

A Pragma-Lexical Collocational Analysis of Omicron Variant Outbreak in ‘The Washington Post’ and ‘The New York Times’

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Abstract:

In corpus linguistics, the concept of collocations is an attractive phenomenon. It inverts the linguistic, stylistic and cultural significance of a text. Collocations represent a key constituent of the lexicon of natural languages. They have been examined in great details over the last two decades. Their significance is perhaps farther-reaching than previously thought. Collocations play a pivotal role in the language: they are regarded to be the mechanism that gives cohesion or textuality to the text. Moreover, they are a fundamental regulating unit in the terminology of any language. Collocations endow the language with natural sounding speech and writing.

This paper is a two-part study. The first part represents the theoretical background which illustrates the concept of collocations, its origin and history, classifications of collocations, collocations and colligations, and the boundaries between collocations, idioms, proverbs and phrasal verbs. The second part manifests the practical investigation which involves the statistical analysis of collocations used in two American papers: ‘The Washington Post’ and ‘The New York Times’. The Analysis is based on Tanskanen’s (2006) three-fold classification of collocations.

Keywords: Collocations, Lexical Collocations, Collocability, Omicron, ‘The Washington Post’, ‘The New York Times’, and Tanskanen’s classification.

تحليل تداولي معجمي للمتلازمات اللفظية لتفشي متغير أوميكرون في 'واشنطن بوست' و 'نيويورك تايمز'

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المستخلص: في اللغويات النصوية، يعتبر مفهوم المتلازمات اللفظية ظاهرة جذابة. تعكس المتلازمات اللفظية الأهمية اللغوية والأسلوبية والثقافية للنص. فهي تمثل مكوناً رئيسياً في قاموس اللغات الطبيعية. بُحِثت المتلازمات اللفظية بتفاصيل كبيرة على مدى العقدين الماضيين. ربما تكون أهميتها أبعد مما كان يعتقد سابقاً. تلعب المتلازمات اللفظية دوراً محورياً في اللغة: فهي تعتبر الآلية التي تعطي التماسك أو النصية للنص. علاوة على ذلك، فهي وحدة تنظيمية أساسية في مصطلحات أي لغة. تضيف المتلازمات اللفظية على اللغة صوتاً طبيعياً للكلام والكتابة.

هذا البحث عبارة عن دراسة من جزأين. يمثل الجزء الأول الخلفية النظرية التي توضح مفهوم المتلازمات اللفظية وأصلها وتاريخها وتصنيفاتها المتلازمات اللفظية والتضامات والحدود بين الاصطلاحات والتعبير والأمثال والأفعال الاصطلاحية. يُظهر الجزء الثاني الجانب العملي الذي يتضمن التحليل الإحصائي للمتلازمات اللفظية المستخدمة في صحيفتين أمريكيتين: 'واشنطن بوست' و 'نيويورك تايمز'. يعتمد التحليل على تصنيف تانسكانين (٢٠٠٦) ثلاثي الجوانب للمتلازمات اللفظية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المتلازمات اللفظية و المتلازمات اللفظية المعجمية و التلازم اللفظي و أوميكرون و 'واشنطن بوست' و 'نيويورك تايمز' و تصنيف تانسكانين.

1. Introduction

All languages universally acknowledge that words often co-occur with other word(s), producing larger units known as **collocations**. However, these co-occurrences are not always freely combined nor individually analysable. Collocations pertain to how words characteristically occur together. In English, for example, *strong* goes with *tea* or *coffee*, but not with *cake*. Someone should say *weak tea*, but not **feeble tea*, despite the fact that *weak* and *feeble* are synonymous. In other words, according to Lewis (1997: 8), a collocation is “*the readily observable phenomenon whereby certain words co-occur in natural text with greater than random frequency*”. In this context, a collocation is a combination of two or more words that always occur together systematically in various contexts of a particular language. Virtually, ‘collocations’ is a term used to describe the possibility of occurrence of largely two or more words in lexical or syntactic relations. Collocations are thus vital in a number of ways, one of which is the lexical contribution that they provide. Words are further analysed in terms of neighboring/surrounding words that show how they behave in context. These co-occurrences or ‘collocates’ are studied in terms of looking at patterns, two words at a time.

2. Theoretical Background

This part of the study presents the definition of collocations and its origin and history. It also reviews a number of sections related to collocations.

2.1. The Origin and History of Collocations

The use of the word collocation has varied a great deal since it was first borrowed into English around the sixteenth century (Barnbrook et al., 2013: 3). It is believed that J. R. Firth is the first scholar who focuses on the study of words collocability. According to Gelbukh and Kolesnikova (2013: 22), Firth

introduces the term **collocation** from Latin *collocatio* which means ‘bringing together, grouping’.

According to Barnbrook et al. (2013: 4-6), texts dealing specifically with vocabulary first appeared in English around the middle of the fifteenth century, with monolingual dictionaries. Many of the earlier examples of these dictionaries dealt with new words recently borrowed into English, and could provide evidence of the status and meaning of words at this time. Dictionaries and similar texts produced from 1450 to 1702 in the *Lexicon of Early Modern English* contains occurrences of specific words, and a search was made using the string ‘**collocat**’ so as to find any occurrences of *collocate*, *collocates*, *collocating*, *collocation*, etc. The earlier dictionaries including this string, published between 1538 and 1587, were bilingual dictionaries of English and Latin, and contained a variant of the Latin form *collocatus*. One of these dictionaries was that of *Bullokar’s*, published in 1616:

Collocation. A placing together.

From the beginning of the eighteenth century onwards, most monolingual dictionaries produced in English dealt comprehensively with both hard and simple words. For instance, the 1755 *Johnson’s Dictionary* had a very similar definition to *Bullokar’s*:

Collocation. A placing or setting in order.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) which was published between 1884 and 1928, the word *collocation* first appeared in English in various forms around the beginning of the sixteenth century. It provided a first quotation from 1513 of the verb form, *collocate*. In the OED, the noun form *collocation* is:

Collocation. The action of setting in a place or position, frequently applied to the arrangement of words in a sentence, of sounds, etc.

Barnbrook et al. (2013: 7) also mention that **collocations** were borrowed into English from Latin in response to pressures created, among other things, by the huge amount of translation from classical texts during the period. In some cases, words were borrowed because new concepts needed new terms.

