Collocations Involving the Word /?allaah/ ‘God’ in Modern Standard Arabic: A Corpus-Based Study

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0. Introduction:

This paper informs about a corpus-based study of the collocations including the word for God in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). The study attempts to answer three questions: (a) What are the collocations including the word /?allaah/ ‘God’ in MSA? (b) How many are such collocations and which are the most frequent of them, and (c) How can these collocations be classified syntactically and semantically? The data used in this study depends on the online corpus collected by Al-Sulaiti (2006) and the concordance program prepared by Roberts (2004). The paper starts with a brief theoretical background on collocations and their properties. Section (2) introduces collocations in Arabic and corpus studies. Section (3) shows how Arabic collocations have been classified in the literature. Section (4) explains the
study aim and technique. Section (5) presents an analysis of the results of the study by discussing the various syntactic and semantic categories of collocations used in the corpus. The results of this study can be useful in the fields of translation, lexicography and language pedagogy.

1. Collocations and their Characteristics:

   The term collocation was first introduced to theoretical linguistics by Firth (1957) who is well-known for the statement: “You shall know a word by the company it keeps!” (Ibid: 11). There is a great deal of disagreement among linguists on the definition of collocations. This can be seen from the differences between these definitions:

1. “Collocations of a given word are statements of the habitual and customary places of that word” (Firth 1957: 12).
2. “The term collocation will be used to refer to sequences of lexical items which habitually co-occur” (Cruse 1986: 40).
3. “a sequence of words that occurs more than once in identical form in a corpus, and which is grammatically well structured” (Kjellmer 1987: 133).
4. “A collocation is a sequence of two or more consecutive words, that has characteristics of a syntactic and semantic unit whose exact and unambiguous meaning or connotation cannot be derived directly from the meaning or connotation of its
components” (Choueka 1988).

5. “Collocation refers to the combination of words that have a certain mutual expectancy. The combination is not a fixed expression but there is a greater than chance likelihood that the words will co-occur” (Jackson 1988: 99).

6. “A collocation is an arbitrary and recurrent word combination” (Benson 1990: 23).

7. “Collocation is the cooccurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text. The usual measure of proximity is a maximum of four words intervening” (Sinclair 1991: 170).

8. “Natural languages are full of collocations, recurrent combinations of words that co-occur more often than expected by chance and that correspond to arbitrary word usages” (Smadja 1993: 143).

9. “A collocation is an expression consisting of two or more words that correspond to some conventional way of saying things” (Manning and Schütze 1999: 151).

10. “lexically and/or pragmatically constrained recurrent co-occurrences of at least two lexical items which are in a direct syntactic relation with each other” (Bartsch 2004: 76).

McKeown & Radev (2000: 509) state the properties of collocations as follows: “Collocations are typically characterized
as arbitrary, language- (and dialect-) specific, recurrent in context, and common in technical language.” According to Seretan (2008: 20), there are five features of collocations:

1. Collocations are prefabricated phrases: They are available to speakers as ready-made, or prefabricated units.
2. Collocations are arbitrary: They are not regular productions of language, but “arbitrary ... word combinations” (Benson: 1990).
3. Collocations are unpredictable: It is impossible to predict the morphosyntactic properties of a collocation on the basis of the properties of participating words.
4. Collocations are recurrent: They are “habitual and customary” (Firth 1957: 12), “combinations of words that co-occur more often than expected by chance” (Smadja 1993: 143).
5. Collocations are made up of two or more words: “In most of the examples, collocation patterns are restricted to pairs of words, but there is no theoretical restriction to the number of words involved” (Sinclair 1991: 170).

Moreover, Manning & Schütze (1999: 172-73) offer the following criteria as typical of collocations:

1. Non-compositionality: The meaning of a collocation is not a straightforward composition of the meanings of its parts.
2. Non-substitutability: We cannot substitute near-synonyms for the components of a collocation.
3. Non-modifiability: Many collocations cannot be freely modified with additional lexical material or through grammatical transformations.

