

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

One of the most difficult aspects of the English language to be acquired in a setting where English is taught as a Foreign Language (EFL) class is how words are collocated. As a component of syntax and grammar, the collocation of words and its proper usage is a challenge for foreign students especially those in countries where English is hardly spoken but yet is taught for educational purposes.

The benefits of learning word collocations are immense as it is not just about learning words but also about how certain words are placed in concordance with others. Having a good command of word collocations illustrates a speaker's high level of proficiency in that target language thus, it can be said that the successful learning of word collocations in a foreign language context can also contribute to building a learner's self esteem and confidence. This is because a good command of word collocations, particularly of English, facilitates good writing skills and good writing skill is an ability that is very much in demand in various industries. In formal classroom learning, the knowledge learners acquire from learning about word collocations can also help to increase their language competence as well as accentuate their communicative competence. Both these areas are essential to language learning. However, in foreign contexts where learners hardly hear English nor ever get the chance to practice the target language, learning about word collocations becomes a challenge. In that regard, it would seem that word collocation instructions in EFL courses is necessary. In the same respect, teachers teaching the English language in foreign contexts will also need to enhance their own knowledge of word collocations. In addition, they also need to instill this knowledge among their EFL learners by raising their

awareness of such collocations. One such strategy of raising learners' awareness is through highlighting their misuse of collocations, i.e. when they make mistakes in using them, whether when speaking or writing in the target language. Perhaps, it may also be necessary to introduce a list of new words to these learners on a regular basis so that they can be familiarized with the word combinations. However, what evidence can be extracted in order to highlight to the learners as well as the teachers that such a phenomenon exist? This study will henceforth serve as the undertaking to provide some evidence to illustrate some of the samples of errors made by Iranian students and also as a justification as to why Iranian EFL teachers need to familiarize themselves with the various types of collocational errors made by Iranian EFL learners. If these EFL teachers know what type of collocational errors are being made by the EFL learners frequently especially in writing, the teachers would then be able to give the component more emphasis while teaching English in the EFL context. This may also impel the requirement to provide classroom texts that encompass the teaching and learning of word collocations.

English is an international language because it is the language most references are written in. Despite being one of the most internationally sought after language to learn and acquire, English is a language that is not regular unlike other languages like Malay or Mandarin because of its tense and the way words are collocated when used in concordance with each other. For instance a speaker can say '*light*' which carries a different meaning depending on whether it is used as a noun or as an adjective. However, when you use the word as a verb, it has to concur with another word as in '*come to light*' which means *become visible*, or '*see the light of...*' which means to *understand* (Cobuild & Sinclair, 2006). This indicates that there is a need to provide learners in an EFL context the space to acquire such aspect of the English language. The examples of the collocation of words

exemplified shows so complexity of the nature of the language and this can therefore be used as a reason to explain why learning the English language in west Asian countries such as Iran or Iraq can be a struggle especially when the target language is rarely used as a language of communication, even in learning institutions as it is merely taught as a subject. While learners in these countries struggle to equip themselves with the international language of English so that they can be at par with other nations which use English as an international language, these learners will constantly be faced with the challenge of saying the wrong things especially when it involves word collocations. Instances of this kind can be embarrassing for learners as well as professionals who have not acquired the competence from young. In that regard, the significance of learning word collocations especially among foreign language learners from a younger age, most suitably from secondary schools, would be an asset. This particular linguistic knowledge can help them in their adult lives by enhancing their careers and personal development. The acquisition of word collocation is beneficial for foreign students as it is for second language learners and the benefits have been highlighted (Brown, 1974; Channell, 1981; Bahns, 1993; Howarth, 1998). Studies (Channell, 1981; Farghal and Obiedat, 1995; Koosha and Jafarpour, 2006; Webb & Kagimoto (2009)) which focus on collocational errors made by EFL learners have been conducted in the past and they reveal that EFL learners make many collocational errors in their writing and speaking because of their lack of awareness.

For the purpose of discussing the findings of this study, it is relevant to provide some background information about the current situation of learning and teaching the English language in Iran, where the participants involved in this study originate from.

### **1.1.1 Background of Iran**

Iran is located in the Middle East. In Iran, the official language is Persian. English is taught as a foreign language in this country but only as a subject. In recent years, the English language has become an important language in Iran due to technological development but the speed at which it is being acquired is not parallel to the speed it is being employed all over the world. This therefore puts Iran quite far behind in terms of catching up with other nations.

In Iran, education starts at the pre-school level and continues through primary (elementary) school, guidance school and then high school. Children are 5 years old when they go to pre-school which lasts for a year. Primary or elementary school comes after pre-school and this lasts for 5 years. This is then followed by guidance school which lasts for 3 years and finally high school which lasts for 4 years.

English instruction starts in the first grade of the guidance school and continues into high school. After graduating from high school and receiving their diploma, it is possible for the students to participate in university entrance examination in order to continue their studies. At schools and universities in Iran the medium of teaching is Persian. It is only in EFL classes that, there is an instance of English being used as a medium of teaching and this usually begins in the first grade of the guidance school (at the age of 11). In each academic year, only one English course is provided to students thus it can be said that Iranian students are taught 7 English courses during their guidance school (3 years) and also during high school (4 years). In Iranian EFL classes, Reading, Grammar and Vocabulary are given much emphasis. English books used in Iranian schools also tend to be inclined towards this area. For instance, such textbooks are likely to include sections such as those listed below:

Section 1(New Words): in this section new words are introduced to the students and are translated into Persian.

Section 2 (Reading): this section includes a text in English.

Section 3(Comprehension): this section consists of questions, true or false questions and multiple choice questions. Based on the text, the students would then answer the comprehension questions.

Section4 (Grammar): in this section there are exercises related to English grammar which students would answer.

Section 5 (Language Function): this section consists of a dialogue in a special context for example “*shopping, bargaining, introducing a friend, talking about a place, and requesting politely*”.

Section 6 (Vocabulary Review): in this section there are sentences with missing words which students need to fill in (the blanks) with proper or appropriate words.

Section 7 (Pronunciation Practice): in this section phonetics such as /u/, /ei/, /ai/, /u: /, etc are taught to students.

At universities, Iranian students need to pass General English (2 credit hours) and Special English (2 credit hours). English is not spoken in offices and institutions in the country, in fact, Iranians do not encounter great difficulties if they do not know English at all because they are proud of using their own language which is usually spoken with good care and attention. English is probably used by foreigners and those in industries which need to communicate with foreigners.

## 1.2 Research Problem

In the last few decades, the field of applied linguistics was focused on understanding how learners learn another language after their L1 and applied linguistics then revolved around contrastive analysis (Lado, 1957), an approach that was developed in order to understand learner problems in acquiring their L1. This approach was taken by researcher who compares learners' L1 and L2 so as to be able to detect their similarities and differences which would then be analyzed in order to illustrate how learners were influenced into making these errors of L2. This approach complied with the theory of Behaviourism (Skinner, 1963) which theorizes that learning is a result of stimulus, response, reinforcement and imitation. However, as time passes, it was found that what were stated in contrastive analysis do not always manifest themselves in the learning and the learners' error. The approach was then demystified by the onset of the introduction of the mentalist (Chomsky, 1959) approach which claims that language, especially L1, is acquired due to an innate capacity. Thus as learners learn their target language or L2, their mental processing is also activated. In that regard, error analysis (Corder, 1967) was developed in order to understand the mental processes of learning L2. This can be done by looking at the learner's error in L2 and then following a procedure to analyze these learner errors. Ellis (1986) provides a list of steps to follow. Nonetheless, error analysis usually focuses on the learning of English among second language learners.

Studies focusing on foreign language learners, especially those in Iran where the language is hardly used but is taught as a learning subject in schools, seems far in between. In particular, the few studies also conducted do not provide much information about the difficulty of using word collocations among Iranian learners of English. This gap has

resulted in a shortage of literature review focusing on the acquisition and learning of collocations among Iranian learners learning English as a foreign language.

### **1.3 Aim of the Study**

This study hence aims to identify the type of collocational errors made by Iranian EFL university learners. As collocational errors are of two types, this study will also attempt to identify the types of collocational errors made and to what extent is the frequency of these collocational error types. The study also aims to locate the possible sources which had contributed to the EFL learners' collocational errors.

### **1.4 Hypothesis**

In this study a hypothesis is dictated for the purpose of making an emphasis because English is being taught in a foreign context, unlike other countries where English is learnt as a second language. It is undeniable that different cultures have different ways of speaking thus how people speak and convey their messages will differ in terms of whether nouns, verbs or adjectives come first since every language has its own grammar system. Further, despite the fact that English has a particular grammar and syntax which all learners need to adhere to in order to be seen as competent in the language, it cannot be denied that errors made by the different foreign learners will also differ. In that regard, this study proposes a hypothesis. It is hypothesized that Iranian EFL university learners will make more lexical collocational errors than grammatical collocational errors because the teaching of grammar is emphasized and taught in the EFL classes whereas the collocation of words in terms of how nouns will collocate with certain verbs or adjectives is neither taught, nor emphasized. In this study, qualitative method is used for parameters that are not measurable

quantitatively while the amount of error which is measurable will be presented quantitatively.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

In the context of this study which proposes to investigate the use of collocations by Iranian EFL university learners, the following research questions are presented.

1. What collocational error types are made by postgraduate Iranian subjects?
2. What is the frequency of collocational error types made by postgraduate Iranian subjects?
3. What are the possible sources of the collocational errors made?

### **1.6 Limitations**

The aim of the present study is to investigate the collocational errors made by Iranian postgraduate students who come from an EFL learning context. It is hypothesized that these subjects will make two types of collocational errors with a tendency towards making lexical collocational errors. Based on the hypothesis and research questions of the study set out in this study the focus is thus on writing and on the collocational errors detected from these writing pieces. Learner language is expected to contain many errors apart from collocational errors for example errors in spelling and grammar. In this regard the researcher did not face any serious problem as the spelling errors were minimal in comparison and in the same regard the way words were used did not change very much. In addition, errors in grammar like tense errors, pronoun errors, and auxiliary errors were also excluded from examination in this study as these errors were not related to collocational errors. Therefore, the results of this study would not be affected.

Other types of errors such as morphological errors, punctuation errors, or stylistic, syntactic and rhetorical errors will also not be included in this study as these errors did not affect the result of the study.

Another limitation is that the present study is focused on 60 Iranian postgraduate students studying at a public university in Malaysia. Although all had studied English as a foreign language in guidance school (in Iran, guidance school is a level between primary school and high school which lasts 3 years) and high school (high school lasts 4 years) in Iran for 7 years and all had graduated from high schools in Iran, they are also individuals with distinctive personal traits and characteristics which may or may not affect their writing. Nonetheless, as postgraduate students, all the 60 participants will have to be reasonably competent in the English language because they are also expected to produce evidence of academic writing such as reports, research papers, theses and dissertations in their academic undertakings at the university. All the 60 subjects have also passed a compulsory English Proficiency Course which the institution requires. In this aspect, it can be said that the subjects had some homogenous background especially in terms of their language skills and level of competence in using English. In this aspect, their findings could not be generalized with Iranian students in Iran. This is because they had more exposure to the language than their counterparts in Iran.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is its benefits to EFL teachers in Iran teaching word collocations and lexis to EFL learners. These teachers will become more sensitive to these features of English and in return they would be able to give more emphasis to such a component when teaching in an EFL context. This study can also benefit Iranian EFL

learners by acquainting them with difficulties which they may face in learning collocations as well as raise their awareness of such components they need to acquire. In addition, EFL teachers and curriculum specialists will benefit from the findings of this study by familiarizing themselves with the types of collocations that could be difficult for EFL learners. The learning of collocations can help to increase learners' communicative competence and also enhance learners' language competence. Having a command in word collocations can also enable EFL learners to speak more fluently as well as make their speech more intelligible to others internationally. Simultaneously, this kind of competence and knowledge can facilitate their writing and oral skills (Wray, 2002, as cited in Fan, 2008). If EFL learners have a better understanding of word collocations, they will be able to produce sentences which are grammatically and semantically acceptable (Farghal & Obiedat, 1995; Bahns, 1993). It has been observed that Iranian EFL students seem to face great difficulties when English learning is related to prepositions. This research will thus provide some evidence of the types of grammatical and lexical collocational errors made by Iranian postgraduate students who come from an EFL learning context. In addition, the sources of these collocational errors will also be examined.

## **1.8 Definition of Collocation**

As different researchers perceive linguistic terms in different contexts, this section will provide a section which will look at how the term collocation is defined by different writers. First and foremost, it is noted that most researchers define collocations from the way words act in concordance with each other when used together.

As pioneers in looking at syntax, Halliday and Hasan (1976, as cited in Li, 2005, p. 7) looked at collocations from the aspect of discourse. They define collocations as “cohesive

effect of pairs of words such as *flame... candles, king...crown* and *hair...comb*". They explain that collocations are the tendency of a lexical item to co-occur with one or more words. Firth (1957, as cited in Fan, 2009) however, maintains that collocations are part of the word's meaning while Sinclair (1991, p.170) defines collocations as: "the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text". Fan (2009, p. 110) maintains that "collocation is an aspect of language generally considered arbitrary by nature and they can be problematic to L2 learners who need collocational competence for effective communication".

In the present study, the focus of word collocational errors will be on the co-occurrence of words in writing while the classification of word collocations will be based on the categories of collocations proposed by Benson et al. (1986) who grouped English collocations into two major groups: lexical collocations and grammatical collocations. They further divided lexical collocations into seven types while grammatical collocations were divided into eight types.

The classifications of collocations proposed by Benson et al (1986) is complete and comprehensive since it takes into account both lexical collocation types as well as grammatical collocation types. Also, they provided illustrative examples for each type of lexical and grammatical collocations. For example under L4 (see chapter 3 for explanation) collocations the following examples have been brought to light:

*Adjectives modify, bees buzz, blizzards rage, blood circulates, bombs explode* and *alarms go off*. More will be discussed in Chapter 3.

## **1.9 Summary**

This chapter has briefly mentioned the research problem, aim of the study, limitation, the three research questions as well as the significance of the study. It also provided a short background about the Iranian education system. The chapter also explained why the collocation of words is an important concern in EFL classes. It was also hypothesized that Iranian EFL learners would make more lexical collocational errors than grammatical collocational errors. In the present study, the definition of collocations will focus on the co-occurrence of words, and the classification of collocations will be based on the categories of collocations proposed by Benson et al. (1986). The scope of this study is based on the writing of 60 Iranian postgraduate students studying in a public university in Malaysia. It also explained that errors in grammar like tense errors, pronoun errors and auxiliary errors were excluded from this study. This study provides five chapters: chapter I is the introduction and it provides an overview of the study. Chapter II reviews the definition of collocations and previous studies done on collocations. Chapter III describes the methodology of data collection, procedures taken and how data will be analyzed and categorized. Chapter IV provides the results and discussion of the results. Chapter V includes a summary of the results, the limitations encountered in the study and implications for future research and teaching.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literatures relevant to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) by discussing some aspects of the theories and the components related to contrastive analysis and error analysis. In addition, it will also provide a broader discussion of the various studies and results which indicate that L2 (second language or target language) errors made by learners are due to the influence of their mother tongue. This section also reviews literature which focuses on the following topics: a) the notion of collocation, b) collocation and other combination of words, c) studies on EFL learners' collocation knowledge, d) causes of producing collocational errors, and e) the importance of teaching collocation.

### **2.2 Second Language Acquisition**

Saville-Troike (2006) mentions that learners, whether as individuals or as groups, learning a language after they have acquired their first language as young children should be termed as second language learners thus the process is equated as second language learning (SLA). However, she adds that it is not confined to only the learning of an L2. The term, second language learning, may also be applied to contexts which encompass the learning of additional languages such as a third, fourth or fifth language. This process is also linked to the learning of a language that is termed as a foreign language such as in a learning context located in Iran where the learning of English is defined as a foreign language. SLA, a term often referred to for second language acquisition/learning is not confined to just learning a language in classrooms. It is often expanded to encompass formal learning which occurs in formal situations like classrooms as well as in contexts

which are a mixture of formal settings and informal contexts. The study of SLA can focus on phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary but more commonly, it attempts to highlight the acquisition of two components of language: linguistic competence and linguistic performance. While the former discusses the grammar and structure of language, the latter discusses the ability of the speaker to use language appropriately within suitable contexts. The study outlined for this dissertation focuses more on the structure of the learner's linguistic competence, henceforth, the collocational errors made by postgraduate Iranian students.

For the benefit of this study, it is apt to make clear distinctions. Although the researcher employs the theoretical framework offered by SLA which claims that L2 learning is no different from L1 acquisition, it is stressed that successful L2 learning, in this regard, can also be affected by various factors. Some of these factors are linked to the learners' motivation, their learning styles, their personal level of the affective filters, the learning environment, attitude towards the language and the teachers and also the time they are being exposed to the language. Although behaviorism has been criticized as a theory, it cannot be denied that the behaviorist theory is practiced in many classroom situations in EFL contexts in Asian countries because it is faster as it saves time and it enables teachers to complete their syllabus and prepare their students for examinations on time. Teachers provide the stimulus, students repeat after the teachers, teachers reinforce and students become habituated to learning. While second language (L2) is commonly accepted as the language one learns to use after the first language had been acquired, in Iran, English is learnt for the purpose of education, employment and possibly recreation. Thus, the use of L2 in this study will also encompass the reference to foreign language since it might also

be used for travelling purposes, and for future cross cultural interactions (Saville-Troike, 2006).

As mentioned in chapter 1, previous research in applied linguistics used to revolve around the study of learner errors whether in speaking or writing because people (see Lado, 1957) believe that learners are more inclined towards using their L1 in order to convey their meanings in L2. Lado (1957, as cited in Mehdi, 1981) believes that it is an important area to study because it helps researchers to understand why learners make such errors and in what way their L1 may have made an impact on how they learn their L2. Over the years, researchers find that what was documented in contrastive analysis do not always show up in learners learning in the target language, thus, they shifted to looking at the mental processes of the learners by giving more focus to the errors which have been categorized as interlingual (L1 interference) or intralingual (lack of knowledge in the target language). Consequently, with the introduction of transformational generative grammar, ideas were soon shifted to looking at the mentalist approach offered by Chomsky who says that in learning the L1, all children are prewired to speak their own language with ease because these rules have been imprinted in their innate learning capacity. By looking at error analysis (Corder, 1967) researchers were able to predict why learners were making such errors and in that regard, why recommendation can be made to enable learners to learn the target language better.

The errors made by learners when using word collocation is termed as collocational errors and this is also a component in error analysis. Ellis (1986) states that there are procedures to follow when analyzing learner errors and these are as follows:

- a. Collection of samples of learner language
- b. Identification of errors

- c. Description of errors
- d. Explanation for errors
- e. Evaluation of errors

Saville-Troike (2006) who also look at errors analysis (EA) mention that the process is not a clear-cut procedure because there are various flaws to be overcome such as:

- a. Ambiguity of classification – an instance where it would be difficult for the researcher to determine when an error is developmental or when it is due to mother tongue (L1) interference.
- b. Lack of positive data - an instance where the researcher cannot decide whether the ‘gap’ made by the learner is due to a lack of knowledge of the target language or due to the learner’s oversight or memory lapse.
- c. Potential for avoidance – an instance where learners may be using a strategy of avoiding a difficult structure by writing something easier, for example, it was mentioned that Chinese learners avoid using relative clauses because they find this difficult to use.

### **2.2.1 Interlanguage**

When looking at error analysis, one cannot refrain from explaining a little about interlanguage. The term was coined by Selinker (1972, as cited in Mehdi, 1981) who used it to refer to the language learners use while in the interim of acquiring their target language. This approach was taken because like first language acquisition, young children go through a process termed as developmental stage of acquisition where the words they produce are unlike adult variety. It is late run when the child has been exposed to more language input that his utterances of words will become fine-tuned to resemble the adult variety. In the same way, Selinker also views that second language learners experience a similar stage in

L2 learning thus, it was termed as interlanguage. He and others considered this interim stage as “a creative process, driven by inner forces in interaction with environment factors, and influenced both by L1 and by input from the target language” (Saville Troike, 2006, p. 41). Interlanguage tends to bear certain characteristics but since this is not the focus of the study, it will not be further elaborated.

However, Selinker (1972, as cited in Mehdi, 1981) noted that interlanguage (IL) development in SLA differs from the developmental stage of children in first language acquisition in that IL tend to contain different cognitive processes (McLaughlin, 1987 cited in Saville-Troike, 2006). Inclusive in this are five processes identified by Saville-Troike (2006) as: a)language transfer from L1 to L2, b)transfer of training or how the L2 was taught, c)strategies of second language communication or ways that learners try to communicate with others in the L2, d)strategies of second language learning or how learners approach the L2 materials and the tasks of L2 learning, and e)overgeneralization of the target language linguistic material in which L2 rules that are learned are applied too broadly.

### **2.2.2 Fossilization**

As a term often used in SLA, fossilization is used to refer to the errors made by learners because there is no change despite attempts made to guide the learners. The term is used to refer to the stage where it is thought that learners have stopped in their development to reach their target language norms after various language input and time has been invested. Often, it is employed with older L2 learners in respect of their age. This may be used as a reason to distinguish the successful and less successful L2 learners.

## 2.3 The Notion of Collocations

### *General Definitions*

According to Bahns (1993), collocation is defined from different aspects. On the one hand, Firth's view on collocation is related to the meaning of a word (Hill, 2000). On the other hand, McCarthy (1991), p. 65) contends that "collocation refers to the probability that lexical items will co-occur and is not a semantic relation between words".

Sinclair (1996, as cited in Hsueh, 2004)) believes that grammar and lexis are different. Structures (syntagms) and systems (paradigms) describe grammar, but lexis is about collocations and sets. Sinclair maintains that collocation is the partnership of two words and grammatical structures.

Benson et al.(1986) define collocations in general: "In English, as in other languages, there are many fixed, identifiable, non-idiomatic phrases and constructions. Such groups of words are called *recurrent combinations*, *fixed combinations*, or *collocations*." *Recurrent combinations* and *fixed combinations* are often called *collocations*. They are in contrast with *free combinations*. Benson et al.(1986) believe that "free combinations are those in which the two elements do not co-occur repeatedly. They occur with other lexical items freely". The example is *recall an adventure (an event, an accident)*. Benson et al.(1986) believe that "*collocations* are words in which the two elements co-occur habitually and they are bound specifically to each other". For example, *inspire fear* or *fast friend*. Benson et al. (1986) divided English collocations into two main groups: lexical collocations and grammatical collocations. Further, lexical collocations have been divided into seven types while grammatical collocations have been divided into eight types. From Benson et al. (1986) perspective, lexical collocations can include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Thus, lexical collocations may appear as verb + noun, noun + verb, adjective + noun,

adverb+ adjective, and verb + adverb. Lexical collocations divide into seven types designated by L1, L2, L3, L4, L5, L6, and L7 by Benson et al. (1986). The following is the definition of the seven types of lexical collocations as defined by Benson et al (1986).

L1: “L1 collocations consist of a verb (usually transitive) and a noun/pronoun (or prepositional phrase). Most L1 collocations consist of a verb denoting *creation* and/or *activation* and a noun/pronoun”. They are called *CA collocations* for example *compose music* or *set a record* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxiv).

L2: “L2 collocations consist of a verb meaning *eradication* and/or *nullification* and a noun. They are called *EN collocations*.” Examples are *dispel fear* or *break a code* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxvi).

L3: “L3 collocations consist of an adjective and a noun” for example *thorough knowledge* or *brilliant idea* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxvi).

L4: “L4 collocations consist of a noun and a verb; the verb names an action that is characteristic of the person or thing designated by the noun” for example *bees buzz* or *blood circulates* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxvii).

L5: “L5 collocations indicate the unit that is associated with a noun. The structure of an L5 collocation is often *noun of noun*.” Typical examples are *a pride of lions* or *a herd of buffalo* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxvii).

L6: “L6 collocations consist of an adverb and an adjective” for example *strictly accurate*, *closely (intimately) acquainted* and *sound asleep* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxvii).

L7: “L7 collocations consist of a verb and an adverb” for example *amuse thoroughly*, *anchor firmly* and *apologize humbly* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxviii). Table 2.1 helps to illustrate the lexical collocations.

Table 2.1 The Lexical Collocations

Type	Pattern	Examples
L1	V(meaning creation or activation) + N( pronoun or prep. Phrase)	Come to an agreement
L2	V( meaning eradication or nullification)+N	Break a code
L3	Adj. + N	A crushing defeat
L4	N + V	Adjectives modify
L5	N of N	A pack of dogs
L6	Adv. + Adj.	Sound asleep
L7	V + Adv	Amuse thoroughly

Adopted from Benson et al. (1986, p. xxiv)

Having mentioned what Benson et al (1986) say of Lexical collocations, the following section will explain what grammatical collocations are. To begin with, grammatical collocations are phrases comprising a dominant word like a noun, a verb, or an adjective and a preposition or a grammatical structure such as an infinitive or clause. According to Benson et al. (1986) grammatical collocations can be divided into eight types and they are specified as G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, and G8. However, Benson et al (1986) also looked at how grammatical collocations can be defined. They are further explained below.

G1: “G1 collocations consist of a noun + a preposition combination. A noun + *of* combination and a noun + *by* combination are not included in this category”. Examples of G1 are *apathy towards* or *blockade against* (Benson et al, 1986, p. x).

G2: “G2 collocations consist of a noun followed by a *to* + infinitive”. Examples of G2 are *an effort to do* or *an obligation to do* (Benson et al, 1986, p. x).

.G3: “G3 collocations consist of a noun followed by a *that clause*” for example they made a *disturbance that we had to leave* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xi).

G4: “G4 collocations consist of a preposition + a noun combination”. Examples are *by airmail* or *in alignment* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xi).

G5: “G5 collocations are an adjective + a preposition combination that occurs in the predicate or verbless clauses” for example *they were **angry at** everyone* or *they were **fond of** children* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xii).

G6: “G6 collocations consist of a predicate adjective followed by a *to* + infinitive”. Examples are *it is **easy to learn** English* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xii).

G7: “G7 collocations consist of an adjective followed by a *that clause*” for example *He was **happy that he would get a good mark*** (Benson et al, 1986, p. xiv).

G8: “G8 collocations include English verb patterns. There are nineteen categories being specified by the capital letters G8 (A) to G8(S). Following this is the definition of each category.