2.2. Defining Collocations

Firth (1957: 196) asserts that ‘**collocations**’ “*is an abstraction at the syntagmatic level and is not directly concerned with the conceptual or idea approach to the meaning of words*”. For example, one meaning of **night** is its collocability with **dark**. He (1957: 181) defines **collocations** as orders of mutual expectancy, statements of habitual or customary co-occurrences of lexical units. In this sense, a word’s collocation is not to be regarded as mere juxtaposition. Palmer (1968: 6; 1981: 94) believes that the meaning of a word depends on other words which co-occur with it, i.e. a word and the company it keeps. Likewise, Crystal (2008: 86) mentions that **collocations** are the habitual co-occurrences of individual lexical items.

Cruse (2006: 27), stresses that ‘**collocations**’ is a term in linguistics used to refer to any co-occurrence of more than one word that, without oddness, go together to form grammatically well-formed sequence of words such as **excellent** which goes together with **performance** to form the normal sequence **excellent performance**. For Matthews (2003: 530), ‘**collocations**’ means a relation within a syntactic unit between specific lexical parts; e.g. **drunk** with **lord** in *as drunk as a lord*; **run** with **riot** in *run riot*. Further in this regard, Meyer (2009: 223) defines **collocations** as words that generally happen along. For instance, the sentence *I strongly agree* composes two words, **strongly** and **agree**, that commonly co-occur in this context. Other words might obviously

follow strongly, but are much less likely to do so than agree and other words, like *disagree* or *dislike*, expressing opinions.

According to Van Roey (1990 as cited in Gelbukh and Kolesnikova, 2013: 23), '**collocations**' is a linguistic phenomenon whereby a given vocabulary item prefers the company of another item rather than its 'synonyms' because of constraints which are not on the level of syntax or conceptual meaning but on that of usage.

Carter (1998: 51) argues that a **collocation** is the frequent normal co-occurrence of words that go habitually together. This view is known as the '**frequency-based approach**' which dates back to Firth. However, Nesselhauf (2004: 11) stresses that a **collocation** can be seen as a word-combination, one that is fixed to some degree but not thoroughly. This view is known as the '**phraseological approach**' which has been adopted by scholars of lexicography and pedagogy such as Cowie and Sinclair.

In sum, several definitions of collocations have been mentioned in this paper. However, there are still many others given by different scholars and linguists which illustrate or agree on that a collocation is the co-occurrence of two or more words which are normally fit together and they are, in a way or another, distinguished from other vocabulary units such as idioms, phrasal verbs, proverbs...etc.

2.3. Collocations, Idioms, Proverbs and Phrasal Verbs

An idiom and a collocation are often seen as similar, even overlapping, terms. Hence, whether something regarded as idiomatic or not is not decided by a single factor; most linguists recognise at least two factors – its position on a spectrum with 'fixed' or 'invariant' and 'variable' as its end points, and a second spectrum ranged between semantic 'opacity' and 'transparency'. Idioms focus mainly on the meaning of the whole, while

collocations are specifically concerned with combinations of words which do or do not occur (Lewis, 2000: 130).

An idiom is a frozen expression which is relatively fixed and allows little or no change. It is often metaphorical such as *He put the cat among the pigeons; Don't count your chickens*. A collocation is a predictable combination of words. Collocations can be easy that they hardly worth marking upon such as *a big flat, a nice car*. Some 'strong' collocations have the status of idioms since they are not guessable and non-generative such as *shrug your shoulders*. Collocations and idioms share an important rule, both are inseparable from their grammatical context. In one sense, all collocations are idiomatic and all idioms and phrasal verbs are collocations – predictable combinations of different kinds (Hill, 2000: 50-52).

According to Benson et al. (1986: 253), proverbs or sometimes known as sayings are more frozen expressions than idioms. Their meaning, however, can be little or nearly literal such as *an apple a day keeps the doctor away*. The substantial difference between idioms and proverbs is that proverbs convey folk wisdom or an alleged general truth. Such as *he who hesitates is lost*. Thus, while proverbs are complete sentences, idioms often represent parts of sentences.

Phrasal verbs are combinations of verbs and particles such as *make up, put the light out*. Their meaning may or may not be evident from the individual words (Hill, 2000: 51). Grains and Redman (1986: 33-34) agree with Hill in that phrasal verbs retain the meaning of their individual verbs and particles. However, the meaning of other phrasal verbs cannot be deduced from an understanding of the constituent parts such as *take in* (deceive/cheat someone). In addition, many phrasal verbs have more than one meaning such as *pick up*, meaning

(lift/acquire/collect, etc.). An important thing is that phrasal verbs are different from prepositional verbs in that they can be separable. Someone using a phrasal verb can say *take off your hat* or *take your hat off* or *take it off*, but not *take off it*. In the case of prepositional verbs, someone can say *look after the children* or *look after them*, but not *look the children after* or *look them after*.

2.4. Classifications of Collocations

Collocations can be classified in many ways depending on different perspectives of different scholars/linguists. Hill classifies them according to their strength. Meanwhile, Benson et al., for instance, classify collocations according to the arrangement of the parts of speech. There are also classifications based on the context in which collocations are employed within.

Hill hierarchically describes collocations according to their strength. He (2000: 63-64) offers the following taxonomy of collocations:

1. **Unique collocations:** Some words are impossible to collocate with other words. The fixedness of these words is what makes them unique such as *he shrugs his shoulders*, but not other parts of our anatomy. The uniqueness of the verb *foot* as in *foot the bill*, but not *foot the invoice* or *foot the coffee*.
2. **Strong collocations:** A large number of collocations are not unique, but strong or very strong such as *trenchant criticism* and *rancid butter*. This does not mean that other things cannot be trenchant or rancid. Such strong collocations are not unique, but it is clear that any knowledge of the words *trenchant* or *rancid* would be seriously incomplete without some knowledge of these strong collocations. In other words, strong collocations are

where the link between two words is quite restricted or fixed.

3. **Weak collocations:** There are words that can collocate with many other words i.e. not strong enough to succeed or be effective. For example, many things can be *long* or *short*, *cheap* or *expensive*, *good* or *bad*. Combinations such as *blue shirt*, *red car*, etc. can be made.
4. **Medium-strength collocations:** These are words that go together with a greater frequency than weak collocations. The context in which these collocations are used is significant. This type makes up a large part of what we say or write. For example, students of intermediate level know the words *hold* and *conversations*, *make* and *mistake*, but have not stored *hold a conversation* and *make a mistake* in their mental lexicon as a single item. This type of collocations is of prime importance in expanding the learners' mental lexicon.

