

## LEXICAL COLLOCATION ERRORS: MISCOLLOCATING IN PRE-SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT WRITING

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### ABSTRACT

In foreign language learning, second language learners as well as Native speakers commit mistakes in their attempt to achieve knowledge in the target language. It has been observed that most of the second language learners in this research group commit collocation mistakes. The purpose of the study is to understand the nature of made errors as stumbling blocks to effective pre-Social Media Content Writing. The objective of the investigation is to identify the errors, analyze their structural compositions so as to identify whether there are similarities between students in this regard and to find out whether there are patterns to these kinds of mistakes which will enable the researcher to understand their sources and causes. As a descriptive research, the researcher samples 120 post writing collected from 12 learners of English as a second language.

### KEYWORDS

Collocations, errors, collocation errors, EFL students.

### INTRODUCTION



For decades, a surge in work on collocation have been done in learner corpora. This is hardly surprising given that the appropriate use of collocation is now widely considered to be one of the key prerequisites for proficient language use (Wray, 2002). Collocation is what makes native speakers' speech fluent, natural and idiomatic. However, it is what often renders second language learners' speech wrong and unnatural. Indeed, it has been found that L2 learners have challenges with collocation in their written and spoken language. Particularly, why do learners often have poor production of collocations in writing? Scientists believe that the challenges and problems in EFL learners' collocation use are at least partially caused by the fact that collocations do not commonly constitute comprehension problems, and therefore negligence in the process of foreign language teaching and learning. A second, collocations are extremely challenging to learn, particularly because they are so numerous and nuanced that memorizing them all is not nearly possible. This second reasoning throws light on an important reason that learning of collocation is not taking place as it should: generally, vocabulary learning in EFL has been commonly focused on memorization, namely memorizing single words and their definitions. Within this learning context, learning collocations would indeed be a difficult task, for several reasons. A third and fourth reason why the memorization of single words causes the learning of collocations is that it subtly reinforces a wrong view of language; that words, once "learned" may just be changed for their synonyms at will within grammatical "slots", and that learning the connotative meaning is sufficient for word mastery. These last two problems, which have been researched at depth, are worth examining with many considerations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Collocations and writing skill

It has been detailed that the utilize of certain learning technique types e.g. equivalent word, reiteration and overgeneralization by learners have negative impact on the procurement of English collocation among EFL and ESL learners. References [1, pp. 79-91], [2, pp. 315 - 531], [3, pp. 45-72], [4], [5, pp 103-120 ], [6, pp 227-245], [7] detailed that the EFL learners tend to substitute a word in writing with a equivalent word leading to making incorrect usage of the word. Although, synonyms are words that are comparable in meaning however learners who have restricted capability in English language utilize this technique since they need the competence.

Further considers have moreover recognized the utilize of redundancy and overgeneralization techniques as however another cause of collocation mistakes. The studies have also identified the use of repetition and overgeneralization strategies as yet other cause of miscollocation. Studies [8, pp57-68], [9, pp. 281-288 ], [10, pp 145-160 ], [11, pp. 45-72] notified that because of limited competence in L2, English as a second language learners make use of known collocations repeatedly instead of using new ones. M.R. Zughol, & H.S. Abdul- Fattah [7] reported that overgeneralization or the extension of the use of L2 features to another leads erroneous collocation combinations among language learners.

### Classification of Collocations

The most well-known referenced classification of collocation in the literature reviewed so far [5, pp. 103-120], classified English collocations into two major groups: lexical and grammatical.

#### 1. Lexical Collocation:

Lexical Collocation is used to refer to the relations between two or more content words that



“spontaneously” appear together in context. There are eight open/content word classes, yet only four of these collocate: noun, verb, adjectives, and adverb. For these four classes, a number of classification subtypes have emerged through studies. For example, [5 pp 103-120] provided seven subtypes:

- 1) Verb+ Noun/P (or prepositional phrase) e.g. set an alarm, break a law, take a look, etc.
- 2) Adjective +Noun e.g. mild weather, heavy rain;
- 3) Noun1 +of + Noun 2 e.g. a surge of anger;
- 4) Verb + adverb e.g. argue heatedly, appreciate sincerely;
- 5) Adverb + Adjectives e.g. deeply absorbed, closely related;
- 6) Noun+ Verb e.g. scandal erupts, water freezes;
- 7) Verb + noun e.g. reject appeal, compile a list.

On the other hand, lexical collocations include two (or more) content words in various word classes constructing particular syntactic structures in different degrees of semantic structure.

## 2. Grammatical Collocations

These are formed in combinations containing a content word, such as noun, an adjective and a function word e.g. a preposition e.g. Speak through. However, the analysis of the grammatical collocation mistakes is not the concern of current study, which adopts the lexical collocation subtypes provided [5, pp. 103-120], because it is more comprehensive.

