

LEXICAL COLLOCATION PRODUCTIONS BY MYANMAR BURMESE REFUGEE LEARNERS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Collocations are important in language learning. This article aims to investigate the types of lexical collocations (both non-deviant and deviant forms) produced by Form Three Myanmar Burmese refugee learners in their picture-based written task and describe the possible sources for the production of deviant lexical collocations. The analysis revealed that Myanmar Burmese participants recorded a total of 93 lexical collocations and 19 (20.4%) deviant lexical collocations were identified. The most frequent lexical collocation used in the written task is Lexical Collocation Type 2 (L2) (Adjective + Noun) type. Use of synonyms was identified as the primary source of lexical collocational errors in the participants' written task. The findings of the research indicate participants' lack of collocational knowledge as they overused L2 type collocations, a common type. Most of the deviant collocations were related to the use of synonyms. It hints that participants are more accustomed to single word learning, thus indicating the absence of collocational teaching. The current study calls for research on collocation productions of learners to better understand their collocational knowledge, thus paving the path to incorporate it in vocabulary teaching.

Keywords – lexical collocations, Myanmar refugee learners, vocabulary learning

INTRODUCTION

Collocations are crucial items in language learning. Generally, native speakers are able to flourish in their native language as opposed to their counterparts because they need not store single words instead they have ready-made chunks or prefabricated chunks stored in their lexicon which give them fluency (Wray, 2001). Many corpus studies to have proved that native speakers' spoken and written data are mostly phraseological or in other words consist of prefabricated chunks (Nesselhauf, 2005).

Prefabricated chunks can be defined as one or more words that appear together, which are mostly fixed and semi-fixed. They include elements like phrasal verbs, lexical bundles, and collocations, etc. Interestingly, one of the notable findings of the corpus

studies is that collocations appear more frequently in the native speakers' spoken and written data than other types of prefabricated chunks (Nesselhauf, 2005). Having realized the prudence of collocation teaching, many researchers have embarked on the journey to prioritize collocations in second language teaching. Michael Lewis (2000) is one of them who strongly recommended collocational teaching. In a similar vein, Channell too emphasized the importance of collocational teaching for the EFLs (1981). It has been stressed many times through researches that first language acquisition begins with prefabricated chunks where the child stores ready-made chunks more often than single words (Peters, 1983). A similar scenario has been observed in second language learning of a child too, dictating the impact of prefabricated chunks in language learning (Woods, 2015).

Having realized its importance, collocational teaching is well received in second language realm with multiple studies done to promote collocational, for all kinds of learners. For instance, a research done on the collocation and technicality of engineering mentioned that those students of non-native engineering face problem in understanding textbooks in English is because of their collocational behavior of that specific field, indicating the need to make the learners aware of collocations (Ward, 2007). Due to a lack of exposure to collocations, studies showed that even the advanced learners have difficulties in producing appropriate collocations. The study by Kamariah & Su'ad (2011) highlighted that even the law undergraduates face problem in collocations. According to Wang (2001), students majoring in English too had difficulty in collocation productions. Despite the call for collocational teaching, grammar and vocabulary have been given paramount weightage in second language learning in the Malaysian context. Normazidah Che Musa and few others (2012) exposed that Malaysia has not implemented phraseology in its vocabulary teaching and learning. This condition lingers even among learners of other ESL/EFL countries too because they are not accustomed to collocational teaching nor its significance.

A study involving EFL learners revealed that the former was not aware of the existence of ready-made expressions in English (Zaabalawi & Gould, 2017). Having no collocational competence will lead to the production of unnatural sounding expressions or inappropriate word combinations like "did a mistake" instead of "made a mistake". Hill (2000) rejected the common belief about bad grammar being the reason for learners to make a mistake; instead, he claimed lack of collocational knowledge as the main cause. Hill's statement indicates the need to change our focus from grammar and vocabulary dichotomy to collocational teaching. In addition to that, owning complex grammar does not guarantee fluency as much as collocational competence because collocational competence greatly supports the proficiency of every advanced learner (Lewis, 2000). Collocations supply ready-made chunks with