Benson et al (2010: xix) classify collocations into grammatical and lexical. **Grammatical collocations** are phrases involving a dominant word (noun, adjective, verb) and a preposition or grammatical structure such as an infinitive or clause. In this respect, they describe eight major types of grammatical collocations. These are designated by G1, G2, G3, etc.... and are illustrated in table (1):

Table (1): Benson's et al. Classification of Grammatical Collocations

<i>No.</i>	<i>Grammatical Collocations</i>	<i>Examples</i>
G1	Noun and preposition	Blockade against, apathy towards
G2	Noun and to infinitive	They made an attempt to do it.
G3	Noun and <i>that</i> clause	He took an oath <i>that</i> he would

		do...
G4	Preposition and noun	By accident, in agony, at anchor
G5	Adjective and preposition	Angry at, fond of, hungry for
G6	Predicate Adj. and to infinitive	It was stupid to, it was necessary to
G7	Adjective and <i>that</i> clause	She was afraid <i>that</i> she would fail...
G8	Consists of 19 English verbs	He sent the book to his brother. Send: dative movement transformation

Lexical collocations, on the other hand, normally do not include prepositions, infinitives or clause. They consist of nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs (Benson et al. 2010: xxxi). They describe lexical collocations into seven types. These are designated by L1, L2, L3, etc.... as shown in the following table:

Table (2): Benson's et al. Classification of Lexical Collocations

<i>No.</i>	<i>Lexical Collocations</i>	<i>Examples</i>
L1	Verb and noun	Set an alarm, compose music
L2	Verb (eradication or nullification) and noun	Ease tension, repeal a law
L3	Adjective and noun	Reckless abandon, a crushing defeat
L4	Noun and verb	Bees sting, adjectives modify
L5	Noun and noun	A pack of dogs, a bouquet of flowers
L6	Adverb and adjectives	Strictly accurate, hopelessly addicted
L7	Verb and adverb	Appreciate sincerely, affect deeply

Tanskanen (2006: 61) classifies collocations into a three-fold system. This system has its basis within Halliday and Hasan's (1976) definition of collocations in which they say that collocations are "associations achieved by habitually co-occurring lexical items". These items occur in similar environments as they describe things or happenings that occur in similar situations.

The first category of Tanskanen's classification (2006: 61) is the **ordered set collocations**. This category is the most obvious among the other categories. It consists of members of ordered sets of lexical items such as month, days of the week, numbers, colours and so on. Such collocations are easy to find in texts because they are relatively clear. However, they seem to be quite infrequent. Examples of ordered set collocations are *today*, *tomorrow* and *yesterday* in sentence (1), *February*, *April* and *the end of May* in sentence (2) and *Tuesday* and *Friday night* in sentence (3):

- (1) There are only three days in one's life, *yesterday*, *today* and *tomorrow*.
- (2) Our tour starts in *February*, runs through till *April* and ends at the end of *May*.
- (3) **A:** We go on *Tuesday*?
B: Yes. And we will be back on *Friday night*.

The second category of Tanskanen's classification (2006: 61-62) is the **activity-related collocations**. This category of collocations is somehow problematic since it does not follow particular rules. Instead, it is based on an association between items. As the name points to, activity-related collocations describe whatever relations are there between items based on an activity. Therefore, to identify such items, it is helpful to think of the

relationship as resulted from such a relation, for instance, the relation between *meals* and *eat*:

- (4). . .it means of course that they will have the utmost difficulty in paying for their *meals* in the refectories and that means that the refectories go into deficit if they can't afford to *eat* here. . .

The final category is the **elaborative collocations**. Tanskanen (2006: 62-63) asserts that this category is meant to involve all those pairs whose relation is regarded as impossible to define more specifically than stating that the items can somehow elaborate or expand on the same topic. She also stresses that the relation between the items is not totally random. That is to say, it is with the elaborative collocations that the frame concept is reintroduced. In this way, "*frames are knowledge structures evoked by lexical items.*" This denotes that if a text starts with a word like **sport**, means the frame is **sport** and all the following items are recognised according to this frame. It can be noticed that *Cambridge*, in sentence (5), evokes the university frame, and the *Mill Lane lecture room* can be interpreted in the light of this frame:

- (5). . . at the beginning of the Michaelmas term 1955, Sylvia's first year at *Cambridge*. I had walked into the *Mill Lane lecture room* a few minutes early. . .

2.5. Collocations and Colligations

According to Hoey (2000: 234-235), **colligation** is defined as the grammatical company a word keeps and the positions it prefers; in other words, a word's colligations indicate what it typically does grammatically. In this sense, while 'collocations' is the habitual co-occurrence of two or more lexical units that together have a stand as a single semantic unit, 'colligations' is the

co-occurrence of words that are syntactically connected. Typical examples of colligation are terms of employment such as *carpenter*, *accountant*, and *actress*. The word *carpenter* has a higher likelihood of occurring with an indefinite article or in a parenthesis (*Mr Morland, a carpenter from...*), the word *accountant* is much more likely to occur with a classifier (*a wages accountant*), and the word *actress* is more likely to occur in apposition (*actress Debra Winger*).

Lewis (2000: 137) mentions that ‘**collocations**’ is the way one word co-occurs with another word, ‘**colligations**’ is the way one word regularly co-occurs with a particular (grammar) pattern, so, for example, some verbs perfectly occur with a particular tense, or a noun may be perfectly preceded by a personal pronoun, rather than an article (*pass my/your driving test, It’s my/your/our responsibility to... but I’ll take the responsibility for...*). He adds, it is generally accepted that language does not involve a few, ‘big’ structures with slots which are filled with individual words. The whole grammar/vocabulary dichotomy is invalid. All language lies on a fixed-variable dichotomy, and there are many different degrees of fixedness and, parallelly, different degrees of generalisation are possible. Thus, ‘**colligations**’ generalises beyond the level of individual collocations, so *a bunch of grapes/bananas/flowers* are three split collocations, but the last one can be generalised to any kind of flowers such as *a bunch of roses/daffodils, etc.....*

In the words of Crystal (2008: 86), ‘**colligations**’ is a set of words on the basis of their similarity in entering into syntagmatic grammatical relations. A set of verbs that take a specific kind of compliment construction, would be said to be in colligation with that construction. Verbs such as *agree, choose, manage*, etc.

colligate with to+infinitive constructions, but not with *-ing* forms as in *I agree to go* versus **I agree going*.

3. Data Analysis

In this part of the study, collocational expressions are identified in frequencies, percentages and indications in the two selected texts. A number of examples have been chosen for the analysis. Also, this part provides the discussion of the available data.

3.1. Analysis of Collocations in ‘The Washington Post’ (Henceforth TWP)

TWP paper includes, according to Tanskanen’s classification, all types of collocations: ordered set collocations, activity-related collocations, and elaborative collocations.

