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Collocability of Mental Capacity Evaluative Adjectives in Current English

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Abstract

The study was conducted to investigate the collocability of mental capacity evaluative adjectives in current English. In English people have been and are still describing each other. This description goes hand in hand with giving value to other people especially on the intelligence of a person. In English language, this function is fulfilled with the use of a number of devices one of which is evaluative adjectives, more specifically evaluative mental capacity adjectives. However, the understanding of the way these adjectives are used to convey a given value in a given particular context is limited. Thus the current study contributes to this limited knowledge by exploring how this device is used by looking at collocability of such adjectives. The study was guided by a major research question namely: What nouns do positive evaluative mental capacity adjectives collocate with? The study was a corpus-based study and the data were extracted from British National Corpus. The analysis is based on five positive adjectives namely bright, intelligent, sharp, clever and smart. In the analysis, both qualitative and descriptive statistics techniques were employed. The findings show that the studied adjectives collocate with nouns of particular human reference or related to human cognitive actions or parts of human body. Thus three general categories of nouns that collocate with these adjectives are common nouns, proper nouns, and pronouns.

Keywords: *evaluative adjectives, collocation, current English, British National Corpus*

Introduction

Currently, English is characterized by diversity as evidenced by Graddol (2000, p.5) who points out that "English is remarkable for its diversity..." Because of the diverse nature of English language around the world, the term current English will be referring to current British English. In using English language, adjectives as one of the parts of speech in grammar are important in commenting on the appearance of objects, ideas, persons and even conversation. The comments can range from positive to negative. When adjectives are used to address a person, they can impact the addressee negatively or positively depending on the type of adjective used and how it is used.

The available literature categorizes adjectives in different ways Quirk and Greebaum (1973) and Turker (1998) give a semantic classification of adjectives into three categories namely gradable/non-gradable, stative/dynamic and inherent/non-inherent. Givon (2001) also categorizes adjectives into two major broad categories namely the prototypical adjectives and less prototypical adjectives.

Even though the classification by Quirk and Greebaum (1973) and Turker (1998) is regarded to be semantic in nature by these authors, still the way they analyze them reflects the syntactic aspects of adjectives. Furthermore, Givon (2010) simply mentions the categories without giving detailed

explanation. What appears to be a wide-ranging categorization is that given by Bhatia (2005). Bhatia categorises evaluative adjective into seven categories namely **Frequency** (*normal* and *usual)*; **Ethics** (*responsible,* and *reasonable);* **General quality** (*advisable, acceptable, good, bad* and i*nteresting)*; **Evidence** (*natural,* and *evident)*, **Consequence** (*critical, crucial* and *considerable)*; **Relational** (*appropriate*, *adequate)* and **Modal evaluative** adjectives (*unpractical* and *undesirable).*

This study is located on the general quality type of adjectives but narrowing down to adjectives that give quality or value to mental capacity of a person. The motivating reason for narrowing down to this category is evident from the above classification where evaluative adjectives are treated in a general sense and there is no mention of evaluative mental capacity adjectives. In this case, therefore, evaluative mental capacity adjectives are the adjectives that comment or give value on the intelligence of an individual, where, the value given can be a positive value or a negative value, for example; *a stupid person*, or *an intelligent person*.

This study focused on positive evaluative mental capacity adjectives because the positive comment is preferred over the negative comments due to the effects associated with, and fear of negative evaluation. The concept of fear of negative evaluation can be understood as "the apprehension and distress arising from concerns about being judged despairingly or hostilely by others" (Carleton et al, 2006, p.297). Thus, the fear of negative evaluation is striking among individuals as the definition of the term itself shows. This, therefore, indicates that the knowledge on evaluative mental capacity adjectives in current English is of significance since the choice of a particular adjective to give value to one's related intellect matters is very essential in expressing the intended meaning.

However, Quirk and Greebaum (1973) assert that it is not possible to tell whether a word is an adjective by looking at it in isolation, neither can the form of a word tell us that it is an adjective. Therefore, the identification of a word as an adjective depends on the way it is used. One way of identifying whether a word is an adjective is by looking at its collocations. Thus, collocation can be useful in determining the meaning of a word by basing it on its co-occurrence.

