Notes on Collocations in E4PS
(lexical / grammatical / aesthetic collocations)

What is a collocation?

A collocation is two or more words that often go together. These combinations just sound "right" to a native English speaker, who uses them all the time. On the other hand, other combinations may be unnatural and just sound "wrong" – even if the meaning would seem the same.
Compare, for example, the following:

- *fast food* [✓] vs *quick food* [✗]
- *a quick meal* [✓] vs *a fast meal* [✗]
- *unemployment rate* [✓] vs *joblessness rate* [✗]
- *job market* [✓], *labour market* [✓] vs *work market* [✗]
- *goods and services* [✓] vs *services and goods* [✗]
- *supply and demand* [✓] vs *demand and supply* [✗]
- *assets and liabilities* [✓] vs *actives and passives* [✗]
- *credit card* [✓] vs *credit paper* [✗]
- *soft skills* [✓] vs *transversal skills* [✗]

How to learn collocations

- treat collocations as **single blocks of language**, think of them as individual blocks and learn *strongly support*, not "strongly" + "support";
- when you learn a new word, **write down other words that collocate with it** (*remember rightly*, *remember distinctly*, *remember vaguely*, *remember vividly*);
- learn collocations in groups that work for you – e.g., you could learn the **by topic** or **by a particular word**;
- you can find information on collocations (often in bold) in any good **dictionary** – both monolingual and bilingual – as well as on www.wordreference.com;
- you can also find specialised dictionaries of collocations, such as the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* (2001), the *MacMillan Collocations Dictionary* (2010) and www.ozdic.com

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Types of collocations

There are several different types of collocations made from combinations of items from the various word-classes – being they lexical or grammatical.

LEXICAL COLLOCATIONS

- **adv** + **adj** ➡ *extremely low*
- **adj** + **n** ➡ *Political Science*; *developing countries*
- **n** + **n** ➡ *stock exchange; unemployment rate; travel agency*
- **n** + **v** ➡ The US *Congress approved* the tax-cutting package.
- **v** + **n** ➡ They *entered politics* in the hope of changing society.
- **v** + **adv** ➡ *to increase dramatically*

GRAMMATICAL COLLOCATIONS

- **v** + **preposition** ➡ *to apply **for**; to depend **on**; to focus **on**; to deal **with**; to result **in**; to result **from**; to listen **to**; to be composed **of**; to be made **up of**; to participate **in**; to be associated **with***
- **adj** + **preposition** ➡ *interested **in**; dependent **on**; independent **from**; consistent **with***
- **linking expressions** ➡ *according **to** / **in** accordance **with** / **on** the basis **of**/based **on**; as well as; as well; such as; due **to** / because **of**; **in** order **to**; so far; **in** compliance **with**; **in** addition; **in** addition **to***

N.B.: Metaphors and metonymies, as well as phrases containing sound repetition, such as alliteration or paronomasia, are referred to as **AESTHETIC COLLOCATIONS**:

- *white collars*
- *fat cat*
- *to make a mistake*
- *to face the facts*

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