Furthermore, Husamaddin (1985) considers collocations one simple form of idiomatic expressions and Hoogland (1993: 75) explains the phenomenon of collocation as follows:

Two (or sometimes more) words appear in each other’s company because the usage of a particular word (for example a noun) limits the choice of an adjective to a small number of adjectives that can combine with this particular noun. The same can count for a noun and a verb. … there is a core word (the word that comes to the mind first) and a collocator that combines with that core-word.

To stress the importance of collocations, Newmark (1988: 213) considers them the “nerves” of a text: “If grammar is the bones of a text, collocations are the nerves, more subtle and multiple and specific in denoting meaning, and lexis is the flesh.” In addition, Brashi (2005: 2) states that collocations “play an important role in the coherence and cohesion of language. … they are present in all text types.”

2. Collocations in Arabic and Corpus Studies:

Collocations in Arabic have been studied by Heliel (1990) who considers collocations a problem in English/Arabic translation. He gives the example of seven collocations with the
English adjective ‘heavy’ that should be translated in Arabic with seven different adjectives. He also gives the example of the Arabic adjective /jaaf/ ‘dry’ and shows that it is translated into English by using five different adjectives depending on the noun with which it collocates. (For the phonemic symbols used to transcribe Arabic data and for the symbols and abbreviations employed in the study, see the Appendix.)

Brashi (2005: 156-65), identifies thirteen characteristics of Arabic collocations. Here are these characteristics together with Brashi’s explanation of them:

1. Consisting of two or more words: A collocation contains at least a ‘base’ and a ‘collocate’.

2. Semantic transparency: The meaning of a collocation can clearly be deduced from at least one of its constituent parts.

3. Arbitrariness: The words are joined together arbitrarily to form a collocation. There is no logical or semantic reason why word X would collocate with word Y.

4. Unpredictability: Collocations are not predictable on the basis of syntactic or semantic rules.

5. Language-specificity: What collocates with a word in one language does not necessarily collocate with the same word in another language.

6. Flexibility of word order: One can possibly change the order of words in a collocation.
7. Impossibility of replacement by a synonym: Substituting a synonym for one of the words of a collocation usually results in an unacceptable collocation.

8. Formality: Most, but not all, collocations are formal in usage.

9. Possibility of addition: It is possible to add a word to the components of a collocation.

10. Possibility of tense-change: One can possibly change the tense of a verb in a collocation.

11. Possibility of passivization: The formation of the passive voice in a collocation is possible in most cases.

12. Possibility of pluralization: It is possible to use the plural form of a noun in a collocation.

13. Possibility of collocational range expansion: A word may gain new collocates over time.

The study of collocations is significant for both language learners and translators. That is why Hoogland (1993: 75) affirms that “in a bilingual context collocations are very important for learners of a language. Usage of the right combinations, being a part of style, results in correct language production.” Moreover, Shakir and Farghal (1992: 3) indicate that:

Collocations constitute a key component in the lexicon of natural language. Translators and/or interpreters should, therefore, possess a high syntagmatic competence alongside their paradigmatic competence. ... Unnaturalness comes as an immediate consequence
of the translators’/interpreter’s inability to call up the relevant collocations in the target language.

Showqi (2006) considers collocation one of the major ‘trouble spots’ for translators. He ascribes this to the relative difficulty in predicting the constituent elements of a collocation, the considerable variation in collocability across languages and the lack of adequate resources on collocation. He argues that few empirical studies have been made on the types of collocations that are particularly problematic to the translator, the specific sources of the problem and the procedures that translators actually resort to in handling such collocations. His paper investigates the areas just defined with special reference to collocation in English and Arabic. He designed a translation test involving thirty-sentence contextualized collocations of different types. The test was administered to four Arab university instructors who taught translation and did translation work for different periods. The participants’ performance in the test was considerably low. He conducted a detailed analysis of the problem and then reported the findings.