G8 (A): “In this pattern, verbs allow the *dative movement transformation*, that is, they allow the shift of an indirect object (usually animate) to a position before the direct object, with deletion of *to* when both objects are nouns and when the direct object is a noun”. For example *my son sent his sister a gift- my son sent a gift to her- my son sent her a gift* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xiv).

G8 (B): “In this pattern, verbs are transitive; when these verbs have an indirect object, they do not allow the *dative movement transformation*, i.e, the shift of the indirect object (usually animate) to a position before the direct object with the deletion of *to*” for example *the teacher described the sentence to them not the teacher described them the sentence* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xiv).

.G8(C): “In this pattern, the verbs are transitive and they are used with the preposition *for*, so they allow the *dative movement transformation*, i.e., allow the deletion of *for* and the shift of the indirect object (usually animate) to a position before the direct object”. Examples are *he bought a bag for his wife* or *he bought his wife a bag*, *he bought a bag for her* or *he bought her a bag* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xv).

G8 (D): “In this pattern, the verb forms a collocation with a specific preposition”. Examples are *persist in*, *agree with* and *contribute to* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xv).

.G8 (E): “In this pattern, verbs are followed by a *to* + infinitive”. Examples are *she promised to learn English* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xv).

G8 (F): “In this pattern, the small number of verbs followed by an infinitive without *to* are included”. These verbs are called *modals* for example *we must go*. Moreover, *had better* and *would rather* are included in this category (Benson et al, 1986, p. xvi).

G8 (G): “In this pattern, verbs are followed by a second verb formed in *-ing*”. Examples are *the houses need painting* or *we miss going to work every day* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xvi).

G8 (H): “In this pattern, transitive verbs are followed by an object followed by a *to* + infinitive”. Examples are *they challenged us to fight* or *he invited me to participate* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xvi).

G8 (I): “In this pattern, transitive verbs are followed by a direct object followed by an infinitive without *to*”. Examples are *they let him go to the park* or *they heard her leave* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xvii).

G8 (J): “In this pattern, verbs are followed by an object and a verb formed in *-ing*”. For example, *he kept me waiting two hours* or *I caught them stealing apples* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xvii).

G8 (K): “In this pattern, verbs are followed by a possessive and a gerund, i.e., a verbal noun”. The example is *they could not explain their coming late* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xvii).

G8 (L): “In this pattern, verbs are followed by a noun clause beginning with the conjunction *that*”. The example is *he believed that they were wrong* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xviii).

G8 (M): “In this pattern, transitive verbs can be followed by a direct object, the infinitive *to be*, and either an adjective, or a past participle, or a noun/pronoun. In most examples, the same verb can be followed by any of these three forms”. The example is *we found him to be very clever* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xix).

G8 (N): “In this pattern, transitive verbs can be followed by a direct object and an adjective or a past participle or a noun/pronoun”. Examples are *he made his meaning clear* or *she dyed her hair red* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xix).

G8 (O): “In this pattern, transitive verbs can take two objects, neither of which can normally be used in a prepositional phrase with *to* or *for*”. The example is *the woman asked her husband a question* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xx).

G8 (P): “In this pattern, intransitive, reflexive, and transitive verbs must be followed by an adverbial. The adverbial may be an adverb, a prepositional phrase, a noun phrase, or a clause”. The example is *the party lasted three hours* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xx).

G8 (Q): “In this pattern, verbs are followed by an interrogative word: how, what, when, where, which, who, why and whether”. The example is *the girls knew what they should do* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxi).

G8(R): “In this pattern, transitive verbs are preceded by the dummy *it* and are followed by *to* + infinitive or by *that* + clause or by either”. Examples are *it puzzled them that she went to the party* or *it surprised her to see her friend* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxii).

G8(S): “In this pattern, a small number of intransitive verbs are followed by a predicate noun or by a predicate adjective”. For example, *he became a singer* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxii). Table 2.2 helps to illustrate the grammatical collocations clearly.

Table 2.2 The Grammatical Collocations

Type	Pattern	Examples
G1	N + Prep	What's the <i>matter with</i> you?
G2	N + to Inf.	They felt a <i>need to do</i> it.
G3	N + that clause	We came to <i>an agreement that they would buy the car</i> .
G4	Prep + N	I saw my friend <i>by accident</i> .
G5	Adj. + Prep	They were <i>hungry for</i> news.
G6	Adj. + to Inf.	It was <i>stupid to go</i> .
G7	Adj. + that clause	It was <i>enjoyable that we could go to the village</i> .
G8(A)	V + direct O + to + indirect O	My son <i>sent a gift to his friend</i> ..
G8(A)	V + indirect O + direct O (allow the dative movement transformation)	My son <i>sent his friend a gift</i> .
G8(B)	V + direct O + to + indirect O (do not allow the dative movement transformation)	The teacher <i>described the sentence to them</i> ..
G8(C)	V + direct O + for + indirect	He <i>bought a bag for his sister</i> .

	V + indirect O + direct O	He <i>bought his sister a bag.</i>
G8(D)	V + Prep + O	Our committee <i>consists of six members.</i>
G8(D)	V + O + Prep + O	She <i>based her results on the essential facts.</i>
G8(E)	V + to Inf.	They <i>began to speak.</i>
G8(F)	V + bare Inf.	He <i>would rather go.</i>
G8(G)	V + V-ing.	She <i>quit smoking.</i>
G8(H)	V + O + to Inf.	She <i>asked me to come.</i>
G8(I)	V + O + bare Inf.	He <i>watched them unload</i> the car.
G8(J)	V + O + V-ing.	He <i>kept me waiting</i> two hours.
G8(K)	V + a possessive and V-ing.	<i>My speaking</i> so loudly annoyed her.
G8(L)	V + that clause	I know that this is true.
G8(M)	V + O + to be + C	We <i>consider her to be very capable.</i>
G8(N)	V + O + C	He <i>made his meaning clear.</i>
G8(O)	V + O1 + O2	We <i>bet her ten pounds.</i>
G8 (P)	V + (O) + Adverbial	The meeting <i>will last two hours.</i>
G8(Q)	V + (O) + wh-clause/ wh-phrase	I do not <i>know what I should do.</i>
G8(R)	It + V + O + to Inf.	<i>It surprised me to see my friend.</i>
G8(R)	It + V + O + that clause	<i>It puzzled them that she spoke in English.</i>
G8(S)	V + C	She <i>became an engineer.</i>

Adopted from Benson et al. (1986, p. x)

### ***Collocations as Conventional/Prepatterned Expressions***

Cantos and Sanchez (2001) suggest a different definition of collocation. They believe that collocations are conventional or prepatterned expressions. In a sense, collocations are equal to recurrent word combinations but in another sense, collocations also consist of two or more words that tend to be used together. In that aspect, collocations can be seen as words which co-occur with each other habitually. In English you say *common knowledge* not *general knowledge* or you say *a burning ambition* not *a firing ambition*. It can be said that collocations lie on a continuum where the idioms are at one end of the continuum for

example *as soft as butter* and where free combinations are at the other end of the continuum for example *the table*. In this example, based on a grammatical rule a countable noun is followed by a definite article.

### ***Collocations as Node Words***

Daudaravicius and Marcinkeviciene (2004) compared several methods (MI, T-Score, Dice) for extracting collocations and consequently were able to present a new method called Gravity Counts. They state that collocation consist of a node word and its collocate. Therefore the search for a collocation should start with the node word (the term *node* is employed to stand for the word studied and the term *collocate* is used to represent any word occurring in the specified environment of a node). They claim that most collocations are usually constructed from pairs of words which consist of a node word and its collocate. Without a clear idea about the boundaries of collocations, it would be difficult to determine which part of a corpus consists of collocations. Daudaravicius and Marcinkeviciene (2004) thus presented a new method to measure the length of collocations statistically and also to set the boundaries of collocations.

Another researcher Dayrell (2007) investigated collocational patterns of translated texts by comparing it with the texts which were not translated and were thus in the original language. From this study, Dayrell concluded that for each node in the translated text, there is less collocates as compared with the texts which were not translated and in the original language.

Stefanowitsch and Gries (2003) suggest a method of collocational analysis which they refer to as collostructional analysis which always starts with a particular construction and it would then investigate which lexemes are strongly attracted to or repelled by a particular slot in the constructions (i.e. occur more frequently or less frequently than expected ). This

method investigates the interaction of lexemes and the grammatical constructions. According to this method, grammar consists of signs (form and meaning pairs), so it is not basically different from the lexicon. The researchers remark that this method is more suitable to be used for increasing the adequacy of grammatical description through providing a way to identify the meaning of a grammatical construction.

Additionally, Gries and Stefanowitsch (2004) define collocation as “words that occur in a given span around the node word”. They propose a method referred to as “distinctive-collexeme analysis” for analyzing the alternating pairs. Examples of alternating pairs are listed by Gries and Stefanowitsch (2004) as:

- |    |                                  |   |
|----|----------------------------------|---|
| 1- | a) John sent Mary the book.      | b) John sent the book to Mary.          |
| 2- | a) Picasso painted this picture. | b) This picture was painted by Picasso. |
| 3- | a) John picked up the book.      | b) John picked the book up.             |
| 4- | a) The university’s budget.      | b) The budget of the university.        |

This method identifies lexemes which prefer to be one member of the pair in contrast to the other. Therefore, this method is able to indicate the subtle differences between synonymous constructions and that these differences are not identified in terms of traditional approaches.

Likewise, Bednarek (2008) believes that types of evaluation interplay or combination also exist. He provided the following examples to illustrate:

- 1- Evaluative conflation: In this instance linguistic expressions are evaluated along two or more parameters at the same time;

2- Evaluative collocation: In this instance, evaluations occur along different parameters frequently (or they collocate across a sufficiently large number of texts);

3- Evaluative modulation (a sub-type of evaluation collocation): In this instance, modulators and types of evaluative parameters collocate commonly across a sufficiently large number of texts.

Another researcher, Cowie (1981) defines a collocation as a composite unit where the items are substitutable for at least one of its constituent elements. In other words, collocations are pairs of words where one of them allows substitution.

Based on the OSTI report (the Report to the Office for Scientific and Technology Information) which talks about the Lexical Research for the period January 1967 to September 1969, Williams (2005) henceforth defines collocation as the co-occurrence of two items which when occur within a specified environment can be described as a regular collocation and this occurs between two items. The occurrence is such that they co-occur more often than their respective frequencies and length of the text in which they appear would be able to forecast.

## **2.4 Collocation and Other Combination of Words**

It would seem that the categorization of collocations can occur and be perceived from different perspectives. Wood (1981, as cited in Li, 2005) used both the semantic and syntactic criteria to draw a distinction among collocations, idioms, colligations, and free combinations. Wood (1981, p.168, as cited in Hsueh, 2004) points out that “an idiom is fully non-compositional and non-productive while a free combination is fully compositional and productive”. He further adds that, “a collocation with its meaning in a

restricted sense is less frozen than an idiom” and “a colligation is compositional and it permits only a limited lexical variation”.

Lewis and Conzett (2000)(p. 137) explains that collocation and colligation differ such that, “collocation is the way one word co-occurs with another word while colligation is the way one word regularly co-occurs with a particular (grammar) pattern”. They illustrated by saying that some verbs typically occur with a particular tense or a noun and they might typically be preceded by a personal pronoun. In an example of an article on driving, the researchers provided: *pass my, your driving test, it is my / your, our responsibility to ..., but I will take the responsibility for....*

Combinations of words are sometimes seen as compound words and Benson et al. (1986) and Benson (1989) distinguished five types of word combinations which are as listed below:

- 1- Compounds are completely frozen and do not vary. They are the most fixed among word combinations. Instances of nominal compounds are *floppy disk* and *aptitude test* and an example of a compound verb (or phrased verb) is *break through*.
- 2- Idioms are expressions which are not variable and the sense of their constituents is not equal to the meaning of these expressions. An example of an idiom is *to kill two birds with one stone*.
- 3- Transitional combinations (transitional collocations) are more frozen and less variable than collocations. The meanings of transitional combinations are close to their component parts. Examples are *for old time's sake*, *the facts of life*, *to be in a tight spot*, and so on.

4- Collocations are fixed, arbitrary recurrent word combinations and the whole meaning is equal to the meaning of the parts. For example, *pure chance*, *commit murder*, *close attention*, and *keen competition*.

5- Free combinations are those whose components are the freest related to being combined with other lexical items. They are the least cohesive among the combinations. Examples of typical combinations of this sort are *to recall an adventure (an event, an accident)* and *to analyze (report, investigate) a murder*.

Sinclair (1991) classified collocations into two groups: *downward collocation* and *upward collocation*. Sinclair (1991) employed two terms for classifying these collocation, “*node*” and “*collocate*”. “*Node*” is a term that shows the word which is being studied and “*collocate*” indicates every word which co-occurs with “*node*”. According to Sinclair (1991), when A is node and B is collocate, it is called a downward collocation and examples are *satisfied with* or *focus on*. However, when B is node and A is collocate, it is called an upward collocation and examples are *at risk* and *in time*.

On the other hand, Cowie and Mackin (1975) classify collocations and idioms into four groups in terms of idiomaticity listing them as: *pure idioms*, *figurative idioms*, *restricted collocations*, and *open collocations*. They further elaborate these.

a) *Pure idioms*: They say that historically, pure idioms form a process by which the combinations of words establish themselves by using constantly and then undergoing figurative extension. Pure idioms do not have a literal meaning. In other words, the meaning of the parts is not reflected by the meaning of the whole. Examples of pure idioms are *blow the gaff* and *kick the bucket*.

b) *Figurative idioms*: They say that figurative idioms have an idiomatic sense and they also have a literal meaning. Examples of figurative idioms are *beat one's breast* and

*burns one's boats*'. Such figurative idioms may be strange to some speakers because the literal meaning of these expressions does not match with their figurative meaning in normal use. Although figurative idioms can connote a meaning more successfully, it would seem that under everyday contexts of use, figurative idioms has to be expressed to make an impact figuratively. This is because a figurative idiom by itself does not have a literal meaning. Consequently, such speakers put these expressions in to the category of pure idioms.

- c) *Restricted collocations*: The authors also say that restricted collocations can sometimes be called "semi-idioms". In this type of collocation, one word has a figurative meaning while the other has a familiar and literal meaning. Restricted collocations are similar to open collocations because some members of this category are used in their literal meanings and can be substituted freely as in *a cardinal error/sin/virtue/grace*. On the other hand, restricted collocations resemble idioms since in these combinations only one word has a figurative meaning as shown in the example, *jog one's/sb's memory* which can only be used in a specific context and no other while *chequered* is limited to collocations with *career* and *history*.
- d) *Open collocations*: it appears that open collocations are also free collocations or loose collocations. This is because they are easily distinguished from idioms. Examples of open collocations are *fill the sink* and *a broken window*. In free collocations both elements (verb and object or adjective and noun) can be substituted freely, for example in *fill, empty, drain the sink* and *fill the sink, basin, and bucket*. In open collocations each element has a literal meaning. This means that in open collocations, the meaning of the parts is reflected by the whole meaning.

Having provided a fair account of what collocations mean to various researchers, the section below will now delve into the studies of collocations.

## **2.5 Studies on EFL Learners' Collocational Knowledge**

In recent years, experimental studies on the use of English collocations have been conducted around the world and most studies investigate EFL learners' collocational knowledge ((Channell, 1981); (Wang, 2001); (Koosha & Jafarpour, 2006); (Claveau & L'Homme, 2006)). The results of these studies seem to imply that EFL learners are deficient in their mastery of English collocations. Findings indicate that EFL learners were found to lack collocational knowledge and it is possible that this occurred because the teaching and learning of collocations have been neglected in language classes ((Brown, 1974); (Huang, 2001)).

Chang (1997, as cited in Hsueh, 2004) claims that EFL students face a serious problem related to lexical collocations in their writing. From a study he conducted which looked at the different types of grammatical and lexical collocations used by college students who were asked to write English compositions, Chang came to the conclusion that less proficient students made more lexical and grammatical collocational errors. On the other hand, the better students who were more proficient showed fewer collocational errors in their writing samples. In addition, Chang (1997) found that among the lexical collocational errors detected, it appears that the type of ADJ+N collocational error and the V+N collocational error carried the highest frequency in terms of occurrence. Among grammatical collocational errors, he found that Pre +N collocational errors and V + Pre collocational errors had the highest frequency.

Another researcher, Wang (2001, p. ii) carried out a study of English lexical collocations of various students majoring in English in Taiwan. From her findings, she concluded that “the English department students’ lexical collocations do not exhibit a series of developmental stages and this seems to imply that they do not improve. There is a possibility that this phenomena is due to a lack of emphasis in classrooms.

Others like Koosha and Jafarpour (2006) also remark that English collocations, especially English preposition collocations can cause serious problems for Iranian EFL learners. Their study focused on the relevance of English prepositions. The subjects were two hundred students majoring in English and studying at three universities in Shahrkord. Their study found that Iranian EFL learners of English tended to omit English prepositions when equivalents are not required in their mother tongue. Other than this, it was also deduced that Iranian EFL learners have a tendency to select improper prepositions especially when equivalents were not used in their mother tongue. They also discovered that Iranian EFL learners have a tendency to fall back on their mother tongue if they did not know the correct preposition collocations. Consequently, they translate their L1 word into the target language resulting in a negative transfer (Lado, 1957).

Koosha and Jafarpour (2006) applied a translation task by including 60 fill-in-the blanks items which were related to English prepositions. From their study which was presented in percentage, they concluded that about 68.5% of errors were due to the interference of their L1 (mother tongue).

From these findings, it can be deduced that it would be beneficial for EFL learners to be encouraged to translate from chunk to chunk or from collocations to collocations and also to look for parallel equivalents both in their L1 and L2. In addition, it also seems necessary

for EFL teachers to introduce such English collocations which do not have any direct equivalents in Persian to their learners.

According to Bahns (1993), the large number of lexical collocations which is currently in existence can be used as being the main reason why it is creating problems among learners and why it is necessary to introduce the teaching of lexical collocations in EFL classrooms. Nonetheless, to solve this problem, a contrastive approach can be employed to teach the concept of lexical collocation. As the first few researchers, a contrastive analysis related to N+V and V+N collocations between English and German was made by Bahns (1993). She found that there is a direct translational equivalence. From this point, she concluded that there was no necessity to teach such lexical collocations. It appears that this can be easily translated or inferred by learners since the collocation exist in their L1. It was emphasized, however, that those lexical collocations which do not have any direct translational equivalents should be taught in language classes.

Claveau and L'Homme (2006) presented an original corpus-based acquisition method for acquiring noun-verb collocations and these were classified according to the semantic link between their components. The researchers focused on noun-verb pairs in which verbs convey a realization meaning and they based their classification on lexical functions. In the experiments carried out, noun-verb pairs were acquired from a French domain-specific corpus of computing. The results show that this approach was able to find these very specific semantic relationships (the realization noun-verb pairs) with very successful rates.

Both competent and incompetent EFL learners have problems with English collocations. For example secondary students investigated by Fan (1991, as cited in Fan, (2009), advanced learners studied by Biskup(1992, as cited in Huang, 2001) and university students

studied by Farghal and Obiedat (1995) show that collocations can serve as a serious problem to EFL students whether competent or incompetent.

One of the difficulties that EFL learners have with English collocations is related to the idiosyncratic nature of collocational use (Fan, 2009). For instance, although the two words “*strong*” and “*powerful*” have the same meaning there are variations in how these two terms are used. In “*a strong/powerful argument*”, the adjective “*strong*” can co-occur with the noun “*tea*” as well as argument whereas the adjective and “*powerful*” collocates with “*car*” and argument even though both strong and powerful collocates with argument (Holiday, 1966, p. 16, as cited in Fan, 2009). This shows that not all adjectives are easily substituted and unless they have been studied for a long period of time, such knowledge will be absent among EFL learners.

Another problem which EFL learners have with English collocations is related to the fact that different languages use different collocations. For instance, in English you say “*acquire/gain knowledge*”, but in Iranian you say “*learn knowledge*”. As a result, should EFL learners like the Iranians attempt to use the collocation, they would be more likely to use the collocations incorrectly.

One of the biggest difficulties that EFL learners have with English collocations is that they are not exposed to the practical usage of the English language. In other words, native speakers of English learn collocations subconsciously as they grow up speaking the language in their speech community. They are continuously exposed to the language therefore their sociolinguistic competence in using these collocations become honed over time. EFL learners, on the losing end, do not have such an opportunity and they only get limited exposure to learn English in EFL classrooms (Fan, 2009).

Zarei (2002, as cited in Koosha and Jafarpour, 2006) contends that English collocations cause major problems for Iranian EFL learners. He shows that the collocational errors related to English preposition collocations present the highest frequency. On the other hand, the collocational errors relevant to adverb + adjective collocations and fixed expressions indicate the lowest frequency. Also, he concludes that EFL learners need to learn English collocations in order to achieve native-like competence in English.

Delshad (1980, as cited in Koosha and Jafarpour, (2006)) also found that Iranian EFL/ESL students usually omit English prepositions or use English prepositions incorrectly. In other words, he found that Iranian students tend to omit English prepositions if the equivalents were not required in their mother tongue. In addition, Iranian students would also select incorrect English prepositions if the equivalents were not used in their mother tongue.

Lindstromberg (2001) points out that less than 10 percent of upper-level EFL learners can use and understand prepositions correctly. He states that the collocational relations of the prepositions with other elements of language are strong, so EFL learners have great difficulties in the use of correct English preposition.

All the above discussions provided highlight the fact that collocations are problematic for Iranian students thus it gives a strong support to justify why the current study needs to be conducted for the benefit of Iranian learners and teachers.

## **2.6 Causes of Producing Collocational Errors**

Previous studies have demonstrated that there are several causes for collocational errors made by the EFL learners (Mehdi, 1981; Ellis, 1986; Bahns, 1993; Farghal and Obiedat,

1995; Howarth, 1998; AbiSamra, 2003; Khodabandeh, 2007) and the main cause of collocational errors is often due to the EFL learners' mother tongue/L1.

It was found that L2 learners had a big gap between their receptive and productive knowledge of collocations (Farghal and Obiedat, 1995). Farghal and Obiedat (1995) point out that, EFL students who did not acquire the ability to use specific collocations tend to resort to various strategies such as using *synonyms*, *paraphrasing*, *avoidance*, and *transfer*.

Another study showed that when Iranian EFL learners were asked to do a translation of headlines, their results indicate that the errors were caused by the interference of mother tongue. It appears that errors were produced when there was a translation of the target language (Khodabandeh, 2007).

Other studies of Arab students' writing also provided results which contain interlingual and intralingual transfer where the interlingual transfer were the result of *negative transfer* and the intralingual transfer were composed as a result of *overgeneralization*, *false concept hypothesis*, *ignorance of the rule restrictions*, and also the student's reliance on *synonyms* (AbiSamra, 2003).

From the preposition errors made by Arab EFL learners, Mehdi (1981) concludes that the major source of collocational errors related to English prepositions was due to negative transfer or mother tongue interference.

Howarth (1998) considers cognitive strategies such as *avoidance*, *experimentation (use of synonym)*, *negative transfer*, *analogy (overgeneralization)*, and *repetition* as the sources of collocational errors and this is not just among EFL learners but also among L2 learners.

According to Bloom (2006), EFL learners resort to their mother tongue when they do not know the correct answer. As EFL learners fail to recognize prepositions as parts of

multiword expressions, it is thus necessary to teach them how to distinguish grammatical collocations from lexical chunks.

Ellis (1986) contends that the learners who acquired English as second language are affected by their native language. Moreover, there is also a likelihood of the influence of native speakers' foreign accent when teaching ESL learners.

An empirical research investigating the knowledge of English collocations of Arab EFL learners' and their tendency to making collocational errors was conducted by Mahmoud (2005). The subjects were 42 students majoring in English and studying at a university. They were instructed to write a composition. Analysis of the results shows that the subjects had serious deficiency related to English collocations. The results also indicate that the subjects made more lexical collocational errors than grammatical collocational errors. In addition, it was found that about 61% of the collocational errors were due to mother tongue interference.

Shoshana and Levenston (1978) state that the causes of lexical collocational errors made by EFL learners can be traced to their reliance on strategies linked with *synonymy*, *avoidance*, *transfer* and *paraphrasing* which are related to communication strategies. This finding concurs with the other studies already mentioned earlier.

Liu (1999, as cited in Hsueh, 2004) conducted a study for EFL learners and her findings reveal that the causes of the collocational errors made by her subjects were also traced to strategies like *word coinage* and *approximation*. However, it seems that the majority of the errors were caused by *interlingual transfer* (L1 transference). In addition, she also found that there were four kinds of *intra lingual transfer* (lack of knowledge in the target language) – *overgeneralization*, *ignorance of rule restriction*, *misconception of verbs*, and *the use of synonym* and these seem to belong to *cognitive strategies*.

An *interlingual error* is one which results from the language transfer. In other words, it is caused by the learners' first language. For example, many Iranian EFL learners refer to *take medicine* as *eat medicine* because the noun *medicine* in Persian regularly co-occurs with the verb *eat* instead of *take*. Other examples are *learn knowledge* instead of *acquire/gain knowledge*, *satisfied of* instead of *satisfied with*, *believe to* instead of *believe in*, *align in* instead of *align with*, *spend with* instead of *spend in*.

On the other hand, an *intralingual error* is an error which results from faulty or partial learning of the foreign language. For example, EFL learners may produce *He is comes* in terms of a blend of English structures *He is coming* and *He comes*. Other examples are *do plans* instead of *make plans*, *should likes* instead of *should like*, *perfect knowledge* instead of *thorough knowledge*, *made students to improve* instead of *made students improve*.

The main sources of the collocational errors made by L2 learners as concluded by Liu (1999, as cited in Hsueh, 2004) are further accounted below:

- 1- Negative interlingual transfer: Some collocational errors are caused by direct translation. Although phrases, like "*listen his advice*" and "*wait your phone call*" are understandable when they are translated back into Chinese, they are not acceptable English collocations. Being intransitive verbs, *listen* and *wait* cannot be directly followed by a noun. This rule does not exist in Chinese.
- 2- Overgeneralization: Students use overgeneralization when the items do not carry any obvious contrast to them. It is the creation of one deviant structure in place of two regular structures according to the background of the student subject to the target language. For example, instead of using "*am used to taking*" students may use the collocation "*am used to take*" which is the combination of "*am used to something*" and "*used to take*."