The literature available on adjectives shows a limited discussion on adjectives basing on syntax and general semantic aspect of the adjective. No discussion has been made regarding the evaluative mental capacity adjectives. Moreover, the definitions of adjectives in dictionaries do not give ample collocational information for the reader of a dictionary to understand their use in daily communication. The study was guided by a major question: What nouns do the positive evaluative mental capacity adjectives collocate with? The study investigated the kinds of nouns that evaluative mental capacity adjectives collocate with in order to find out whether nouns that are modified by these adjectives have common properties or not and whether positive value related to intellect is restricted or not restricted to human beings.

Theoretical Review

Evaluative adjective is an essential category of adjectives. These adjectives express a judgment or an assessment (Mindt, 2011). They typically characterize a person's behavior or attitude in terms of the speaker's subjective judgment. This category of adjectives consists of a large pool of English adjectives such as *rude, mean, clever, smart, nice, kind, silly, imprudent, impolite, generous,* just to mention to a few.

Because of the diverse nature of evaluative adjectives, they tend to fall in different categories. Different scholars have tried to categorize evaluative adjectives but what seems to be a comprehensive categorization is that of Bhatia (2005) and other categorization provided by other scholars seem to present vague information. Because of the absence of other sources, as far as the researcher has tried to search, that provide a clear discussion on the classification of evaluative adjectives, the only categorization by Bhatia stands to be the only

reference. Bhatia (2005) categorizes adjectives into seven types according to how they are interpreted in general language namely general quality, modal, relational, ethic, consequence, evidence and frequency adjectives.

Even though the classification by Bhatia (2005) can be said to be a comprehensive discussion on evaluative adjectives, still the mental evaluative capacity type of adjectives is not touched upon. It is implicitly included in the general quality type. However, it deserves its own discussion because the question of commenting on someone's intellect is part and parcel of daily use of language. Therefore this is the research gap that this study addressed.

As Quirk and Greebaum (1973) assert that it is not possible to tell whether a word is an adjective by looking at it in isolation, the study resorted to collocation as a strategy of understanding the evaluative mental capacity adjectives. Riemer (2010) defines collocation as a regular combination of words. In support of this claim of regular combination Cruse (1986, p.40) states that "collocations are sequences of lexical items which habitually co-occur" but he adds another concept that each lexical constituent is a semantic constituent. Collocations can be viewed from two major approaches namely the frequency-based approach and the significance based approach (Nesselhauf, 2005). Frequency-based approach refers to collocation as the co-occurrence of words that can be measured in terms of frequency of occurrence. Thus collocation can be distinguished as more frequent collocation or not frequent. On the other hand, the significance based approach views collocation as word combination, most commonly as one that is fixed to some degree but not completely.

From the above discussion of the concept collocation, it is clear that collocation is regarded to be co-occurrence of words. Regarding collocation as co-occurrence of words seem to emphasize the statistical understanding of the term. According to Seratan (2011), a statistical understanding of the term collocation is broader. Therefore, Seratan suggests that the term collocation needs to be understood from a linguistically motivated view. From this view, items in collocation need to be syntactically-related i.e. fulfilling the syntactically well-formedness criteria which "implies that the collocational span is the phrase, clause or, at most, the sentence containing these words" (Seratan, 2011, p.13). This argument advanced by Seratan (2011) is explicitly catered for in a node-collocate theory of Stubbs (2002).

The node collocate theory by Stubbs (2002) is a useful theory of looking at lexical collocation. Stubbs (2002) defines collocation as "a lexical relation between two or more words that have a tendency to co-occur within a few words of each other in running text" (p. 24). He views collocation in terms of a span which consists of a node and collocates. These collocates can be reflected both on the right side and left side of the node. For instance, if the node is a noun, it can have collocates on both sides as in the example below;

(1) The tall building along the road

In the above example, the node is *building* and collocates are *tall* on the left side and *along the road* on the right side. However, Stubbs (2002) points out that the node and collocates are defined depending on the study being carried out. He, therefore, defines node as the lemma being investigated and collocates as word-forms that co-occur with the word form being investigated. The theory is summarised as a node framework <Collocates...node...Collocates> and find out what the possible collocates are depending on the interest of the researcher.