The design of a corpus of contemporary Arabic was the topic of an article written by Al-Sulaiti and Atwell (2006). In this article, they stressed the fact that corpora were an important resource for both teaching and research. They also indicated that Arabic lacked sufficient resources in this field, so they designed a
research project to compile a corpus, which represents the state of the Arabic language at the present time and the needs of end-users. They collected and published an initial version of the Corpus of Contemporary Arabic (CCA) to meet these design issues. The CCA is freely downloadable via the internet web site of Leeds University at: http://www.comp.leeds.ac.uk/arabic.

3. Classification of Collocations in the Literature:

One classification of collocations is provided by Benson et al. (1986) who distinguish between grammatical and lexical collocations. They define a grammatical collocation as “a phrase consisting of a dominant word (noun, adjective, verb) and a preposition or grammatical structure such as an infinitive or a clause” (Cited in Hoogland 1993: 76). They state that lexical combinations, on the other hand, “normally do not contain prepositions, infinitives, or clauses. Typical lexical collocations consist of nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs” (Ibid). According to Stuart & Trelis (2006: 239), some authors (e.g. Firth 1957 and Hoey 2005) keep the term collocations to lexical collocations and call grammatical collocations “colligations.”

Emery (1991), as cited in Hoogland (1993: 76), classifies word combinations into four types:

a) **Open collocations**: combinations of two or more words co-occurring together, without any specific relation between them.
They are combinations in which both elements are freely recombinable; each element is used in a common literal sense. For example, /badaʔ-at il-ḥarb-u/ ‘the war started.’

b) **Restricted collocations**: combinations of two or more words used in one of their regular, non-idiomatic meanings, following certain structural patterns, and restricted in their commutability not only by grammatical and semantic valency, but also by usage. For instance, /jariimat-un nakraaʔ-u/ ‘vicious murder.’

c) **Bound collocations**: a bridge category between collocations and idioms. One of the elements is uniquely selective of the other, for example /ʔaṬraq-a r-raʔ-s-a/ ‘to bow one’s head.’

d) **Idioms**: the constituent elements of idioms are opaque, i.e. used in ‘specialized’ senses, together forming a single semantic unit. For example, /ḥarb-u n-nujuum/ ‘star war.’

Ghazala (1993a) and (1993b) studied the translation of collocations from Arabic into English and vice versa in two articles, respectively. In the first article, he classifies collocations according to three different patterns: grammatical, lexical and stylistic. Hoogland (1993: 78) offers the following classification of restricted collocations based on syntactic and part-of-speech information¹:

1) Verb + noun (subject), e.g. /ʔinxafaD-a s-ṣi3r-u/ ‘the price has come down.’
2) Verb + noun (object), e.g. /manaḥ-a jaa?izat-an/ ‘to grant a prize’
3) Verb + preposition + noun, e.g. /?ixtaar-a bayna badaa?il-a/ ‘to choose from alternatives’
4) Noun + adjective, e.g. /?iktifaa?-un ḍaatiyy-un/ ‘self-sufficiency’
5) Noun + noun (construct phrase), e.g. /tasalsul-u ḍaḥadaaθ-in/ ‘sequence of events’
6) Verb + adverb, e.g. /naffaΔ-a bi-diqqat-in/ ‘to carry out accurately’
7) Adjective + adverb, e.g. /Sa3b-un li-lgaayat-i/ ‘extremely difficult’
8) Noun + preposition + noun, e.g. /šabakat-un mina T-Turuq-i/ ‘a network of roads’
9) Adjective + noun, e.g. /waasi3-u n-niTaaq-i/ ‘wide in range’
10) Word + synonym, e.g. /garaa?ib-u wa-Taraa?if-u/ ‘strange and peculiar things’
11) Word + antonym, e.g. /šaḥn-un wa-tafriiq-un/ ‘loading and unloading’