- 3- Ignorance of rule restriction: Analogy and failure to observe the restrictions of existing structures are at times the reason why students produce unacceptable collocations. For example, "to make Joyce surprise" is a false analogy of the construction of verb + object + infinitive. (e.g *make Joyce surprised* )
- 4- Misconception of verbs: Students have misconceptions about such verbs as *make*, *do*, and *take*. Some students may think that these words are de-lexicalized verbs so they can be substituted for one another freely. For instance, students may use "do plans" instead of "make plans."
- 5- The use of synonym: Students might use "receive other people's opinion" instead of "accept other people's opinion". It is taken as a straightforward application of the open choice principle.
- 6- Word coinage and approximation: Word coinage is a type of paraphrase employed to make up a new word to communicate the desired concept. The instance is "to see sun-up" instead of "to see the sunrise". On the other hand, approximation is another type of paraphrase. It is the use of an incorrect vocabulary item or structure which shares enough semantic features in common with the desired item to satisfy the speaker. For example, the word *middle* in "middle exam" is used to mean *mid-term* in *midterm exam*.

Table 2.3 shows the sources of collocational errors made by a subject. The subject made 5 collocational errors, 1 grammatical collocational error and 4 lexical collocational errors. According to classification of the sources of collocational errors proposed by Liu (1999), the causes of producing collocational errors made by the mentioned subject are *overgeneralization*, *misconception of verbs*, *negative transfer* and *the use of synonymy*.

The blanks in the table show that the subject has used the corrected collocations, so it is not necessary to be written the corrected collocation in the forth column and also the sources of collocational error in the fifth column as there is no errors thus the forth and the fifth columns are empty. For example, “*Influence on*” is a corrected collocation used by the subject, so the forth and the fifth columns are empty.

Table 2.3 sources of collocational errors made by a subject

Coll. No.	Type of Coll.	Used Collocation	Corrected (If Used is Incorrect)	Source of collocational errors
1	G4	In life		
2	G8(D)	Influence on		
3	G8(D)	Live with		
4	G8(L)	I remember that all these ....		
5	G8(D)	Advise about		
6	G8(Q)	... illustrates me which way is the best.		
7	G8(H)	Asked me to think		
8	G8(D)	Think about		
9	G8(F)	Must to advise	Must advise	overgeneralization
10	L1	Learn knowledge	Gain/acquire knowledge	Negative transfer
11	L1	Make advice	Give/offer advice	Misconception of verbs
12	L2	Expensive advice	Valuable advice	The use of synonymy
13	L6	Affect highly	Affect deeply/strongly/profoundly	The use of synonymy
14	G 8(H)	Advise them to think		

In sum, it has been discussed that previous studies have presented findings which show that the causes of collocational errors made by EFL learners are often due to learners' lack of collocational knowledge, their tendency to apply interlingual or intralingual transfer and the use of various strategies such as paraphrasing, approximations, synonymy to convey what they mean in terms of collocations.

## **2.7 The Importance of Collocation in Language Teaching**

The significance of collocational knowledge is beyond dispute. Teaching collocations in EFL classrooms can successfully lead to fluency in speaking and writing since collocations can cause learners' concentration to shift from individual words to larger structures of the discourse as well as to the social aspects of the interactions (Brown, 1974) Learning collocations is important not only to ease comprehension but also for active participation in social interactions especially through active English oral productions. By memorizing collocational groups, EFL learners will have knowledge about certain lexical restrictions. In other words, learning collocations enables EFL learners to comprehend language chunks used by native speakers in speech and writing. The knowledge of collocations also enables EFL learners to master the proficiency in communicating in English confidently. Therefore, it is essential for EFL learners to know how collocations are used (Brown, 1974)

Brown (1974) maintains that it is necessary to teach predictable collocations because they are the basis for other unpredictable collocations. In addition, Brown believes that it is essential for EFL learners, especially college-bound and advanced learners to learn collocations and in that regard, they should first be taught predictable collocations.

Bahns (1993) addresses lexical collocations as an important, yet neglected, variable in EFL teaching and learning. She indicates that EFL learners have insufficient collocational knowledge and she suggests that in EFL classes, those items that have no English direct equivalents should be taught by EFL teachers.

Likewise, Kennedy (2003) maintains that teaching collocations might be expected to have a more explicit and prominent place in the language teaching curriculum. This is because in class, the teachers can pay attention to collocations not only through direct teaching but also by spending more time to acquire them through an emphasis on autonomous implicit learning activities like reading.

It is necessary to introduce collocations explicitly into L2 classrooms as Laufer (1991) believes that the majority of words are learned through direct instruction with few gains made incidentally in an EFL context.

Research on vocabulary learning in an EFL context shows that acquiring meaning for even single-word items is a slow learning process and it depends very much on the amount of input. Due to that it could be seen that learning collocations may occur in a small way since the number of words needed to encounter the same collocation is twice as great as those needed to encounter the same word. Research indicates that at least eight encounters are needed to learn a word's meaning (Horst, Cobb, & Meara, 1998); (Waring & Takaki, 2003).

The evaluation of multiword lexical units (MLUs) popularized by textbook publishers was conducted by Hsu (2008) in a more cautious manner. In her study, Hsu focused on three series of contemporary EFL/ESL textbooks: *Communication Strategies* (Paul, 2003a) and *Further Communication Strategies* (Paul, 2003b), *Touch stone: Book I and II* (McCarthy, McCarten, & Sandiford, 2005) and *Totally true: Book I, II and III* (Huizenga &

Huizenga, 2005). These were used to constitute the basis for a profile of multiword lexical units. Among these three series of contemporary EFL/ESL textbooks, she found that only *Touch stone* series contained well over 900 million words which have their bases linked to multiword lexical units in the Cambridge International Corpus. She therefore concludes that it would be beneficial for EFL/ESL learners to use these series of textbooks including the multiword lexical units.

Channell (1981) had emphasized on teaching English collocations in EFL classes. She suggests that the relation of a word to other words with similar meaning and the context where the word occurs when teaching a new word should be taught by EFL teachers.

Collocations are important and Howarth (1998) points out the requisite collocations in L2 language learning. He believes that learning collocations helps ESL/EFL learners to become more native-like because often native speakers of English tell EFL learners that a sentence is good English, but it is never used by the native speakers. Therefore, if chunks of language are applied by EFL learners in situations which can be predicted, they will be able to become more native-like. As native speakers of English apply a great deal of internally fixed expressions, it is necessary for EFL learners to learn those same expressions to extend their meanings so that they too would be able to acquire the competency they want to approximate the proficiency of native speakers. In other words, collocations make them fluent English users. Learning collocations can contribute to thinking more quickly and communicating more efficiently. Howarth (1998, p.34) maintains that "if one or more elements in an expression is figurative and makes no independent contribution to its overall meaning, it may not make much difference which combination is produced".

Newman (1988) believes that highlighting the collocational aspects of lexical items is as important as teaching them individually. This means that the language teachers ought to

teach words collocationally rather than individually. Therefore, when a lexical item such as “fast” is taught to EFL learners, it is not sufficient to explain what it means but it is necessary to teach the words that co-occur with the word “fast” like *fast color*, *fast friend*, *fast hold*, etc. In this manner, EFL learners will be able to construct acceptable sentences lexically as well as grammatically. Hsueh (2004) remarks that it is necessary for EFL teachers to emphasize on lexical collocations because it can contribute to EFL learners gaining new collocations in their written and spoken discourse and thus aid them in their ability to reanalyze and apply previously acquired collocations in new ways.

Liu (2000) states that if EFL teachers teach EFL students a great number of collocations it is possible for EFL students to use collocations correctly. He investigated the effects of teaching collocation on the proficiency of students’ English vocabulary and found that after teaching collocations to the students they became competent in producing collocations.

## **2.8 Summary**

By reviewing the above literature, the importance and the requisite of learning and teaching collocations in EFL classes is perceived. Experimental studies related to collocational knowledge were reviewed and the types of the collocational errors, sources of making of the collocational errors and instruction effects on collocational competence were also discussed. Most researchers conducted empirical studies on the lexical collocational errors and neglected investigating the grammatical collocational errors. In other words, they concentrated on the lexical collocations. Most of them did not pay attention to the causes of producing collocational errors. In Iran, there is no detailed and thorough research done on the collocational errors committed by Iranian EFL learners and there are also few empirical studies investigating the lexical and grammatical collocational errors of Iranian EFL

learners' writing. Therefore, the present study will probe into the collocational error types seen in Iranian EFL learners' writing and explore the causes of producing these collocational errors. In addition, the studies done by some of the researchers also paved the way for this current study to be developed and conducted so that the types of collocational errors can be evidenced and the causes of producing these collocational errors can be presented as evidence for academics and curriculum designers to reflect on its importance. It has been highlighted that one of the major causes of the collocational errors is mother tongue interference or negative transfer while the similarities between two languages may induce positive transfer (*facilitation*) Lado (1957, as cited in Mehdi, 1981) have talked about errors and mistakes and how L1 can effect a positive or a negative transfer. However, the differences between two languages can lead to a negative transfer (*interference*) (Schachter & Celce-Murcia, 1977, as cited in Mehdi, 1981).

## **3.0 METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter looks at the methodology used in this research. The chapter will discuss the participants involved and how they were selected, the procedure for data collection, and the framework used to analyze and present data. The theoretical aspect of this study relies on the related field which focuses on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as discussed in chapter 2 since it is through SLA that studies on errors, interlanguage, and communication strategies were derived. This study will not dwell on the common understanding of SLA but it will touch on some aspects of errors as proposed by Lado (1957) and Ellis (1986).

In this study, a qualitative method is used for parameters that are not measurable quantitatively while the amount of error which is measurable will be presented quantitatively.

The present study aims to examine the types of collocational errors made by 60 Iranian postgraduate university students studying at a public university in Malaysia. Based on the experience of the researcher as a teacher of English teaching at the high school level in Iran, (see biodata in appendix) it could be said that Iranian EFL learners are seldom successful in using English collocations. Although one can pinpoint several possible reasons, it is hereby stressed that this is because of a lack of emphasis being given by EFL teachers in schools in Iran. Iranian schools focus on grammar hence grammatical collocations can be acquired fairly easily by Iranian students whereas lexical collocations becomes a problem because there is less emphasis given to the learning of how words collocate in existence.

This study aims to investigate the writing pieces of 60 postgraduate Iranian students studying in a public university in Malaysia. Data comprise 60 pieces of writing samples extracted from the 60 Iranian subjects who had been selected based on their background, accessibility in a foreign country like Malaysia and also their academic background as all are postgraduate students who have been through the various levels of education based on the Iranian education system, thus some aspect of commonality.

Data will then be analyzed quantitatively by separating them into the two main groups of collocational errors. The percentage of the collocational errors will also be calculated by using the following formula:

$$\text{Average percentage of errors} = \left( \frac{\text{Sum of each individual subject's percentage of error}}{\text{Number of subjects}} \right) * 100$$

### **3.2 Procedure**

The steps involved in collecting data for this study are presented in the flow chart below. They will be explained with details where necessary in the subsequent sections within this chapter.

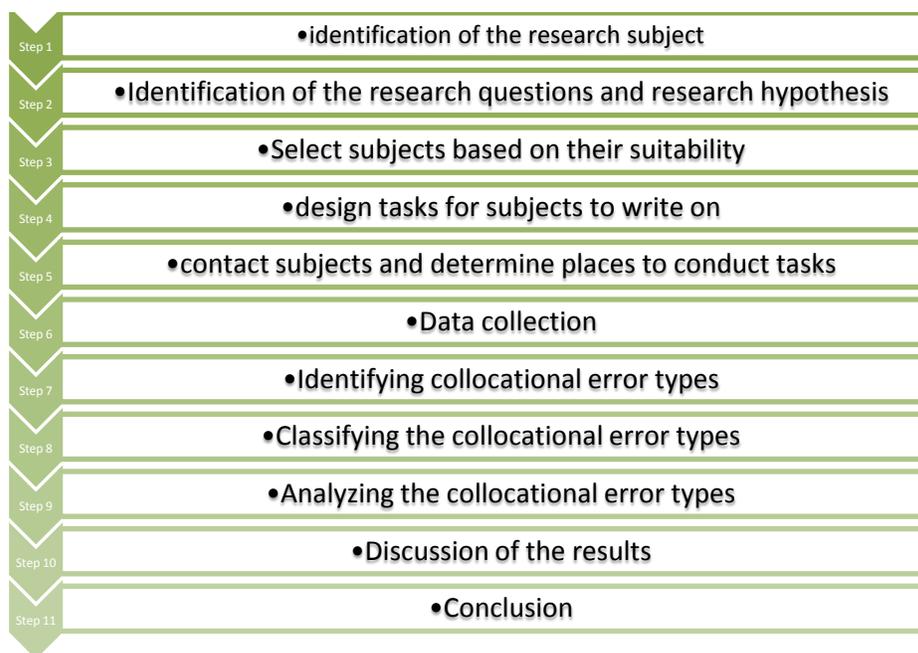


Figure 3.1 Steps towards doing research

### 3.2.1 Research Questions

As has been mentioned in chapter 1, this study seeks to address the following research questions:

- 1-What collocational error types are made by the subjects?
- 2-What is the frequency of collocational error types made by the subjects?
- 3-What are the sources of the collocational errors?

### 3.2.2 Research Hypothesis

For doing this research which had developed as a result of the researcher's observations as an experienced English language teacher, the research will provide a hypothesis. This is for the purpose of making an emphasis that Iranian EFL learners are likely to make more lexical collocational errors than grammatical collocational errors since grammar and its collocations and not lexical collocations are emphasized in EFL classes.

### **3.2.3 Subjects**

60 postgraduate students were selected as the subjects of the present study. They were identified through random sampling from among 580 Iranian postgraduate students studying at university Malaya. The subjects had taken either IELTS or TOFEL tests in their respective situations before they enrolled for the postgraduate courses. If they had not passed these two English proficiency tests, they will need to sit for the English placement tests provided by the university which they have enrolled in. They then sit for a particular English proficiency class which lasts between three to six months, after which they can register for their postgraduate courses, on passing this particular course.

All the subjects had studied English as a foreign language in guidance school and high school in Iran and all had graduated from high schools in Iran. All the 60 subjects had also passed the Academic Writing Course which is mandatory before completion of their degree. All have lived in Malaysia for at least two years and their ages ranged between 22 and 35. As is stated all are native speakers of Persian. From the 60 subjects identified, 44 were males and 16 were females. Nonetheless, this study makes no attempt to distinguish gender differences.

### **3.2.4 Data Collection**

#### ***Task***

For the purpose of eliciting the data required, the researcher provided a simple task to the 60 subjects. First the researcher carried out a small study on 10 Iranian students who were not part of the 60 subjects, the purpose is to gauge whether or not these topics meant for the 60 subjects would be able to elicit sufficient collocations. When it was verified that the amount of collocations would not only be sufficient but also of similar level for the 60

subjects, the researcher then proceeded to performing the task on the 60 selected subjects.

The subjects were requested to write on one of the three topics provided below:

- 1- The most influential person in your life
- 2- The important qualities of a good friend
- 3- Reasons People attend college or university

The subjects were asked to write between 150-200 words. The time allotted for writing was 50 minutes. Prior to writing, subjects were asked to locate a place suitable and majority chose to perform the task in the main library and also at the postgraduate room of the faculties where they come from in the university. The researcher stayed with the subjects when they were writing. The subjects were requested not to refer to a dictionary but if they did not know the meaning of a word, they can ask the researcher. This is to control the subjects' dependence.

### ***Challenges***

Although the research procedure seems straightforward, the researcher encountered some challenges in carrying out the study. For the purpose of collecting data, the researcher had to go to the main library and the different faculties several times. Since it is human nature to withdraw from one's commitment, some students also became difficult to contact. As a result, the researcher had to constantly appeal to them for some cooperation. Consequently, data collection was delayed for about three months.

### ***Procedure in analyzing data***

After data were collected, the researcher read the essays written by the subjects one by one. It was necessary for the researcher to identify and also classify the collocational errors manually because the subjects wrote these essays on the spot on not on computer. It was a

time-consuming process and for each essay analyzed, it took the researcher almost 5 hours to categorize due to checking and counter checking to minimize biasness. The researcher also encountered some instances of strange collocations which needed to be further verified. For doing this, the researcher then employed the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations, Associated Word Concordancer, Oxford Dictionary and TANGO (a national e-learning project established by National Science Council) as references to identify and analyze the collocational errors made by the subjects. Otherwise, the researcher referred to the BBI Dictionary.

As we are aware, a research is a scientific study and it needs to follow a specific structure for it to be valid. Fan (2009) mentions the investigation into English collocations is not easy because there is a wide spectrum of looking at collocations. However, studies on collocations can be limited by looking at particular structures only. Bahns (1993) and Howarth (1998) for example, studied verb+noun collocations while Fan (1991, as cited in Fan, 2009) examined delexical verbs. Another researcher, Lorenz (1999, as cited in Fan, 2009) focused on the adverb+adjective collocations. This suggests that collocational errors can be studied in various ways. In order to understand how Iranian learners in an EFL context are unable to apply collocations with precision or accurately, this study will thus investigate both grammatical collocational error types and lexical collocational error types. The classifications attempt to follow the classification of collocations proposed by Benson et al. (1986). According the researchers, lexical collocations can include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Therefore, lexical collocations may involve verb + noun, adjective + noun, adverb + adjective and verb + adverb. They also mentioned that lexical collocational errors are usually related to the word usage. On the other hand, a grammatical collocation is a phrase consisting of a dominant word like a noun, adjective, or verb and a

preposition. It can also be a grammatical structure which contains an infinitive or clause. A grammatical collocational error is usually related to a grammatical structure which exists in the sentence.

In the present study, the researcher classified the collocational errors made by the subjects into two categories: *grammatical collocational errors* and *lexical collocational errors* in order to test the hypothesis of the study that Iranian EFL students make more lexical collocational errors than grammatical collocational errors. At the beginning of the process of analysis, the researcher read the subjects' compositions and tried to understand what the subjects wanted to express. After reading their compositions, the researcher began to categorize the subjects' collocational errors in their writing samples. It is understood that this study lacks the intervention of a second independent rater. Initially, the researcher approached a few academicians for help but their services required monetary compensation which the researcher did not have. Moreover, they also requested for more time and the researcher was unable to fit their time into her own schedule because her scholarship was self sponsored and she had a deadline to meet. Ultimately, the two options were dismissed. However, to ensure that the researcher was not biased or prejudiced while rating the subjects' writing, the researcher made sure that each essay was read and carefully scrutinized at least three times before and during her analysis of the collocational errors. In instances where there were slight ambiguous, the researcher consulted a friend who was majoring in English for her opinion.

### ***Analyzing the collocational error types***

The following section discusses the process of identifying, classifying and analyzing the subjects' collocational errors.

All collocational errors are identified by making reference to the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations, Associated Word Concordancer (Virtual Language Center, Hong Kong, (Greaves)), Oxford Dictionary and TANGO (a national e-learning project established by National Science Council).

### ***Justifications for using the various concordancers***

The BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations (Benson et al, 1986, p.vii) gives “essential grammatical and lexical recurrent word combinations, often called collocations; when necessary, it provides definitions, paraphrases, and usage notes”. Much of the material provided in this Dictionary has never before been published and the material is of vital importance to those learners of English who are native speakers of other languages. Therefore, these learners who have no resources to enable them to acquire the ability to use collocations with precision would now be able to refer to the BBI Dictionary. EFL learners would be able to benefit from this resource since the list includes examples which show that verbs are used with specific nouns such as *call an alert, lay down a barrage, hatch a conspiracy, impose an embargo, roll a hoop, draw up a list, administer an oath, enter (make) a plea, crack a smile, punch a time clock, inflict a wound*, etc. This BBI dictionary is also relatively easy to access. Using this dictionary, EFL learners may learn to avoid making errors which, in an Iranian EFL context, resemble examples like *they mentioned him the book, a stranger was lurking, we are very fond, we send you hearty greetings, she told when she would arrive*.

Collocations are a phenomenon of word combination occurring together relatively often. Collocations also reflect the speaker’s fluency of a language, and serve as a sign of near native language proficiency. Collocation extraction is critical to a range of studies and applications hence, having a series of resources to make reference to is beneficial. TANGO

is a concordancer that is capable of answering users' queries on the use of collocations. . Currently, TANGO supports two text collections: a monolingual corpus (BNC) and a bilingual corpus (SPC). TANGO is generally employed to extract instances of VN (Verb-Noun) collocations from a very large corpus. TANGO is applicable to other types of collocations. The main difference between TANGO and other resources is that TANGO is used to extract valid instances, based on linguistic information of chunks and clauses and not types. In TANGO we observe other types of collocations related to VN such as VPN (verb + preposition + noun) and VNP (verb + noun + preposition).

The two types of collocations mentioned by Benson et al (1986) are *grammatical collocations* and *lexical collocations*. Benson et al (1986) further categorize grammatical collocations into eight types and they are designated as G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, and G8. Benson et al (1986) categorized the lexical collocations into seven types and they are designated as L1, L2, L3, L4, L5, L6, and L7. It should be mentioned that the Combinatory Dictionary does not include free combinations.

L1 to L7 collocational types have been listed in Table 2.1 and G1 to G8 collocational types have been listed in Table 2.2.

As Ellis (1986) has mentioned in error analysis procedures, there are various types to adhere to but for the purpose of this study, the researcher will adopt the steps shown by Li (2005) in order to reveal the process of identifying the collocational errors made by the subjects. As mentioned earlier the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations and Associated Word Concordancer were employed as tools to analyze. Where the collocations do not involve errors related to Verb and Adverb (V+Adv), TANGO was not applied.

In the current study, the researcher found only one instance of the V + Adv collocational error, "She never *punished* me *seriously*" (Subject Number 17). The verb "*punish*" co-

occurred with the adverb “*seriously*” in an unusual way as the collocation did not emerge in the TANGO concordance. In this example, the researcher used the Associated Word Concordancer to verify. The use of the Associated Word concordancer is further elaborated. The following steps were adhered to in this study.

Step 1. The researcher searched the Associated Word Concordancer with the search key “*punish seriously*”. The researcher did not find any suggestion.

Step 2. The researcher then looked up the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations to find appropriate words which collocate with the verb “*punish*”. The appropriate adverb was “*severely*” and then found other examples (shown in Table 3.1

Step 3. After looking up the dictionary, the researcher searched the Associated Word Concordancer with the search key “*punish severely*”.

Step 4. The researcher suggests correction “*punish severely*”.

For the purpose of illustration, the following table is provided and it was extracted from the associated word concordancer.

Table 3.1 Examples Extracted from Associated Word Concordancer

No.	Examples
1	Hill, Cleator Moor, was <i>severely punished</i> by Whitehaven Bench on Thursday.
2	Field, the Wales No8, had <i>severely punished</i> Craige for a quick throw-in.
3	He was not <i>punished</i> more <i>severely</i> .
4	... that damage the game is <i>punished severely</i> .
5	...kept good its promise to <i>punish severely</i> ...

Extracted from Associated Word Concordancer

### 3.2.5 Classification of the Collocational Errors

Besides using Li's (2005) steps to analyze data, the researcher also adopted the classification types of collocations proposed by Benson et al. (1986). This is because Benson's model is more complete and comprehensive as compared to other classification of collocations offered by other researchers. On the other hand, as this study also aims to examine both grammatical collocational errors and lexical collocational errors, it was found that the classification of collocations proposed by Benson et al (1986) can be more efficient. Several classifications of collocations are also proposed by other researchers as those explained below.

Wood (1981, p. 168, as cited in Hsueh, 2004) divides collocations into *idioms*, *colligations* and *free combinations* in terms of a syntactic and semantic criterion in a continuum.

Howarth (1998) classifies collocations and idioms into four groups : *free combinations*, *restricted collocations*, *figurative idioms*, *pure idioms*

Cowie and Mackin (1975) classify collocations and idioms into four groups in terms of idiomaticity: *pure idioms*, *figurative idioms*, *restricted collocations*, and *open collocations*.

Lewis (1997, as cited in Li, 2005) classifies collocations into *strong*, *weak*, *frequent*, and *infrequent*.

In the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations, collocations are divided to two main groups according to Benson et al (1986): *grammatical collocations* and *lexical collocations*. Lexical collocations fall into seven types designated by L1, L2, L3, L4, L5, L6, and L7. According to Benson et al. (1986) grammatical collocations fall into eight types designated by G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, and G8.

Lexical collocations include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Lexical collocations may be verb + noun, adjective + noun, adverb + adjective and verb + adverb. Lexical collocational errors are usually related to the word usage. A grammatical collocation is a phrase consisting of a dominant word (noun, adjective, or verb) and a preposition or grammatical structure which contains an infinitive or clause, and a grammatical collocational error is usually related to a grammatical structure which contains an infinitive, a clause or a preposition.

According to BBI Dictionary (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxiv), L1 collocations consist of a verb (usually transitive) and a noun/pronoun (or prepositional phrase). Most L1 collocations consist of a verb denoting *creation* and/or *activation (CA)* and a noun/pronoun. Such fixed lexical combinations are called *CA collocations*. There are some examples of collocations with verbs denoting creation: *come to an agreement, make an impression, compose music, set a record, reach a verdict, and inflict a wound*. In addition, there are some examples of collocations that express the concept of activation: *set an alarm, fly a kite, launch a missile, punch a time clock, and spin a top, wind a watch*.

In some examples, the same noun collocates with one verb (or verbs) to denote creation and with another verb (or verbs) to denote activation: *establish a principle (= creation) - apply a principle (= activation); draw up a will (=creation) - execute a will (=activation)*.

Sometimes the meanings *creation* and *activation* are united in one verb, for example *call an alert, display bravery, hatch a conspiracy, impose an embargo, produce friction, inflict an injustice, offer opposition, pose a question, lay a smoke screen, put out a tracer, commit treason, issue a warning*.

According to BBI Dictionary (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxiv) CA collocations are arbitrary and non-predictable. Non-native speakers face difficulties related to them. They must be

guided. Non- native speakers do not know that one says in English *make an estimate* (but not *make an estimation*); *commit treason* (but not *commit treachery*). In English one says *commit fraud* and *perpetrate fraud*. However, the collocation *commit suicide* is acceptable and *perpetrate suicide* is not acceptable (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxiv).