3.1.1. Ordered Set Collocations

This is the first type in Tanskanen’s classification of collocations. It involves members of ordered set lexical items that point to, for instance, colours, numbers, months, days of the week and the like. Some examples found in the text are:

- (1) *After emerging in **November**, the omicron variant spread rapidly across the globe because of mutations that allowed it to evade....*
- (2) *Those who recently had covid-19 may alternatively show documentation that they tested positive no more than **90 days** before departure – and have recovered.*
- (3) *The first confirmed case in the United States was reported in California on **December 1**, and within weeks, it had been detected in all 50 states.*
- (4) *One recent study showed omicron-fighting antibodies persisted for **four months** after a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.*

With regards to the starting point of emergence of the omicron variant in ‘**November**’, TWP in sentence (1) announces that the virus spreads because of certain new developed mutations. This allows the virus to expand its range and evade some of the immunity that has been produced through vaccinations and prior infections. In sentence (2), it has been given that anyone who wishes to depart a state or travel abroad, should have been recovered from the virus if s/he has held it earlier, and that should be proven by a document. That document should show that the holding person has the virus 90 days or more before her/his departure. In this sentence, the ‘**90 days**’ time period signifies the ordered set collocation. ‘**December 1**’ in sentence (3), refers to the ordered set of time period which refers to the first case ever confirmed of omicron variant in the United States, California. Starting from then, the virus has expanded to all other states. In sentence (4), TWP declares that the omicron version has improved its capability. In a recent study, it can persist for four months after taking a third dose of the widely used vaccine in the United States which is Pfizer-BioNTech. The ‘**four months**’ period of time indicates the ordered set collocation. Table (3) illustrates the ordered set collocations available in the text:

Table (3): Ordered Set Collocations in The Washington Post

Months	Numbers	Periods of Time	Years
December (6)	50 states	Next month	2020 (2)
March (5)	700,000 cases	Days later	
November (3)	75,000 cases	Five months (2)	
February	30 genetic changes	One day before	

	Two fronts	90 days	
	12 and older	Within days	
	18 and older	Seven-day daily average	
	17 million people	Two months	
	97 million people	Four months	
	217 million people		
15	10	9	2

3.1.2. Activity-Related Collocations

The second type of Tanskanen's classification of collocations is the activity-related collocations. This type is somehow difficult to notice. It is related to activities in terms of particular associations between items such as **driving-the same car**, **cyphers-decode**, **meals-eat**, etc. Some examples extracted from the text are:

- (5) *Now, a subvariant called BA.2, which has many mutations not seen in omicron, is **posing** a new **threat** and counting for swiftly **growing** share of **cases** in the United States.*
- (6) *The United States **imposed restrictions** on travelers from Botswana, Eswatini, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe.*
- (7) *In the event that vaccines lose some of their punch, vaccine makers say they could also **adjust** their **formulas** relatively quickly to target omicron.*
- (8) *Studies have suggested that in many cases, omicron has **caused** less severe **disease** than previous variants – and may even be more likely to **lead to** asymptomatic **infections**.*

According to TWP in (5), a new subvariant of omicron called BA.2 has been spotted which has several new developed mutations that the old version does not have. This virus causes troubles and hits many new cases. In this sentence, ‘**posing**’ collocates with ‘**threat**’ and ‘**growing**’ collocates with ‘**cases**’ which form activity related collocations. In their new policy to face the virus, the United States in sentence (6) has announced new restrictions on travelers, particularly people who come from Africa. The activity related collocation is ‘**imposed restrictions**’ where ‘**imposed**’ collocates with ‘**restrictions**’. Due to the virus’s developed mutations in (7), vaccine makers are highly sensitive to developing vaccines that are relatively effective against the virus. This can be achieved by adjusting their ‘**formulas**’ to the new mutations of the virus. ‘**Adjust**’ collocates with ‘**formulas**’ making an activity related collocation. In sentence (8), omicron, as new studies have realised, causes less severe disease in comparison with the previous versions. Its symptoms are barely recognisable. In this sentence, ‘**caused**’ collocates with ‘**disease**’ and ‘**lead to**’ collocates with ‘**infections**’, forming activity related collocations. Table (4) displays the activity related collocations used in TWP:

Table (4): Activity Related Collocations in The Washington Post

General	Disease/Virus/Medicine/Health
Across the globe	Get a booster (2)
Posing a new threat	Growing share of cases
Show a steady rise	Updated its mask guidelines
Analyzing more current data	Makes people sicker
Raised the alarm	Detected a worrying variant

Circulating throughout communities	Reviewed genetic sequencing data
Allows it to gain entry	Confirmed case
Appear to have been right	Surpassed the delta-driven summer surge
Neutralize the target	Binds to human cells
Focused on two fronts	Make omicron more transmissible
Began curbing fights	Targeting spike proteins
Imposed restrictions	Analyze biomedical information
Inbound international travelers	Become more transmissible
Show documentation	Caused less severe disease
Creates a risk	Lead to asymptomatic infections
Expanded its recommendation	Recommend getting a testing center
Increase protection	Waiting for care
Elude a great deal of the protection	Wear masks
Keep the respect	Wear a mask
Announced contrasting findings	Wash hands
	Get tested
	Recommended masking
	Received a booster shot
	Showed omicron-fighting antibodies
	Adjust their formulas
	Pointed to the need to vaccine
	Undergo many genetic changes
	Causes milder cases

	Causes less severe illness
	Prevent severe illness
	Began a monoclonal antibody treatment
20	32

3.1.3. Elaborative Collocations

The final type of collocations according to Tanskanen's classification is the elaborative collocation. This type represents the relation between items in the sense that an item elaborates on the other. This relation is not random, rather it is identified within a particular frame. Some examples available in the text are:

(9) *It is distinct from other variants in another crucial way:*

There is a greater number of mutations. Omicron has more than 30 genetic changes in the spike protein, the part of the virus that binds to human cells and allows it to gain entry.

(10) *The international response initially focused on two fronts: travel restrictions and encouraging more people to get vaccinated.*

(11) *“I think vaccine equity is a really important issue,” said Linda Bauld, a professor of public health at the University of Edinburgh. She noted the low vaccination rates in many African countries and the fact that high prevalence of the virus means it can undergo many genetic changes each time it jumps between individuals.*

(12) *Current data indicates that the omicron variant causes milder cases of covid-19 than the delta variant — but scientists warn it can still be dangerous,*

especially to vulnerable populations, such as those who are not vaccinated.