Hafiz (2002) offers twelve classes of Arabic collocations based on grammatical patterns, nine of which are similar to Hoogland’s (1993) first nine categories. The remaining three are:
1. Verb + conjunction + verb, usually with synonymous verbs, e.g. /Taar-a wa-hallaq-a/ ‘to fly and soar’
2. Noun + conjunction + noun, e.g. /3azm-un wa-?iSraar-un/ ‘intention and insistence’
3. Noun + preposition, e.g. /muqaaranat-an bi-/ ‘in comparison with’

Semantically, Husamaddin (1985), cited in Brashi (2005: 35-37), classifies collocations into seven groups:
1. Words representing different sounds made by different animals or different objects, e.g. /Sahiil-u l-xayl-i/ ‘the neighing of horses’
2. Verbs related to the act of cutting various objects, depending on the nouns with which they collocate, e.g. /qaTaf-a zahrat-an/ ‘to pick a flower’
3. Names of places where animals or insects are found, e.g. /3ariin-u l-?asad-i/ ‘the lion’s den’
4. Groups of objects, e.g. /baaqat-u ward-in/ ‘a bouquet of flowers’
5. Parts of objects, e.g. /kisrat-un mina l-xubz-i/ ‘a piece of bread’
6. Verbs related to uncovering different parts of the body, e.g. /kašaf-a 3an saaq-i-hi/ ‘to uncover one’s leg’
7. Movements of different parts of the body e.g. /xafaqaan-u l-qalb-i/ ‘the beating of the heart’

4. Study Aim & Technique:

This study aims at finding the collocations involving the word for God in MSA and classifying them. The study attempts to answer three questions: (a) What are the collocations including the word /?allaah/ ‘God’ in MSA? (b) How many are such collocations and which are the most frequent of them? (c) How can these collocations be classified syntactically and semantically?

The analysis in this work is not restricted to a specific collocational approach but it investigates the idea of collocation as describing the general phenomenon of words that habitually come together. Like van der Wouden (1997: 9), I will use the term collocation as "the most general term to refer to all types of fixed combinations of lexical items."

An online corpus prepared by Latifa Al-Sulaiti (2006) has been used as a source for the study data. It is called “A Corpus of Contemporary Arabic” (CCA) and is the only freely downloadable corpus on the internet at the time of writing this paper. The target users of this corpus are language teachers, language engineers, foreign learners of Arabic and material writers. Al-Sulaiti mainly derived her written texts from websites. She also included some
spoken files, which she obtained from Radio Qatar. The corpus includes 842,684 words and 415 texts in some of the categories identified by the language teachers and language engineers. The entire corpus is downloadable, stripped of XML markup, as a raw UTF-8 textfile: CCA_raw_utf8.txt. The benefit of using a corpus is that collocations are identified and selected on usage-based grounds. That is why McKeown & Radev (2000: 507) state that:

Since they occur repeatedly in language, specific collocations can be acquired by identifying words that frequently occur together in a relatively large sample of language; thus, collocation acquisition falls within the general class of corpus-based approaches to language.

After downloading Al-Sulaiti’s corpus on my computer, I downloaded a program that is specialized in searching for strings in large corpora. It is called “A-ConCorde” and prepared by Andrew Roberts (2004). This is a multi-lingual concordance tool. Originally developed for native Arabic concordance, it possesses basic concordance functionality, as well as English and Arabic interfaces. It is written in Java and runs on any platform that has the Java Runtime Environment installed.

I ran the program on the downloaded corpus to search for all the strings including the words /?allaah/ ‘God’, /bi-illaah/ ‘by God’, /li-illaah/ ‘for God’, /fa-illaah/ ‘then, God’, /ta-illaah/ ‘by God’ and /wa-illaah/ ‘and God’. A transliterated sample of the results of the search process can be seen in Table (1). No English
translation is provided since some strings do not constitute full-formed sentences.