Sometimes it is necessary even for native speakers to refer to a list of CA collocations. Many may not know which verbs collocate with such nouns: *acquittal, afterburners, authority, barrage, bench warrant, Caesarean section, cartwheel, circuit breaker, cloture, copyright, counsel, coup de grace, etc.* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxiv)

Also, according to BBI Dictionary (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxvi), L2 collocations consist of a verb meaning essentially *eradication* and/or *nullification (EN)* and a noun/pronoun. Such fixed lexical combinations are called *EN collocations*. Some examples are *reject an appeal, lift a blockade, break a code, reverse a decision, dispel fear, squander a fortune, demolish (raze, tear down) a house, repeal a law, revoke a license, annul a marriage, suspend martial law, scrub (cancel) a mission, withdraw an offer, countermand an order, renege on a promise, crush(put down)resistance, break up a set (of china), rescind a tax, ease tension, quench one's thirst, denounce(abrogate) a treaty, exterminate vermin, override a veto, etc.* (Benson et al, 1986, p. xxiv)

As the two categories of L1 (V+N, CA collocations) category and L2 (V+N, EN collocations) category proposed by Benson et al. (1986) do not affect on the results of this study, the researcher combined these two categories into one and it is thus identified as L1 (V+N) category in this study.

Table 3.2 illustrates the classification of lexical collocations. The classification of the grammatical collocations adopted from Benson et al. (1986) is also shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.2 The Lexical Collocations

Type	Pattern	Examples
L1	V + N	Make an impression
L2	Adj. + N	High ambitions
L3	N + V	Bombs explode
L4	N of N	A school of whales
L5	Adv. + Adj.	Strictly accurate
L6	V + Adv	Argue heatedly

(Adopted from Benson et al, 1986, p.xxiv)

All lexical collocational errors are analyzed by using the framework offered above (Benson et al. 1986) so as to be able to categorize the errors systematically.

In this study the classification of collocations proposed by Benson et al (1986) is used and the analysis of lexical collocational errors and grammatical collocational errors were done based on this classification. According to the hypothesis and research questions indicated in chapter 1, both grammatical collocational errors and lexical collocational errors are to be investigated. Since it was already mentioned that the model proposed by Benson et al (1986) is more efficient for analyzing grammatical collocational errors and lexical collocational errors, Table 3.3 is provided for further illustration.

Table 3.3 The Grammatical Collocations

Type	Pattern	Examples
G1	N + Prep	What's the <i>matter with</i> you?
G2	N + to Inf.	They made <i>an attempt to do</i> it.
G3	N + that clause	They made a <i>disturbance that we had to leave</i> .
G4	Prep + N	What the music should we play <i>at the party</i> ?
G5	Adj. + Prep	They were <i>fond of</i> children.
G6	Adj. + to Inf.	It was <i>necessary to work</i> .
G7	Adj. + that clause	He was <i>happy that he would get a good mark</i> .
G8(A)	V + direct O + to +	We <i>sent the manuscript to her</i> .

	indirect O	
	V + indirect O + direct O (allow the dative movement transformation)	<i>We sent her the manuscript.</i>
G8(B)	V + direct O + to + indirect O (do not allow the dative movement transformation)	<i>She tried to communicate her thoughts to him.</i>
G8(C)	V + direct O + for + indirect	<i>He designed a beautiful house for us.</i>
	V + indirect O + direct O	<i>He designed us a beautiful house.</i>
G8(D)	V + prep + O	<i>She was commended for bravery.</i>
	V + O + Prep + O	<i>She ingratiated herself with the boss.</i>
G8(E)	V + to Inf.	<i>He determined to learn English.</i>
G8(F)	V + bare Inf.	<i>We must work.</i>
G8(G)	V + V-ing.	<i>The children came running.</i>
G8(H)	V + O + to Inf.	<i>They were pressing me to agree to the compromise.</i>
G8(I)	V + O + bare Inf.	<i>They heard her leave.</i>
G8(J)	V + O + V-ing.	<i>He kept me waiting two hours.</i>
G8(K)	V + a possessive and V-ing.	<i>They love his clowning.</i>
G8(L)	V + that clause	<i>She informed them that she would come.</i>
G8(M)	V + O + to be + C	<i>We appointed her to be treasurer.</i>
G8(N)	V + O + C	<i>We found them interesting.</i>
G8(O)	V + O1 + O2	<i>The police fined him fifty dollars.</i>
G8 (P)	V + (O) + Adverbial	<i>We fared well.</i>
G8(Q)	V + (O) + wh-clause/ wh-phrase	<i>We had to infer what she meant.</i>
G8(R)	It + V + O + to Inf.	<i>It behooves you to study.</i>
	It + V + O + that clause	<i>It surprised her to see her friend.</i>
G8(S)	V + C	<i>She was enthusiastic.</i>

(Adopted from Benson et al, 1986, p. x)

All the grammatical collocational errors identified from the 60 pieces of writing samples are then analyzed by using the framework offered above (Benson et al. 1986) in order to systematically categorize the errors.

### **3.2.6 Analyzing the Errors**

In order to analyze the collocational errors, at first the researcher extracted all the collocations used by the subjects both lexical collocations and grammatical collocations. Then, the researcher identified the collocational errors made by the subjects both grammatical collocational errors and lexical collocational errors. Extracting collocations and also identifying collocational errors took a lot of time.

All collocational errors are identified using the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations, Associated Word Concordancer, Oxford Dictionary and TANGO (a national e-learning project established by National Science Council) as references to analyze the collocational errors made by the subjects. After extracting collocations from subjects' writing samples and identifying lexical collocational errors and grammatical collocational errors, the researcher embarked on categorizing the collocational errors. For doing this, the classification of collocations proposed by Benson et al (1986) was applied. The types of lexical collocational errors and grammatical collocational errors made by the subjects were identified and also the percentage of errors was calculated. Table 3.4, Table 3.5 and Table 3.6 show the analysis of data as extracted from 3 subjects' writing samples. As all the errors were manually categorized, similar tables were drawn up for all the 60 subjects in order to be able to detect where their collocational errors are and in what way they could be classified according to Benson's category. The blanks in the table show that the subject has used the corrected collocations, so it is not necessary to be written the corrected collocation in the forth column thus the forth column is empty. For example, "*depend on*" is a corrected

collocation used by the subject, so the forth column is empty as it doesn't need to be written the corrected one.

Table 3.4 The Number and the Type of Collocational error(s) Made by the Subject 1

No.	Type of Collocation	Used Collocation	Corrected (If Used Collocation is Incorrect)
1	G2	People to attend	
2	G8(D)	Depend on	
3	G3	... important ones that make people choose ...	
4	G8(I)	Make people choose	
5	G1	Preparation for	
6	G8(L)	I think that the most important...	
7	G8(F)	Can get	
8	G2	People to study	
9	G8(H)	Try their best to collect	
10	G8(H)	Helps them to gain	
11	G8(E)	Want to prepare	
12	G8(F)	Will be	
13	G8(D)	Compete with	
14	G3	... the job that they want.	
15	G8(D)	Tend to	
16	G8(Q)	... apply what they learned .	
17	G4	In college	
18	G4	In university	
19	G8(H)	Choose the best way to reach	
20	G6	Encourage to attend	
21	L1	Get a job	
22	L2	Plenty of knowledge	Extensive/thorough knowledge
23	L2	Developed society	Advanced society
24	L2	Competitive experience	Broad/wide experience
25	L1	Reach success	Achieve/attain success
26	L2	Abundant knowledge	Extensive/thorough knowledge

It can be seen that subject 1 had used 26 collocations, 20 grammatical collocations and 6 lexical collocations. There are no grammatical collocational errors made by the subject. Instead, from the 6 lexical collocations used by the subject 5 are lexical collocations errors. Table 3.6 illustrates how they were classified.

Table 3.5 The Number and the Type of Collocational error(s) Made by the Subject 2

No.	Type of Collocation	Used Collocation	Corrected (If Used Collocation is Incorrect)
1	G8(E)	Plan to pursue	
2	G8(D)	Provide to Iranian	Provide for Iranian
3	G8(D)	Apply in industry	Apply to industry
4	G4	In life	
5	G8(I)	Made me mature	
6	G8(Q)	... give me how to overcome ...	
7	G8(D)	Influence in my approach	Influence on my approach
8	G2	Approach to plan	
9	G8(D)	Plan the future	Plan for future
10	G8(A)	I owe him my ability	
11	G4	All aspects	In all aspects
12	G8(B)	He introduced a new set to me.	
13	G8(L)	... believe that the most influential person...	
14	G8(F)	Should have	
15	G8(H)	Motivate colleagues to be	
16	G8(H)	Encourage coworkers to be	
17	G8(F)	Should do	
18	L1	do plans	Make plans
19	L1	Change mind	
20	L1	Establish a production	Step up/speed up/ increase a production
21	L1	advice	Give/offer advice
22	G1	Advice in	Advice on/about

Subject 2 had applied 22 collocations (18 grammatical collocations and 4 lexical collocations). From grammatical collocations, 6 are grammatical collocational errors and from lexical collocations, 3 are lexical collocational errors.

Table 3.6 The Number and the Type of Collocational error(s) Made by Subject 3

No.	Type of Collocation	Used Collocation	Corrected (If Used Collocation is Incorrect)
1	G6	Easy to understand	
2	G8(L)	... understand that most people ...	
3	G8(E)	Want to have	
4	G8(D)	Similar with	Similar to
5	G8(E)	Prefer to have	
6	G8(F)	Can not know	
7	G4	From glance	At a glance
8	G6	Difficult to break	
9	G8(F)	Should concentrate	
10	G8(D)	Concentrate on	
11	G8(S)	Is honest.	
12	G8(F)	May not share	
13	G8(E)	Try to be	
14	G5	Clear about	
15	G8(S)	Is attentive.	
16	G8(S)	Is adaptable.	
17	G8(Q)	... notices how little things affect...	
18	G8(F)	Can not read	
19	G8(F)	.. tell when we are...	
20	G8(L)	... aware that they ..	
21	G8(E)	Try to change	
22	G8(D)	Talk to	
23	G8(D)	Talk about	
24	G8(F)	Will know	

25	G8(Q)	.. know what makes ...	
26	G8(I)	Help us become	
27	G3	.. person that we want ..	
28	G8(E)	Want to be	
29	G8(F)	Won't try	
30	G8(E)	Try to change	
31	G8(N)	Make us comfortable.	
32	G4	At risk	
33	G8(E)	Try to steal	
34	G1	Gossip about	
35	G8(F)	Will help	
36	G8(I)	Help you move	
37	L1	get friends	Make friends
38	L1	Have willingness	Express/show willingness
39	L2	desire qualities	Admirable/good qualities
40	L2	Good friend	
41	L2	Big pleasure	Great pleasure
42	L2	Much people	Many people
43	L1	Establish relationship	
44	L1	Find a friend	Make a friend
45	L2	Near friend	Close friend
46	L4	Action of violence	An act of violence
47	L2	Perfect friend	True /fast friend
48	L1	Damage reputation	Destroy reputation
49	L2	Good time	
50	L2	Right friend	True friend

It can be seen that the subject had used 50 collocations (36 grammatical collocations and 14 lexical collocations). From grammatical collocations, 2 are grammatical collocational errors and from lexical collocations, 11 are lexical collocational errors.

While analyzing the collocational errors, the researcher found that some collocational errors overlapped. In other words, some errors did not belong to a clear-cut category for

example, the collocational error “*make little advice*”, which could be corrected to “*give a bit of advice*”. This error would be categorized as an L1 (V+N) error due to the misuse of the verb “*make*”. It could also be classified as an L4 (N of N) error due to the misuse of the adjective “*little*”. In this case, the error was considered as a collocational error of type L1 and L4 error.

In addition, in this study the term “target collocations” has been used (Huang, 2001). It means the collocations produced by native speakers of English and are opposed to “learner collocations”. “Learner collocations” are the collocational errors produced by EFL learners.

### **3.2.7 Using Liu’s Categories to Classify Sources of Collocational Errors**

The researcher also adopted the classification of the sources of collocational errors proposed by Liu (1999, ps. 177&178, as cited in Hsueh, 2004). Liu (1999) analyzed the collocational errors in EFL learners’ writing samples with 14 types of lexical and grammatical collocational errors investigated in the students’ compositions and examination papers and there were seven main sources of errors found. Liu (1999) concluded that the causes of the collocational errors made by EFL learners can be traced to strategies like *word coinage* and *approximation* belong to *communication strategies*, but it seems that the majority of the errors are caused by the *interlingual transfer* and also four kinds of the *intra lingual transfer* – *overgeneralization*, *ignorance of rule restriction*, *misconception of verbs*, and *the use of synonym-* belong to *cognitive strategies*.

The researcher selected the classification of the sources of collocational errors proposed by Liu (1999) because it was the most complete compared to the classification of the sources of collocational errors proposed by other researchers. There are several classifications of the sources of collocational errors proposed by the various researchers as follows:

Iranian EFL learners' translations of headlines show that their *native language interference* was the most noticeable source of the errors in translation of the native language to the target language (Khodabandeh, 2007).

It appears that studies had also found that Arab students' writing also contained interlingual and intralingual transfer where the Interlingual transfer showed *negative transfer* and the intralingual transfer were composed of *overgeneralization, false concept hypothesized, ignorance of rule restrictions, and use of synonym* (AbiSamra, 2003).

From the preposition errors made by Arab EFL learners Mehdi (1981) concludes that the major source of collocational errors related to English prepositions was due to *negative transfer or mother tongue interference*.

Howarth (1998) considers cognitive strategies such as *avoidance, experimentation (use of synonym), negative transfer, analogy (overgeneralization), and repetition* as the sources of collocational errors.

According to Blom (2006), EFL learners resort to their *mother tongue* when they do not know the correct collocations.

Ellis (1986) contends that the learners acquired English as second language are affected by their native language and this claim is supported by the foreign accent of ESL learners when speaking English.

An empirical research investigating Arab EFL learners' knowledge of English collocations and collocational errors was conducted by Mahmoud (2005). The results show that the subjects had serious deficiency related to English collocations. The subjects made more lexical collocational errors than grammatical collocational errors. In addition, he

found that the source of about 61% of the collocational errors was mother tongue interference.

Shoshana and Levenston (1978) state that the causes of lexical collocational errors made by EFL learners can be traced to their reliance on strategies linked with *synonymy*, *avoidance*, *transfer* and *paraphrasing*.

After reading and comparing the classification of the sources of collocational errors proposed by Liu (1999) and the classification of the sources of collocational errors proposed by other researchers, the researcher found that the classification of the sources of collocational errors proposed by Liu (1999) is the most complete and comprehensive of all. So, it is efficient for analyzing grammatical collocational errors and also lexical collocational errors. Table 3.7 shows the sources of the collocational errors proposed by Liu (1999).

Table 3.7 The Sources of Collocational Errors

Cognitive strategies	Intralingual Transfer	i. Overgeneralization ii. Ignorance of Rule Restriction iii. Misconception of verbs iv. The Use of Synonym
	Interlingual Transfer	Negative Transfer
Communication Strategies	Paraphrase	Approximation Word Coinage

Adopted from Liu (1999)

### 3.2.8 Statistical Presentation of Data

In the present study, data used for statistical analysis include the number of subjects, the types of collocational errors, number of collocations used, the number of correct collocations used and the number of the collocational errors made.

The data from the subjects' writing samples were then typed into a database in order to prepare the data for analysis. The prepared database was then used for statistical analysis by using Microsoft Excel software.

### **3.3 Summary**

The present study aims to probe into the collocational errors made by Iranian postgraduate university students studying at a public university in Malaysia. The present study focused on investigating the types of collocational errors made by the 60 subjects, the frequency of the collocational error types, and the sources of the collocational errors made by the subjects as seen in their writing samples. This is seen as one way of measuring the subjects' knowledge and use in both types of *lexical* and *grammatical* collocations. 60 Iranian postgraduate university students studying at a public university in Malaysia served as the subjects and their writing samples served as the data. All had studied English as a foreign language in guidance school and high school in Iran for 7 years and have graduated from high schools. All the 60 subjects also passed the Academic Writing Course and a compulsory English proficiency Course which are mandatory courses offered by the University of Malaya before completion of their postgraduate degree. All have lived in Malaysia for at least two years. Their ages range between 22 and 35 and all are native speakers of Persian. From the 60 subjects, 44 were males and 16 were females.

The subjects were asked to write on one of three topics. The essay written by the subjects needed to include words between 150-200. The researcher adopted the lexical and grammatical collocation classification proposed by Benson et al. (1986). The subjects' collocational errors were then identified based on the collocation classification adopted from Benson et al. (1986). The researcher adopted the classification of collocations

proposed by Benson et al. (1986) not any other model because this classification is more complete and comprehensive compared to other classification of collocations offered by other researchers. On the other hand, as this study is to investigate both grammatical collocational errors and lexical collocational errors only the classification of collocations proposed by Benson et al (1986) can be efficient. Related to the sources of collocational errors the researcher adopted the classification of the sources of collocational errors proposed by Liu (1999, ps. 177&178, as cited in Hsueh, 2004). Liu (1999) concluded that the causes of the collocational errors made by EFL learners can be traced to strategies like *word coinage* and *approximation* belong to *communication strategies*, but it seems that the majority of the errors are caused by the *interlingual transfer* and also four kinds of the *intra lingual transfer – overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, misconception of verbs, and the use of synonym-* belong to *cognitive strategies*.

The researcher selected the classification of the sources of collocational errors proposed by Liu (1999) because it was the most complete compared to the classification of the sources of collocational errors proposed by other researchers. After collecting the data, the collocational errors in subjects' writing were identified by using the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations, Associated Word Concordancer (Greaves), TANGO (a national e-learning project established by National Science Council), and Oxford Dictionary as references to analyze the subjects' collocational errors and to provide suggestions for the correction. After the errors were identified and classified, the researcher entered related data into a database. Microsoft Excel software was then employed to analyze the subjects' collocational error types in their writing.

## **4.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the results of the study. The chapter is divided into four sections. Section 4.2 examines the kinds of collocational errors made based on 60 pieces of writing samples. Sections 4.6 and 4.7 examine the types of collocational errors detected in the subjects' writing samples. Based on the experience of the researcher as a teacher of English (see biodata in appendix) who has been teaching for 12 years at high school level in Iran, it can be said that Iranian EFL students are deficient in speaking and writing in English and evidence can be traced to the errors they make especially in the use of collocational words. From the reports of some studies conducted on Iranian EFL students' writing, it seems that one of the Iranian learners' difficulties in learning English is their lack of ability to apply the use of collocations correctly. It appears that Iranian learners were more receptive than productive in learning the language. They were given the language input as a subject taught in class but they seldom get the opportunity to practice using the language and this, inevitably, has led to their poor skills in communicating in English. In other words, they are not able to convey their thoughts in English successfully and correctly although they do not have serious problems in English grammar. In EFL classes in Iran grammar is emphasized by EFL teachers and a great deal of grammar exercises are often provided to these EFL students. Hence, Iranian EFL learners/students tend to acquire an extensive and thorough knowledge of the English grammar. By analyzing the English compositions written by Iranian postgraduate students studying in a local university in Malaysia, the researcher hopes to be able to unravel samples of their errors and then use them as possible evidence

to convince other EFL teachers why the use of word collocations need to be given emphasis in schools and at various levels of learning and teaching in Iran.

Sections 4.8 and 4.9 discuss the frequency of the collocational errors identified and the frequency of collocational errors is investigated for the purpose of identifying the types of collocation errors which could be the most problematic to learners of Iranian background and also the least problematic so that these need not be emphasized in classrooms. In section 4.10 the sources of collocational errors are further discussed.

## **4.2 Kinds of Collocational Errors Made by the Subjects**

In the present study, the classification of collocations proposed by Benson et al. (1986) was used to analyze the subjects' collocational errors in their writing samples. Benson et al. (1986) in the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations divided English collocations into two major groups: lexical collocations and grammatical collocations. In the present study, all lexical collocational types categorized by Benson et al. (1986) in the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations were investigated. They are listed as

- 1) L1 (V+N),
- 2) L2 (Adj. + N),
- 3) L3 (N + V),
- 4) L4 (N of N),
- 5) L5 (Adv+Adj),
- 6) L6 (V+Adv).

These have been mentioned in detail in chapter 3. In addition, all grammatical collocational types categorized by Benson et al. (1986) in the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations were also examined in this study. They are listed as

- 1) G1 (N + Prep),
- 2) G2 (N + to Inf.),
- 3) G3 (N + that clause),
- 4) G4 (Prep + N),
- 5) G5 (Adj. + Prep),
- 6) G6 (Adj. + to Inf.),
- 7) G7 (Adj. + that clause),
- 8) G8 A (V + direct O + to + indirect O);  
     B (V + indirect O + direct O (allow the dative movement transformation));  
     C (V + direct O + to + indirect O (do not allow the dative movement transformation));  
     D (V + direct O + for + indirect; V + indirect O + direct O);  
     E (V + Prep + O; V + O + Prep + O);  
     F (V + to Inf.; V + bare Inf.);  
     G (V + V-ing.);  
     H (V + O + to Inf.);  
     I (V + O + bare Inf.);  
     J (V + a possessive and V-ing.);  
     K (V + that clause);  
     L (V + O + to be + C);  
     M (V + O + C);  
     N (V + O1 + O2);  
     O (V + (O) + Adverbial);  
     P (V + (O) + wh-clause/ wh-phrase);  
     Q (It + V + O + to Inf.);

R (It + V + O + that clause);

S (V + C).

G8 collocations consist of nineteen English verb patterns, designated by the capital letters A to S.

The present study aims to explore and identify the collocational error types made by Iranian EFL postgraduate students who are studying at a public university in Malaysia. Li's (2005) study also attempted to uncover the type of collocation errors made by Taiwanese students learning English but the present study differs from Li's study (2005) in several ways in that the hypothesis, population, and materials used as data are different thus, the results of these two studies would be different although there may also be some similarities. In Li's research (2005), the subjects were 61 sophomores in the department of Applied English at Ming Chuan University in northern Taiwan. In Li's study (2005), the materials used for collecting data composed of two kinds of writing samples, an assignment and an in-class activity. In addition, she also administered a questionnaire was administered to investigate the subjects' perceptions of difficulty in collocations.

In the present study, after extracting all the collocations from the 60 subjects' writing samples, the researcher separated them by classifying them as lexical collocational errors and grammatical collocational errors. The researcher then embarked on categorizing the collocational errors. For doing this, the classification of collocations proposed by Benson et al (1986) was applied.

As was mentioned in chapter 3, a pilot study was conducted to determine if the tasks set would be appropriate and 10 Iranian contacts were sourced and the topics were then administered. The 10 Iranian subjects who were also from universities in Malaysia were requested to write on any of the 3 topics (same as the tasks set for this study) provided. The

writings collected from these 10 participants indicate that all the 10 subjects had used both lexical and grammatical collocations. This finding enabled the researcher to be able to fine tune her approach in analyzing her future writing samples. It also helped to ensure that the three topics selected were adequate.

4- In the current study, 60 subjects were sourced from the population of Iranian postgraduate students studying in Malaysia but this figure did not include the 10 participants in the pilot study. From the 60 subjects identified and who had written on any one of the 3 topics provided, it was found that 17 of them chose to write on Topic 1 (The most influential person in your life), 22 subjects opted to write on Topic 2 (The important qualities of a good friend) and 21 subjects chose to write on Topic 3 (Reasons People attend college or university). Their essays were then manually categorized and the errors were classified. The following section discusses the findings.

### **4.3 Lexical Collocational Errors**

In this section, the outcome of the lexical collocational errors is discussed. As the subjects seemed to have some difficulties related to the use of lexical collocations, the section will thus discuss the findings relevant.

Of the 60 samples of written pieces extracted from the subjects and categorized manually by the researcher, it was found that there were a total of 602 lexical collocations used by the subjects and 354 were errors. Based on the categorization which followed Benson's framework (1986), it was found that of those who had written on Topic 1 (The most influential person in your life) all had made lexical collocational errors (the subject's writing samples are provided in appendix). These lexical collocational errors are also presented in Table 4.1. The percentage of the lexical collocational errors is next provided in

order to illustrate their level of deficiency in using these collocations correctly. The errors will be discussed according to the topics of the task written by the subjects.

#### 4.3.1 Topic 1 – The Most Influential Person in Your Life

Of the 60 subjects identified, 17 subjects chose to write on Topic 1. These 17 subjects had applied a total of 165 lexical collocations in their writing samples. From the total of 165 lexical collocations used by the subjects, 100 were errors and this means that 60.6% of the total (100/165) were errors, suggesting that the writers are suffering from a deficiency or the ability to use the collocations correctly. In the attempt to illustrate the low level of their ability to use collocations well, this section will also provide a sample of the subjects' errors. Based on table 4.2 below, it appears that all the subjects had committed errors in collocations. As subjects are numbered, it appears that subject 1 had made all errors (100%) in terms of using collocations when writing on the topic. Subject 3 made about half (50%), subject 4 more than half (75%), subject 6 more than half (77.78%), subject 7 also made more than half (69.23%), and finally subject 8 also made more than half (80%). This shows that 5 out of 17 had a higher level of errors. However, subjects 2, 5 and 11 made less than half of the errors with their errors being 28.57%, 40% and 30.77% respectively. The section below will also provide samples of the Iranian subjects' errors.

#### **Subject No. : 3**

Table 4.1 Examples of Lexical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 1)

Collocation No.	Type of Collocation	Some of the 100 Errors Identified	Correct collocation
1	L1	Learn knowledge	Gain/acquire knowledge
2	L1	Make advice	Give/offer advice

3	L2	Expensive advice	Valuable advice
4	L6	Affect highly	Affect deeply/strongly/profoundly

**Subject No. : 6**

Table 4.2 Examples of Lexical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 1)

Collocation No.	Kind of Collocation	Some of the 100 Errors Identified	Correct collocation
1	L2	Pure way	Proper/right way
2	L6	Talk fluently	Talk frankly/bluntly

**Subject No. : 10**

Table 4.3 Examples of Lexical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 1)

Collocation No.	Kind of Collocation	Used Collocation	Corrected (If Used is Incorrect)
1	L1	do plans	Make plans
2	L1	Establish a production	Step up/speed up/ increase a production
3	L1	advice	Give/offer advice

**Subject No. : 11**

Table 4.4 Examples of Lexical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 1)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Kind of Collocation</b>	<b>Used Collocation</b>	<b>Corrected (If Used is Incorrect)</b>
1	L1	Make a pattern	Set/establish a pattern
2	L4	Little advice	A bit of advice

The section below will now focus on all the errors made by the 17 subjects. Table 4.5 highlight the individuals' ability and lack of ability to use these collocations correctly. The statistics thus indicate that almost all could not be considered as proficient in using the lexical collocations as majority had made errors.