In sentence (9), the omicron variant is elaborated to have 30 genetic changes in the spike protein making it distinct from other the variants of coronavirus. These distinctions enable omicron's rapid and easy access to human cells. The second part is an elaboration to the first part which says that omicron is distinct from the other variants, and is seen as an elaborative collocation. In sentence (10), restrictions have been imposed on travelers, along with vaccination campaigns urging people to get vaccinated. These are the two fronts that the international response focuses on, making an elaborative collocation. In sentence (11), Linda Bauld realises that the fewer people who receive the vaccine, the greater the difficulty. Hence, this enhances the virus' ability to spread, making it more powerful. More significantly, the virus can improve itself, producing many new genetic changes each time it catches a new victim. What professor Linda notes is an elaboration to her first thinking that the vaccine equity is really an important issue, producing an elaborative collocation. In sentence (12), in their elaboration to how omicron is different from the other variants, scientists warn that omicron can still be dangerous and should be taken in close consideration and observation despite the fact that it is less severe from the previous versions of coronavirus, particularly to vulnerable people. Those scientists' elaboration on the difference between omicron and the previous variants is seen as an elaborative collocation. Table (5) shows the elaborative collocations used in TWP text:

Table (5): Elaborative Collocations in The Washington Post

<p>After emerging in November, the omicron variant spread rapidly across the globe because of mutations that allowed it to evade some of the immunity produced by vaccinations and previous infections.</p>
<p>Now, a subvariant called BA.2, which has many mutations not seen in omicron, is posing a new threat and accounting for a swiftly growing share of cases in the United States, as it propels sharp case increases in Europe and Asia.</p>
<p>Preliminary research suggests BA.2 is at least 30 percent more transmissible than omicron.</p>
<p>Although BA.2 has been described as a “subvariant” of omicron, scientists point out it is quite different — as different from omicron as the delta variant is from the alpha variant, said Jeremy Luban, a virologist at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.</p>
<p>Omicron was first reported in late November, but its exact origin is still unknown. Scientists in South Africa confirmed on Nov. 25 that they had detected a worrying variant. Days later, other nations including the Netherlands said they had reviewed genetic sequencing data and found that the variant was already circulating within their borders at the same time as when South Africa raised the alarm. The World Health Organization soon listed it as a “variant of concern.”</p>
<p>The first confirmed case in the United States was reported in California on Dec. 1, and within weeks, it had been detected in all 50 states.</p>
<p>Omicron’s genetic profile is unique compared with other circulating variants, meaning it represents a new lineage of the virus.</p>

It is distinct from other variants in another crucial way: There is a greater number of mutations. Omicron has more than 30 genetic changes in the spike protein, the part of the virus that binds to human cells and allows it to gain entry.

Scientists were worried that those mutations would make omicron more transmissible, even among those with a natural or vaccine-acquired immune response — and they appear to have been right. Antibodies defeat the virus by targeting spike proteins, but changes that alter the structure can prevent them from binding as they usually do to neutralize the target.

Studies have suggested that in many cases, omicron has caused less severe disease than previous variants — and may even be more likely to lead to asymptomatic infections. But because it is so contagious, the large number of infections could still result in a sizable number of severe cases, some experts have said.

The international response initially focused on two fronts: travel restrictions and encouraging more people to get vaccinated.

Health experts recommend getting tested at a testing center, even pharmacies and local health departments — but not emergency departments.

U.S. public health authorities have also re-upped efforts to get shots into arms, including boosters for those who have already been fully vaccinated.

And despite the recent relaxation of mask recommendations, federal health authorities still recommend that everyone age 2 and older wear a mask in indoor public spaces in areas where the covid-19 community level is high. In addition, the CDC said people should avoid crowds and poorly ventilated areas, wash hands frequently, and, when needed, get tested and isolate to protect others.

Several studies have shown the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna

vaccines remained highly effective at preventing the worst outcomes from omicron infections even as protection against mild illness waned.

In the first in-depth laboratory study on omicron, scientists in South Africa found that omicron was able to elude a great deal of the protection provided by disease-fighting antibodies. But the study, a preprint that has not yet been peer-reviewed, also said that previous infection followed by vaccination or a booster shot was likely to “confer protection from severe disease in Omicron infection,” suggesting boosters could be important.

One recent study showed omicron-fighting antibodies persisted for four months after a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, suggesting that a fourth shot may not be immediately necessary.

And a similar study found that the Moderna booster remained effective against the variant in laboratory tests for at least six months.

Given the spread of omicron in South Africa, several experts have pointed to the need to vaccinate underserved countries to bolster the world’s protection from future, more-evasive variants.

“I think vaccine equity is a really important issue,” said Linda Bauld, a professor of public health at the University of Edinburgh. She noted the low vaccination rates in many African countries and the fact that high prevalence of the virus means it can undergo many genetic changes each time it jumps between individuals.

Current data indicates that the omicron variant causes milder cases of covid-19 than the delta variant — but scientists warn it can still be dangerous, especially to vulnerable populations, such as those who are not vaccinated.

A major private study by Discovery Health, South Africa’s largest health insurer, published in December, found omicron appears to cause less severe illness than earlier coronavirus variants but is

more resistant to the two-dose Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine widely.

Regeneron Pharmaceuticals said in a news release that data confirms its therapy, REGEN-COV, has “diminished potency” against omicron but remains useful against the delta variant, which is still the dominant strain in the U.S.

At the same time, AstraZeneca said a lab study of Evusheld, its coronavirus antibody cocktail, found that the treatment “retained neutralizing activity” against omicron.

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3.2. Analysis of Collocations in ‘The New York Times’ (Henceforth NYT)

NYT paper also includes all types of collocations: ordered set collocations, activity-related collocations, and elaborative collocations.

3.2.1. Ordered Set Collocations

In this is type of collocations, we are looking for specific members of ordered set lexical items that show an indication to colours, numbers, days of the week, months, years and the like. Some examples available in the text are:

(13) *The subvariants have been detected in more than 40 countries and in more than 30 states across the United States, Dr. St. George said.*

(14) *The CDC extended the federal transportation of mask requirement for two weeks on Wednesday, five days before it was set to expire. The mask mandate now expires May 3, if it is not extended yet again.*

(15) *Before the pandemic, Auckland International Airport was a major hub, with more than 21 million passengers*

passing through in the financial year 2019, according to the airport.

