

**COLLOCATIONAL ERROR TYPES IN THE WRITING
OF IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS**

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ABSTRACT

Collocations are one of the most important concerns in EFL classes and materials. The significance of second language learners possessing some knowledge of collocations is now widely recognized. The learning of collocations can provide advantages such as increasing learners' language competence and also enhancing learners' communicative competence. Hence collocation knowledge is essential for EFL learners while collocation instructions in EFL courses become a necessity. EFL learners such as Persian learners of English make many collocational errors in their writing and in their speaking due to a lack of collocation competence in English. For instance, Persian/Iranian EFL learners say "*learn knowledge*" rather than "*gain/acquire knowledge*", because in Persian the noun "*knowledge*" co-occurs with the verb "*learn*" instead of "*gain/acquire*". Due to this gap, it would seem necessary for teachers teaching EFL in Iran to enhance their own collocation knowledge and through this competence; they can help to raise the awareness of EFL learners' errors. Hence, it would pay for the education ministry, curriculum designers and teachers to help EFL learners to pay attention to their mis-collocations when producing the target language. In this way, EFL learners find out that it is necessary for them not only to learn new words but also to be familiar with word combinations.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate what kind of collocation errors are made by Iranian EFL university learners and also to attempt to identify the collocational error types and the frequency of collocation error types made by Iranian postgraduates in their writing. In addition, the sources of Iranian EFL university learners' collocation errors are also discussed in the present study.

The hypothesis of the study is that Iranian EFL learners make more lexical collocation errors than grammatical collocation errors, since grammar is emphasized in classes. In the present study, the definition of collocations focused on co-occurrence of words.

The subjects in the present study are 60 Iranian postgraduate university students studying at a public university in Malaysia. They had all studied English as a foreign language in guidance school and high school for 6 years, graduated from high schools. All of them have passed the Academic Writing course offered by the university they are attending and an English course which is a mandatory course for the completion of their degree. They have been here at least for 2 years. The subjects' ages are between 22 and 35 and all of them are native speakers of Persian.

The data were collected from the subjects. The data included 60 copies of the subjects' writing samples. The subjects were asked to write on one of three topics provided to them as tasks and the length can be around 150-200 words. The unacceptable grammatical and lexical collocational errors were then manually identified based on the classification of collocations proposed by Benson et al. (1986). The BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations, Associated Concordancer, and TANGO (a national e-learning project established by National Science Council) were also employed to analyze the subjects' collocational error and to provide suggestions for correction.

After analyzing the collected data, a total of 1664 collocations were found in the subjects' writings. Out of the 1664 collocations, 602 were lexical collocations and 1062 were grammatical collocations. From these total, it seems that the subjects had made 354 lexical collocational errors and only 71 grammatical collocational errors. So, the results showed that there were more lexical collocational errors (60.12 %) than grammatical collocational errors (7.42%) and this conforms to the hypothesis of the present study that

Iranian EFL learners make more lexical collocational errors than grammatical collocational errors. Regarding the types of lexical and grammatical collocational errors detected in the subjects' writing samples, the results revealed that all types of the lexical collocational errors occurred in the subjects' writing samples containing L1 (V + N), L2 (ADJ + N), L3 (N + V), L4 (N OF N), L5 (ADV + ADJ) and L6 (V + ADV). Moreover, the results indicated that ten types of the grammatical collocational errors including G1(N + Prep), G4 (prep + N), G5 (ADJ + Prep), G6 (ADJ + to Inf), G8(D) (V + Prep + O/ V + O + Prep + O), G8(E) (V + to Inf), G8(F) (V + bare Inf), G8(H) (V + O + to Inf), G8(I) (V + O + bare Inf) and G8(Q) (V + wh-clause/ wh-phrase / V + O + wh-clause/ wh-phrase) were found in subjects' writing samples. Concerning the frequency of the collocational error types, it was found that among the lexical collocational error types, L1(V+N) and L2 (Adj+N) errors were the most common in the subjects' writing samples. On the other hand, the results revealed that among the grammatical collocational errors, G8 (D) (V + Prep + O/ V + O + Prep + O) errors occurred the most frequently in the subjects' writing samples.

