

ColloCaid: a text editor that helps writers with academic English Collocations

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Dictionaries have seen dramatic improvements over the past decades. Paper dictionaries focussing primarily on language comprehension have evolved into portable electronic devices that can also help to improve language production. Writers wishing to find out what word combinations are appropriate in the context of their emerging texts will find collocation dictionaries and resources like corpora particularly useful. These references provide information on words that are conventionally used together, like *increase IN demand*, *DEVELOP a system*, *SUBSTANTIAL improvements*, *SUCCESSFULLY achieve* or *PURELY practical*. However, research has shown that writers do not consult dictionaries or corpora as often as they should. This may be due to a combination of factors, including: not being aware of collocation problems (Laufer 2011; Frankenberg-Garcia 2014); not knowing that there are resources that can help with collocations (Frankenberg-Garcia 2011); and not wanting to interrupt their writing to look up collocations (Yoon 2016). This can result in less idiomatic writing and errors, and in the overuse of certain collocations or the underuse of others. As discussed in Frankenberg-Garcia (2018), people may also abandon what they originally intended to put down in writing if unable to find suitable words.

Our solution to the problem is to bring collocation prompts to a text editor, so that writers can gain lexical assistance as and when required. I begin this presentation with an overview of how pedagogical dictionaries have evolved, and of some of the obstacles in the way of getting writers to become better users of today's highly sophisticated lexicographic tools and resources. Next, I present the [ColloCaid](#)ⁱ project (Frankenberg-Garcia et al. 2019; Frankenberg-Garcia 2018; Lew et al. 2018), whose aim is to support users of academic English with collocations from within a text editor. I explain the rationale underlying our lexicographic coverage and visualisation decisions, introduce our initial prototype, and describe the next steps of our research.

At the end of the presentation, seminar participants will be invited to self-assess their ability to recall academic collocations, after which they will be given the opportunity to try out a beta version of ColloCaid on their own devices.ⁱⁱ

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ⁱⁱ No software installation required, but please bring a laptop with a wireless connection for online access to ColloCaid.

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BIONOTE

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