(16) *New Zealand's national airline added an additional **96 flights**, for a total of **20,000 seats**, between Australia and New Zealand from **April** until **June**.*

In sentence (13), Doctor St. George declares that the new variant, omicron and its two subvariants (BA.2.12.1 and BA.2.12.2.) are widening their range. In addition to the United States, they are available in a great number of countries around the world. The number which are '**40 countries**' and '**30 states**' are regarded as ordered set collocations. In example (40), the requirement of mask mandate has been extended due to the rise in positive cases. It has extended on '**Wednesday**' for new '**two weeks**' before **five days** of its expiration. The new date of the mandate is valid to '**May 3**'. All expressions in bold are seen as ordered set collocations. In sentence (15), Auckland International Airport, before the pandemic struck in 2019, used to be crowded with flights in and out with almost 22 million passengers. Both expressions '**21 million passengers**' and '**2019**' are identified as ordered set collocations. Talking about travelling and flight, sentence (16) expresses that more flights, '**96 flight**' in particular, have been added between Australia and New Zealand, a total of '**20,000 seats**' between '**April**' until '**June**'. All bold expressions are ordered set collocations. The ordered set collocations detected in the text are given in Table (6):

Table (6): Ordered Set Collocations in The New York Times

Months	Numbers	Periods of Time	Years
February (4)	31,000 new cases (2)	Wednesday (8)	2020 (4)
March (3)	Two countries (2)	Two weeks (7)	2019
April (2)	400 million cases (2)	Tuesday (3)	2022
May (2)	30 states	90 days (2)	2021
June (2)	Two subvariants	Few weeks (2)	1958
January (2)	One in five cases	Last years (2)	
September (2)	1000 organizations	Two months (2)	
October	Two countries	Past week (2)	
Mid-July	21 million passengers	Few months	
July	96 flights	In recent days	
	20,000 seats	In recent months	
	300 million cases	Two years	
	40 countries	Early weeks	
	Half a billion	Monday	
	7.9 billion population	Three years	
	100 times	Five days	
	1.1 million cases	In the spring	
	3,800 death cases	Three-year Great Famine	
	5.1 billion people	This year	
	1.7 billion booster shots		
	Tens of millions		

	Hundreds of millions		
	373 million people		
	45 Chinese cities		
	5,000 international students		
20	28	39	8

3.2.2. Activity-Related Collocations

Activity related collocations denote specific terms of particular associations between items such as driving-the same car, cyphers-decode, meals-eat, etc. Some examples found in the text are:

- (17) *The Omicron subvariant known as BA.2, has **become the dominant form** among new U.S. cases.*
- (18) *Public health experts say the emergency declaration has **offered a lifeline** to people who might otherwise have lost health coverage.*
- (19) *In the United States, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention **issued new guidelines** in late February suggesting that most Americans could stop **wearing masks** and no longer needed to **maintain social distance or avoid crowded indoor spaces**.*
- (20) *Instead, Beijing has insisted on following the same playbook it has used since 2020, which **relies on mass testing, quarantine and lockdowns** that have **disturbed hundreds of millions of people's lives**.*

The new subvariant of omicron, in sentence (17), dominates the majority of the United States, according to the recorded daily cases. The association between ‘**become**’ and ‘**dominant**’ forms an activity related collocation. Accordingly, in sentence (18), the

emergency plans of wearing masks, keeping social distances and washing hands regularly has saved many lives. ‘Offered’ is associated with ‘lifeline’, forming an activity related collocation. In sentence (19), The CDC ‘issued’ new ‘guideline’ how to act in the current phase of life with omicron. It has announced that ‘stop wearing masks’, ‘maintain social distance’ and ‘avoid crowded indoor spaces’ are no longer necessary. All these bold expressions are regarded as activity related collocations where ‘issued’ collocates with ‘guidelines’, ‘wearing’ collocates with ‘masks’, ‘maintain’ collocates with ‘social distance’ and ‘avoid’ collocates with ‘crowded indoor spaces’. In sentence (20), China’s procedures during the omicron dominance are the same as those followed in 2020, including testing, quarantine, and lockdowns. ‘Relies’ collocates with ‘mass testing’, ‘quarantine’ and ‘lockdowns’, and ‘disturbed’ collocates with ‘people’s lives’. Table (7) includes all the activity related collocations used in the text:

Table (7): Activity Related Collocations in The New York Times

General	Disease/Virus/Medicine/Health
Stepped up those efforts	Causes severe disease
Use that information	Remove mask mandates
Allowing the emergency declaration	Maintain a range of health benefits
Approached the peak	Offered a lifeline
Allowed people	Enroll in Medicare Advantage plans
Stay in the program	Kept people from health consequences
Researched and written about the effects	Access care

Live in a state	Maintained.... Coronavirus restrictions
Remains in effect	Relaxed some... pandemic restrictions
Take the risk	Ramped up testing
Live in rural areas	Increase vaccination and testing
Lost access	Stop wearing masks
Allowed hospitals	Maintain social distance
Faced crushing financial pressures	Avoid crowded indoor spaces
Reunited with families and friends	Receive at least one dose
Arrived at airports	Focus on managing the virus
Reopened its borders	Relies on mass testing, quarantine and lockdown
Permitted travel	Disturbed hundreds of people's live
Established quarantine-free travel	Reported more coronavirus deaths
Stalk the world	
Called for Efforts	
Remained higher in Europe	
Avoid the consequences	
Choose not for other reasons	
Issued new guidelines	
Go back to normal life	
Escape an outbreak	
Reporting food shortage	
Mobilized the nation	
Destroyed crops	
Banged pots and bans	

Lit firecrackers	
Waved flags	
Ate harmful insects	
Ruined crops	
Starved to death	
End up hurting	
Ignored scientists' opposition	
Ignoring experts' recommendations	
Abandon its costly-zero strategy	
Complained about the city's response	
Operate at full capacity and patrons	
Depends heavily on tourism	
Began easing restrictions	
44	20

3.2.3. Elaborative Collocations

This type signifies the relation between items in the sense that an item elaborates on the other. However, this relation is not random, rather it is identified within a particular frame. Some examples extracted from the text are:

- (21) “It’s just a **reminder** that **we’re not out of the woods with regard to this virus, and people should continue to take precautions and to get fully vaccinated if they haven’t completed their course,**” said Kirsten St. George, a virologist for the state who led the work.