### Miscollocating by English learners

The use of L2 collocations by learners refers two aspects, namely comprehension and production, researchers have taken a deep interest in production since the learners more struggle with producing proper collocations than understanding them (Brashi,

2006). Given semantic properties of lexical collocations are frequently derived from the components, it would be a natural outcome that L2 learners have relatively higher receptive collocation knowledge than productive one [6, pp. 227-245; 18, pp. 272-281]. Producing L2 learners' collocations has been widely examined in a written mode because of its permanency and the resultant convenience of data collection and analysis.

Word awareness is not just knowing its form, use, and meaning. Indeed, vocabulary knowledge also involves other subcomponents of a word, including collocations. For example, collocations provide contextual meaning that can enhance learners' comprehension of word knowledge in particular communication situations. It is acknowledged that collocation is often introduced as a part of word knowledge [13]. For example, contextual data is important for language users to differentiate different meanings of a polysemous word. Take the phrase I watch TV program; here, the word watch means to look. While in the collocation watch out, the meaning of watch is to be careful. However, Hill (2000) reported the lexicon for learners is “not arbitrary”. That is, during the process of speaking or writing, vocabularies are not arbitrarily selected by learners. For instance, the verb measure usually collocates with nouns or phrases that refer to the size, length, and amount. In contrast, the verb make exists many nouns that collocate with it (make a cake, make a decision, make a dinner), but the choice is limited (e.g., make a bed is not acceptable).

## METHODOLOGY

The present experiment focused on non-native learners' use of L2 collocation. In this study, all the lexical collocation errors identified in 10 topic based posts produced by ESL students after learning units in



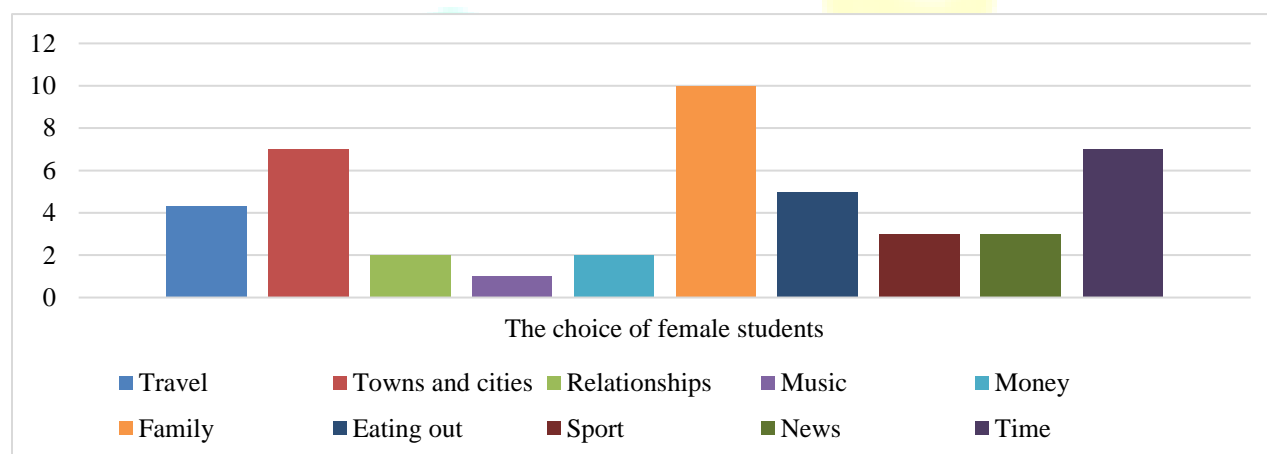
book, titled “English Collocations in Use”, perfect book for both self-study and classroom activities. Learning collocations in context, with lots of various topics, including “Using the Internet”, “Presentations”. All students optionally selected topics from the book and wrote Instagram or Facebook posts.