Moreover, a node-collocate pair do not need to be immediately next to one another but they can be relatively near to one another. Stubbs (2002, p.29) stipulates that "there is some consensus, but no total agreement that collocates are usually found in a span of 4:4 as Sinclair and Jones (1997) argue". This implies that it is possible to find collocates at a quite long distance from the node. Taking into consideration that the lemma being studied are adjectives, and adjectives can occur both attributively and predicatively in giving attribute to nouns, this free span of identifying collocates suggested by Stubbs

was therefore relevant and adequate for the this study and hence the researcher employed node collocate theory to discuss the collocability of English mental capacity evaluative adjectives.

Methodology

This study was a corpus-based study and the data for analysis were electronically drawn from corpus. According to Biber and Conrad (2001), the use of large, representative electronic database of spoken or written texts is one of the unifying characteristics of corpus-based research. The study analyzed five selected evaluative mental capacity adjectives namely *smart, clever, bright, sharp,* and *intelligent.* These adjectives were selected on the reasons that these adjectives are not derived from other parts of speech. The criterion was set because the researcher aimed at getting a clear essence of mental evaluative adjectives without some association of adjectival meanings from other parts of speech (in case included) from which they are derived.

The data used in this study were mainly primary data that were drawn from the British National Corpus particularly the BNC (untagged) and the BYU-BNC (tagged): The British National Corpus (BNC) acted as the primary source of data, and the BYU-BNC was a supplementary source of data because it provides an expanded context of the word unlike the simple BNC. The British National Corpus was chosen to be the source of data because it is the only available source of electronic data which represents a wide cross-section of current British English and contains a large number of data since it is a 100 million word collection) (http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/).

The type of data analyzed were only those sentences containing the studied evaluative adjectives (s*mart, clever, bright, sharp,* and *intelligent*) but referring to mental capacity. A number of steps were involved in retrieving the data from the corpus namely opening the BNC available online at *http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/*, typing in the search box at the BNC start page a particular adjective example intelligent, which in turn displayed sentences in which the word has been used and copying all the sentences to the Microsoft word document for analysis.

Data were extracted in cycles (displayed sentences in a single online search). Each cycle contained 50 displayed sampled sentences from which the sentences containing the studied adjectives were selected. Each cycle of analysis contained only fifty (50) sentences because it is the maximum number of sentences displayed online in a single cycle or search. Each adjective was analyzed in a maximum of four cycles. This makes the total number of 1000 sentences that were analysed where each adjective contains 200sentences from which the desired sentences reflecting mental capacity were selected.

The data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative analysis is based on the identification and explanation of nouns that collocate with evaluative mental capacity adjectives in their context of use. The quantitative analysis was mainly used in accounting for the frequency of occurrence of evaluative mental capacity adjectives (i.e. in a total number of sentences analyzed the adjective appear how many times referring to mental capacity value). The use of the quantitative analysis, as McEnery & Wilson, (2001) put it, is to assist the understanding of the rarity or frequency of evaluative mental capacity adjectives in current usage in English. Simple Concordance Program version 4.0 was used to analyze the collocations of the adjectives under study.

Findings

As pointed above the research investigated the kinds of nouns that collocate with evaluative mental capacity adjectives. Generally, the findings on collocability of evaluative mental capacity adjectives show that there are three categories of nouns that can collocate with *bright, intelligent, clever, sharp* and *smart*. Let it be understood here that pronouns are treated as a type of noun since they stand in the position of a noun. For that reason, the three types of nouns that collocate with evaluative mental capacity

adjectives are common nouns, pronouns, and proper nouns. However, results are presented in two major categories namely common nouns collocates and proper and pronoun collocates. The reason behind this categorization is the nature of appearance of the collocates. Common nouns are collocates that appear in the attributive use of adjectives and proper nouns and pronouns are collocates that appear in the predicative use of adjectives.

Common nouns as collocates of bright, intelligent sharp clever and *smart.*

All five adjectives prove to collocate highly with common nouns. Even though all collocate with common nouns but they demonstrate variability in the kind of common nouns that they collocate with.