To highlight their frequency in making these errors, the table below will displays their frequency i.e. according to numbers. The purpose is to highlight how many of these subjects were prone to making the errors. The higher their tendency in making these errors, the more tangible the evidence is to show that Iranian writers, including postgraduate students, have difficulties in using word collocations in their writing

Table 4.5 Illustrates the Total Number of Collocations Used by the 17 Subjects and the Total Number of Errors in Figures and Percentages

<b>subject</b>	<b>Total Nos. of lexical collocations used</b>	<b>Total Nos. of lexical collocational errors</b>	<b>Percentage of Errors (%)</b>
1	4	4	100
2	7	2	28.57
3	4	2	50
4	4	3	75

5	5	2	40
6	9	7	77.78
7	13	9	69.23
8	5	4	80
9	8	5	62.5
10	8	5	62.5
11	13	4	30.77
12	8	5	62.5
13	16	10	62.5
14	14	9	52.63
15	11	8	64.29
16	17	11	72.73
17	19	10	64.71
Total	165	100	1055.71
Average Percentage of Errors = $(1055.71/17)*100 = 62.10 \%$			62.10

From the table shown above, it can be seen that only two of the writers/subjects committed less errors. Subject 2 had a little more than a quarter in errors while subject 11 had almost similar results. The other 15 subjects made errors ranging from 40% to 100%. This implies that more than half of the subjects writing on Topic 1 had difficulties in using collocations correctly. In other words, the evidence is strong enough to show that the Iranian subjects have a difficulty with word collocations.

These errors detected from the 17 subjects' writing were then categorized accordingly as table 4.6 illustrates.

Table 4.6 Examples of Lexical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples on Topic 1

Type	Learner Collocation Errors	Persian Version	Target Collocations
L1	<i>make advice</i>	<i>Tosie kardan</i>	<i>give/offer advice</i>
	<i>leave effect</i>	<i>Asar gozashtan</i>	<i>have/produce an effect</i>
	<i>relieve loads</i>	<i>Barira bardashtan</i>	<i>lighten loads</i>
	<i>take respect</i>	<i>Ehteram gozashtan</i>	<i>pay respect</i>
	<i>follow rules</i>	<i>Etaat az qavanin</i>	<i>obey rules</i>
	<i>give confidence</i>	<i>Etemad benafs dadan</i>	<i>inspire/instill confidence</i>
L2	<i>expensive advice</i>	<i>Tosie arzeshmand</i>	<i>valuable advice</i>
	<i>pure way</i>	<i>Raveshe sahih</i>	<i>proper/right way</i>
	<i>cold face</i>	<i>Chehreye qoshk</i>	<i>poker face</i>
	<i>grand change</i>	<i>Taqire bozorg</i>	<i>great/drastic change</i>
	<i>heavy decision</i>	<i>Tasmime qatei</i>	<i>firm decision</i>
L3	<i>pain heal</i>	<i>Eltiame dard</i>	<i>pain wear off/ disappear</i>
L4	<i>a behavior of violence</i>	<i>Raftare qoshunatbar</i>	<i>an act of violence</i>
	<i>a person from a family</i>	<i>Ozve qanevade</i>	<i>a member of family</i>
L6	<i>affect highly</i>	<i>Qeili asar gozashtan</i>	<i>affect deeply/strongly</i>

From table 4.6 it would seem that Iranian subjects had committed errors in all the 5 groups proposed by Benson et al (1986). The analysis suggests that those subjects who chose to write on topic 1 tended to make errors which can be classified into 5 types of lexical collocational errors including L1 (V+N), L2 (Adj. + N), L3 (N + V), L4 (N of N), and L6 (V + Adv). Of the five types of error identified, it appears that L1 and L2 were the most common so it should be construed as being most difficult for the subjects. From the total of 100 lexical collocational errors (out of 165 collocations used) made by the 17 subjects, 47 were L1 errors and 31 were L2 errors and between this two, there was no much difference in difficulty since the percentage of L1 error was 55.79% and the percentage of L2 errors was 56.03%.

### 4.3.2 Topic 2 – What Are some of The Important Qualities of a Good Friend?

From the total of 60 subjects who served as the sources for collecting data, 22 of them chose to write on topic 2. These 22 subjects had applied a total of 225 lexical collocations in their writing samples. From the total of 225 lexical collocations used by the subjects, 135 were errors. The figure again illustrates that 60% of them were errors, and this is again a sign that Iranian postgraduate students do have a tendency to commit collocational errors in writing. For the purpose of illustrating the errors made, the table below will also demonstrate some of the examples of errors made in comparison to the correct collocations.

#### *Subject No. : 2*

Table 4.7 Examples of Lexical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 2)

Collocation No.	Type of Collocation	Some of the 135 Errors Identified	Correct Collocation
1	L1	Set relationship	Establish relationship
2	L2	Valuable part	Significant/important part
3	L2	Special moment	Critical moment

#### *Subject No. : 7*

Table 4.8 Examples of Lexical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 2)

Collocation No.	Type of Collocation	Some of the 135 Errors Identified	Correct collocation
17	L2	Suitable friend	Good friend
18	L1	Satisfy emotions	Stir up/whip up emotions

20	L2	Appropriate friend	Good friend
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**Subject No. : 12**

Table 4.9 Examples of Lexical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 2)

Collocation No.	Type of Collocation	Some of the 135 Errors Identified	Correct Collocation
1	L2	Perfect knowledge	Thorough knowledge
2	L1	Analyze the problem	Solve the problem
3	L1	Make communications	Establish communication

**Subject No. : 14**

Table 4.10 Examples of Lexical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 2)

Collocation No.	Type of Collocation	Some of the 135 Errors Identified	Correct collocation
1	L1	Figure out the problem	Solve the ...
2	L4	Little trouble	A bit of trouble
3	L3	Experiences obtain	Experiences gain/acquire
4	L2	Complicated situations	Crisis/critical/desperate ...

The section below will now focus on all the errors made by the 22 subjects. Table 4.11 highlights the individuals' ability and lack of ability to use these collocations correctly.

The statistics will henceforth show that more than half of the writers had difficulties using collocations in their writing.

To highlight their frequency in making these errors, the table below will display the frequency of the errors made. The purpose of doing this is to highlight how many of these subjects were prone to making the said errors. The higher their tendency in making these errors, the more tangible the evidence is to show that Iranian writers, including postgraduate students, have difficulties in using word collocations in their writing

The errors of the 22 subjects who committed the various collocational errors were then counted and presented in figures in order to highlight how much of their errors could be due to difficulty. The higher the percentage of errors is, the more the difficulties. The table below illustrates the figures in terms of percentage.

Of the 22 subjects who wrote on topic 2, , it appears that 17 of them had made more than half of the errors for example subject 1 (75%), subject 2 (66.67%), subject 4 (60%), subject 6 (62.5%), subject 8 (50%), subject 9 (100%). Only subjects 3, 5, 7, 12, and 18 committed less than half of the errors. The percentage of errors for subjects 3 was 37.5%, subject 5 was 42.86%, subject 7 was 33.33%, subject 12 was 37.5% and subject 18 was 30%.

Table 4.11 Total Number of Collocations Used by the 22 Subjects and the Total Number of Errors in Figures and Percentages

subject	Total Nos. of lexical collocations used	Total Nos. of lexical collocational errors	Percentage of Errors (%)
1	4	3	75
2	6	4	66.67
3	8	3	37.5
4	5	3	60
5	14	6	42.86
6	8	5	62.5

7	9	3	33.33
8	8	4	50
9	6	6	100
10	14	10	71.43
11	14	11	78.57
12	8	3	37.5
13	10	6	60
14	11	7	63.64
15	12	8	66.67
16	8	7	87.5
17	8	6	75
18	10	3	30
19	13	9	69.23
20	19	10	52.63
21	18	12	66.67
22	12	6	50
Total	225	135	1336.7
Average Percentage of Errors = $(1336.7/22)*100 = 60.76 \%$			60.76

The figure shows that the percentage of errors committed by the writers ranged from the lowest of 33.33% to the highest of 87.5%. This can be interpreted as a tangible piece of evidence which shows that Iranian writers do have difficulties in using word collocations correctly and this fact supports the claim that Iranian writers are weak in using word collocations with precision because they do not have adequate exposure from schools.

All their errors were further classified and they could be categorized into 6 types. This is demonstrated in the table provided where it shows that the 6 types of lexical collocational errors are L1 (V+N), L2 (Adj. + N), L3 (N + V), L4 (N of N), L5 (Adv + Adj), and L6 (V+Adv) with type L1 and L2 being the most common. From the total of 135 lexical collocational errors made by the 22 subjects who wrote on Topic 2, 66 were L1 errors and

54 were L2 errors. The percentage of L1 errors was 67.00% and the percentage of L2 errors was 52.10%. This can therefore be interpreted as being the most difficult for the subjects concerned. This finding further substantiates the claim that Iranian subjects are deficient in using lexical collocations. The table below is provided to illustrate examples of the collocational errors made in comparison to what is deemed as target collocations (correct version) and the Iranian equivalent which could be the source of their errors.

Table 4.12 Examples of Lexical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples on Topic 2

Type	Learner Collocation Errors	Persian Version	Target Collocations
L1	receive opinion	Paziroftane ide	accept opinion
	trust the promise	Be qole qod amal kardan	keep a promise
	find a friend	Dust peida kardan	make a friend
	damage reputation	Az bein raftane etebar	destroy reputation
	break contact	Qat shodane erteбат	lose contact
L2	perfect friend	Duste kamel	true friend
	suitable friend	Duste monaseb	good friend
	desire qualities	Qeifyate matlub	admirable, good qualities
	near friend	Duste nazdik	close friend
	right friend	Duste qub	true friend
	hard situations	Moqieyate saqt	delicate situations
L3	friendship fail	az bein raftane dusti	friendship destroy/break off
L4	little gossip	Kami soqanchini	A bit of gossip
L5	completely indebted	Kamelan bedehkar	deeply indebted
	completely interested	Kamelan alaqemand	keenly/deeply/ highly interested
L6	advise deeply	Shadidan tosie kardan	advise strongly
	argue warmly	Daq shodane bahs	argue heatedly

### 4.3.3 Topic 3 - Reasons People Attend College or University

From the 60 subjects identified, it was found that 21 subjects chose to write on Topic 3. These 21 subjects had applied a total of 212 lexical collocations in their writing samples. From the total of 212 lexical collocations used by the subjects, 119 were errors. This figure helps to illustrate that Iranian writers do have difficulties with using word collocations as there was a total of 56% in error. Of the 21 subjects as shown in table 4.16, it appears that 17 subjects made more than half of the errors for example subject 1 (58.33%), subject 2 (83.33%), subject 3 (64.29%), subject 4 (57.14%), subject 6 (54.55%), and subject 7 (55.56%). Only subjects 5, 12, 13, and 19 committed less than half of the errors. The percentage of errors for these 4 subjects is 36.36%, 31.25%, 38.46% and 40% respectively. From these statistics, it can be verified that out of 21 subjects more than half i.e. 17 subjects (80.95%) had made more than 50% of lexical collocational errors. This evidence thus shows that majority of the Iranian subjects encounter great difficulty related to lexical collocations. Table 4.13 provides samples of their errors as evidence.

#### ***Subject No. : 1***

Table 4.13 Examples of Lexical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 3)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 119 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct collocations</b>
1	L2	Big dreams	Wild dreams
2	L1	Get a class	Form a class
3	L1	Get a knowledge	Gain/acquire knowledge
4	L2	Significant position	High/prominent position
5	L1	Reach dreams	Achieve dreams

6	L1	Get an image	Project an image
7	L3	Changes happen	Changes occur/take place

**Subject No. : 28**

Table 4.14 Examples of Lexical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 3)

Collocation No.	Type of Collocation	Some of the 119 Errors Identified	Correct Collocations
1	L1	Get competence	Gain /acquire competence
2	L2	Vast education	Broad education
3	L2	General knowledge	Common knowledge
4	L1	Learn knowledge	Acquire knowledge
5	L1	Learn skill	Acquire skill

**Subject No. : 40**

Table 4.15 Examples of Lexical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 3)

Collocation No.	Type of Collocation	Some of the 119 Errors Identified	Correct Collocation
19	L2	Strong eyesight	Keen eyesight
22	L2	Abundant knowledge	Thorough/extensive knowledge
23	L2	Developed society	Advanced/civilized society
24	L1	Gain goal	Reach/attain/achieve goal

25	L1	Achieve agreement	Come to /reach an agreement
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Having illustrated some of the errors made by the 21 subjects who wrote on topic 3, it can be seen quite clearly that these writers cannot evade from this manifestation of collocational errors. The evidence of their errors is further presented in Table 4.16 as a way of highlighting how many made the errors and also the frequency of each individual's errors. These statistics will serve as evidence that the Iranian subjects do have difficulties in using lexical collocations correctly.

Table 4.16 Illustrates the Total Number of Collocations Used by the 21 Subjects and the Total Number of Errors in Figures and Percentages

subject	Total Nos. of lexical collocations used	Total Nos. of lexical collocational errors	Percentage of Errors(%)
1	12	7	58.33
2	6	5	83.33
3	14	9	64.29
4	7	4	57.14
5	11	4	36.36
6	11	6	54.55
7	9	5	55.56
8	7	6	85.71
9	6	4	66.67
10	9	6	66.67
11	10	5	50
12	16	5	31.25
13	13	5	38.46
14	12	7	58.33
15	12	8	66.67
16	9	5	55.56
17	11	7	63.64
18	11	6	54.55

19	5	2	40
20	12	6	50
21	9	7	77.78
Total	212	119	1214.85
Average Percentage of Errors = $(1214.85/21)*100 = 57.85\%$			57.85

The average percentage of errors made by all the 21 writers was calculated to be 57.85%. From the figures shown, it is also apparent that only 4 out of the 21 made lesser errors and this can be traced to subjects 5, 12, 13 and 19 who each committed the total of 36.36%, 31.25%, 38.46% and 40.0% respectively. This can be deduced as a clear manifestation that Iranian writers cannot evade from making collocational errors with more than half of them (17/21) making at least 50% of errors. This evidence again suggests that Iranian writers have difficulties.

The errors made by the 21 subjects writing on topic 3 are further categorized according to the types of lexical errors as proposed by Benson et al. (1986). The table below illustrates the 5 types of lexical collocational errors detected and they are L1 (V+N), L2 (Adj. + N), L3 (N + V), L5 (Adv + Adj), and L6 (V+Adv). Again, the statistics indicate that types L1 and L2 appear to be the most common, hence the most problematic. Of the total of 119 lexical collocational errors classified, 60 were L1 errors and 51 were L2 errors and the percentage breakdown shows that 59.79% were L1 types and 51.84% were L2 types.

The writers' errors are now represented by making a comparison of these to the target collocations and their mother tongue collocations, Iranian equivalents as a way of displaying whether or not the source of the errors could be due to mother tongue (Iranian) interference.

Table 4.17 Examples of Lexical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples on Topic 3

Type	Learner Collocation Errors	Persian Version	Target Collocations
L1	get a class	Kelas <b>dashtan</b>	<b>form</b> a class
	get a knowledge	<b>Gereftane</b> danesh	<b>gain/acquire</b> knowledge
	reach dreams	<b>Residan</b> be roya	<b>achieve</b> dreams
	reach success	<b>Residan be</b> movafaqiyat	<b>achieve/attain</b> success
	achieve a job	<b>Residan</b> be shoql	<b>get</b> a job
	get their promotions	Tarfi <b>gereftan</b>	<b>make</b> their promotions
	come to evaluations	Arzyabi <b>kardan</b>	<b>make</b> an evaluations
	mixture experience	Tajrobe <b>jam kardan</b>	<b>gather</b> experience
L2	significant position	Jaygah <b>mohem</b>	<b>high/prominent</b> position
	plenty of knowledge	Daneshe <b>ziad</b>	<b>thorough/extensive</b> knowledge
	developed society	Jame-eye <b>pishrafte</b>	<b>advanced</b> society
	focal role	Naqshe <b>markazi</b>	<b>key</b> role
	overall trend	Ravande <b>kolli</b>	<b>general</b> trend
L3	changes <b>happen</b>	<b>Etefaq oftadane</b> taqir	changes <b>occur/take place</b>
	projects <b>attend</b>	<b>Anjam shodane</b> poroje	project <b>carry out/draw up</b>
	technology <b>improve</b>	<b>Pishrafte</b> tekhnology	technology <b>develop</b>
L5	<b>deeply</b> skilled	<b>Besiyar</b> maher	<b>highly</b> skilled
	<b>fully</b> wrong	<b>Kamelan</b> eshtebah	<b>totally/completely</b> wrong
L6	change <b>highly</b>	Taqire <b>asasi</b>	change <b>drastically/radically</b>

As mentioned above, the error which seemed to exist in the writer's writing samples when using lexical collocational errors are related to L1 and L2 collocational errors. Based

on the results presented the above tables, it could be deduced that the sources of the writer's errors could be due to the *use of synonym* and *mother tongue interference*.

#### **4.4 Sources for the Possible Errors Made by the 60 Subjects in Using Collocations**

Analysis of the writers' writing samples of the three topics provided demonstrate that type L1 and L2 collocational errors are the most commonly made by the subjects. Although one cannot go into the mental processes of each writer to determine the actual cause of the errors, one of the most likely reasons leading to this deficiency is that teachers of English do not emphasize on teaching lexical collocations particularly those involving L1 and L2 collocations in classrooms. In order to substantiate this claim, the researcher interviewed 10 teachers of English (in Iran, Birjand where the researcher was teaching English at high school level) about the knowledge and the emphasis given to collocations in their classrooms. From the interview conducted it was found that 2 of the teachers do not even know the term *collocation* and it is possible that the gap was left behind by the lack of emphasis given to the teaching of collocations. Although the other 8 was aware of collocations, they had not taught any aspect of collocations before. This is possible due to the fact that vocabulary is taught as single lexical items by teachers of English in Iran. In other words, the teachers of English teach words individually rather than collocationally.

For example, when a lexical item like *fast* is taught, it is not enough for EFL teachers to explain only what it means. They should provide examples like *fast runner*, *fast typist* and *fast horse* so that learners are aware of the difference in usage. It is also necessary that this lexical item be used in other stable collocations such as *fast color*, *fast friend* and *fast hold* if the learners are to be further exposed to collocations.

Also, Persian as the subjects' mother tongue could have influenced the writers' errors. Richards (1972, as cited in Mehdi, 1981) proposes that errors should be classified into two categories: 1- interference errors which are caused by native language 2- intralingual and developmental errors which are caused by the structure of the target language. These errors reflect the learners' competence at a particular stage. The intralingual and developmental errors can be discussed in terms of the strategy of the learning which is categorized by overgeneralization, incomplete acquisition of rules and ignorance of rule restrictions. Also, Corder (1967, p. 167) states that the process of first and second language learning is the same. He distinguishes between errors and mistakes. Mistakes are slip of tongue and are not systematic because they are performance failure made by all speakers. Errors are systematic and reflect the learners' transitional competence. He includes the possibility of transfer from the first language to the target language. On the other hand, Gradman (1973, as cited in Mehdi, 1981) remarks that the sources of errors is related to mother tongue interference, poor teaching, ignorance of rule restrictions and poor materials.

Taylor (1975, as cited in Mehdi, 1981) believes that the sources of errors are mother tongue interference and overgeneralization,

Lado (1957, as cited in Mehdi, 1981) contends that learning a language is synonymous with learning the differences between the target language and the native language. He maintains that by employing correct technique of teaching that would progress to the surface structure, there would be less interference.

Selinker (1972) introduces the term "interlanguage" to hypothesize the existence of a linguistic system separate from the native language of the learner and the target language. He identifies five processes as central to second language learning and as potential sources of errors. The processes are a) mother tongue interference b) transfer of training c) strategies

of second language learning d) strategies of second language communication and e) overgeneralization of target language linguistic material. These five central psycholinguistic processes are believed to exist in a “talent psychological structure” in the brain that is activated when a learner attempts to learn a second language.

Having illustrated the lexical collocational error types, the section below will now delve into the grammatical collocational error types.

#### **4.5 Grammatical Collocational Errors**

As has been outlined by Benson et al (1986), grammatical collocations are phrases which comprise a dominant word like a noun, a verb, or an adjective followed by a preposition or a grammatical structure such as an infinitive or clause. Benson et al. (1986) have put them into 8 groups and they were designated as G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7 and G8. In this study, the findings will also be classified into Benson’s 8 groups of grammatical collocational errors.

#### **4.6 Discussion of Findings**

Of the 60 samples of written pieces extracted from the subjects and categorized manually by the researcher, it was found that there were a total of 1062 grammatical collocations employed by the subjects and only 71 were errors.

##### **4.6.1 Topic 1 – The Most Influential Person in Your Life**

From the 60 subjects identified, 17 subjects chose to write on Topic 1. These 17 subjects had applied a total of 312 grammatical collocations in their writing samples. From the total of 312 grammatical collocations used by the subjects, 27 were errors. This means that the

subjects were more competent in using grammatical collocations. The section below will also provide samples of the Iranian subjects' errors.

***Subject No. : 35***

Table 4.18 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 1)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 27 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G4	In during life	In life
2	G8(H)	Encourage me for continue	.... to continue
3	G8(D)	Guide to	Guide for
4	G8(F)	Had to worked	Had to work

***Subject No. : 37***

Table 4.19 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 1)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 27 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G8(D)	Impact in	Impact on
2	G8(D)	Face to	Face with

**Subject No. : 56**

Table 4.20 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 1)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 27 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G1	Respect about	Respect for
2	G8(D)	Reply with	Reply to

**Subject No. : 58**

Table 4.21 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 1)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 27 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G8(D)	Arrive to	Arrive in /at

**Subject No. : 60**

Table 4.22 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 1)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 27 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G5	Satisfied to	Satisfied with

From the analysis that was performed on those 60 written essays, it was found that of the 17 subjects who had written on Topic 1, 14 of them or 82.3% had made grammatical collocational errors. Table 4.23 shows the number of grammatical collocations used by the

subjects and the number of grammatical collocational errors made by the subjects who wrote on Topic1. The percentage of grammatical collocational errors is also presented.

Table 4.23 Illustrates the Total Number of Collocations Used by the 17 Subjects and the Total Number of Errors in Figures and Percentages

Subject	Total Nos. of grammatical collocations used	Total Nos. of grammatical collocational errors	Percentage of Errors (%)
1	10	1	10
2	22	0	0
3	24	4	16.67
4	18	6	33.33
5	11	0	0
6	21	1	4.76
7	16	1	6.25
8	19	1	5.26
9	26	4	15.38
10	15	2	13.33
11	24	1	4.17
12	17	0	0
13	16	1	6.25
14	37	1	2.7
15	9	2	22.22
16	16	1	6.25
17	11	1	9.09
Total	312	27	155.66
Average Percentage of Errors = $(155.66/17)*100 = 9.16 \%$			9.16

From Table 4.23, it also seems clear that some subjects made more errors than others. For example subject 4, 33.33%; subject 9, 15.38%; subject 10, 13.33%; and subject 15, 22.22% made errors. Of the 17 subjects, it appears that all the subjects had committed less

than 50% and it is a good sign of mastery of grammatical collocations. The average percentage of grammatical collocational errors is 9.16 %.

Examples of the grammatical collocational errors identified from the writing samples on Topic1 are presented in Table 4.24. From the 60 subjects identified, 17 subjects chose to write on Topic 1. The grammatical collocational errors were manually categorized by the researcher based on the categorization which followed Benson et al's framework (1986). From the categorization, it was found that 17 subjects who wrote on Topic 1 (the most influential person in your life) made a total of 27 grammatical collocational errors. These grammatical collocational errors are presented in Table 4.24 for the purpose of elaboration. As shown inTable 4.24, the subjects had committed 7 types of grammatical collocational errors including G1 (N + Prep), G4 (Pre + N), G5 (Adj + Pre), G8 (D) (V + Prep + O), G8 (E) (V + to Inf.), G8 (F) (V + bare Inf.), G8 (H) (V + O + to Inf.). The results show that most of these types of grammatical collocational errors are related to preposition collocations. This presents that the subjects are deficient in preposition collocations.

Table 4.24 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples on Topic 1

Type	Learner CollocationErrors	Persian Version	Target Collocations
G1	advice <b>in</b>	Tosie <b>be</b>	advice <b>on</b>
G4	<b>In during</b> life	<b>Dar toole</b> zendegi	<b>in</b> life
G5	full <b>with</b>	Por <b>az</b>	full <b>of</b>
	satisfied <b>to</b>	Razi budan <b>az</b>	satisfied <b>with</b>
G8(D)	associate <b>to</b>	Marbut budan <b>be</b>	associate <b>with</b>
	reply <b>with</b>	Javab dadan <b>be</b>	reply <b>to</b>
	arrive <b>to</b>	Residan <b>be</b>	arrive <b>in</b>
	face <b>to</b>	Movajeh shodan <b>ba</b>	face <b>with</b>
	guide <b>to</b>	Rahnamyee kardan <b>be</b>	guide <b>for</b>
G8(E)	<b>decide kill</b>	<b>Tasmingereft</b>	<b>decide to kill</b>

		<b>bekoshad</b>	
G8(F)	<b>must to advise</b>	<b>Bayad tosie konad</b>	<b>must advise</b>
G8(H)	<b>encourage me for continue</b>	<b>Tashviq kardan mara baraye edameye</b>	<b>encourage me to continue</b>

#### 4.6.2 Topic 2: The Important Qualities of a Good Friend

Table 4.30 illustrates the total number of collocations used by the 22 subjects and the total number of errors in figures and percentages. The percentage of grammatical collocational errors is also presented.

From Table 4.30 it can be seen that the 22 subjects had used a total of 436 grammatical collations in their writing samples. From the total of 436 grammatical collocations used by the subjects, 27 were errors. This also shows that they are competent in grammatical collocations. Of the 22 subjects, it appears that all the subjects had committed less than 50% of errors. The section below will also provide samples of the Iranian subjects' errors.

