A) RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT
Even very advanced L2 speakers with massive input are known to have difficulties with lexical collocation, the statistical association between syntagmatically related words (e.g. utter failure, run risk). One possible explanation for this phenomenon may lie in the more limited role that anticipation plays in L2 processing. Anticipation, and prediction, have recently been identified as key components of implicit, error-driven learning: if speaker-generated predictions are not met during online processing, the resulting error signal can be used to adjust the speaker’s knowledge base. Given that collocational knowledge is characterised by mutual expectancy between words, collocational processing is a fruitful ground to investigate the role of predictive processes in online L2 learning.

B) REFERENCES THAT SHOULD BE READ (if you do not have access to these, please email me)

C) RESEARCH AIMS / QUESTIONS
The project will investigate the role of predictive learning mechanisms, in which learning emerges as a consequence of unmet speaker-generated expectations, in collocation processing in L1 and L2 speakers. It will thus attempt to establish whether and when, online adaptation (learning) might be expected to occur during incidental exposure to language.

D) METHODS
You will use a combination of on and off-line methodologies, including eyetracking, lexical decision, and production measures. Participants will include both mono and bilinguals.

E) SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU COULD GAIN
You will gain knowledge of advanced experimental and statistical methods.