Table (1)
A Sample of the Product of A-ConCorde

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sayabqaa kaɗaalika lifatratin narju</th>
<th>ilaaha</th>
<th>?alaa taTuul, laqad kaanat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3ala ɗaalika staTa3tu bifaDli</td>
<td>ilaahi</td>
<td>?an ?u0bita ?anna Iburuuja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?an qaalat ?ummii ra détail</td>
<td>ilaahu</td>
<td>?ida najahya fii haaɗihi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa?anta ta3rifu ?annii mu?minun</td>
<td>billaahi</td>
<td>?iimaanan 3amiiqan laakinna nnaasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rijaalu haaɗa ddawri wal hamdu</td>
<td>lillaahi</td>
<td>?allaɗii 3aafaahu min ɗaalika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fabtasamat muḥaddi0atii waqaalat</td>
<td>wallaahi</td>
<td>yaa ?axi lmiskiinatu l3aruus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>walaa tafrahuu bimaa ?aataakum</td>
<td>wallaahu</td>
<td>laa yuhibbu kulla muxtaalin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa</td>
<td>tallaahi</td>
<td>tilka hiya ttijaaratu rraabilha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It can be noticed from the sample that the program produced the search word in the middle column with four words before and four words after it in the columns in the left and right of that word. Running the program on the corpus produced approximately 700 strings involving the word for God, which I gathered in a long table. Then, I edited the table manually by deleting the repeated strings, re-ordering the unordered structures and excluding the colloquial examples and the proper nouns referring to people’s names, especially /3abd-ul llaah/ ‘Abdulla.’ After that, I went through the resulting strings looking for collocations and counting the number of occurrences for each collocation and gathered the results in one table. Finally, I classified the collocations syntactically and semantically.

5. Analysis of the Results:

This section analyzes the findings of the study. The number and frequency of each collocation are presented. Then, the syntactic and semantic classifications of collocations are provided. Meanwhile, the percentage of each class in relation to the whole number of collocations is calculated.

5.1. Number and Frequency of Collocations:
After extracting the collocations including the word for God, I gathered them in one long table and counted the number and
frequency of each collocation. It has been found that there are 193 collocations involving the word for God in the corpus. Their overall frequency is 516 times. Table (2) shows the ten most frequent of them, in order of frequency, and the number of occurrences of each. This table reveals that the ten most common collocations occur 216 times in the corpus. This represents nearly 42% of the overall 516 occurrences of all collocations involving the word for God.

Table (2)
The Most Frequent Arabic Collocations Involving the Word for God in the Corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic Collocation</th>
<th>Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. /raḥim-a, ya-ḥam-u + object pronoun + ḥallaah/‘May God have mercy upon + object pronoun’</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. /Sallaa ullaah-u 3alay-hi wa-sallam/‘May God's prayers and peace be upon him’</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. /?allaah-u ta3alaa/‘God be exalted’</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. /raDiy-a ullaah-u 3an-hu/‘May God be pleased with him’</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. /?in šaa?-a ullaah/‘God willing, Okay’</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. /?allaah-u subḥaana-hu wa-ta3alaa/‘God to Whom be ascribed all perfection and majesty’</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. /rasuul-u ullaah/‘God's messenger’</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. /?alhamd-u li-llaah/ ‘Thanks be to God’ 13
9. /?allaah-u 3azz-a wa-jall/
   ‘God to Whom belongs might and majesty’ 10
10. /bi-?iðn-i llaah/ ‘God willing’ 8
Total 216

5.2. Syntactic Classification of Collocations:

Table (3) indicates the syntactic classes into which the Arabic collocations involving the word for God can be classified, the number of examples representing them in the corpus and their percentages.