#### *Subject No. : 9*

Table 4.25 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 2)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 27 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G8(D)	Fill up	Fill with
2	G8(D)	Spend with technology	Spend in technology
3	G8(D)	Focus in	Focus on

**Subject No. : 25**

Table 4.26 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 2)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 27 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G8(D)	Similar with	Similar to
2	G4	From glance	At a glance

**Subject No. : 32**

Table 4.27 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 2)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 27 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G8(F)	Can to be	Can be

**Subject No. : 36**

Table 4.28 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 2)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 27 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G8(E)	Want choose	Want to choose
2	G8(E)	Want go	Want to go

**Subject No. : 46**

Table 4.29 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 2)

<b>Collocation No</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 27 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G4	With risk	At risk

Of the 22 subjects who had written on Topic 2, 16 subjects or 72.72% had made grammatical collocational errors. The average percentage of errors is 7.72 %. Table 4.30 shows that the subjects were competent in grammatical collocations. All 22 subjects made grammatical collocational errors less than 20% except subject 3 (33.33%) and subject 4 (38.89%).

Table 4.30 Illustrates the Total Number of Collocations Used by the 22 Subjects and the Total Number of Errors in Figures and Percentages

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Total Nos. of grammatical collocations used</b>	<b>Total Nos. of grammatical collocational errors</b>	<b>Percentage of Errors (%)</b>
1	12	2	16.67
2	21	1	4.76
3	9	3	33.33
4	18	7	38.89
5	33	1	3.03
6	23	0	0
7	31	0	0
8	27	1	3.7
9	18	1	5.56
10	6	0	0
11	36	2	5.56
12	34	1	2.94

13	32	1	3.13
14	15	1	6.67
15	19	1	5.26
16	18	0	0
17	23	1	4.35
18	9	1	11.11
19	11	2	18.18
20	12	0	0
21	15	1	6.67
22	14	0	0
Total	436	27	169.81
Average Percentage of Errors = $(169.81/22)*100 = 7.72 \%$			7.72

For the purpose of highlighting what the grammatical errors used and made are, Table 4.31 is provided. Examples of those grammatical collocational errors identified from the writing samples are then categorized and presented. From the 60 subjects identified, 22 subjects chose to write on Topic 2. The grammatical collocational errors were manually categorized by the researcher based on the categorization which followed Benson et al's framework (1986). From the categorization, it was found that 22 subjects who wrote on Topic 2 (The important qualities of a good friend) committed a total of 27 grammatical collocational errors. These grammatical collocational errors are presented in Table 4.31 for the purpose of elaboration. As shown in Table 4.31, the subjects had committed 9 types of grammatical collocational errors including G1 (N + Prep), G4 (Pre + N), G5 (Adj + Pre), G6 (Adj. + to Inf.), G8 (D) (V + Prep + O), G8(E) (V + to Inf.), G8(F) (V + bare Inf.), G8(H) (V + O + to Inf.), G8(Q) (V + (O) + wh-clause/ wh-phrase). The results show that four types of grammatical collocational errors are relevant to preposition collocations and this illustrates the deficiency of the subjects in prepositions.

Table 4.31 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples on Topic 2

Type	Learner Collocation Errors	Persian Version	Target Collocations
G1	conversation <b>between</b>	Goftegu <b>ba</b>	conversation <b>with</b>
G4	<b>with</b> risk	<b>Dar</b> qatar	<b>at</b> risk
	<b>from</b> the glance	<b>Az</b> yek negah	<b>at</b> a glance
G5	similar <b>with</b>	Shabih budan <b>ba</b>	similar <b>to</b>
G6	<b>better</b> choose	<b>Behtar ast enteqab shavad</b>	<b>better to</b> choose
G8(D)	belong <b>with</b>	Motaalleg budan <b>be</b>	belong <b>to</b>
	believe <b>to</b>	Motaqed budan <b>be</b>	believe <b>in</b>
	select <b>among</b>	Enteqab kardan <b>miane</b>	select <b>from among</b>
G8(E)	<b>like</b> see	<b>Dust darad bebinad</b>	<b>like to</b> see
G8(F)	<b>should</b> likes	<b>Bayad dust dashte bashad</b>	<b>should</b> like
G8(H)	<b>need somebody</b> understand	<b>Niaz ast be kasi ke befahmad</b>	<b>need somebody to</b> understand
G8(Q)	<b>knows that when to keep</b> quiet	<b>Midanad ke che moqe aram bashad</b>	<b>knows when to keep</b> quiet

#### 4.6.3 Topic 3: Reasons People Attend College or University

Moving on to the subjects who chose to write on Topic 3 (reasons people attend college or university), the analysis shows that of the 21 subjects who had written on Topic 3, 12 subjects or 57.14% had made grammatical collocational errors. Table 4.37 is provided to show the number of grammatical collocations used by the subjects and the number of grammatical collocational errors made by those subjects who wrote on Topic3. The percentage of the grammatical collocational errors is also presented.

Clearly, a total of 314 grammatical collocations were used by the writers in their writing samples. From the total of 314 grammatical collocations used by the subjects, 17 were errors. This indicates that they are competent users of grammatical collocations.

**Subject No. : 20**

Table 4.32 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 3)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 17 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G8(D)	Attend in university	Attend university

**Subject No. : 29**

Table 4.33 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 3)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 17 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G5	Interested to	Interested in
2	G1	Update with	Update on

**Subject No. : 31**

Table 4.34 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 3)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 17 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G8(D)	Attend in university	Attend the university
2	G8(E)	Like say	Like to say

**Subject No. : 33**

Table 4.35 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 3)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 17 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G8(D)	Attend in university	Attend university
2	G8(D)	Contribute in	Contribute to

**Subject No. : 38**

Table 4.36 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples (Topic 3)

<b>Collocation No.</b>	<b>Type of Collocation</b>	<b>Some of the 17 Errors Identified</b>	<b>Correct Collocation</b>
1	G5	Different between	Different from
2	G8(D)	Attend in university	Attend the university

Based on the analysis made of grammatical collocations used, it appears that all the subjects had committed less than 50% of the errors, showing that only 5.70% of grammatical collocational errors were committed. This finding indicated that the subjects did not face great difficulty related to grammatical collocations.

Table 4.37 Illustrates the Total Number of Collocations Used by the 21 Subjects and the Total Number of Errors in Figures and Percentages

subject	Total Nos. of grammatical collocations used	Total Nos. of grammatical collocational errors	Percentage of Errors (%)
1	3	0	0
2	20	0	0
3	11	1	9.09
4	31	1	3.23
5	25	1	4
6	21	1	4.76
7	12	1	8.33
8	14	0	0
9	11	2	18.18
10	14	0	0
11	14	2	14.29
12	24	2	8.33
13	22	2	9.09
14	13	2	15.38
15	8	1	12.5
16	16	0	0
17	14	0	0
18	12	0	0
19	14	0	0
20	8	1	12.5
21	7	0	0
Total	314	17	119.68
Average Percentage of Errors = $(119.68/21)*100 = 5.70\%$			5.70

For the purpose of comparison, examples of the grammatical collocational errors identified from the writing samples on Topic 3 are presented. They are also categorized respectively. From the 60 subjects identified, 21 subjects chose to write on Topic 3. The grammatical collocational errors were manually categorized by the researcher based on the

categorization which followed Benson et al's framework (1986). From the categorization, it was found that 21 subjects who wrote on Topic 3 (reasons people attend college or university) made a total of 17 grammatical collocational errors. These grammatical collocational errors are presented in Table 4.38 for the purpose of elaboration. As shown in Table 4.38, the subjects had committed 5 types of grammatical collocational errors including G1 (N + Prep), G5 (Adj + Pre), G8 (D) (V + Prep + O), G8 (E) (V + to Inf.), and G8 (I) (V + O + bare Inf.). The results show that three types of grammatical collocational errors are relevant to preposition collocations and this illustrates the deficiency of the subjects in prepositions.

Table 4.38 Examples of Grammatical Collocational Errors from the Subjects' Writing Samples on Topic3

Type	Learner Collocation Errors	Persian Version	Target Collocations
G1	update <b>with</b>	Beruz budan <b>ba</b>	update <b>on</b>
G5	confident <b>from</b>	Atemad <b>be</b> nafs dashtan	confident <b>of</b>
	interested <b>to</b>	Alaqemand budan <b>be</b>	interested <b>in</b>
G8(D)	attend <b>in</b> college	Hozur <b>dar</b> kaleg	attend college
	contribute <b>in</b>	Komak kardan <b>be</b>	contribute <b>to</b>
	escape the military	Farar kardan <b>az</b> artesh	escape <b>from</b> the military
G8(E)	<b>like say</b>	<b>Dust darad beguyad</b>	<b>like to say</b>
G8(I)	<b>made students to improve</b>	<b>Baes mishavad daneshamuzan pishraft konand</b>	<b>made students improve</b>

The sections above have attempted to show the lexical and grammatical collocational errors made by the three groups of subjects in their writing. The next section will thus focus on explaining the differences or similarities if detected.

#### **4.7 Comparison between the Lexical and Grammatical Collocational Errors Analyzed**

In this study, the writing and collocational errors detected are then compared. It was mentioned that the 60 subjects had used or applied a total of 1664 collocations with 602 being lexical collocations and 1062 being grammatical collocations. This figure illustrates that the writers were more inclined towards using grammatical collocations. Of the total of 1062 used by the 60 Iranian writers, 425 of these appeared to be collocational errors were found with 354 errors being lexical collocational errors and only 71 errors being grammatical collocational errors

The results reveal that the subjects had made more lexical collocational errors (60.12%) than grammatical collocational errors (7.42%) throughout the 60 writing samples. Hence, it could be said that the subjects encountered difficulties related to lexical collocations. The findings or results of this study were consistent with the hypothesis of the study which claims that Iranian EFL learners would make more lexical collocational errors than grammatical collocational errors. Although there is no evidence to substantiate this claim, it can only be reemphasized here that this inadequacy is due to the fact that grammar is more emphasized in EFL classes in Iran. This could have contributed to the Iranian subjects' lack of proficiency in using lexical collocations with precision.

Figure 4.1 is provided as a way of showing the emphasis which says that the number of lexical collocations used by the subjects in comparison to the grammatical collocations differs. Through this comparison, it is understood that the subjects were inclined to apply grammatical collocations. All the 6 types of lexical collocations (L1 to L6) used by the subjects have been discussed above but they are also shown in Figure 4.1.

All the various types of grammatical collocations (G1 to G8 and 19 subcategories of G8) are also illustrated in Figure 4.1 for emphasis.

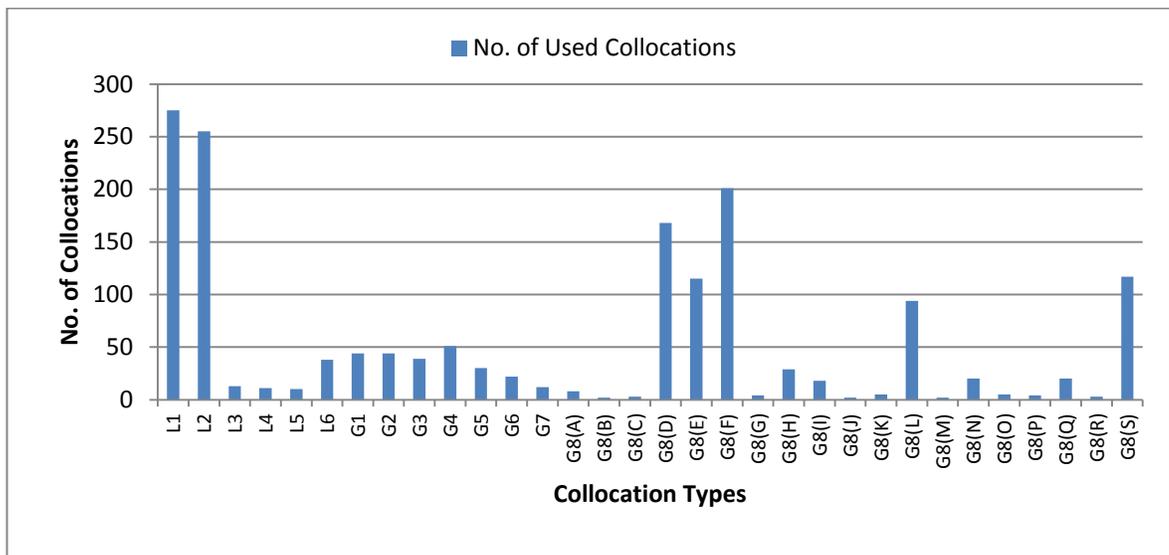


Figure 4.1 The Comparison between the Number of Used “L” and “G” Collocations

Figure 4.1 shows that the subjects had applied 1062 grammatical collocations and only 71 were errors. On the other hand, 602 lexical collocations were used by the subjects and 354 were misused. Thus, lexical collocations were used less but more errors were made (60.12%) and grammatical collocations were used more but the subjects had made less errors (7.42%). This result conforms to the hypothesis of the study and shows that the subjects have made lexical collocational errors more than fifty percent (60.12%). So, lexical collocations cause problems for Iranian EFL learners and EFL teachers should pay much attention to lexical collocation instruction in EFL classes.

Figure 4.1 demonstrates the total percentage of collocation errors made and the graphs clearly indicate that L1 and L2 type are the highest in frequency with G8 classified under grammatical collocation being the highest among the others. This distinction helps to indicate that the need to emphasis on lexical collocations in Iranian classrooms is urgent if it is to enable Iranian writers to be able to construct their sentences well.

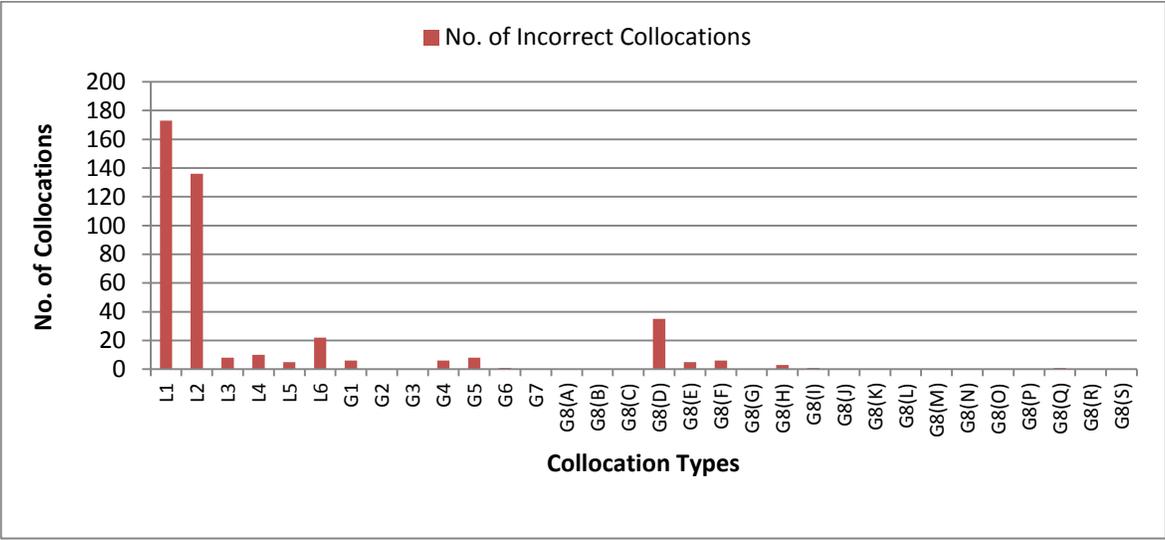


Figure 4.2 The Comparison between the Number of “L” and “G” Collocational Errors

Figure 4.3 presents the comparison between the number of lexical collocations and grammatical collocations used by the subjects and the number of lexical collocational errors and grammatical collocational errors made by the subjects.

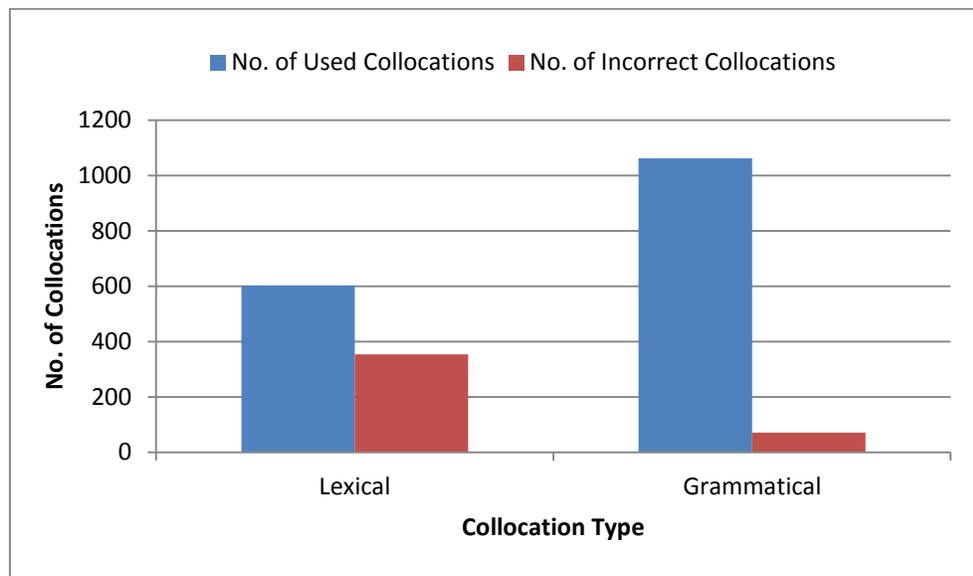


Figure 4.3 The Comparison between the Number of Used “L” and “G” Collocations and the Number of “L” and “G” Collocational Errors

## 4.8 Sources of Errors Made by the Writers

### 4.8.1 Through the Use of Synonym

The use of the synonym for a lexical item in a collocation is seen as a “straightforward application of the open choice principle” (Farghal and Obiedat, 1995, p. 321). Table 4.39 shows the errors resulting from the use of synonym. The reason that the subjects had produced the unacceptable collocations was due to the absence of the lexical items *tell*, *lighten*, *great* and *critical*. It could be explained that the subjects had failed to know the collocability of *tell* with *lies*; *lighten* with *loads*, *great* with *love* and *critical* with *situation*. This is due to the lack of instruction and emphasis on collocations in EFL classes by Iranian EFL teachers.

Liu (2000, as cited in Hsueh, 2004) maintains that EFL students often produce erroneous collocations as they have insufficient collocational information of the synonyms that they

use. For example, from Hsu's (2002) study, it was found that the subjects made "customer psychology" instead of "consumer psychology", "decrease the rate of crime" instead of "lower the rate of crime" and "value concept" instead of "value judgments".

Table 4.39 Examples of Collocational Errors from the 60 Subjects' Writing Samples Resulting from the Use of Synonym

Type	Learner Collocations	Persian Version	Target Collocations
L1	She never <i>says lies</i> .	U hargez <i>doroq nemiguyad</i> .	She never <i>tells lies</i> .
L1	She tries to <i>relieve</i> my loads.	U talash mikonad <i>baram ra sabok kond</i> .	She tries to <i>lighten</i> my loads.
L2	When I face with <i>sensitive situations</i> , he is the first person who is ready to give me hand.	Vahti ba <i>moqeyate hasas</i> movaje mishavam, u avalin shaqsi hast ke amade barye komak be man ast.	When I face with <i>critical situations</i> , he is the first person who is ready to give me hand.
L2	He has <i>wild love</i> and keeps his promise.	U <i>eshqe ziad</i> darad va be qolash amal mikonad.	He has <i>great love</i> and keeps his promise.
L3	Without truth the <i>friendship</i> would easily and quickly <i>fail</i> .	Bedune sedaqat <i>dusti</i> asan va sari <i>shekast miqorad</i> .	Without truth the <i>friendship</i> would easily and quickly <i>break up</i> .
L4	They do not leave you lonely when you are in trouble and try to figure out the problem, even <i>little trouble</i> .	Anha shoma ra tark nemikonand tanha vaqti shoma dar zahmatid va talash mikonand hal konand moshkele shomara hata yek <i>dardesare kuchak</i> .	They do not leave you lonely when you are in trouble and try to figure out the problem, even <i>a bit of trouble</i> .
L5	Last, but not least, we can help others much better because we are <i>deeply skilled</i> .	Ma mitavanim be digaran behtar komak konim zira <i>qeili maher</i> hastim.	Last, but not least, we can help others much better because we are <i>highly skilled</i> .

#### 4.8.2 Through the Ignorance of Rule Restrictions

Ignorance of rule restrictions: several researchers (Gradman, 1973, as cited in Mehdi, 198; Richards, 1972, as cited in Mehdi; Liu, 1999, as cited in Hsueh, 2004) maintain that

analogy and failure to observe the restrictions of existing structures are at times the reason why students produce unacceptable collocations. For example, from Liu's (1999) study, it was found that the subjects made "to make Joyce surprise" that is a false analogy of the construction of verb + object + infinitive. (e.g *make Joyce surprised*) or "few knowledge" instead of "little knowledge".

Table 4.40 shows the errors resulting from the ignorance of rule restrictions in the subjects' writing samples. For example *much compliments* instead of *many compliments* is the ignorance of rule restrictions on countable nouns. Moreover, examples such as *be satisfied to* instead of *be satisfied with*, *respect about* instead of *respect for*, *suffer of* instead of *suffer from* and *agree to* instead of *agree with* indicate the misuse of prepositions. These errors show that the subjects have not paid attention to the collocational restrictions and they have used the same prepositions with similar verbs or nouns when they face a particular preposition with one type of verb or noun. G8 (I) is the error type concerning a transitive verb followed by a direct object and an infinitive without "to". In this study, it was found G8 (I) collocational errors such as *made students to improve* made by the subjects. G8 (F) is the error type regarding a verb followed by an infinitive without "to". It was found that G8 (F) collocational errors like *must to advise* and *can to be* are made by the subjects.

Table 4.40 Examples of Collocational Errors from the 60 Subjects' Writing Samples Resulting from Ignorance of Rule Restrictions

Type	Learner Collocations		Target Collocations
L2	I admire her greatly and pay <i>much compliments</i> on her.	Man u ra qeili tahsin mikonnam va az u <i>qeili tariff</i> mikonam.	I admire her greatly and pay <i>many compliments</i> on her.
G1	She became a person who pay <i>respect about</i> anyone else.	U shod kasi ke <i>be digran ehtram migozarad</i> .	She became a person who paid <i>respect for</i> anyone else.

G5	We will <i>be</i> happier and <i>satisfied</i> completely <i>to</i> life.	Ma qoshhaltar va kamelan <i>razi az</i> zendegi qahim bud.	We will <i>be</i> happier and <i>satisfied</i> completely <i>with</i> life.
G5	The people who graduate from college seem more <i>confident from</i> success.	Mardomi kea z kaleg fareqtahsil mishavand benazar miresad <i>motmaentar be</i> movafaqiyatand.	The people who graduate from college seem more <i>confident of</i> success.
G8(F)	A good friend <i>can to be</i> honest that you can trust him.	Duste qub <i>mitavanad bashad</i> amin ke shoma mitavanid be u etemad konid.	A good friend <i>can be</i> honest that you can trust to him.
G8(I)	Universities <i>made students to improve</i> their knowledge.	Daneshgaha <i>baes shodeand daneshjuyan behbud bebaqshand</i> daneshe qodra.	Universities have <i>made students improve</i> their knowledge.
G8(D)	He was older than me about ten years and was an experienced person that knew how can <i>face to</i> the problems and solve them.	U az man mosentar bud dah sal va batajrobe bud ke midanest chegune <i>movaje shaved ba</i> moshkelat va anha rah al konad.	He was older than me about ten years and was an experienced person that knew how can <i>face with</i> the problems and solve them.
G8(D)	This aim is very important and can <i>contribute in</i> nation progress a lot.	In hadaf qeili mohem ast va mitavanad qeili <i>komak konad be</i> pishrafte meli.	This aim is very important and can <i>contribute to</i> nation progress a lot.
G8(D)	It is easy to understand that most people want to have friends who <i>agree to</i> them.	Asan ast ke befahmim ke bishtare mardom miqahand dustani dashte bashand ke <i>movafeq bashand ba</i> anha.	It is easy to understand that most people want to have friends who <i>agree with</i> them.
G8(D)	Sometimes we <i>suffer of</i> some conversation with our friends.	Baazivaqtha ma <i>ranj mibarim az</i> baazi gofteguha ba dustaneman.	Sometimes we <i>suffer from</i> some conversation with our friends.
G8(D)	I have changed my mind and turn it toward <i>providing a</i> better service <i>to</i> Iranian by applying my knowledge to household industry.	Man avaz kardeam fekram ra be <i>faraham kardane</i> servise behtar <i>be</i> Iraniha ba bekar bordane danesham dar sanate qanegi.	I have changed my mind and turn it toward <i>providing a</i> better service <i>for</i> Iranian by applying my knowledge to household industry.

### 4.8.3 Through Overgeneralization

Overgeneralization: Several researchers (Richards, 1972, as cited in Mehdi, 1981; Selinker, 1972, as cited in Mehdi, 1981; Taylor, 1975, as cited in Mehdi, 1981; Liu, 1999, as cited in Hsueh, 2004) remark that students use overgeneralization when the items do not carry any obvious contrast for them. In other words, it is the creation of one deviant structure in place of two regular structures on the basis of the students' experience of the target language. For example, from Liu's (1999) study, it was found that the subjects made "am used to take" instead of "am used to taking" which is the combination of "am used to something" and "used to take". Therefore, the subjects had made the errors such as *had to worked* instead of *had to work*. It is a mixture of the past tense. Another example, *can categorized* instead of *can categorize* is a mixture of the future tense and the past tense. Moreover, *should likes* instead of *should like* and *should has* instead of *should have* are mixtures of the future tense and the present tense. These errors are shown in Table 4.41.

Table 4.41 Examples of Collocational Errors from the 60 Subjects' Writing Samples Resulting from Overgeneralization

Type	Learner Collocations	Persian Version	Target Collocations
G8(F)	We <i>can categorized</i> our friends as near friends, job friends and private friends.	Ma <i>mitavanim tabaqebandi konim dustaneman ra be dustane nazdik, soqli va samimi.</i>	We <i>can categorize</i> our friends as close friends, job friends and intimate friends.
G8(F)	She <i>should likes</i> everything for her friend.	U <i>bayad dust dashte bashad hamechiz baraye dustash.</i>	She <i>should like</i> everything for her friend.
G8(F)	Generally your friend <i>should has</i> qualities better than you.	Omuman <i>duste shoma bayad dashte bashad qosusiyati behtar az shoma.</i>	Generally your friend <i>should have</i> qualities better than you.