Bright has demonstrated to collocate mainly with two categories of common nouns namely the concrete nouns and the untouchable product of human mind i.e. abstract nouns. Among the concrete nouns that collocate with *bright,* speakers of English prefer to use *bright* with *child* and *students*. This implies that there is a preference for using *bright* in describing or evaluating young intellectually gifted people. The appearance of these collocates is presented in KWIC (Key Word In Context) as follows.

Words never end in -ley", some ***bright child*** *asks, "What about valley*
By all accounts Selina was a ***bright child*** *who ended up as head*
Despite this, she was a ***bright child*** *and did well at school*
But what can we do to help the ***bright child*** *who works well during*
Mr Wong said his friend was a ***bright student*** *and a caring person*
her appointment. /He had been a ***bright student****, but his work had*

The second category of common nouns that collocate with *bright* is abstract nouns. The abstract nouns that have shown to co-occur with *bright* are *idea* and *start*. Both shows that *bright* is also used to comment or give value on someone's suggestion or plan for a course of action or how the beginning of an activity was carried out. The collocability, however, of *bright* with *idea* is not restrictive to young age. Even though *bright* might be associated with young people, when it collocates with *idea*, *bright* does not necessarily refer to young people but to any person who manifests outstanding idea. The following KWIC (Key Word In Context) demonstrates the collocation of *bright* with *start* and *idea.*

A national suggestions box for ***bright ideas***
Someone has had the ***bright idea*** *of bringing on the JB*
Please contact me with any ***bright ideas*** *for a venue*
They had fallen behind in a ***bright start*** *by Bangor*
Despite a ***bright start****, Liverpool were eventually*

Even though *idea* and *start* are the common abstract nouns used with *bright* in reference to mental capacity, the preference of using *bright* is more with *idea* compared to *start*. The reason might be that *start*, as the data shows, is more restricted to the context of sports whereas *idea* almost cuts across all registers.

Intelligent on the other hand, collocates with common nouns denoting occupation, nouns related to cognitive actions, nouns of generic reference to human being, and nouns of generic reference to male and female. Nouns denoting occupation that collocate with *intelligent* are categorized into two namely; names of people reflecting their job and names of people reflecting their profession. Names of people reflecting their jobs include *missionary, invaders, investors* and *newspaper reader*. Nouns of people reflecting their profession are *scientist, technical innovator, teacher* and *player*. Other nouns that collocate with *intelligent* are non-human nouns which are related to cognitive action. These nouns include *question, evaluation, interpretation* and *reply*. The following KWIC (Key Word In Context) shows how *intelligent* collocates with nouns denoting occupation and nouns related to cognitive actions.

*will go up, and they're **intelligent people**, and they*
*have gathered this much. /**Intelligent people** give or at least*
*You know we were **intelligent people** who asked*
*for animals/ An **intelligent human** would know enough*
*character of a rational and **intelligent being**, not in that of the majority*
*know a policeman, a young and **intelligent man**, who trained in*
*He's an **intelligent man**, but his heart was*
*An **intelligent man** who gave much*
*'An **intelligent woman** deliberately*

The collocates of *intelligent* give us the implication that it is an adjective that is widely used in giving value to a person's mental ability or an action resulting from the use of one's mental capabilities. Compared to *bright*, *intelligent* is less used with abstract noun. In the analyzed data, for instance, the abstract noun *idea* occurred once. Also *intelligent* is distinguished from *bright* in the sense that it is not restricted to giving value to young people rather it covers all ages.

Sharp demonstrates that it collocates with abstract nouns related to the way of noticing things (perception nouns). These nouns are *mind, eye* and *ear*. Also *sharp* collocates with nouns denoting occupation i.e. job (*observer*) and profession (player). Of all the kinds of common nouns that collocate with *sharp*, the abstract noun *mind* is the preferred noun that is associated with *sharp*. This conclusion is made based on the frequency of occurrence of *mind* with *bright* compared to other nouns. This is explicitly shown in the following KWIC (Key Word In Context).