Table (3)
Syntactic Classes of Arabic Collocations
Involving the Word for God

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic Class</th>
<th>Occurrences</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Noun + Noun (+Adj/Noun)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>15.50 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Verb + Obj + Subj (+Obj)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>13.95 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Verb + Subj + Prep + Noun/Pro (+ Conj + Verb)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>13.37 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Noun + Prep + Noun (+Noun)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>10.66 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Verb + Subj + Obj (+Adj/Noun/Pro)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7.94 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Subj + Verb (+ Conj + Verb)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic Class</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Prep + Noun + Noun (+Pro)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5.43 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Subj Noun + Pred Noun (+ Conj + Verb)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.84 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cond. Particle + Verb + Subj</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.88 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Verb + Subj + Prep + Noun (+Noun)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.74 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Noun + Adj</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.55 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Noun + Noun + Prep + Noun/Pro (+Conj + Verb)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.55 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Prep + Noun + Adj + Adj</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.16 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Neg. Particle + Noun + Exceptive Particle + Noun</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.16 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Neg. Particle + Verb + Subj (+Obj)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.97 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Other Patterns (Less than five occurrences each)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>9.13 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>516</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An overview of the syntactic classes in Table (3) shows the variety of syntactic structures in which the word for God occurs. To analyze the ten most common syntactic classes, one can notice that the most frequent Arabic collocations including the word for God are in the syntactic class “Noun + Noun (+Adj/Noun).” This structure is mainly a construct phrase in which the second noun is the word for God, as in:

(1) a. /nabiyy-u ILLA-yi/ ‘God’s prophet’
   b. /?asmaa?-u ILLA-yi l-HUSHNA/ ‘God’s 99 names’
Nearly one seventh of the collocation occurrences belong to the class “Verb + Obj + Subj (+Obj).” The word for God acts as the subject in this structure, as in:

(2) a. /waffaqa-hu llaah/ ‘May God grant him success.’
   b. /jaza-ka llaah-u xayr-an/ ‘May God reward you.’

Nearly one seventh and a half of the collocation occurrences are in the class “Verb + Subj + Prep + Noun/Pro.” Here the word for God acts as subject of a verb or object of a preposition:

(3) a. /?amadd-a llaah-u fi?a3maar-i-him/ ‘May God prolong their lives’
   b. /fa-sta3in bi-llaah/ ‘So, ask for God’s help.’

More than one tenth of the collocation occurrences follow the pattern “Noun + Prep + Noun (+Noun).” The word for God acts as the object of a preposition or the second noun in the construct phrase after the preposition:

(4) a. /?al-3aarif-u bi-llaah/ ‘The man knowing God’
   b. /?al-faqiirat-u ?ila ra?mat-i llaah/ ‘The woman poor to God’s mercy’

Nearly eight percent of the collocation occurrences belong to the class “Verb + Subj + Obj (+Adj/Noun/Pro).” In this pattern, the word for God acts as subject or object:

(5) a. /Tayyab-a llaah-u ?araa-h/ ‘May God rest him in peace.’
   b. /?astagfir-u llaah-a l-3aZiim/ ‘I ask God’s forgiveness.’
A little more than seven percent of the collocation occurrences belong to the pattern “Subj + Verb (+ Conj + Verb).” In this structure, the word for God acts as subject noun:

(6) /?allaah-u tabaarak-a wa-ta3aalaa/ ‘God to Whom be ascribed all blessings and majesty’

More than five percent of the collocation occurrences are in the pattern “Prep + Noun + Noun (+Pro).” In most examples of this pattern, the word for God acts as the second noun in the construct phrase after the preposition:

(7) a. /fii sabiil-i llaah/ ‘For the sake of God’
   b. /bi-faDl-i llaah/ ‘Thanks to God’

Nearly five percent of the collocation occurrences are in the pattern “Subj Noun + Pred Noun (+ Conj + Verb).” The word for God acts as the subject noun:

(8) /?allaah-u subhaana-hu wa-ta3aalaa/ ‘God to Whom be ascribed all perfection’

Nearly four percent of the collocation occurrences are in the pattern “Cond. Particle + Verb + Subj.” The word for God acts as the subject of verb:
(9) /?in šaa?-a łaah/ ‘God willing, Okay’

Nearly two percent of the collocation occurrences are in the pattern “Verb + Subj + Prep + Noun (+Noun).” Here the word for God acts as the object of a preposition or the second noun in the construct phrase after the preposition:

(10) a. /?intaqal-a ?ila raḥmat-i łaah/ ‘He passed away (moved to God's mercy).’

b. /yata3awwāḏ-u bi-kalimaat-i łaah/ ‘He seeks refuge with God's words.’