#### 4.8.4 Through Misconception of Verbs

Misconception of verbs: Students have misconceptions about such verbs as *make*, *do*, and *take*. Liu (1999, as cited in Hsueh, 2004) states that some students may think that these words are de-lexicalized verbs so they can be substituted for one another freely. For example, from Liu's (1999) study, it was found that the subjects made "*do plans*" rather than "*make plans*". Richards (1973) remarks that EFL learners may use the word *come* instead of *go*, *bring* instead of *take*, *teach* instead of *learn* and *do* instead of *make*. So, the subjects had made the errors like *take respect* instead of *pay respect*, *do plans* instead of *make plans*, *take advice* instead of *give/offer advice* and *make a pattern* instead of *establish a pattern*. These errors are shown in Table 4.42.

Table 4.42 Examples of Collocational Errors from the 60 Subjects' Writing Samples Resulting from Misconception of verbs

Type	Learner Collocations	Persian Version	Target Collocations
L1	He always <i>took</i> a word of <i>advice</i> .	U hamishe <i>nasihat mikonad</i> .	He always <i>gave</i> a word of <i>advice</i> .
L1	They claim that friends <i>make a pattern</i> for the personal life.	Anha edea mikonand dostaneshan baraye zendegi shakhsi <i>olgu misazand</i> .	They claim that friends <i>establish a pattern</i> for the personal life.
L1	I <i>take respect</i> to her.	Man be u <i>ehtram migozaram</i> .	I <i>pay respect</i> to her.

#### 4.8.5 Through Negative Transfer

Previous studies (Lado, 1957, as cited in Mehdi, 1981; Corder, 1967; Duskove, 1969, as cited in Mehdi, 1981; Selinker, 1972, as cited in Mehdi, 1981; Gradman, 1973, as cited in Mehdi, 1981; Taylor, 1975, as cited in Mehdi, 1981; Bahns, 1993; Mahmoud, 2005; Bloom, 2006) have proposed that the collocational errors are caused by mother tongue

interference. They have claimed, EFL learners resort to their first language when they do not know the correct answer. In addition,

So, the learners' first language influences their production on collocations and is the common source of the collocational errors. For example, from Liu's (1999) study, it was found that the subjects made "*learn knowledge*" instead of "*acquire knowledge*." Therefore, the subjects had produced the collocations like "*keep a smile*" instead of "*wear a smile*", "*learn knowledge*" instead of "*acquire knowledge*", "*use drug*" instead of "*take drug*" and "*find a friend*" instead of "*make a friend*" due to word-for-word translation. The subjects had made these collocational errors since they did not know the collocability of *wear* with *smile*, *acquire* with *knowledge*, *take* with *drug* and *make* with *friend*. In addition, the subjects had made the collocational errors like *want choose*, *want go* and *like see* instead of *want to choose*, *want to go* and *like to see*. In Persian we can say "*you want go on a trip*", but in English we cannot. In the same way, in English we cannot say "*she likes see you happy*". It requires adding "to" between the two verbs. The reason is that the two transitive verbs cannot occur next to each other. We must say "*you want to go on a trip*" or "*she likes to see you happy*". The subjects had committed G8 (D) collocational errors like "*spend with*" instead of "*spend in*", "*interested to*" instead of "*interested in*" and "*believe to*" instead of "*believe in*". These G8 (D) collocational errors are caused by mother tongue interference. In Persian the prepositions used with *spend*, *interested* and *believe* correspond to the English prepositions *with*, *to* and *to*. Table 4.43 is a list of the collocational errors resulting from the negative transfer.

Table 4.43 Examples of Collocational Errors from the 60 Subjects' Writing Samples Resulting from Negative Transfer

Type	Learner Collocations	Persian Version	Target Collocations
L1	She is popular with people as she smiles at them all the time and she always <i>wears a smile</i> on her face	U mahbube mardom ast zira hamishe be anha labqand mizanad va hamishe <i>labqand be lab darad</i> .	She is popular with people as she smiles at them all the time and she always <i>wears a smile</i> on her face
L1	Some people choose university to build a career foundation, while some others have special interest in <i>learning knowledge</i> .	Baazi mardom enteqab mikonand daneshgah baraye saqtane asase shoqlishan darhalike baazi darand alaqeye qas dar <i>yadgiri danesh</i> .	Some people choose university to build a career foundation, while some others have special interest in <i>acquiring knowledge</i> .
L1	A good friend does not <i>use drugs</i> .	Duste qub <i>mavad masraf nemikonad</i> .	A good friend does not <i>take drugs</i> .
L1	Anyway, after <i>finding a friend</i> we should concentrate on some characteristics that are important.	Be harhal, baad az <i>peida kardane dust</i> ma bayad tavajoh konim be baazi qosusiyate mohem.	Anyway, after <i>making a friend</i> we should concentrate on some characteristics that are important.
L2	My mother never put <i>cold face</i> .	Madam hargez <i>chehreye gerefte</i> nadarad.	My mother never display <i>poker face</i> .
G5	Today people are <i>interested to increase</i> their knowledge.	Emruz mardom <i>alaqemand be afzayeshe danesh</i> hastand.	Today people are <i>interested in</i> increase their knowledge.
G8(D)	People in today's high technology fill their feeling up <i>spending their time with</i> technology such as TV, internet and mobile.	Emruze mardom <i>vaqtshanra migozaranand ba</i> teknology manande TV, internet va mobail.	Today people <i>spend their time in</i> using technologies such as TV, internet and hand phone.
G8(D)	He should <i>believe to a</i> creator for entire the world.	U bayad <i>motaqed bashad be qaleqe</i> tamame jahan.	He should <i>believe in</i> a creator for entire the world.
G8(E)	She <i>likes see</i> you happy.	U <i>dust darad bebinad</i> shomara.	She <i>likes to see</i> you happy.
G8(E)	You <i>may like go</i> to the seaside.	Shoma momken ast <i>dust dashte bashid beravid</i> kenare darya.	You <i>may like to go</i> to the seaside.
G8(E)	At first when you <i>want choose</i> a friend be careful, because it is very important for your future and also for your life.	Moraqeb bashid vaqti <i>miqahid enteqab konid</i> dust, zira qeili mohem ast baraye ayande va niz zendegitan.	At first when you <i>want to choose</i> a friend you should be careful, because it is very important for your future and also for your life.

### ***Linguistic Features of English and Persian***

One of the most important problems that EFL learners face is related to the correct usage of English prepositions. Sometimes linguistic errors are caused by mother tongue interference (Bloom, 2006; Koosha & Jafarpour, 2006).

Persian and English differ in many ways. One of the differences between these two languages is related to prepositions. This section will provide a brief discussion of Persian and English prepositional systems. Persian prepositions consist of *be*, *ba*, *dar*, *az* and *baraye* and English prepositions include *at*, *in*, *on*, *for*, *from*, *of*, *to*, *with*, and *by*. In both English and Persian languages, prepositions are to express a relation between prepositional complement and the object. For example, “*I saw her at the street*”. In this example “*her*” is the object and “*the street*” is the prepositional complement. A Persian example is “*Man u ra dar qiaban didam*”. In this example “*u*” is the object and “*qiaban*” is prepositional complement.

In English, the locative prepositions are “*in*, *on*, and *at*” and the directional prepositions are “*to* and *from*”. Other English prepositions are “*by*, *with*, *for*, and *of*”. In this way, in Persian the locative preposition is “*dar*” and the directional prepositions are “*az* and *be*”. Other prepositions are “*baraye* and *ba*”. The preposition “*dar*” is equivalent with English prepositions “*in*, *on*, and *at*” and this equivalence causes many problems for Iranian EFL learners. In addition, the English preposition “*on*” is equivalent with the Persian adverb “*ruye*”. So, “*on*” is equivalent with both “*dar*” and “*ruye*” in Persian. For example, “*on* the first day after his arrival, he was killed.” In this example the preposition “*on*” is equivalent with the Persian preposition “*dar*”. But in this example “*I put the books on the table*”, the preposition “*on*” is equivalent with “*ruye*” that is an adverb in Persian. On the other hand, the Persian preposition “*az*” has two equivalences in English including “*of* and *from*”. In

the meaning of “*possession*” the preposition “*of*” is equivalent with “*e*” and “*ye*” in Persian. In Persian language, “*e*” and “*ye*” show “*possession*”. For instance, “the leg *of* the table” is equivalent with “*paye-ye miz*” or “the ceiling *of* the house” is equivalent with “*saqf-e qane*”. Moreover, the Persian preposition “*be*” is equivalent with the English preposition “*to*” and the Persian preposition “*ba*” is equivalent with the English prepositions “*with* and *by*”. Thus, these equivalences increase the complexity of the matter. Table 4.44 shows Persian prepositions and their English equivalence(s). Also, some examples have been provided.

Table 4.44 Persian prepositions and their English equivalence(s)

Persian Preposition	English Equivalence	Example
dar	in on at	She lives in a big house. On her way, she saw her friend. He lives at 3 Azadi street.
az	Of from	Three of them A man from Canada
ba	With by	Can I come with you? The snake was killed by the stone.
baraye	for	It is not good for you to smoke.
be	to	I went to school.

Table 4.45 indicates English prepositions and their Persian equivalence(s).

Table 4.45 English prepositions and their Persian equivalence(s).

English Preposition	Persian Equivalence	Example
in	dar	She lives <i>in</i> a big house. (U <i>dar</i> qaneyeye bozorg zendegi mikonad.)
on	Dar Ruye ( <i>ruye</i> is an adverb in Persian)	<i>On</i> her way, she saw her friend. ( <i>Dar</i> rahash, dustash ra did.) The book is <i>on</i> the table. (Ketab <i>ruye</i> miz ast.)
at	dar	He lives <i>at</i> 3 Azadi street. (U <i>dar</i> qiabane Azadi 3 zendegi mikonad.)
from	az	A man from Canada (Mardi <i>az</i> Kanada)
of	Az e / ye ( <i>e</i> and <i>ye</i> show possession in Persian)	Three <i>of</i> them (Se ta <i>az</i> anha) The ceiling <i>of</i> the house (saqf- <i>e</i> qane) The handle <i>of</i> the door Daste- <i>ye</i> dar
with	ba	Can I come <i>with</i> you? (Mitavanam <i>ba</i> shoma biayam?)
by	ba	The snake was killed <i>by</i> the stone. Mar <i>ba</i> yek sang koshte shod.
to	be	I went <i>to</i> school. Man raftam <i>be</i> madrese.
for	baraye	It is not good <i>for</i> you to smoke. Sigar keshidan <i>baraye</i> shoma qub nist.

The English prepositions have many uses. Table 4.46 to Table 4.54 indicate different uses of English prepositions (The Concise Oxford Dictionary). Also, the examples from these prepositions and the Persian language versions have been showed. Table 4.46 illustrates the usages of English preposition “*in*”.

Table 4.46 The Usages of English Preposition “in”.

No.	Usage of Preposition	Example	Persian Version
1	Inclusion or position within limits of space, time, and circumstance	<i>In</i> England, <i>in</i> village, <i>in</i> 5th street, <i>in</i> a box, <i>in</i> the rain, <i>in</i> the dark, <i>in</i> health	<i>dar</i> englis, <i>dar</i> rusta, <i>dar</i> khiaban, <i>dar</i> jabe, <i>dar</i> baran, <i>dar</i> tariki, <i>dar</i> salamati
2	As a proportionate part of	One <i>in</i> three, one <i>in</i> a million	Yek <i>dar</i> se, yek <i>dar</i> million
3	As content of	There is sth <i>in</i> what you say.	Vojud darad chizi <i>dar</i> anche shoma miguyeed.
4	During the time	<i>in</i> the morning, <i>in</i> September, <i>in</i> summer	<i>dar</i> sobh, <i>dar</i> septamr, <i>dar</i> tabestan
5	Attitude of mind	We were <i>in</i> full agreement with them on all points.	Ma ba anha <i>dar</i> tavafoq kamel budim <i>dar</i> hameye noqat.
6	As a member of	Serving <i>in</i> the army	Khedmat <i>dar</i> artesh
7	As a kind of	The latest thing <i>in</i> luxury.	Jadidtarin chiz <i>dar</i> lux.

Table 4.47 illustrates the usages of English preposition “on”.

Table 4.47 The Usages of English Preposition “on”.

No.	Usage of Preposition	Example	Persian Example
1	Supported by or attached to or covering or enclosing	He sat on the chair. He hung a picture on the wall. He lives on the continent. A writer on the press	U ruye sandali neshast. U aks ra ruye divar avizan kard. U <i>dar</i> in mantaqe zendegi mikonad. Nevisande <i>dar</i> matbuat
2	Close to, in the direction of	The house is on the road. On fifth avenue On the right On North On both sides	Khane nazdike jade hast. <i>Dar</i> khiabane panjom <i>Dar</i> samte rast <i>Dar</i> shomal <i>Dar</i> hardo taraf
3	Time during, exactly at, contemporaneously with, immediately, after or before, as result of	on Friday on Christmas Eve on the next day on my return	<i>Dar</i> jome <i>Dar</i> shabe krismas <i>Dar</i> ruze baad <i>Dar</i> bargashtam

Table 4.48 illustrates the usages of English preposition “at”.

Table 4.48 The Usages of English Preposition “at”.

No.	Usage of Preposition	Example	Persian Example
1	Expresses exact, approximate, or vague position of condition, occasion, price, and time	Meet <i>at</i> a point Wait <i>at</i> the corner <i>At</i> the top <i>At</i> school <i>At</i> home <i>At</i> work <i>At</i> war <i>At</i> dinner <i>At</i> ease <i>At</i> a low price <i>At</i> (the age of )70 <i>At</i> Easter <i>At</i> that point	Molaqat <i>dar</i> yek noqte Montazer shodan <i>dar</i> ye gushe <i>Dar</i> bala <i>Dar</i> madrese <i>Dar</i> khane <i>Dar</i> sare kar <i>Dar</i> jang <i>Dar</i> sham <i>Dar</i> asani <i>Dar</i> qeimate kam <i>Dar</i> senne 70 <i>Dar</i> eide pak <i>Dar</i> an noqte
2	Expresses motion towards, arrive at a place	Finally they <i>arrived at</i> their destination.	Saranjam anha <i>residand be</i> maqsadeshan.
3	Expresses the meaning of reaction	They were <i>surprised at</i> his rejection of the offer.	Anha <i>motaajjeb budand az</i> radde pishnahad.

Table 4.49 indicates the usages of English preposition “with”

Table 4.49 The Usages of English Preposition “with”

No.	Usage of Preposition	Example	Persian Example
1	In or into company of or relation to, among, beside	He spends the day and night <i>with</i> his child.	U migozaranad shab va ruz ra <i>ba</i> bacheash.
2	Agreeably or inharmonious relations to	I sympathize <i>with</i> you. Blue does not go <i>with</i> green.	Man <i>ba</i> shoma hamdardi mikonam. Abi <i>ba</i> sabz hamchani nadarad.
3	Having, carrying, possessed by,	Vase with handles	Goldan <i>ba</i> dasteha

	characterized by	Walking with a gun	Rah raftan <i>ba</i> tofang
4	In the care or charge or possession of	It rests <i>with</i> you to decide. I have no money <i>with</i> me. Leave child <i>with</i> nurse.	An <i>ba</i> shomast ke tasmim begirid. Man hich puli <i>ba</i> khodam nadaram. Bache ra <i>ba</i> parastar begozarid.
5	By use of as instrument or means	Cut it <i>with</i> a knife	Beborid anra <i>ba</i> kard.
6	By addition or supply or v acquisition or possession of as material	Fill it <i>with</i> water.	Anra <i>ba</i> ab por konid.
7	In same way or direction or degree or at the same time	Changes <i>with</i> the seasons <i>With</i> his death the barony becomes extinct.	Taqirat <i>ba</i> faslha <i>Ba</i> margash qalamrov monqarez shod.
8	Because or by operation of, owing to	Trembles <i>with</i> fear	Larzidan <i>be</i> dalile tars
9	In regard to, concerning, in the sphere of, in the mind or view of	Be patient with him. With God, all things are possible. It is holiday time <i>with</i> us. What do you want <i>with</i> me?	<i>Ba</i> u sabur bash. <i>Ba</i> khoda hame chiz momken ast. Vaqte tatilat <i>baraye</i> mast. Che mikhahid <i>az</i> man?

Table 4.50 indicates the usages of English preposition “to”

Table 4.50 The Usages of English Preposition “to”

No.	Usage of Preposition	Example	Persian Example
1	In the direction of (place, person, thing, condition, quality,...) with or without implication of intention or of arrival	On his way <i>to</i> the station, he saw his friend. Throw it <i>to</i> me. He invited them <i>to</i> dinner.	Dar rahash <i>be</i> istgah, u did dustash ra did. An ra <i>be</i> man part kon. U anhara <i>be</i> sham davat kard.
2	Of comparison, ratio, adaptation, reference	This is nothing <i>to</i> what it might be. 3 is <i>to</i> 4 as 6 is <i>to</i> 8. 2 <i>to</i> 1 is not fair play.	An chizi nist <i>dar moqayese ba</i> an chizi ke bayad bashad. Nesbate 3 <i>be</i> 4 barabar ast ba 4 <i>be</i> 8. 2 <i>be</i> yek bazi monsefaneyi nist.

3	Introducing indirect object of verb, recipient, possessor or person or thing affected by the action, quality, ...	Lend it <i>to</i> him. Explain it <i>to</i> me. Talk <i>to</i> oneself I object <i>to</i> that remark. He has been a good father <i>to</i> them. A room <i>to</i> myself	Qarz bede anra <i>be</i> u. Tozih bede anra <i>be</i> man. Sohbat kardan <i>ba</i> kasi Man <i>be</i> an nomre etraz daram. U yek pedare khoob <i>baraye</i> anha bude ast. Yek otaq <i>baraye</i> khodam
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Table 4.51 indicates the usages of English preposition “*from*”

Table 4.51 The Usages of English Preposition “*from*”

No.	Usage of Preposition	Example	Persian Example
1	Object whose distance or remoteness is reckoned or stated	Ten miles <i>from</i> Rome Apart <i>from</i> its moral aspect	Dah mail <i>az</i> Rom Joda <i>az</i> janbeye akhlaqi
2	Thing or person got rid of, escaped, avoided, of which one is deprived	They released him <i>from</i> prison. She cannot refrain <i>from</i> laughing.	Anha raha <i>az</i> زندان shodand.
3	Thing distinguished	He does not know black <i>from</i> white.	U siyah <i>az</i> sefid ra nemishnasad.
4	source	A man <i>from</i> Italy	Yek mard <i>az</i> Italya
5	Giver, sender	Gifts from Providence They have had no news <i>from</i> him.	Hedye <i>az</i> Providence Anha hich qabari <i>az</i> u nadashtand.
6	Model	Painted <i>from</i> Nature	Naqashi <i>az</i> tabiat
7	Reason, cause, motive	He <i>died from</i> fatigue. <i>Suffering from</i> shingles	U <i>mord az</i> ranj. <i>Ranj bordan az</i> tufal.

Table 4.52 indicates the usages of English preposition “*for*”

Table 4.52 The Usages of English Preposition “for”

No.	Usage of Preposition	Example	Persian Example
1	With the result of, at the cost of, to the amount of	150 <i>for</i> five wickets. A bill <i>for</i> 100 dollars. They have had all their trouble <i>for</i> nothing.	150 <i>baraye</i> 5 chogan Yek surathesab <i>be mablaqe</i> 100 dolar <i>Anha baraye</i> hich <i>be</i> zahmat oftadand.
2	To affect or as affecting, beneficially or the reverse	They live <i>for</i> each other. Things look bad <i>for</i> you. It is bad <i>for</i> him to smoke.	<i>Anha baraye</i> ham zendegi mikonand. Chizha <i>baraye</i> shoma bad benazar miresand. <i>Baraye</i> u sigar keshidan bad ast.
3	Reason, under influence, because of, on account of	He avoided it <i>for</i> fear of accident.	U dur kard anra <i>baraye</i> tars az tasadof.
4	In spite of	For all that he seems to dislike me, I still like him.	<i>Alaraqme</i> anke <i>be</i> nazar miresad u az man motanafer ast, man hanuz dust dalam ura.
5	Corresponding to, in contrast with	For one enemy he has a hundred friends.	<i>Baraye</i> yek dooshman u sadha dust darad.
6	Considering or making the allowance required by, the usual nature of	Quite active <i>for</i> a man of 80 Very bright <i>for</i> a winter day	Kamelan faal <i>baraye</i> yek marde 80 sale qeili deraqshan <i>baraye</i> yek ruza zemestani
7	During, over, to the extend of	Walk <i>for</i> two miles For two hours He left her alone <i>for</i> once.	Rah rafta <i>baraye</i> 2 mail <i>Baraye</i> 2 saat U tark kard ura tanha <i>baraye</i> yekbar

Table 4.53 indicates the usages of English preposition “Of”

Table 4.53 The Usages of English Preposition “of”

No.	Usage of Preposition	Example	Persian Example
1	Material, substance, closer definition, identity	House <i>of</i> cards Built <i>of</i> brick A family <i>of</i> eight City <i>of</i> Rome	Qaneyee <i>az</i> kard Saqteshode <i>az</i> ajor Qanevade-ye 8 nafare Shahr-e Rom

		University <i>of</i> Malaya Your letter <i>of</i> 1 May The worst liar <i>of</i> any man I know	Daneshgah-e Malezi Name-ye 1 May shoma Badtarin doruqgo <i>az</i> har kasi ke mishnasam
2	Concern, reference, direction, respect	I think well <i>of</i> him. I was informed <i>of</i> the fact. At 30 years <i>of</i> age	Ma <i>darbareye</i> u qub fekr mikonam. Man <i>az</i> haqiqat motale shodam. Dar sen- <i>e</i> 30 salegi
3	Partition	Five <i>of</i> us Some <i>of</i> them	5 ta <i>az</i> ma bazi <i>az</i> anha
4	Belonging, connection, possession	We <i>of</i> the middle class The manners <i>of</i> today A thing <i>of</i> the past A tip <i>of</i> iceberg The master <i>of</i> house A topic <i>of</i> conversation For the sake <i>of</i>	Ma <i>az</i> tabaqe motavaset Raftarha-ye emruze Yek chiz <i>az</i> gozashte Nok- <i>e</i> kuheyaqi Master- <i>e</i> qane Mozu- <i>e</i> mokaleme Be qater- <i>e</i>

Table 4.54 shows the usages of English preposition “*by*”

Table 4.54 The Usages of English Preposition “*by*”

No.	Usage of Preposition	Example	Persian Example
1	Along, in passing along, via	<i>By</i> nearest road Travel <i>by</i> Paris <i>By</i> sea	<i>Aztariqe</i> nazdiktarin jade Safar <i>aztariqe</i> Paris <i>Kenare</i> darya
2	During, in the circumstances of	<i>By</i> day <i>By</i> night <i>By</i> light day	<i>Dartule</i> ruz <i>Dartule</i> shab <i>Dar</i> roshanayee ruz
3	As soon as, not later than	<i>By</i> now <i>By</i> next week <i>By</i> tomorrow	<i>Ta</i> alan <i>Ta</i> hafteye baad <i>Ta</i> farda
4	past	He has just gone <i>by</i> the window.	U alan <i>aztariqe</i> panjere raft.
5	agent	He was killed <i>by</i> a stone.	U <i>ba</i> yek sang koshte shod.
6	With succession of	One <i>by</i> one Two <i>by</i> two	Yek <i>be</i> yek Do <i>be</i> do

7	result	He succeeded <i>by</i> hard study.	U <i>ba</i> talashe ziad movafaq shod.
8	At the side of	He is standing <i>by</i> his friend.	U <i>kenare</i> dustash istad.

As a teacher of English, the researcher carried out a research related to English prepositions. The results showed that Iranian EFL learners had a serious difficulty in applying English prepositions correctly and one of the most important reasons for this deficiency was mother tongue interference. Persian learners of English tend to omit English prepositions when equivalents are not required in their mother tongue.

Also, Persian learners of English tend to add English prepositions when equivalents are required in their mother tongue (Ahmadi & Hei, 2010).

In addition, Koosha and Jafarpour (2006) found that Iranian EFL learners misuse or omit English prepositions due to mother tongue interference.

Persian students will select the incorrect prepositions if equivalents are not used in their mother tongue. For example the verb “*believe*” collocates with the preposition “*in*” in English language. But in Persian language this verb collocates with another preposition that is equivalent with ‘*to*’ not “*in*”. In other words, “*believe in*” is equivalent with “*eteqad dashtan be*”. Here “*be*” is equivalent with “*to*” not “*in*”. So, Iranian EFL learners use “*believe to*” due to mother tongue interference. Table 4.55 shows some other example.

Table 4.55 Examples of Incorrect English Prepositions Made by Iranian EFL Learners

No.	English Preposition	Persian Equivalent	Persian Version
1	He was <i>convicted of</i> murder.	He was <i>convicted to</i> murder.	U <i>mahkum be</i> jenayat shod.
2	We <i>hope for</i> improvement.	We <i>hope to</i> improvement.	Ma <i>omidvarim be</i> pishraft.
3	I <i>arrived in</i> London last night.	I <i>arrived to</i> London last night.	Man <i>residam be</i> Landan dishab.

4	I cope <i>with</i> difficulties.	I cope <i>of/from</i> difficulties.	Man <i>az ohdeye</i> moshkelat barmiyam.
5	We <i>approved of</i> his decision.	We <i>approved with</i> his decision.	Ma <i>movafeqat ba</i> tasmimash kardim.
6	<i>On my way to</i> school, I saw her.	<i>In/on/at my way to</i> school, I saw her.	<i>Dar raham</i> be madrese, u ra didam.
7	She <i>satisfied with</i> me.	She <i>satisfied from/of</i> me.	U <i>razi az</i> man bud.

Persian learners of English tend to omit English prepositions when equivalents are not required in their mother tongue. Table 4.56 indicates some examples relevant to omission.

