



## **The Problematique of Collocations in the Papers of Albanian Students of German language**

**Dardane BOJAXHI**

University „UkshinHoti” Prizren, [dardanebojaxhiu@hotmail.com](mailto:dardanebojaxhiu@hotmail.com)

### **ABSTRACT**

Collocations, as typical, specific, and characteristic combinations of two words, which may not always have a semantic explanation (Hausmann 1985:118), as well as other connections of words in the language of science, are considered to be an enormous source of mistakes in writing. In this paper, the objects of study are students' papers in the German language as a foreign language, where the level of mistakes is great. Judging and improving of written formulations is an important principle, proven methodologically. Regarding the standard of German language, i.e. interdisciplinary elements of German scientific diversity, this principle has not yet been properly used. The big importance and potential of this principle in the scientific language research also shows that the type of task "judging/improving of students' papers" in the learning text and the book of exercises by Graefen and Moll is of great importance. Based on this principle, the seminar papers of Albanian students of German language for language correctness were studied and analyzed. In this paper I will try to present the results of this analysis

**Keywords:** Collocations, German, Albanian, foreign language, mistakes

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the beginning, I'd like to present briefly the situation of German as a foreign language, in order to create an accurate impression on this problematique. According to Ehlich (die

fundamentalen sprachlichen Mittel derer sich die meisten Wissenschaften gleich oder ähnlich bedienen, die allgemeinen Kategorien wie `Ursache`, `Wirkung`, `Folge`, `Folge`, `Konsequenz, aber auch der spezifisch System derbrase, wissenschaftlic etwa der Konjunktionen und der komplexeren Syntax gemacht wird.) scientific language will be understood as everyday scientific language. It belongs to it: the basic linguistic tools that most sciences, general categories such as "cause", "effect", "consequence", but also specific scientific use, such as that of the system of connectors and more complex syntax, they use in it the same way or similarly. (Ehlich, 1993: 33). Therefore, everyday academic language will be understood as a language without any special feature. Consequently, in my opinion, a clear distinction is needed between everyday scientific language and academic language. Unlike academic language, everyday scientific language uses an inventory of lexical material that is also mostly used in everyday language.

Although, there are already several individual studies, Fandrych and Graefen (2010) rightly complain about insufficient data regarding the status of research in the German scientific language. There are several papers on written scientific communication (Scientific articles, Seminar papers) (compare Graefen; Thielmann 2007, Stezano Cotelo 2008), but relatively little research has been done on oral scientific communication (lectures, reports) (e.g. Grütz 2002, Schneider; Ylönen 2008).

German as a foreign academic language presents particular problems, although “autochthonous speakers often encounter language problems that are similar with mistakes and deviations from norms by foreign students” (Graefen 2009: 263). For German speakers as a foreign language, the foreign academic language presents a particular challenge. To thematize German as a foreign academic language, Graefen (2001) proposed a University course for entry into the language of science. From such courses came the book and the book of exercises Graefen and Moll (2011), this book is very useful in German language courses. (Kispal 2013). The section of the book of exercises is based on authentic texts, including many seminar papers. Even Jaworska (2011) also protects the potential of the linguistic corpus when creating exercises to promote German as a foreign language of science.

## **1.2 Collocations In Scientific Language**

Less or more, fixed word combinations play an important role in the language of science. Recently, their connection has been themed in various fields.

Wallner (2010) analyzes the significant specific linguistic differences between the use of scientific language and the language of press (newspapers, magazines) of verb-noun collocations in the core DWDS corpus ([www.dwds.de](http://www.dwds.de)) and seeks a specific scientific lexicographic codification of collocations.

Petkova-Kessanlis (2010) research the collocations of technical language, but the research also deals with the components and general linguistic meanings and also with the partial aspects of everyday scientific language. They classify the most commonly used collocations during conversations according to the components or meanings of the technical and common language and consequently define three groups:

- 1) Technical terms and common verbs with a technical meaning (ein Handlungsmuster realisieren)
- 2) Technical terms and common verbs with a common linguistic meaning (jemandem das Rederecht entziehen)
- 3) Common words and technical verbs (eine Beziehung konstituieren) or adjective-noun collocations with a terminological status (kataphorischer Verweis).

Graefen (2004) names the collocations "supplementary", to which he pays great importance. However, the word "supplementary" has not been used as a term in the research of phraseology or in research on the language of science. These connections of words are called in the scientific literature as additions, collocations, or idioms. According to Fandrych and Graefen (2010:513) it is the same category only with different names: "unter statistischem Gesichtspunkt ... um Kollokationen, lexikogrammatisch um Fügungen, lexikographisch betrachtet um idiomatisierte Sprechweisen" (from a statistical point of view ... that lexicogrammatical additions, and lexicographically treated-idiomatic way of speaking). However, it would be more logical to use only one term and to evoke this problem. The naming of the same object, alternated with the terms collocation and idiom is problematic from a phraseological point of view. The traditional study of phraseology considers collocations as idiomatic non-phraseology or as mild idiomatic phraseology (Burger 2010). Helbig (2006) also defines collocations as fixed combinations of words, non-idiomatic, analyzable, and resolvable.

Recently the word idiom has often been used by Feilke for idiomatic tendencies. According to Feilke (1998), idiomatic tendency is a condition for selective and combined choice. Graefen

(2004) also acknowledges this understanding of idioms. Collocations are indeed one of the prototypical forms of realizing idiomatic tendencies.

For this paper the term collocation will be used in a broader sense and this will also include polylexic grammatical structures.

### **1.3 Collocations In The Papers Of Albanian Students Of German Language**

When they write papers during workshops, students must deal with the language of science and also with the scientific supplements of language (Graefen 2009: 266).