*A journalist with an extremely **sharp mind**/ Whether or not he would*
*generally considered to be the **sharp mind** and highly effective set*
*but had a quick, **sharp mind** of considerable*
*Mrs Shephard a mild manner, a **sharp mind** and a rapid rise — but*
*Technology) at ICI, provided a **sharp mind** and clarity of thought you— these*
*journalists wield a **sharp mind** and an even sharper pen*
*of the countryside, a **sharp mind** and a willingness to*
*could do was hope that Lisa's **sharp mind** would fail to make the*
*legendary, but he had too a **sharp eye** for pictures./She has a*
*eye for pictures./She has a **sharp eye** for a toy boy/ That Mr*
*absorbing challenge./With a **sharp ear** for dialogue and an eye*
*learn./ 'Fintan is a clever, **sharp player** and I feel he will*

As reflected in the concordances above, it is evident that *sharp* is preferably used to evaluate or give value to one's mind. Whatever one does or how one behaves is therefore associated with the sharpness of one's mind. Still other nouns can be used with *sharp* as pointed above.

On the other hand, *clever* collocates with a range of nouns that include nouns denoting profession, cognitive action, practice as a result of education and names of people undertaking study in educational institutions. *Lawyer* is the noun denoting profession that has shown to highly collocate with *clever*, as it appears more than once. Nouns denoting cognitive action that collocates with *clever* include *thinkers* and *deal makers*. *Pupil, undergraduates* and *scholars* are names of people undertaking study in educational institutions that collocate with *clever*. Lastly an example of nouns denoting an action as a result of education and practice that collocate with *clever* is *ball control*. The following KWIC (Key Word In Context) presents a summary of these collocates.

*it all in the right way./ Now **clever lawyers** have figured a way*
*guard their wallets from other **clever lawyers** intent on raiding*
*Some **lawyers** are typified as **'clever'**, others as 'stupid'; the*
*and I will show you a very **clever liar**/ Some lawyers are*
*all./ Winners They were the **clever deal makers** with an*
*1920s, remembers him for his **clever ball control**./ He was*

*all, it's all help from God but **clever thinkers** have decided to*
*France: 'One would swear that a **clever pupil** of the Cubists and*
*of the Cubists and an even **cleverer pupil** of Signac had*
*view affects more than just **clever scholars**; I believe that*
*man./ Oh you old clever dick/ **Clever undergraduates** liked them*

However, collocates of *clever* are not restricted to nouns denoting occupation, activities, and education. The adjective collocates with other several nouns such as nouns denoting young age, and generic reference. These collocates are presented below in which the noun *lass* and *pupil* denote young age and *man* and *woman* denote generic reference of male and female respectively.

*was a clever man/ 'She's a **clever lass**, you know; she*
*'One would swear that a **clever pupil** of the Cubists and*
*of the Cubists and an even **cleverer pupil** of Signac had*
*I never was/ Well, you're a **clever** young **woman**, Ruth Appleby*
*clever wife/ But he was a very **clever**, interesting **man**./*
*sake, Laura, you're a **clever woman**/ After all, I have*

Lastly, *smart* has shown to combine with a range of common nouns. These nouns are either informal, denoting occupation or activity. The informal nouns that collocate with *smart* are kind and guy and it is evidenced in the following sentences.

(2). What he really wanted to do was show what a ***smart,*** concerned ***guy*** he was (B/5)
(3). Once woken by her fourteen stones hitting the deck with the play-bike on top, no amount of cotton wool beard or red dressing gown was going to convince a ***smart kid*** like me that those Australian curses and bandy legs stockinged in green wool belonged to Father Christmas. (A/6)

The use of *smart* with informal nouns implies that it is the adjective that is used informally to denote someone's mental ability. Compared to other adjectives such as *intelligent*, *sharp* and *bright*, it is only *smart* that has demonstrated to collocate with informal nouns. Even though *clever* shows, to certain instances, to go with informal noun *dick* but it is used in the sense of describing someone who is annoying hence a negative value given to a person. On contrary, the use of *smart* with informal nouns does not imply negative value. Other nouns that collocate with *smart* are nouns denoting occupation such as *operator, businesswoman* and *worker.* Example sentences are given below.

(4) 'Hilary's a ***smart operator*** (A/8)
(5). The deeply-exotic singer is, at least by pop standards, a ***smart businesswoman.*** (B/6)
(6). You can no longer say, 'OK, but there will be a ***smart worker*** who will learn how to do that in half the time it takes now' (B/2)

The above examples show that *smart* can collocate with nouns denoting occupation like the previous discussed adjective. However, there might be some differences in meaning that might be associated with this collocability. For instance the meaning of *smart businesswoman* is not equal to the *clever businesswoman* as it has been shown in the discussion of the first question.