Table 4.56 Examples of Incorrect English Prepositions Made by Iranian EFL Learners (Omission)

No.	English Preposition	Persian Equivalence	Persion Version
1	She talked to him <i>for</i> three hours.	She talked to him three hours.	U sohbat kard ba u se saat.
2	After I stepped down <i>from</i> the platform, my mother called me.	After I stepped down the platform, my mother called me.	Baad az inke payeene saku amadam, madaram mara seda kard.
3	My brother is married <i>to</i> an educate girl.	My brother is married an educate girl.	Baradaram ezdevajkardeye doqtare tahsilkardeist.
4	I took a nap <i>for</i> about thirty minutes.	I took a nap about thirty minutes.	Man hodude si daqiqe chort zadam.

Persian learners of English tend to add English prepositions when equivalents are required in their mother tongue. Table 4.57 indicates some examples related to addition.

Table 4.57 Examples of Incorrect English Prepositions Made by Iranian EFL Learners (Addition)

No.	English Preposition	Persian Equivalence	Persion Version
1	Some people oppose the employment policy	Some people oppose <i>with</i> the employment policy.	Bazi mardom moqalefat <i>ba</i> siyasate esteqdam mikonand.
2	My son sent me a gift.	My son sent <i>to</i> me a gift.	Pesaram ferestad <i>be</i> man yek hedye.

3	He rushed outside the classroom	He rushed outside <i>off/from</i> the classroom.	U hojum bord birun <i>az</i> kelas.
4	She contacted me yesterday.	She contacted <i>with</i> me yesterday.	U tamas gereft <i>ba</i> man diruz.
5	He joined the club.	He joined <i>to</i> the club.	U <i>be</i> kolub peyvast.
6	They attend the class on time.	They attend <i>in</i> the class on time.	Anha be moqe hozur <i>dar</i> kelas miyaband.
7	The cat climbed the tree.	The cat climbed <i>off/from</i> the tree.	Gorbe bala <i>az</i> deraqt raft.

Moreover, in English the two transitive verbs cannot occur next to each other. So, it requires adding “to” between the two verbs. But in Persian the two transitive verbs can occur next to each other. Thus, due to mother tongue interference, Iranian EFL learners remove “to” between two transitive verbs in English. For example, Iranian EFL learners refer to “*I want choose this book.*” Instead of “*I want to choose this book.*”

#### 4.8.6 Through Approximation

Approximation: Paraphrases can be categorized into two types: *word coinage* and *approximation*. Word coinage is a type of paraphrase employed to make up a new word to communicate the desired concept. The instance is “*to see sun-up*” instead of “*to see the sunrise*”. On the other hand, approximation is another type of paraphrase. It is the use of an incorrect vocabulary item or structure which shares enough semantic features in common with the desired item to satisfy the speaker. For example, the word *middle* in “*middle exam*” was used to mean *mid-term* in “*midterm exam*” (Liu, 1999, as cited in Hsueh, 2004, Nemser, 1974, as cited in Mehdi, 1981). Since there were no the collocational errors belonging to word coinage, the researcher discussed the collocational errors belonging to approximation. In this study, the subjects had made the collocational errors like *pain heal* instead of *pain disappear* or *put relationship* instead of *establish relationship*. Lombark (1997, as cited in Hsu, 2002) remarks some collocational errors may result from the

similarity of spelling or pronunciation between the words. Therefore, the subjects had committed the collocational errors such as *change the views* instead of *exchange views* or *entrance the university* instead of *enter university*. Table 4.58 shows the collocational errors resulting from approximation.

Table 4.58 Examples of Collocational Errors from the 60 Subjects' Writing Samples Resulting from Approximation

Type	Learner Collocations	Persian Versian	Target Collocations
L1	She always <i>changes the views</i> with me.	U hamishe ba man <i>tabadole nazar</i> mikonad.	She always <i>exchanges the views</i> with me.
L1	A deep friend <i>puts a relationship</i> with us.	Duste nazdik <i>dusti mohkami bana minahad</i> ba shoma.	A strong friend <i>establishes a relationship</i> with us.
L1	Somebody wants to get better job, another for earn money and some of people just for his interests, so <i>entrance universities</i> is the correct way.	Kasi miqahad soqle betari begirad, digari pul bedast avarad va baazi faqat baraye alaqe, pas <i>vorod be daneshgah</i> behtarin rah ast.	Somebody wants to get better job, another to earn money and some of people just for their interests, so <i>enter the universities</i> is the correct way.
L3	Without her the life is difficult and there is a spiritual <i>pain</i> that it will never <i>heal</i> that is being far from her.	Bedune u zendegi saqt ast va <i>darde</i> ruhi vojod darad ke hargez <i>eltiam naqahad yaft</i> beqatere duri az u.	Without her the life is difficult and there is a spiritual <i>pain</i> that will never <i>disappear</i> because of being far from her.
L6	She never <i>punished</i> us <i>seriously</i> .	U hargez <i>tanbih nakard</i> mara <i>jedi</i>	She never <i>punished</i> us <i>severely</i> .

#### 4.8.7 Through Word Coinage

Paraphrases can be categorized into two types: *word coinage* and *approximation*. Word coinage is a type of paraphrase employed to make up a new word to communicate the desired concept. The instance is “*to see sun-up*” instead of “*to see the sunrise*”. There were not any collocational errors belonging to word coinage in the writing of 60 subjects.

Table 4.59 shows that 74.10% of the collocational errors resulted from the four kinds of 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 interlingual transfer. Regarding *paraphrase*, only *approximation* influenced the subjects' performance on their writings. 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*.

Table 4.59 The sources of collocational Errors

Strategy	Type of Transfer	Source of Collocational Error	Number of sources of collocational errors	Percentage of sources of collocational errors
Cognitive strategies	Intralingual Transfer	Overgeneralization	6	1.41%
		Ignorance of Rule Restriction	50	11.76%
		Misconceptions of Verbs	62	14.58%
		The Use of Synonym	197	46.35%
	Interlingual Transfer	Negative Transfer	83	19.52%
Communication Strategies	Paraphrase	Approximation	27	6.35%
		Word Coinage	0	0%

Adopted from Liu (1999)

The researcher identified lexical collocational errors and grammatical collocational errors. She categorized these errors based on the classification of collocations proposed by Benson et al (1986). After categorizing the collocational errors, the researcher embarked on identifying the sources of collocational errors based on the classification of the sources of

collocational errors proposed by Liu (1999). This stage was time-consuming and needed total accuracy. The researcher found that out of 425 collocational errors (345 lexical collocational errors and 71 grammatical collocational errors), 6 errors (1.41%) were due to **overgeneralization**. Some examples are *We **can categorized** our friends as near friend, job friends and private friends, She **should likes** everything for her friend, Generally your friend **should has** qualities better than you.* Also, out of 425 collocational errors, 50 errors (11.76%) were on account of **ignorance of rule restriction**. Some examples are *I admire her greatly and pay **much compliments** on her, She became a person who pay **respect about** anyone else, We will be happier and **satisfied** completely **to** life, The people who graduate from college seem more **confident from** success, a good friend **can to be** honest that you can trust him, He was older than me about ten years and was an experienced person that knew how can **face to** the problems and solve them, This aim is very important and can **contribute in** nation progress a lot, It is easy to understand that most people want to have friends who **agree to** them, Sometimes we **suffer of** some conversation with our friends, I have changed my mind and turn it toward **providing** a better service **to** Iranian by applying my knowledge to household industry.* Related to **misconception of verbs**, the researcher found that out of 425 collocational errors, 62 errors (14.58%) were due to this source of collocational errors. Some examples are *He always took **a word of advice**, They claim that friends **make a pattern** for the personal life, I **take respect** to her.* Moreover, the researcher found that out of 425 collocational errors made by subjects, 197 errors (46.35%) were due to **the use of synonymy**. Some examples are *She never **says lies**, She tries to **relieve my loads**, When I face with **sensitive situations**, he is the first person who is ready to give me hand, Without truth the **friendship** would easily and quickly **fail**, Last, but not least, we can help others much better because we are **deeply skilled**, They do not leave you lonely when you are in trouble and try to figure out the problem, even **little trouble**.* Related

to negative transfer that is the other source of collocational errors, the researcher found that out of 425 collocational errors made by the subjects, 83 errors (19.52%) were due to **negative transfer**. Some examples are *She is popular with people as she smiles at them all the time and she always **keeps a smile** on her face, Some people choose university to build a career foundation, while some others have special interest in **learning knowledge**, A good friend does not **use drugs**, Anyway, after **finding a friend** we should concentrate on some characteristics that are important, My mother never put **cold face**, Today people are **interested to** increase their knowledge, He should **believe to** a creator for entire the world, She **likes see** you happy, Maybe you **want go** to a trip, At first when you **want choose** a friend be careful, because it is very important for your future and also for your life. In addition, the researcher found that out of 425 collocational errors, 27 errors (6.35%) were due to **approximation**. Some examples are *She always **changes the views** with me, Somebody wants to get better job, another for earn money and some of people just for his interests, so **entrance universities** is the correct way, Without her the life is difficult and there is a spiritual **pain** that it will never **heal** that is being far from her.* The researcher found no collocational errors due to **word coinage**.*

#### **4.9 Summary**

This chapter has provided the analysis in two ways: lexical collocational errors and grammatical collocational errors. The data were sourced from 60 Iranian postgraduate students studying in a public university in Malaysia. The subjects were asked to write on one of three topics between 150 - 200 words. From the 60 subjects identified, 17 subjects chose to write on Topic 1, 22 subjects opted to write on Topic 2 and 21 subjects were inclined to write on Topic 3.

After analyzing the collected data, a total of 1664 collocations were found to be used in the subjects' writings. Out of the 1664 collocations, 602 were lexical collocations and 1062 were grammatical collocations. In analyzing the samples for collocational errors, it was found that the subjects had made a total of 354 lexical collocational errors and only 71 grammatical collocational errors. Thus, 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 which claims that Iranian EFL learners make more lexical collocational errors than grammatical collocational errors. Based on this evidence, it was suggested that there is a need for Iranian classrooms to give emphasis to the teaching of lexical collocations in English classrooms for EFL learners in Iran.

Regarding the types of lexical and grammatical collocational errors detected in the subjects' writing samples, the results revealed that all the 6 types of lexical collocational errors occurred in the subjects' writing samples ranging from L1 (V + N), L2 (ADJ + N), L3 (N + V), L4 (N OF N), L5 (ADV + ADJ) to L6 (V + ADV). Moreover, the results indicated that 10 types of the grammatical collocational errors were detected in the subjects' writing samples and these include 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) to G8(Q) (V + wh-clause/ wh-phrase / V + O + wh-clause/ wh-phrase) types. Concerning the frequency of the collocational error types made, it was found that among the lexical collocational error types, L1 and L2 errors were the most in the subjects' writing samples. This result implies that there is a need for the teaching of lexical collocations to occur in Iranian classrooms.

On the other hand, the results reveal that among the grammatical collocational errors, G8(D) collocational errors occurred the most frequently in the subjects' writing samples.

Although this result may also indicate that there is a need to introduce the teaching of grammatical collocations in classrooms, this need may not be as needy as it is for the teaching of lexical collocations.

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*.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The findings showed that the subjects had made both lexical and grammatical collocational errors. Based on the subjects' errors in lexical and grammatical collocations, it was found that the subjects had made more lexical collocational errors (60.12%) than the grammatical collocational errors (7.42%). This result conforms to the hypothesis of the present study that Iranian EFL learners make more lexical collocational errors than the grammatical collocational errors. So, it is necessary to emphasize the lexical collocations in English classrooms for the EFL learners in Iran. In the present study, the classification of the collocations proposed by Benson et al. (1986) was used to analyze the subjects' collocational errors in their writings.

### **5.2 Summary of the Study**

#### **5.2.1 Lexical Collocational Errors**

A total of 602 lexical collocations were found and 354 were the lexical collocational errors (60.12%). The results revealed that the subjects encountered great difficulties related to collocations. It was found that L1 (V+N) and L2 (Adj+N) errors were the most frequently errors.

The results showed that the subjects were deficient in L1 collocations. Out of 60 subjects, 59 of them had applied L1 (V + N) collocations and out of 275 collocations used by the subjects, 173 were L1 collocational errors (62.34%). Examples from the subjects' writings are *return self confidence* instead of *restore self confidence*, *arrive goals* instead of *achieve/reach goals*, and *take a friend* instead of *make a friend*. In addition, the results

indicated that the subjects tended to use verbs with similar pronunciation(*approximation*) in L1 patterns such as *change the views* instead of *exchange the views* or *entrance the university* instead of *enter the university*.

Concerning L2 collocational errors, it was found that 59 out of 60 subjects tended to apply L2 collocations and out of 255 L2 collocations used by the subjects, 136 were L2 collocational errors (54.02%). Examples from the subjects' writings are *expensive advice* instead of *valuable advice*, *abundant knowledge* instead of *thorough knowledge*, *pure way* instead of *proper/right way*, *perfect friend* instead of *true friend*, *crucial reason* instead of *strong reason*, *focal role* instead of *key role*, *perfect life* instead of *full life*. Regarding L5 collocational errors, the results indicated that L5 collocational errors were the least frequently errors in subjects' writings. This is consistent with the zarei's findings which revealed that the errors relevant to preposition collocations had the highest frequency, while errors relevant to L5 (adverb + adjective) collocations had the lowest frequency related to Iranian EFL learners. In the present study, it was found that out of 60, 9 of subjects used 10 L5 collocations and out of 10 of L5 collocations used by the subjects, 5 were misused (44.44%). Examples from the subjects' writings are *deeply skilled* instead of *highly skilled*, *seriously competent* instead of *highly competent*, and *completely interested* instead of *keenly/deeply/ highly interested*.

### **5.2.2 Grammatical Collocational Errors**

From total 1062 grammatical collocations used by the subjects, only 71 were the grammatical collocational errors (7.42%). The results revealed that G8 (D) (V + Prep + O/ V + O + Prep + O) errors were the most errors. G5 (ADJ + Prep) collocational errors and G8 (D) (V + Prep + O/ V + O + Prep + O) collocational errors are related to the prepositions. The subjects seemed to face great difficulty in the choice of the correct

prepositions. Out of 30 G5 collocations applied by the subjects, 8 were misused (27.08%) and out of 168 G8 (D) collocations used by the subjects, 35 were G8 (D) collocational errors (22.97%). The use of the prepositions in Persian is different from the use of the prepositions in English. So English prepositions cause problems for the learners of English and sometimes linguistic errors are caused by mother tongue interference (Bloom, 2006).

Kao (2001) notes an area of particular difficulty in English for many ESL/EFL students has been the prepositional verbs. He claims that the existence of the preposition in English prepositional verbs is only a “dummy” element. When context makes their presence redundant, they are likely to be omitted. Boers and Demecheleer, (1998) state prepositions are typically polysemous items. They have different, but related senses. Koosha and Jafarpour (2006) maintain that English prepositions are applied individually by Iranian EFL learners. Moreover, the meaning of English prepositions is learned by Iranian EFL learners and preposition collocations are not paid attention by them. For these reasons EFL learners face great difficulties related to English prepositions. Also, they contend that the main cause in producing preposition collocations is mother tongue interference. Therefore, the subjects had made G8 (D) collocational errors such as *arrive to* instead of *arrive at/in*, *apply in* instead of *apply to*. Also, they had made G5 collocational errors like *interested to* instead of *interested in*. These errors were caused by mother tongue interference (interlingual transfer). On the other hand, the subjects had made the collocational errors which were due to the intralingual transfer. Thus, they had made G8 (D) collocational errors such as *contribute in* instead of *contribute to* and *base from* instead of *base on*. In addition, they had made G5 collocational errors like *confident from* instead of *confident of* and *similar with* instead of *similar to*. Additionally, G1 and G4 collocational errors are related to the prepositions. The subjects had made G1 and G4 collocational errors such as

*update with* instead of *update on* and *in during life* instead of *in life*. These errors were caused by mother tongue interference (interlingual transfer). Moreover, the subjects had made G1 and G4 collocational errors due to the intralingual transfer like *advice in* instead of *advice on* and *from the glance* instead of *at a glance*. So, the results showed that the subjects lacked of the collocational competence in the prepositipons.

G8 (H) (V + O + to Inf) and G8 (E) (V + to Inf) collocational errors are relevant to the infinitives.

### **5.2.3 Sources of Collocational Errors**

With respect of 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, msconception of verbs, and the use of synonym*. On the other hand, 19.52% of the collocational errors were on account of 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*.

### **5.3 Discussion of Findings in Relation to Research Questions**

#### **5.3.1 Collocational Error Types Made by the Subjects**

In the present study, the classification of collocations proposed by Benson et al. (1986) was used to analyze the subjects' collocational errors in their writing samples. According to Benson et al, (1986), English collocations divided into two main groups: lexical collocations and grammatical collocations. From the analysis performed on the writing pieces generated by 60 Iranian subjects, it was found that the subjects had committed both lexical collocational errors and grammatical collocational errors simultaneously. The data collected were then analyzed to examine if there was a significant difference in the number of grammatical and lexical collocational errors. The subjects had applied a total of 1664 collocations, 602 lexical collocations and 1062 grammatical collocations. In total, 425 collocational errors were found. 354 errors were lexical collocational errors and only 71 errors were grammatical collocational errors. The results revealed that the subjects had made more lexical collocational errors (60.12%) than grammatical collocational errors (7.42%) in the 60 writing samples. Thus, the results of the present study conform to the hypothesis of the study that Iranian EFL learners make more lexical collocational errors than grammatical collocational errors. The results indicated 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 showed that ten types of the grammatical collocational errors were found in subjects' writing samples 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).

### 5.3.2 Frequency of Collocational Error Types Made by the Subjects

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 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 were the most. Sources of collocational errors

In this study, the classification of the sources of collocational errors proposed by Liu (1999, as cited in Hsueh, 2004) was used. Liu (1999) analyzed the collocational errors in EFL learners' writing samples with 14 types of lexical and grammatical collocational errors investigated in the students' compositions and examination papers and there were seven main sources of errors found. Liu (1999) concluded that the causes of the collocational errors made by EFL learners can be traced to strategies like *word coinage* and *approximation* belong to *communication strategies*, but it seems that most of the errors are caused by the *interlingual transfer* and also four kinds of the *intralingual transfer* – *overgeneralization*, *ignorance of rule restriction*, *misconception of verbs*, and *the use of synonym*- belong to *cognitive strategies*.

Concerning the sources of 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 on account of 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*.

#### **5.4 Discussion of the Findings of the Study in Relation to the Work of Others**

For this research, the data collected from the subjects. The subjects in the present study were 60 Iranian postgraduate students studying at a public university in Malaysia. The subjects were asked to write on one of three topics between 150 - 200 words. From the 60 subjects identified, 17 subjects chose to write on topic 1, 22 subjects opted to write on topic 2 and 21 subjects were inclined to write on topic 3.

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. 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. Thus, it is suggested emphasizing the lexical collocations in English classrooms for EFL learners in Iran. Regarding types of lexical and grammatical collocational errors 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 were found in subjects' writing samples 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). 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 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 of the causes of producing 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 on account of 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*.

In recent years, experimental study on English collocations have been conducted and most studies (Channell, 1981); (Bahns, 1993); (Farghal & Obiedat, 1995) investigated EFL learners' collocational knowledge. The results of these studies show that EFL learners are deficient in their mastery of English collocations. EFL learners were found to lack

collocational knowledge and this is probable because collocations have been neglected in language classes.

A study conducted by Channell (1981) probes the L2 knowledge of collocations of EFL learners. A collocational grid where adjectives are in the vertical axis and nouns are in the horizontal axis was used on students with advanced-level English ability asked to fill in this collocational grid. Her results reveal that students comprehend the meanings of these words but they were not able to produce acceptable collocations. She thus concludes that it is necessary for EFL learners to concentrate more on collocations.

Farghal and Obiedat (1995) indicate that not only advanced EFL learners but also the teachers have insufficient collocational knowledge. Two questionnaires, an English “fill-in-the-blank” version and an Arabic translation version involving twenty two common collocations relevant to core topics such as food, color, and weather, were administered to senior and junior English majors at Yarmouk university and English major seniors at the Higher College for the Certifications of Teachers, respectively. The results show that both groups were seriously deficient in collocational knowledge.

Koosha and Jafarpour (2006) also remark that English collocations especially English preposition collocations caused serious problems for Iranian EFL learners. They carried out a study relevant to English prepositions. The subjects were two hundred English majors studying at three universities in Shahrkord. They found that Iranian EFL learners of English tend to omit English prepositions when equivalents are not required in their mother tongue. In addition, Iranian EFL learners tend to select the improper prepositions if equivalents are not used in their mother tongue. Also, they discovered that Iranian EFL learners resort to their mother tongue if they did not know the correct preposition collocations.

Koosha and Jafarpour (2006) applied a translation task including 60 fill-in-the blanks items related to the English prepositions. According to the percentage of errors, they concluded that about 68.5% of errors were on account of mother tongue interference.

Thus, it was concluded that it is beneficial for EFL learners to be encouraged to translate chunk to chunk or collocations to collocations and also look for parallel equivalent in L1 and L2. In addition, it also seems necessary for EFL teachers to introduce those English collocations that do not have any direct equivalents in Persian.

According to Bahns (1993), the large number of lexical collocations which exist is the strong reason for producing problems in teaching lexical collocations. Thus, for solving this problem a contrastive approach can be employed to teach the concept of lexical collocation. A contrastive analysis related to N+V and V+N collocations between English and German was made by Bahns (1993). She found that there is direct translational equivalence. Thus, it was concluded that there is no necessary to teach such lexical collocations. It appears that those lexical collocations that have no direct translational equivalents should be taught in language classes.

Zarei (2002, as cited in Koosha and Jafarpour, (2006) contends that English collocations cause major problems for Iranian EFL learners. He shows that the collocational errors related to English preposition collocations present the highest frequency. On the other hand, the collocational errors relevant to adverb + adjective collocations and fixed expressions indicate the lowest frequency. Also, he concludes that EFL learners need to learn English collocations in order to achieve native-like competence in English.

Delshad (1980, as cited in Koosha and Jafarpour, (2006) also found that Iranian EFL/ESL students usually omit English prepositions or use English prepositions incorrectly. In other words, he found that Persian students would omit English prepositions

if the equivalents were not required in their mother tongue and also Persian students would select incorrect English prepositions if the equivalents were not used in their mother tongue.

Chang (1997, as cited in Hsueh, 2004) claims that EFL students face a serious problem related to lexical collocations in their writing. He conducted a study on the different types of grammatical and lexical collocations. College students were asked to write English compositions. He found that less proficient students made more lexical and grammatical collocational errors. But more proficient students had fewer collocational errors in their writing samples. In addition, Chang (1997, as cited in Hsueh, 2004) found that among lexical collocational errors the ADJ+N collocational errors and then the V+N collocational errors presented the highest frequency and among grammatical collocational errors the Pre +N collocational errors and then V+Pre collocational errors had the most frequency.

Wang (2001, p. ii, as cited in Hsueh, 2004) carried out a study on English lexical collocation of English majors in Taiwan. She concluded “the English department students’ lexical collocations do not exhibit a series of developmental stages.”

## **5.5 Pedagogical Implications**

In this study, both lexical and grammatical collocational errors in Iranian EFL learners’ writings were investigated. Based on the results, the subjects came across serious difficulties related to both lexical and grammatical collocations especially lexical collocations. The pedagogical implications for teaching are discussed in this section.

### **5.5.1 Teaching English Collocations**

The awareness of EFL learners related to collocation should be raised by EFL teachers because the use of collocations is arbitrary and idiosyncratic. So, a right way to do so is

enhancing the awareness of EFL learners relevant to the use of collocations in their mother tongue.

The results of the present study show that the causes of producing lexical collocational errors and grammatical collocational errors are on account of interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. Moreover, according to the results of the present study, interlingual transfer or negative transfer is one of the most significant sources for making collocational errors. Therefore, it is necessary for EFL teachers to instruct EFL learners the differences between English collocational use and L1 collocational use. For example, “*acquire/gain knowledge*” that is an English collocation is accepted but “*learn knowledge*” that is a Persian collocation is not accepted. In this way, EFL learners are able to pay attention to English collocational use in reading or listening.

In addition, when a new word is taught in EFL classes, it is not sufficient for EFL teachers to explain only the meaning of this new word, but they need to teach the collocational uses of this new word to EFL learners. For instance, the word *knowledge* can be introduced in the collocations such as *thorough knowledge*, *extensive knowledge*, *profound knowledge*, *inside knowledge*, *slight knowledge*, *intuitive knowledge*, and *common knowledge*. Also, EFL teachers should teach vocabulary in collocational contexts for example when synonyms are taught it is possible to be distinguished the different meanings of words by the collocational contexts in which they are used. The meaning of *curly*, *curved*, *curvy*, and *coiled* are clearly distinguishable by the collocational contexts such as “*curly hair*, *curved blade*, *curvy red lips*, and *coiled snake*” (Fan 2009, p. 120).

Thus, collocational contexts contribute to understand the meaning of words and increase the knowledge of English collocations semiltaniously. On the other hand, in the learning of English collocational knowledge it is necessary to be emphasized avoiding the literal

translations in EFL classes. In other words, EFL teachers need to ask EFL learners to develop the skill of chunking. EFL learners should be taught to translate chunk to chunk or collocations to collocations not literally.

### **5.5.2 Vocabulary Knowledge and Collocational Use**

The knowledge of English collocations and the knowledge of English vocabulary are relevant to each other. The collocational use of a language is related to the words EFL learners know and the co-occurrence of them. So, it can be told that if EFL learners gain more English vocabulary, it will be possible for them to know and use more collocations. Most of time, EFL learners know the words applied in a collocation but they do not have the knowledge of the collocation. So, it is impossible for them to produce this collocation. For example, EFL learners know the words “*serious*” and “*difficulty*” but they may not know the collocation “*serious difficulty*” so they are not able to produce this collocation. Therefore, if EFL learners want to be competent in the use of English collocations, they should develop their knowledge of English vocabulary and also their knowledge of English collocations.

## **5.6 Limitation of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research**

The present study aimed to probe the collocational errors in Iranian EFL university learners’ writing; therefore, this research concentrated on the collocational errors. Other types of the errors such as tense errors, morphological errors, pronoun errors, auxiliary errors, punctuation errors, or other stylistic, syntactic and rhetorical errors were not considered in this study. Further research can take these types of the errors into consideration.

Another limitation was relevant to the number of the subjects. The number of the subjects was small due to the time constraints. Further study can have larger number of subjects such as Iranian postgraduate students studying in other universities in Malaysia. In this way, it is possible to gain a clear picture of Iranian EFL learners' collocational errors.