the story and activities, this lesson was divided into two sessions in order to give enough time for the students to finish the required tasks.

## 5. Learning Collocations through Pictures

Using pictures in the teaching materials makes it easier to understand the meaning of the collocations and the attractiveness of the images helps to motivate students and they can have a clearer understanding of the collocations' meaning. Besides this teaching makes more fun for the students.



## 6. Learning Collocations through Games

An excellent game makes it ever simpler to learn English. Games help to connect the class and to make the classroom interesting and enjoyable. English-speaking is full of challenges for the learner and difficulty in playing games may enable students to learn via blocks so that they can appreciate something that they have found very hard. Whether the class spends quiet games alone or exciting team games.

### 6.1 Game 1: Board Race

Board Race is a fun game that is used for revising vocabulary, whether it be words from the lesson you've just taught or words from a lesson you taught last week. It can also be used at the start of the class to get students active. It is a great way of testing what your students already know about the subject you're about to teach. This is best played with 6 students or more - the more, the better. I've used it in classes ranging from 7-25 years of age and it's worked well in all age groups.

+ Why use it? Revising vocabulary; grammar.

+ Who it's best for: Appropriate for all levels and ages. HOW TO PLAY:



- Split the class into two teams and give each team a colored marker.
- If you have a very large class, it may be better to split the students into teams of 3 or 4.
- Draw a line down the middle of the board and write a topic at the top.
- The students must then write as many words as you require related to the topic in the form of a relay race.
- Each team wins one point for each correct word. Any words that are unreadable or misspelled are not counted.



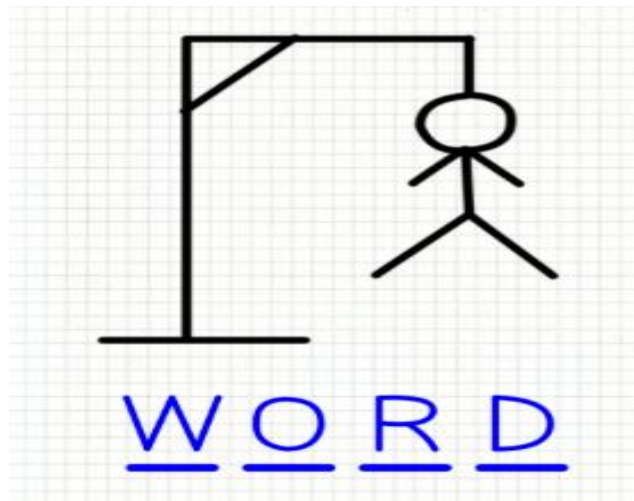
## 6.2 Game 2: Hangman

This traditional game is a favorite for everyone, although it's pretty fast, dull. This game is best utilized for 5 minutes at the beginning, if there is still time, for warming the class up or 5 minutes at the conclusion. It works regardless of how many students there are.

+ Why use it? Warming up / winding down class

+ Who it's best for: Young learners. HOW TO PLAY:

- Think of a word and write the number of letters on the board using dashes to show many letters there are.
- Ask students to suggest a letter. If it appears in the word, write it in all of the correct spaces. If the letter does not appear in the word, write it off to the side and begin drawing the image of a hanging man.
- Continue until the students guess the word correctly (they win) or you complete the diagram (you win).



### 6.3 Game 3: Hot Seat

Hot Seat enables students to develop their vocabulary and fosters classroom rivalry. They may also practice their speech and hearing abilities and can be utilized for any learner level.

+ Why use it? Vocabulary, Speaking and Listening

+ Who it's best for: All ages and levels. HOW TO PLAY:

- Split the class into 2 teams, or more if you have a large class.
- Elect one person from each team to sit in the Hot Seat, facing the classroom with the board behind them.
- Write a word on the board. One of the team members of the student in the hot seat must help the student guess the word by describing it. They have a limited amount of time and cannot say, spell or draw the word.
- Continue until each team member has described a word to the student in the Hot Seat.



#### 6.4 Game 4: Spelling Games

Spelling games help in the teaching, reading and speaking of vocabulary using English. An energetic, dynamic play in the teams is a traditional replay. Start the game with one column for each team dividing the board of the classroom. Write the name of each team over the column and then put a sign or a crack on the board for each team member. A word is stated by the teacher, then the team members take turns and write a letter. The team who completes the word most rapidly and with the right orthography wins the round.