(22) The **decision** to extend the emergency was expected, public health experts said, **even though top federal health officials have said the nation is now in a favorable position, with fewer people hospitalized for Covid-19 lately than at any time since the early weeks of the pandemic.**

(23) At Auckland International Airport, Justine Kanapu told the national broadcaster Radio New Zealand that **she was waiting to see her mother** — who was traveling from the Australian city of Perth — for the first time in almost three years. **“We have missed out on a lot: my parents’ 60th birthdays, some funerals, some real special moments and some real sad moments,” she said. “So I can’t wait to see my Mum.”**

(24) The **coronavirus is continuing to stalk the world** at an astonishing clip, racing past a grim succession of pandemic milestones in 2022: **totals of 300 million known cases around the world by early January, 400 million by early February and, as of Tuesday, half a billion.**

In sentence (21), Dr. St. George elaborates on a reminder he gives on the seriousness of omicron, stating that people should continue acting carefully and that unvaccinated people should get vaccinated. He also urges people who have not completed their course to get fully vaccinated as soon as possible. This elaboration to his reminder is seen as an elaborative collocation. In their response to the extension of the emergency plan in sentence (22), public health experts elaborate that it was expected despite the fewer hospitalised individuals in comparison with previous times or at the time when the virus first hit. Their elaboration on the

emergency plan extension is an elaborative collocation. In sentence (23), a woman named Justine Kanapu elaborates on the hard days she has lost seeing her people, especially her mother. As a result of the pandemic, she has lost many special moments of birthdays, funerals, etc. She is now eager to see her mother as she is waiting for her at Auckland International Airport. The elaboration she gives on the waiting and the missing of moments is an elaborative collocation. In sentence (24), the elaboration on the continuation of coronavirus and the million cases it has inflicted is an elaborative collocation. Table (8) includes all the elaborative collocations used in the text:

Table (8): Elaborative Collocations in The New York Times

Two new versions of Omicron, the coronavirus variant that has swept through the world in the past few months, are circulating in New York State and may be responsible for rising infections in the region over the past few weeks, state health officials announced on Wednesday.
The two subvariants appear to spread rapidly, with a growth advantage of about 25 percent over BA.2, which itself was more contagious than any variant that came before it. But it's unclear whether the subvariants spread more quickly because of greater contagiousness or an improved ability to sidestep the body's immune defenses. One of the new subvariants has a mutation that has been shown to help dodge immunity.
"It's just a reminder that we're not out of the woods with regard to this virus, and people should continue to take precautions and to get fully vaccinated if they haven't completed their course," said Kirsten St. George, a virologist for the state who led the work.
The number of cases so far may seem to be insignificant

compared with the steep Omicron peak of the winter, but “we’re essentially back at levels of case rates back to the Delta wave,” said Eli Rosenberg, deputy director for science at the New York State Department of Health. “This would have been a very significant wave already by last year’s standards.”

Despite great pressure from airlines, the hospitality industry and Republican lawmakers to lift the rule requiring masks on planes and other public transportation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention extended the federal transportation mask requirement for two weeks on Wednesday, five days before it was set to expire. The mask mandate now expires May 3, if it is not extended yet again.

Dr. Ashish K. Jha, the new White House Covid response coordinator, said in an interview that the additional time will allow the C.D.C. to assess whether BA.2, a subvariant of the coronavirus, is going to become a “ripple or a wave” in the United States. The C.D.C. will use that information to determine whether the mandate should be extended further, he said.

“If the infection numbers are relatively low, as they are right now, then I think it’s reasonable to remove mask mandates,” he said, emphasizing that it’s a C.D.C. decision.

It’s not yet clear how severe the impact of these cases will be, Dr. Jha said, noting that BA.2 has caused far more hospitalizations and deaths in the United Kingdom than it has in Israel, two countries where it appeared earlier than in the United States and where it spread widely.

In one of the most recent letters, dated April 8, Airlines for America, an industry group representing eight airlines; the U.S. Travel Association, a trade group representing more than 1,000 public and private organizations catering to business and leisure travelers; the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the nation’s largest

business lobbying group; and the American Hotel and Lodging Association, which represents thousands of hotels, sent a letter to Dr. Jha, arguing that what they see as unnecessary measures were hurting the country economically.

The decision to extend the emergency was expected, public health experts said, even though top federal health officials have said the nation is now in a favorable position, with fewer people hospitalized for Covid-19 lately than at any time since the early weeks of the pandemic.

The Omicron subvariant known as BA.2, has become the dominant form among new U.S. cases, which have started ticking up again.

Reported cases may be an undercount of the virus's true spread to some degree, since access to at-home tests has increased and the results of such tests are often not reported to state health officials.

Public health experts say the emergency declaration has offered a lifeline to people who might otherwise have lost health coverage.

Juliette Cubanski, a deputy director of the Kaiser Family Foundation who has researched and written about the effects of the public health emergency, said the extension announced on Wednesday meant that the U.S. health care system had at least another few months to plan for when its protections would end. The emergency declaration, she said, "has given us a tremendous sense of security in an otherwise very insecure and uncertain time."

"While we can't live in a state of public health emergency forever, there's still a bit of uncertainty about whether we are ready as a health care system to do without the flexibilities" it offers, Ms. Cubanski said.

The emergency has helped Medicare recipients substantially in other ways, notably by expanding eligibility for telehealth

appointments at a time when some doctors' offices were temporarily closed, leaving older and more vulnerable people struggling to see doctors in person, or hesitating to take the risk. If the emergency declaration had lapsed, many Medicare beneficiaries who did not live in rural areas or enroll in Medicare Advantage plans could have lost access to telehealth services.

"It's meant the ability to access care that otherwise would have been inaccessible," Ms. Cubanski said. Using telehealth, she added, has "kept people from serious health consequences that they might have otherwise suffered."

New Zealand citizens were already able to enter, and the country intends to reopen to travelers from elsewhere in the world in a phased reopening over the coming months.

At Auckland International Airport, Justine Kanapu told the national broadcaster Radio New Zealand that she was waiting to see her mother — who was traveling from the Australian city of Perth — for the first time in almost three years. "We have missed out on a lot: my parents' 60th birthdays, some funerals, some real special moments and some real sad moments," she said. "So I can't wait to see my Mum."

At midnight local time, New Zealand also relaxed some additional pandemic restrictions, including abandoning a mask mandate in many settings and encouraging a return to workplaces.

Australia, which has mostly reopened its borders to international travelers, has permitted travel from New Zealand since October. But New Zealand is only now following suit. The change comes after a major outbreak of the Omicron variant, in which the number of reported daily cases and deaths in New Zealand rose to heights far exceeding the country's previous records.

Despite multiple attempts to establish sustained quarantine-free travel between Australia and New Zealand, a "bubble" between

the two countries has been repeatedly halted throughout the pandemic because of outbreaks in both countries. Many people opted not to travel at all to avoid being stranded, leading to months of separation.

Before the pandemic, Auckland International Airport was a major hub, with more than 21 million passengers passing through in the financial year ending in 2019, according to the airport. Since March 2020, its international terminal has been all but deserted.