To conclude this section, the studied adjectives based on the analyzed data (to convey the concept of mental capacity) show variability in the kind of nouns that collocate with. The entire five adjective were compared and contrasted based on features of nouns that collocate with them. These features are nouns denoting occupation, cognitive action, human generic reference, gender, age, cognitive possession, perception and names of people in the education field. The summary of the contrast is provided in a table below.

Table 1.
A summary of Common Nouns that collocate with each Adjective to reflect the sense of Evaluative Mental Capacity

Adjectives	Noun collocates										
	Occupation		Cognitive action	Human generic reference	Gender		Age		Cognitive possession(idea)	Perception nouns (mind, eye, ear)	Education related nouns
	Profession	Job			Male	Female	Young	Adult			
bright					✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
intelligent	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
sharp	✓	✓								✓	
clever	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
smart	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				

Pronouns and Proper nouns as collocates of bright, intelligent sharp clever and smart

As pointed above, pronouns and proper nouns are grouped in the same category because of the reason that both are used predicatively with adjectives. However, each is treated under a separate discussion.

Pronouns, likewise common nouns, have demonstrated to be collocates of these adjectives. As mentioned before, pronouns are treated here as one category of nouns because all have properties of nouns and they can stand in positions of nouns. The findings on this category of nouns show that pronouns collocate with these adjectives mostly in predicative position. A summary of pronoun-adjective collocates is provided for illustration in table 2 below

Table 2.
Pronoun-adjectives collocates of *bright, intelligent, sharp, clever*, and *smart*.

Pronoun	*Bright*	*Intelligent*	*Sharp*	*Clever*	*Smart*
I	0	0	0	3	1
me	0	0	0	0	1
You	0	2	0	1	4
He	3	5	1	4	2
She	1	6	0	3	0
They	0	0	1	4	2
Others	1	3	1	0	0
TOTAL	**5**	**16**	**3**	**15**	**10**

The above table (2) indicates that *bright*, and *sharp* are least used with pronouns. However, it might be unfair to make a strong conclusion bearing in mind that these are the adjectives that have demonstrated to be least used in reference to mental capabilities of a person. For illustration and discussion, the adjectives *intelligent, clever* and *smart* are mainly taken into consideration because they have at least a reasonable number of usages with pronouns. A general view is that neither of

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the adjectives seems to collocate with all kinds of pronouns. However, *clever* seems to be used with all pronouns except *me*. The explanation that can be provided is that all the five adjectives except *smart* are not used with pronoun *me*; even when used with *smart* it seems to be a complement of a preposition *of* as can be seen in the following sentence

(7) It wasn't very ***smart of me*** to upset the guy in the first place(C/5)

Therefore, it may be said that *me* is not a productive pronoun in collocating with these adjectives. With this remark therefore, *clever* stands out to be the adjective that can be used with all the identified pronouns.

Looking at the three adjectives *intelligent, clever* and *smart*, they exhibit differences in terms of collocability with pronouns. *Smart* seems to collocate more with the second person pronoun *you*, *intelligent* with the third person pronoun *she*, and *clever* with the third person plural *they*. The explanation to this aspect can be attributed in one instance to preference of usage. For instance, the table (2) shows that the second person pronoun *you* appears in all the three adjectives but appears more with *smar*t. On the other hand, as far as the data shows, probably there are some restrictions or no preferences among the British speakers in the use of the third pronoun *she* with *smart* or the second pronoun *you* with *intelligent* to refer to one's mental capacity.

Comparing the collocability of the third pronoun *he* with *intelligent, clever* and *smart*, it is clear that the pronoun collocates more with *intelligent* and *clever* rather than with *smart*. It can, therefore, be concluded that the use of *smart* with, especially, third pronouns do not invoke the sense of mental capabilities rather a sense of appearance.