#### 7. Learning Collocations through Oxford Collocations Dictionary

According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries website, the Oxford Collocations Dictionary (2208) is a corpus-based dictionary that indicates which words work together and sound more natural. It helps students learn the most important collocations by choosing the correct combinations appropriate for specific contexts. This dictionary contains 250,000 word combinations, collocations for 9,000 nouns, verbs, and adjectives, and over 75,000 examples. Its corpus is based on the analysis of the Oxford English Corpus, a collection of nearly 2,5 billion words of English that show words which really do go together. The data obtained from the software were looked up in this dictionary in order to check the category of collocations and to confirm that the collocations are of lexical types. Thirteen types of collocations are introduced in the Oxford Collocations Dictionary, which are listed in the following table.



## Collocation types introduced in Oxford Collocations Dictionary (2208)

Entries	Types of combinations	Example
Noun entries	Adjective + Noun Quantifier + Noun Verb + Noun Noun + Verb Noun + Noun Preposition + Noun Noun + Preposition	Bright/intense/strong light A beam/ray of light Cast/give/shed light Light glows/shines A light source By the light of the moon The light from the window
Verb entries	Adverb + Verb Verb + Verb Verb + Preposition	Choose carefully Be free to choose Choose between two things
Adjective entries	Verb + Adjective Adverb + Adjective Adjective + Preposition	Make/keep something safe Perfectl /environmentally safe Safe from attack

*Source: Oxford Collocations Dictionary (2208: ix) 4 .*

## **PART 3. CONCLUSION**

### **1. Conclusion**

According to survey data, there are many difficulties for students in learning English collocation. 90.9% of students admitted that there are 3 main difficulties in studying collocations as follows: many types of lexical collocations, collocations with ‘Verb+ Noun’ and the negative transfer from the mother tongue. Besides, 59,1% found learning methods and collocations with “Adverb + Adjective” difficult. However, not many of them found the development of English collocations (18,18%) or collocations with “Adjective+ Noun” (36,36%) difficult.

The result also shows that 40.9% of students think that learning collocation is important, which proves that they take collocation into consideration and understand its essentials. Besides, 9.1% of students think that learning collocation is not important, so 18.18% students spend less than 30 minutes learning English, which shows that some students are still indifferent to collocation and this leads to low learning outcomes and poor communication.

In addition, 45.45% of students want to enhance English collocations for high scores and 13.64% of them want to learn English better with the use of collocations. Furthermore, the most favorable method for students is learning collocations through games accounting for 36.36% which shows games are a fun way to practice English. It can be a really motivating way to learn a language and makes it easy for students to remember. Learning Collocations through stories accounted for 9.09% of the students' interest.

In conclusion, finding out the difficulties in learning English collocations for first year English major students is very important. After the process of completing this research paper, the researcher hopes that students will overcome the difficulties of learning collocations and make efforts to learn better and love learning English collocations more.

### **2. Limitations and suggestions for further study**

A considerable effort has been made to find out the difficulties in learning English collocations for first year English major students. However, due to limited time and ability, there are a number of related areas which the researcher cannot cover in the study. First, the subjects of the study are only the small number of students. Second, the researcher merely concentrates on the difficulties in learning

English collocation; does not focus on some related skills such as writing and reading. Furthermore, in the English language teaching and learning in general, the above suggested ways of learning collocations are only small parts.

Based on chapter 3, the students should enhance the frequency of using lexical collocation in transactional speaking, not only type one collocation but also they have to use all of the types of lexical collocation because if they know about collocation it can make the easier to speak or express their idea and also they spoken English can be more native-like. The students can also use the technology or using the internet as we are in the modern era which provided with sophisticated technology that facilitate the students to learn about the lexical collocation.

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**APPENDIX 1.1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS**  
**(ENGLISH VERSION)**

Dear students,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out about your attitude towards your current learning English collocation. Its ultimate purpose is to find out the difficulties in your English learning collocations. Please do give your own opinions, frankly!