In the beginning of studies of German language as a foreign language, Albanian students must have level A2 and then until the end of their studies they have to reach the level C1, respectively C2, when it comes to scientific language.

In this sense, knowledge of German language may correspond to the low limit of expectations regarding the improvement of the language of science. Bachelor students, of course, must be able to read scientific literature and understand lectures. During their studies, they must achieve the ability to write scientific texts and present papers

## **2. METHOD**

The object of this paper is the use of collocations in the seminar papers of Albanian students of German as a foreign language. 5 seminar papers of students were taken, written in the winter semester 2019/2020 at the University "Ukshin Hoti" in Prizren, in different fields. So, the objective is to classify the collocations used in these seminar papers and analyze them based on the misuse. In recent years, almost none of the student who have grown up in Germany and speak German as their mother tongue, so there is always a problem for students who learn this language in the use of scientific language and through the use of collocations. Through this paper, at least with a few examples, this problem will be presented

### **2.1 Analysis of Papers**

The analysis of collocations in the seminar papers will be done in the following steps:

1. Inventory of collocations of seminar papers
2. Classification of collocations in seminar papers
3. Analysis of mistakes

## 2.2. Inventory of Collocations of Seminar Papers

Since the students' papers were printed, finding the collocations had to be done manually. The collocations will be understood in a broader sense and will be presented mainly in selected predicate forms. Therefore, not only the traditional double combinations will be treated of Hausmannsbasis+collocator (e.g. Schlussfolgergerungen ziehen / Hausmann 2004), but also verbs with data on valence (es wird besonders darauf eingegangen), connections with more than two lexical components will be treated (wurde in Betracht gezogen) and fixed grammatical structures will also be treated (in dieser Arbeit handelt es sich um ...) (Hausmann 2004 also points out that collocations can have a three-component structure and in the traditional aspect in this case can be called as partial idioms). The research and analysis of monolexic adverbs (folgendermaßen, anschließend) in scientific language will not be done in this paper. However, their alternative use in the form of polylexic structures (im Folgenden, im Anschluß) will be considered. Individual verbal words (untersuchen) will also not be considered, while their alternative polylexic formulations (eine Untersuchung durchführen) are important for this paper. 56 collocations were found in 5 seminar papers taken for analysis.

## 3. FINDINGS

### 3.1 Classification of Collocations of Seminar Papers

The classification of collocations will be done according to the list proposed by Graefen; Moll (2011). They make the grouping in this form: (1) Explanation of terms and definition; (2) Thematization, commenting and separation; (3) Question, problem and the like; (4) Relationships and references in the text; (5) Argumentation, arguments; (6) Approach and comparison. These six groups of linguistic forms form the basis for classifying collocations in the seminar papers analyzed.

The vast majority of collocations are of group (2) thematization, commenting, and separation. This is justified by their presence in the main part of the seminar papers.

In the smallest number are collocations of the group (1) (3) (5) explanation of terms, problem solving and argumentation. To a very small extent, collocations of the group (4) (6) refer to the text references and approach.

From a total of 56 collocations, only 7 can be called wrong. The small number of incorrectly used collocations suggests that the seminar papers had been from the best students.

#### 4. RESULTS, DISCUSSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

##### *Analysis of Mistakes*

Not only wrong grammatical structures will be analyzed, but also deviations that are inappropriate in scientific texts (e.g. *einen Vergleich aufstellen* instead of *eininen Vergleich anstellen*) (Graefen 2001: 195). Eichler (2004) categorizes mistakes in the use of collocations and divides them into groups: race change, wrong choice of speech, or pollution of collocation. These are the results of a study conducted with German-speaking students. However, non-German speakers also encounter these mistakes.

Mistakes encountered in the seminar papers of Albanian students of German language as a foreign language are divided into the following categories: 1) collocator, 2) valence, 3) node, 4) sayings / expressions. The following is a brief analysis of the mistakes.

##### *The Wrong Collocator*

- a) Meine Arbeit wird aus zwei Hauptkapiteln stehen
- b) Ich habe eine Darstellung gemacht
- c) Ich werde diese Untersuchung schaffen

Example a) - the wrong use of the verb *stehen* instead of *bestehen* may have been done because of the formal similarity of the two words. While in example b) we encounter the most popular but wrong use of collocator *machen*. We also relate this to the misuse of the verb *schaffen* in example c).

##### *Mistakes in Valence*

- d) ... das vierte Zitat geht es darum ...

According to this example, we can easily see that students confuse the expressions *gehe es um etw.*, *irgendwo handelt es sich um etw.* and *etw. handelt von etw.*

##### *Wrong use of the article*

- e) .... würde die Rahmen der Arbeit ...

The correct use of the expression should be *den Rahmen der Arbeit*.

*Wrong use of saying/expression*

f) die meisten Studenten sind in der Meinung

g) in zweiter Reihe

In the example f) the use of preposition *in* is unnecessary, while in example g) the wrong choice of word is made, instead of the word *Linie* is chosen *Reihe*.

Collocations are a source of mistakes for both German-speaking and foreign students. According to this short research we can conclude that Albanian students of German as a foreign language make typical mistakes in the use of collocations in scientific writings, but it can be said that they can write quite well and are confident in their writing and word selection. Most mistakes have been found in the group where the wrong collocator was used, while with fewer mistakes found are the groups with mistakes in valence and articles.

Four areas for mistakes classification can be specified: a wrong collocator is selected, the valence is not correct, it is used incorrectly or without the need for article, and when a statement/ expression is not properly understood. In many cases mistakes occur due to native language interference.

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