In another instance, the distribution of, especially frequently occurring, pronoun collocates can be explained in terms of politeness point of view. Looking at the three adjectives; *intelligent, clever* and *smart*, mostly they seem to collocate with pronouns that indicate others and not self. *Intelligent* mostly collocate with *he* and *she*, *clever* collocate mostly with *he* and *they* and *smart* collocate mostly with *you*. In this case, it shows that British speakers adhere to approbation and modesty maxim (Leech, 1983). Approbation maxim requires one to maximize praise of other whereas modesty maxim requires one to maximize dispraising of oneself. Thus, commenting positively on oneself or to use Leech's words 'praising oneself' is to "commit the social transgression of boasting" (1983, p.136). Therefore, this is culture-bound.

Proper noun is the last category of nouns that collocate with an evaluative mental capacity adjective. These nouns behave like pronouns in that adjective collocate with them predicatively. This category of nouns seems not to be productive in collocating with the studied adjective in a sense of giving value to mental capacities of a person.

For instance, there is only one occasion in which *bright* collocate with proper nouns, and two occasions where *smart* collocate with proper nouns. *Intelligent* and *clever* have at least more than three occurrences where they collocate with proper nouns. The following KWIC supports the argument.

*Mathematics/**James** was not very **bright** at school but learnt many manual*
*youth, something **Turman** was **smart** enough to recognise/What*
*African ladies/**Old Rudolf** being **smart** enough to pull a trick*
***Leonard** is cheerful, **intelligent**, and pleasant to*
***Prince** was too sensitive, too **intelligent**, to play the part mapped*
***Gielgud** is acute, highly **intelligent** and concerned to help*
*that the **Masai** were 'more **intelligent** than, and of a type*
*and **Jessica** was far too **intelligent**, and caught her drift*
***Arthur Koestler** is a very **clever**, knowledgeable and*
***The Act of Creation** is very **clever** too') largely for the*
*what I mean: **Lizzie** was **clever**, bright; I never was/ Well*
*and **Mutty Michelle's** very **clever**./This is very clever of*

enormous range./ ***Buchanan*** *is* ***clever****/ In Britain the hostility*
*'****Harold*** *was very* ***clever****./ Charles Handy says that*
very clever./This is very ***clever*** *of* ***Brutus,*** *saying that he*
PAUL *appears...is in fact very* ***clever****,*

From the above data, it is obvious that *sharp* does not occur at all with proper nouns. As for these findings, it is concluded that *sharp* has selection restriction to proper nouns. In regard to all adjectives, it is evident that proper nouns are not productive in co-occurring with the studied adjective in reference to mental capacity. Since proper nouns are names of specific person, it can be established that speakers of British English least specify a person when commenting on his or her mental capability.

Generally, collocates of *bright, intelligent, sharp, clever* and *smart* can be said to be of two categories. These categories are left collocate and right collocate. The categories are identified based on the fact that adjectives can be used both attributively and predicatively. Among the two usages "attributive usage of adjectives results in a more integrated structure than predicative ones because predicative adjectives require an entire clause to present the same information contained in a noun phrase with an attributive adjective" (Biber and Conrad, 2002, p.86).

However, not all collocates of these adjectives were immediately identified after the node. Some of the collocates were immediately identified whereas others were identified at a distance to mean that there were words in between the node and the collocate. This finding, therefore, proves the credibility of using the node collocate theory by Stubbs (2002) because it has given the researcher wider chance in identifying collocates of the studied adjective. The identified collocates of the studied adjectives as identified earlier are categorized into three namely common nouns, proper nouns and pronouns. Of the three categories, pronoun and proper nouns were identified as left collocates whereas common nouns were identified as right collocates.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that evaluative mental capacity adjectives collocate with nouns referring to the human being of particular reference or nouns related to human being such as parts of the body. Also, the evaluative mental capacity adjectives collocate with nouns related to human being's actions or deeds. It has been also established that these adjectives show variability in collocating with common nouns, proper nouns, and pronouns. Furthermore, nouns which collocate with these adjectives affect the meaning of these adjectives given a context of use. Thus, it is concluded that these adjectives (in a sense of mental capacity) are generally related to human beings though there might be some variation where other nouns are used with these adjectives to denote mental capabilities. This can be said to be equated to human functions or sometimes those nouns are used in a personification way.

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