With respect to the sources of the collocational errors, it was found that 74.10% of the collocational errors resulted from four kinds of the intralingual transfer including *overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, misconception of verbs and the use of synonym*. On the other hand, 19.52% of the collocational errors were due to the interlingual transfer. Regarding paraphrase, only one of the communication strategies, *approximation* influenced the subjects' performance on their writing samples. Moreover, out of the seven types of the strategies employed, *the use of synonym* was the major source of the collocational errors, because 46.35% of the collocational errors resulted from *the use of synonym*. Out of the two types of transfer (*intralingual transfer* and *interlingual transfer*) more collocational errors resulted from the *intralingual transfer*. Among the four types of

the *intralingual transfer*, more collocational errors were due to *the use of synonym* than the other three. Only 6.35% of the collocational errors resulted from *approximation*.

It is suggested that further studies should have larger number of subjects such as Iranian postgraduate students studying at other universities in Malaysia to provide a clearer picture of Iranian EFL university learners' collocational errors.

ABSTRAK

Collocations adalah salah satu kebimbangan yang paling penting dalam kelas dan bahan-bahan EFL. Kepentingan pengetahuan gabungan kata-kata kepada pelajar-pelajar bahasa kedua kini diiktiraf secara meluas. Pembelajaran gabungan kata-kata mempunyai kelebihan seperti 'kemampuan Bahasa dan juga peningkatan pelajar pelajar meningkatkan kecekapan berkomunikasi. Oleh itu, pengetahuan gabungan kata-kata adalah penting untuk pelajar EFL dan arahan gabungan kata-kata di EFL kursus dikehendaki. Pelajar EFL membuat banyak kesilapan collocational secara bertulis mereka dan bercakap mereka kerana kekurangan kecekapan gabungan kata-kata dalam bahasa Inggeris. Sebagai contoh, Iran EFL pelajar berkata, "ilmu belajar" dan bukannya "mendapat / memperoleh pengetahuan", kerana dalam bahasa Parsi, kata nama "pengetahuan" bersama berlaku dengan kata kerja "belajar" dan bukannya "keuntungan / memperoleh". Jadi, guru-guru juga perlu meningkatkan pengetahuan gabungan kata-kata pelajar EFL melalui meningkatkan kesedaran mereka collocations. Oleh itu, ia berkesan untuk membantu pelajar EFL untuk memberi perhatian kepada salah-collocations mereka apabila menghasilkan bahasa. Dengan cara ini, pelajar EFL mengetahui bahawa adalah perlu bagi mereka bukan sahaja untuk mempelajari perkataan baru tetapi juga membiasakan diri dengan kombinasi perkataan. Oleh itu, pelajar EFL perlu tahu kedua-dua apa yang betul dan apa yang salah. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menyiasat apa jenis kesilapan gabungan kata-kata yang dibuat oleh pelajar universiti EFL Iran dan juga cuba untuk mengenalpasti jenis ralat gabungan kata-kata dan kekerapan jenis kesilapan gabungan kata-kata dalam penulisan mereka. Di samping itu, sumber-sumber ralat gabungan kata-kata Iran EFL universiti pelajar akan dibincangkan dalam kajian ini.

Hipotesis kajian ini adalah Iran EFL pelajar membuat kesilapan gabungan kata-kata yang lebih leksikal daripada kesilapan gabungan kata-kata tatabahasa, kerana tatabahasa ditekankan dalam kelas. Dalam kajian ini, definisi collocations memberi tumpuan kepada kejadian bersama kata-kata.

Subjek dalam kajian ini adalah 60 Iran universiti pelajar pasca siswazah yang belajar di Universiti Malaya. Mereka semua belajar bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa asing di sekolah bimbingan dan sekolah menengah selama 6 tahun, berkelulusan dari sekolah-sekolah yang tinggi. Kesemua mereka telah lulus kursus Penulisan Akademik dan kursus bahasa Inggeris di universiti sebagai kursus wajib untuk menyiapkan ijazah mereka. Mereka telah berada di sini sekurang-kurangnya selama 2 tahun. Umur subjek adalah di antara 22 dan 35 dan semua mereka adalah penutur asli Parsi.