Please, tick the answer that best describes your ideas and add final comments at the bottom of the sheet if you wish. We need your frank opinions. We thank you for your cooperation!

1. How long have you been studying English?
  - A. 0-2 years
  - B. 2-5 years
  - C. More than 5 years
2. How long do you spend learning English collocation in a day?
  - A. Less than 30 minutes
  - B. 30 minutes- 1 hour
  - C. 1 hour- 2 hours
  - D. More than 2 hours
3. What are the difficulties in learning English collocations?

<b>The difficulties in learning English collocations</b>	<b>Student's opinion</b>	
	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Many types of lexical collocations		
Difficult to remember "Adjective + Noun"		
Difficult to remember "Adverb + Adjective"		

Difficult to remember collocation “Verb + Noun” eg: collocation with take, make, have, catch...		
The development of English collocations		
Negative transfer from the mother tongue		
Learning method		
Other difficulties “Noun + Noun”; ....		

4. What is the way of learning English collocation which you like most?

- A. Learning Collocations through Mind map
- B. Learning Collocations through Stories
- C. Learning Collocations through Music and songs
- D. Learning Collocations through Pictures
- E. Learning Collocations through Games

5. What do you think about the importance of learning English collocation?

- A. Very important
- B. Important
- C. Normal
- D. Not important

6. What do you expect for English collocation learning?

- A. Good communication
- B. High scores
- C. Better English
- D. Others

**Your comments:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

***Thank you for your co-operation!***



## APPENDIX 1.2 : CÂU HỎI KHẢO SÁT (VIETNAMESE VERSION)

Các bạn thân mến,

Hãy điền vào bảng câu hỏi này và gửi lại cho chúng tôi. Chúng tôi cần những ý kiến thẳng thắn của các bạn về việc học các cụm từ để tìm ra các khó khăn trong việc học cụm từ của các bạn, cũng như có thể hiểu hơn về việc học của các bạn. Rất cảm ơn sự hợp tác!

Hãy đánh dấu vào câu trả lời miêu tả đúng nhất ý kiến của bạn và viết thêm một vài bình luận của bạn ở dưới.

1. Bạn học tiếng Anh được bao lâu rồi?
  - A. 0-2 năm
  - B. 2-5 năm
  - C. Hơn 5 năm
2. Bạn dành bao lâu để học cụm từ tiếng Anh trong một ngày?
  - A. Dưới 30 phút
  - B. 30 phút - 1 giờ
  - C. 1 giờ - 2 giờ
  - D. Hơn 2 giờ
3. Những khó khăn khi học cụm từ tiếng Anh là gì?

Những khó khăn khi học cụm từ tiếng Anh	Ý kiến của sinh viên	
	Đồng ý	Không đồng ý
Nhiều loại hình thành các cụm từ		
Khó nhớ các cụm từ hình thành từ "Tính từ + Danh từ"		
Khó nhớ các cụm từ hình thành từ "Trạng từ + tính từ"		

Khó nhớ các cụm từ hình thành từ “Động từ + Danh từ” Ví dụ: cụm từ với take, make, have, catch...		
Sự đa dạng của các cụm từ tiếng Anh		
Sự chuyển giao không chuẩn từ tiếng mẹ đẻ		
Phương pháp học tập		
Khó khăn khác “Danh từ + Danh từ”; ....		

4. Cách học cụm từ tiếng Anh mà bạn thích nhất là gì?

- A. Học các cụm từ thông qua sơ đồ tư duy
- B. Học các cụm từ thông qua các câu chuyện
- C. Học các cụm từ thông qua âm nhạc và bài hát
- D. Học các cụm từ thông qua hình ảnh
- E. Học các cụm từ thông qua trò chơi

5. Bạn nghĩ gì về tầm quan trọng của việc học cụm từ tiếng Anh?

- A. Rất quan trọng
- B. Quan trọng
- C. Bình thường
- D. Không quan trọng

6. Bạn mong đợi điều gì cho việc học cụm từ tiếng Anh?

- A. Giao tiếp tốt
- B. Điểm cao
- C. Tiếng Anh tốt hơn
- D. Những lý do khác

**Ý kiến đóng góp của sinh viên:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Một lần nữa xin chân thành cảm ơn sự hợp tác của các bạn!**