5.3. Semantic Classification of Collocations:

Table (4) offers the various semantic categories of Arabic collocations involving the word for God in the corpus and the number of collocations representing them in the corpus as well as their percentages. It has been a very tricky process to classify these collocations semantically since, as far as I know, no body has attempted that classification before.
Table (4)
Semantic Classes of Arabic Collocations
Involving the Word for God

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic Class</th>
<th>Occurrences</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Respecting the Dead</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>15.12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Glorifying God</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>13.18 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ascribing Things to God</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8.72 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Expressing Hope</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ascribing People to God</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6.78 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. God’s Deeds</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6.20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Thanking God</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6.01 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Seeking God’s Favor</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.62 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Respecting the Prophet</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.62 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Requesting God’s Blessing</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5.04 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Respecting the Companions</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.46 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Belief in God</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.88 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Calling for God</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.71 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Submission to God</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.74 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. God’s Attributes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.74 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Greeting &amp; Farewell</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.55 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Worshiping God</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.36 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Supplication to God</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.97 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantic Class</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing No Knowledge</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.78 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanking People</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.39 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Meanings (one occurrence each)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.96 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>516</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A general look at the semantic classes in Table (4) gives an idea about the kind of religiousness prevalent in the Arab world nowadays. The reason for the common use of the word for God in MSA has been stated by Brashi (2005: 53):

Many expressions and phrases that are still used in Modern Standard Arabic today come from the Quran. Collocations are one of those types of expressions. The Quran has always been known for its richness of expression, including collocations. This has continued to influence the use of language until nowadays.

Table (4) reveals that the greatest number of collocation occurrences belongs to the semantic class ‘Respecting the Dead.’ Most of its examples are used when asking God to have mercy on a dead person, as in:

(11) a. /tawaffaa-huma llaah/ ‘They (du.) passed away.’

   b. /tagammad-a-hu llaah-u bi-raḥmat-i-h/ ‘May God encompass him with His grace.’

Nearly one seventh and a half of the collocation occurrences are in the class “Glorifying God.” The expressions in this class show a Muslim’s glorification of God:
(12) a. /?allaah-u ?akbar/ ‘God is the greatest.’
   b. /sub-khāana ILLA AH/ ‘Glory is to God.’

Nearly nine percent of the collocation occurrences belong to the category “Ascribing Things to God.” In this class, people relate things to God:

(13) a. /kitaab-u Illaah/ ‘God's book (The Holy Quran)’
   b. /bayt-u Illaah-i l-haraam/ ‘God's holy house (the Kaaba)’

Seven percent of the collocation occurrences are in the group “Expressing Hope.” In this group, people express their hope that something may or may not happen.

(14) a. /wa-illaah-u waliyy-u t-tawfiq/ ‘May God grant you success!’
   b. /laa qaddar-a Illaah/ ‘God forbid!’

Nearly seven percent of the collocation occurrences belong to the class “Ascribing People to God.” This relates prophets, messengers and pious people to God.

(15) a. /muhammad-un rasuul-u Illaah/ ‘Muhammad is God's messenger.’
   b. /?awliyaa?-u Illaah-i S-Saalihiin/ ‘God's holy men’

More than six and a half percent of the collocation occurrences are in the semantic category “God’s Deeds.” This refers to the works of God, such as creation, choice, sustenance, guidance, etc.

(16) a. /xalaq-a-hu Illaah/ ‘God created him/it.’
b. /ʔal-xiirat-u fii-ma xtaar-a-hu llaah/ ‘The best choice is that of God.’

A little more than six percent of the collocation occurrences belong to the semantic class “Thanking God.”

(17) a. /ḥamad-tu llaah/ ‘I thanked God.’

b. /šaakir-iina llaah/ ‘Thanking (m.pl.) God’

More than five and a half percent of the collocation occurrences are in the semantic category “Seeking God’s Favor.” This occurs when a Muslim asks for God’s pleasure, help, refuge, etc.