Data yang dikumpul daripada subjek. Data termasuk 60 salinan sampel penulisan mata pelajaran '. Mata pelajaran telah diminta untuk menulis pada salah satu daripada tiga topik di sekitar 150-200 perkataan. Kesilapan collocational tidak boleh diterima tatabahasa dan leksikal telah dikenal pasti berdasarkan klasifikasi collocations yang dicadangkan oleh Benson et al. (1986). Kamus BBI Gabungan Kata dalam Bahasa Inggeris, Concordancer Bersekutu, dan Tango (projek e-pembelajaran kebangsaan yang ditubuhkan oleh Majlis Sains Negara) telah digunakan untuk menganalisis kesilapan collocational mata pelajaran dan untuk memberikan cadangan untuk pembedahan.

Selepas menganalisis data yang dikumpul, sejumlah 1664 collocations ditemui dalam tulisan-tulisan mata pelajaran. Daripada 1664 collocations, 602 adalah collocations leksikal dan 1062 adalah collocations tatabahasa. Mata pelajaran telah membuat 354 collocational kesilapan leksikal dan hanya 71 kesilapan collocational tatabahasa. Oleh itu, keputusan menunjukkan bahawa terdapat lebih banyak kesilapan leksikal collocational (60,12%)

daripada kesilapan tatabahasa collocational (7.42%) dan ini sesuai dengan hipotesis kajian ini bahawa Iran EFL pelajar membuat lebih banyak kesilapan leksikal collocational daripada kesilapan tatabahasa collocational. Mengenai jenis collocational kesilapan leksikal dan tatabahasa dalam mata pelajaran 'sampel bertulis, keputusan mendedahkan bahawa semua jenis kesilapan leksikal collocational yang berlaku dalam mata pelajaran sampel bertulis yang mengandungi L1 (V + N), L2 (adj + N), L3 (N + V), L4 (N N), L5 (ADV + adj) dan L6 (V + ADV). Selain itu, keputusan menunjukkan bahawa sepuluh jenis kesalahan tatabahasa collocational ditemui dalam sampel subjek bertulis termasuk G1 (N + Prep), G4 (prep + N), G5 (adj + Prep), G6 (adj + untuk Mesin), G8 (D) (V + Prep + O / V + O + Prep + O), G8 (E) (V + untuk Mesin) G8 (F) (V + kosong Mesin), G8 (H) (V + O + Mesin), G8 (I) (V + O + kosong Mesin) dan G8 (Q) (V + wh-fasal / wh-frasa / V + O + wh-fasal / wh-frasa). Mengenai kekerapan jenis ralat collocational, didapati bahawa di antara jenis kesilapan leksikal collocational, L1 (V + N) dan L2 (Penyesuaian + N) kesilapan adalah yang paling dalam sampel 'menulis mata pelajaran. Sebaliknya, keputusan mendedahkan bahawa antara kesilapan-kesilapan tatabahasa collocational, G8 (D) (V + Prep + O / V + O + Prep + O) berlaku kesilapan yang paling kerap dalam sampel 'menulis mata pelajaran.

Dengan berkenaan dengan sumber-sumber kesilapan collocational, ia mendapati bahawa 74,10% daripada kesilapan-kesilapan collocational akibat daripada empat jenis pemindahan intralingual termasuk overgeneralization, kejahilan sekatan peraturan, salah faham kata kerja dan penggunaan sinonim. Sebaliknya, 19,52% daripada kesilapan-kesilapan collocational disebabkan pemindahan interlingual. Mengenai parafrasa, hanya salah satu daripada strategi komunikasi, penghampiran mempengaruhi prestasi mata pelajaran pada sampel bertulis mereka. Lebih-lebih lagi, daripada tujuh jenis strategi yang digunakan,

penggunaan sinonim adalah punca utama kesilapan collocational, kerana 46,35% daripada kesilapan-kesilapan collocational akibat daripada penggunaan sinonim. Daripada kedua-dua jenis pemindahan (transfer intralingual dan pemindahan interlingual) kesilapan lebih collocational hasil daripada pemindahan intralingual. Antara empat jenis pemindahan intralingual, kesilapan yang lebih collocational disebabkan oleh penggunaan sinonim daripada tiga orang lain. Hanya 6,35% daripada kesilapan-kesilapan collocational akibat daripada penghampiran.

Adalah dicadangkan bahawa kajian lanjut boleh mempunyai bilangan mata pelajaran yang lebih besar seperti pelajar pascasiswazah Iran yang belajar di universiti-universiti lain di Malaysia untuk kekal sebagai satu gambaran yang jelas kesilapan collocational Iran EFL universiti pelajar.

To my dear parents,
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