appropriate grammar, thus relieving the learners from producing sentences on their own. Huge storage of mental lexicon will thereby reduce the processing effort, which means the learners do not have to process the grammar and vocabulary rules to convey the intended message. Conklin & Schmitt (2012) had put forward the same notion where they mentioned that formulaic language has processing benefit unlike non-formulaic language devoid of processing benefit. In order to gain competency and fluency, collocations are the key. Learning them is easy since many native corpuses like BNC (British National Corpus) and LOCNUS (Louvain Corpus of Native English Es says) are available which can supply countless native-like utterance with appropriate collocations (Hunston, 2002). It is evident that collocations can bring positive changes to second language learning. Above all, collocations have shown prospects of making English learning easy with the less laborious task involving drills of grammar. Thus, the stakeholders of second language learning and teaching should make an effort to incorporate collocations as it is every learner's goal to be able to produce native-like utterances.

Myanmar Refugees in Malaysia

The 1951 Convention on Refugees (and its companion 1967 Protocol) defines 'refugee(s)' as an individual or group of people who are forced to leave their homeland and seek refuge elsewhere. Currently, Malaysia is *hosting* over 170000 refugees and asylum seekers ("Refugees", n.d.). Ninety-three per cent of refugees are from Myanmar ("Refugees", n.d.).

Research Problem

A learner with collocational knowledge will excel in terms of fluency, oral abilities, writing proficiency, reading a comprehension and even lack in prepositional knowledge can be compensated by collocations (Wood, 2015). However, collocations persist as a problematic area for learners irrespective of their proficiency level. However, vocabulary teaching primarily focuses on single-word thus neglecting to learn of word combinations such as collocations. In terms of Malaysian national schools grammar teaching is emphasized thus neglecting inclusion of phraseology (Normazidah, Koo & Hazita,

2012) Thus, it is important to investigate collocation productions of learners to see if they are aware of it. This investigation will shed light on types of lexical collocations used by learners and identify the types of collocations that they struggle with the English language plays a significant role in refugees' lives as they mostly resettle in English speaking countries like America, United Kingdom and Australia. Windle and Miller (2012) advocate that low literacy of English acts as the stumbling block in refugee learners' education. Upon their arrival in English speaking countries, the refugee learners find it hard to understand the curriculum as they lack in terms of English proficiency (Bartlett, Menclenhall & Kucher, 2017).

Low proficiency in English not only affects refugee learners' academics but their self-esteem too. A research that involved 106 first-generation refugee youth indicated that the refugee youths with good proficiency possess higher self-esteem than their counterparts (Buchanan et al., 2018). As the refugees spend quite a long time in Malaysia, any initiative to improve their English is crucial. Therefore, the current study intends to investigate the collocation productions of Myanmar refugee learners to understand better and facilitate their language learning. Besides that, studies done on refugees in Malaysia mostly focus on their living conditions and rights. Al's (2016) research highlights refugees' personal experience being a refugee and the struggles they face. Similarly, Alice's (2006) study to inform the struggles of refugees and ways to promote a better living condition for them. Having said that, this current study could shed light on refugees' English education thus suggests ways to improve their English.

Aim of the study

Based on participants' lexical collocation productions, the study intends to identify types of lexical collocations produced by participants. The study also highlights non-deviant and deviant lexical collocations. Lastly, possible sources for the deviant lexical collocations to occur in their picture-based essay writing are identified.

Research Questions

1. What are the types of lexical collocations Myanmar Burmese refugee learners produce in their picture-based written task?
2. What are the non-deviant and deviant lexical collocations produced by the participants?
3. What are the possible sources for the deviant lexical collocations to occur in their picture-based written task?