### Participants and topic data

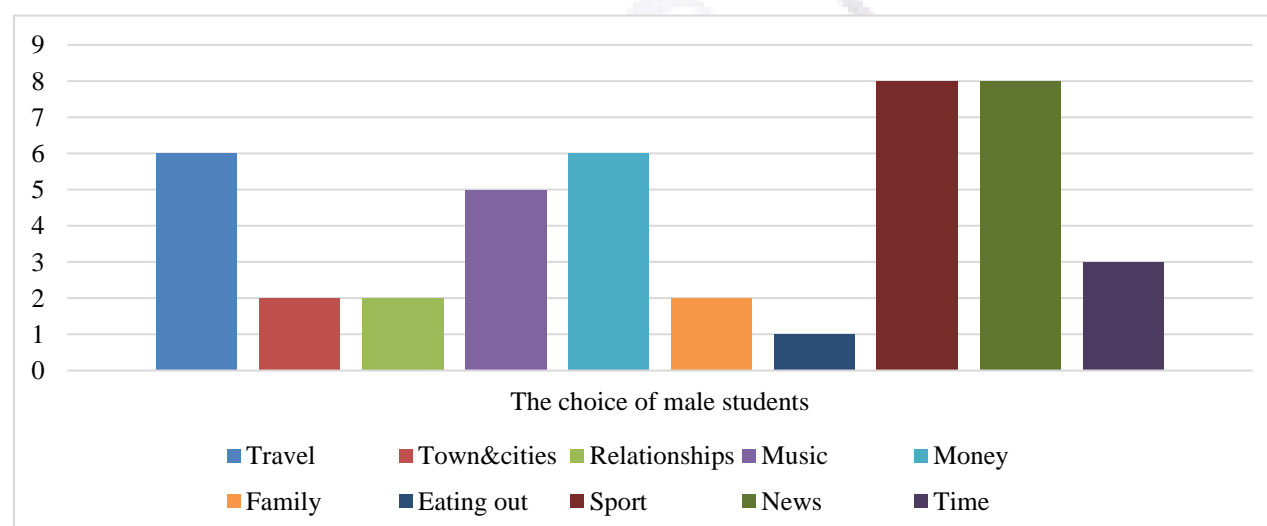
For the purpose of the current investigation, short Instagram or Facebook posts written by 12 learners of

English (10 females, 2 males, second year university students). At the time of data collection, the students had around two hours of lexical collocations within 10 days, on top of being exposed to English on a daily basis. The teacher asked them to choose any favorite unit where they learnt collocations and expressions themselves. After submitting their ready assignment, it was obvious that most of them selected topics, according to their interests.

**Graphs 1**



**Graphs 2**





In the graphs 1 and 2, it is indicated that the total number of unit choice distinguish by the preference of female and male students. It is evident that the ESL male students in this research group had selected units on sport and news the most, while female students' high choice on collocation units had represented on topic "family".

### DATA ANALYSIS

The students were made to write on ten Facebook or Instagram post writing as self-study task. The posts were written in ten days after learning collocations and producing them in their profile pages on social networking sites. The students were told that the essays are going to be used for research purposes. A total of 120 pieces of Instagram posts, that were unposted on social networking sites. They were collected and analyzed to check for various lexical collocation errors. The numbers of occurrences were counted, consequently these were converted to percentages. For the purpose of present research, a lexical collocation is acceptable and counted as valid even if it contained spelling or grammatical error [10, pp. 72-75; 11, pp. 149-155; 12, pp. 210-215]. On the other hand, lexical collocation mistakes so identified in a post

were recorded once even if the same kind appear severally in the post i.e. each error in a student post writing is recorded once even if the same appears second time.

Based on the analysis of the data collection, the main literature and causes of the lexical and grammatical collocation error reported in this research are Native language impact and lack of collocation competence. These are discussed further:

### Native language impact

In present investigation, it is indicated to Mother Tongue interference in the learning of the target language resulting in direct translation from the mother tongue to English. However the fact remains that there are frequently a lot of differences between the two languages. As a result of these differentiations, additionally the ESL learner tend to consider first in their Mother tongues before translating their ideas into the target language in speaking and writing the target language. Several examples of these collocation mistakes identified in the female students' post writing analyzed include in Table 1:

| English collocation  | Native language induced errors |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Miss the class       | Pass the class                 |
| Reduce to high rate  | Minimize                       |
| Dining out           | Go to eat to restaurant        |
| Close knit family    | Kind to each other family      |
| Reveal the truth     | Open the truth                 |
| Perfectly acceptable | Nicely acceptable              |

Table 1. Miscollations in post writing





## CONCLUSION

This investigation studied the lexical collocation mistakes found in the unposted Facebook and Instagram posts produced by intermediate level ESL students. The findings from the analysis of collocation errors identified in the 120 post writing indicates that English as Second Language learners' in present research group commit lexical collocation errors. After data collection, it was obvious that the Native language interferes with the target by way of transfer of and then direct translation of ideas were investigated. However, the fact remains that there are frequently a lot of differences between the two languages. As a result of these differentiations, additionally the ESL learner tend to consider first in their Mother tongues before translating their ideas into the target language in speaking and writing the target language.

In this process, words, phrases and even longer sentences undergo a lot of transformation resulting into erroneous combinations in the target English language namely since the linguistic systems of the two languages differ.

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