In preparation for the border reopening, Air New Zealand, New Zealand's national airline, added an additional 96 flights, for a total of 20,000 seats, between Australia and New Zealand from April until June, said Leanne Geraghty, the airline's chief customer and sales officer.

The coronavirus is continuing to stalk the world at an astonishing clip, racing past a grim succession of pandemic milestones in 2022: totals of 300 million known cases around the world by early January, 400 million by early February and, as of Tuesday, half a billion.

“That’s dangerous,” Ali Mokdad, an epidemiologist at the University of Washington, and formerly of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said in a recent interview. “If you don’t test, then you don’t know what variants you have.”

The number of new cases reported around the globe each day has been declining for some time now; the average over the past week has been about 1.1 million cases a day, according to the Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University. That’s about 32 percent fewer than two weeks ago.

Still, the director-general of the W.H.O., Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, recently said that the world remains in the acute phase of the pandemic, and many health experts agree.

In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention issued new guidelines in late February suggesting that most Americans could stop wearing masks, and no longer needed to maintain social distance or avoid crowded indoor spaces.

“What’s happening globally and in the U.S.,” Dr. Mokdad said, “is that people basically gave up. They just want to go back to normal life.”

The peak of the most recent surge may have passed in some parts of Europe, but Hong Kong is still trying to escape an outbreak that began in January, and Shanghai residents are under lockdown and reporting food shortages.

“The focus on new cases is warranted,” Crystal Watson, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, said in a recent interview. “What we’re seeing in China is a very extreme surge in cases, because they have not had a lot of exposure there, and the vaccine is less effective there.”

Long before its “zero-Covid” policy, China had a “zero-sparrow” policy. In the spring of 1958, the government mobilized the nation to try to exterminate sparrows, which Mao Zedong had declared to be pests that destroyed crops. All over China, people banged pots and pans, lit firecrackers and waved flags to keep the birds from landing, so they would fall and die from exhaustion.

The fear in China now is that the “zero-Covid” policy has become another Mao-style political campaign based on the will of one person — the country’s top leader, Xi Jinping — that could end up hurting everyone.

Just as Mao and his lieutenants ignored scientists’ opposition to their anti-sparrow policy, Beijing has been ignoring experts’ recommendations that China abandon its costly zero-Covid strategy and focus on managing the virus.

Instead, Beijing has insisted on following the same playbook it has used since 2020, which relies on mass testing, quarantine and

lockdowns that have disrupted hundreds of millions of people's lives.

“This disease has been politicized,” Zhu Weiping, an official in Shanghai's disease control apparatus, told a person who complained about the city's response to the virus outbreak there.

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4. Findings and Discussion

Upon the analysis of collocations available in both chosen texts, the study has arrived at some important results. Beginning with the ‘ordered set collocations’, its frequencies and percentages in both texts are demonstrated in the following table:

Table (9): The Frequencies and Percentages of Ordered Set Collocations

Paper	Frequencies	Percentages
The Washington Post	36	27.48%
The New York Times	95	72.51%
Total	131	100%

According to this table, both texts are seen to have a good amount of ordered set collocations. These are employed in the texts to reflect the actual dates of emerging and ending of the variants and subvariants of covid-19. Also, both texts use a high number of time periods which indicate, for example, the time being of the subvariant, medical plans, quarantine and lockdowns. Day of the weeks, months, and years are used to show the exact timing of the events. NYT used more ordered set collocations than TWP due to the text which is a bit longer than the text of TWP. Also, it is for the attention the paper pays to the numbers caused by covid-19,

especially omicron positive cases in each period, the number of deaths in each period as well as the number of students, travelers and seats.

Concerning the second type of collocations which is the ‘activity-related collocations’, its frequencies and percentages in the two texts are given in the following table:

Table (10): The Frequencies and Percentages of Activity Related Collocations

Paper	Frequencies	Percentages
The Washington Post	52	44.82%
The New York Times	64	55.17%
Total	116	100%

Activity related collocations are used in both texts to show certain functions or purposes. One purpose is to build a powerful and influential speech that pertains warning. Both texts urge the people to take serious precautions, real actions to face the new subvariants of omicron. They also insist that people complete their vaccination course, or to begin taking the vaccine if they are not started yet. In this respect, the texts continually mention what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announces and recommends. Another purpose of using activity related collocations is to emphasise the seriousness of the pandemic and the seriousness of what the government regularly announces. A third function is to persuade the world, especially the United States communities, of the importance of following the governmental procedures of health and to abandon any unnecessary flights, meetings, and the like although the omicron variant is less severe than the previous ones. The use of this type

of collocations in a smart employment uncovers the skills and abilities of both papers to give the readers a great impression.

The final type of collocations is the ‘elaborative collocations’. It has been utilised in both texts greatly. Its frequencies and percentages employed are mentioned in the following table:

Table (11): The Frequencies and Percentages of Elaborative Collocations

Paper	Frequencies	Percentages
The Washington Post	24	39.34%
The New York Times	37	60.65%
Total	61	100%

Both texts include the elaborative collocations type. This type is employed to increase the cohesiveness of the texts. In other words, it creates connected, understandable and cohesive texts due to the accurate and detailed elaborations which connect what is said before with what is said next. Some elaborative collocations are used to emphasise things, to persuade the readers and sometimes to warn them about the consequences of the virus. Thus, it highlights and affirm the major issues in the speech. Other elaborative collocations indicate different occasions to urge people to change their decisions and to positively respond to the procedures of the government and especially the CDC. Other elaborative collocations are employed in the NYT to persuade the world with political ideas and beliefs, for instance, when the paper elaborates on what happened in China in the Spring of 1958. In

addition, the paper believes that China is the reason of the virus and that it has been used for political campaign purposes.

5. Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussion of the results, the study arrives at the following concluding remarks:

1. The employed model, Tanskanen's classification of collocations (2006), plays a major role in detecting the types of collocations, their meanings and indications.
2. Collocations are utilised to function multiple purposes to fulfill the messages of the texts.
3. Collocations are used as a powerful device of persuasion to convince the readers of the main ideas, that is of the risk, the virus consequences, the necessary procedures that lead to the safe side.
4. Collocations are intended to express warning in the process of facing the virus. They warn the people of what might happen if they are, for instance, not vaccinated or ignore the scientists and experts' instructions.
5. Using collocations, especially elaborative collocations, increases the cohesiveness of the texts. Their contributions have improved the readability and connection of the texts.
6. Some collocations are meant to denote political ideas. They show that the virus has been made somewhere in the world for political campaign and the like.

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