(18) a. /yabtaguuna faDl-an mina llaah/ ‘They seek grace from God.’

b. /ʔallujuu?-u ?ila llaah/ ‘Seeking refuge with God.’

Similarly, more than five and a half percent of the collocation occurrences are in the semantic class “Respecting the Prophet.” This is used when a Muslim asks God to grant his peace and prayers to Prophet Muhammad.

(19) /Sallaa llaahu 3alayhi wasallam/ ‘May God's prayers and peace be upon him.’

More than five percent of the collocation occurrences are in the class “Requesting God’s Blessing.”

(20) a. /3ajjal-a llaah-u šifaa?-ak/ ‘May God grant you immediate recovery.’

b. /sallam-a-ka llaah/ ‘May God save you.’
6. Conclusion:

This article provides an analysis of the collocations involving the word for God in MSA based on an online corpus. According to the results of the study, there are 193 Arabic collocations including the word /?allaah/ ‘God’. They occur 516 times in the corpus.

From a syntactic viewpoint, the collocations involving the word /?allaah/ ‘God’ can have twenty-five classes, the most frequent of which are:

1. Noun + Noun (+Adj/Noun),
2. Verb + Obj + Subj (+Obj),
3. Verb + Subj + Prep + Noun/Pro (+ Conj + Verb),
4. Noun + Prep + Noun (+Noun),
5. Verb + Subj + Obj (+Adj/Noun/Pro),
6. Subj + Verb (+ Conj + Verb),
7. Prep + Noun + Noun (+Pro),
8. Subj Noun + Pred Noun (+ Conj + Verb),
9. Cond. Particle + Verb + Subj, and

Semantically, the collocations involving the word /?allaah/ ‘God’ can have twenty-three classes, the most frequent of which are:
1. Respecting the Dead,
2. Glorifying God,
3. Ascribing Things to God,
4. Expressing Hope,
5. Ascribing People to God,
6. God’s Deeds,
7. Thanking God,
8. Seeking God’s Favor,
9. Respecting the Prophet, and

The results of this study can be used in the fields of translation, lexicography and language pedagogy. They may be used to develop machine-translation systems or improve dictionaries. In addition, this study can open possibilities for further linguistic research. For instance, a translation study can show how the collocations involving the word for God are rendered into English. Moreover, a lexicographical study might test the data used in this work against Arabic dictionaries and see how the collocations of the word for God are dealt with in them. Finally, a contrastive study may analyze an English corpus to see the syntactic and semantic classes of the collocations of the word for God in it, and then contrast them with those in Arabic.
Notes

1 The first three classes are re-ordered depending on information provided by Hoogland (1993: 78) himself.

2 The construct phrase in Arabic means a phrase formed by two successive nouns in which the first is annexed to the second.

3 It has to be noted here that “Subj” means either a subject noun or a subject pronoun, and “Obj” means either an object noun or an object pronoun. In both cases, the pronoun may be either explicit or implicit. Moreover, the “Other Patterns” include structures borrowed from the Quran, each occurring only once in the data.
## Appendix

### A. Consonants of Standard Arabic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manner</th>
<th>Voicing</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Labiodental</th>
<th>Interdental</th>
<th>Dento-Alveolar</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Uvular</th>
<th>Pharyngeal</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stop</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### B. Vowels of Standard Arabic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Front</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
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<td>aa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Symbols & Abbreviations

MSA  Modern Standard Arabic
/ /  phonemic transcription
-  morpheme boundary
sg  singular Subj  Subject
du  dual  Obj  Object
pl  plural  Prep  Preposition
m  masculine  Pro  Pronoun
f  feminine  Neg  Negative
Cond  Conditional  Conj  Conjunction
Pred  Predicate  Adj  Adjective

References

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http://www.comp.leeds.ac.uk/andyr/software/aConCorde.