Limitations

The study only employed 13 Myanmar Burmese participants. Thus, the results cannot be generalized to refugee learners of different ethnic background and country. Furthermore, only one picture based written task was employed to extract lexical collocations. Thus, it had limited the productions of collocations involving both deviant and non-deviant within that genre of writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Notion of Collocations

Scholarship on collocations first started 2300 years ago in Greek (Robins, 1967). In Greek literature, the scholars formed a connection between collocation and semantic, where they argued that words could not function in isolation as they are understood based on the collocation that they appear with. (Robins, 1967). Though John Firth has been notified as to the *Father of Collocations*, the term itself was first introduced to the linguistic world by Harold E. Palmer in 1938. In the 1930s he introduced a broad term *collocation* to refer to *comings – together – of words*. Actually this term came from a Latin word *collocare*.

Firth defines collocation as 'the company a word keeps' (Firth, 1951). It can be understood that the meaning of a word is created based on its location with co-occurring words. In general, collocational approaches developed by the linguists can be grouped into three main approaches namely Firthian Approach, Phraseological Approach and Psychological approach (Nesselhauf, 2005). The current study employed the phraseological approach. Phraseological approach or

significance oriented approach defines collocations as a word combination that is fixed to some degree but not completely (Nesselhauf, 2005). Few key persons developed this approach namely A.P Cowie, Iguk Melcuk and F.J. Hausmann. As per A. P Cowie, he categorizes collocations as a type of combination which appears alongside with idioms and free combinations (Nesselhauf, 2005).

Benson, Benson & Ilson (1990, p.ix) have adopted the phraseological approach in defining collocation too. They claim that languages generally consist of word combinations which are fixed, semi-fixed, non- idiomatic phrases and constructions (Benson, Benson & Ilson, 1990). For example, we say *fast food* not *quick food* though fast and quick convey the same meaning to a certain extent. Current study employed a phraseological approach to bring a clear distinction between collocations and free combination owing to the fact that it is necessary for L2 learners' collocational studies (Howarth, 1998). In addition to that, the study did not attempt to use frequency approach because frequency approach only identifies significant collocations based on the statistical value which does not include collocations based on phraseological approach (Greenbaum, 1970).

Sadoughvanini & Zaid, 2013). At the same time, there are few studies with contradicting results where grammatical collocations are more problematic for learners as opposed to lexical collocations (Li, 1999). Figure 1 shows lexical collocation types by Hsu (2007) which has seven lexical collocation types. The current study used Hsu's classification of lexical collocations.

Collocational Knowledge of Learners

A study by Hou Yanjuan (2014) claims that in China, learners face difficulty in collocation productions because of their high number of collocational errors. A similar finding is highlighted in research which compared collocational use by Turkish learners and Asian learners with native speaker corpora (Demirel & Kazazoglu, 2015). A study on collocational errors conducted at Ming Chuan University China showed that participants produced more errors in grammatical collocations than in lexical collocations (Li, 2005).

Lexical collocations, in particular, are seen as an integral part of language learning. Bahns (1993) claims that lexical collocations are more important than grammatical collocations as the former involves meaning. Similarly, Wilkins (1972) claims that a little grammar can convey a message but

Figure 1 Lexical Collocation Types by Hsu (2007)

| Lexical Collocation (Type) | Pattern | Example |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Lexical Collocation 1 (L1) | Verb +Noun | Sing a song, cancel a mission |
| Lexical Collocation 2 (L2) | Adjective + Noun | Strong tea, gentle breeze |
| Lexical Collocation 3 (L3) | Noun + Verb(Action) | Water flows, wind blows |
| Lexical Collocation 4 (L4) | Noun 1 of Noun 2 | A school of fish, a packet of sugar |
| Lexical Collocation 5 (L5) | Adverb + Adjective | Really well, Very good |
| Lexical Collocation 6 (L6) | Verb + Adverb | Speak boldly, whisper quietly |
| Lexical Collocation 7 (L7) | Noun + Noun | Picnic blanket, school teacher |

Besides that, the study's attempt in highlighting only lexical collocation productions by Myanmar refugee learners is because it was found that L2 learners usually produce more deviant lexical collocations than grammatical collocations (Ahmadi, 2012; Shamsudin,

without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed, thus supporting the importance of lexical collocations which are very much related to words. Hong (2014) analyzed 117 written texts of 117 students of Tongji University. Their written productions were correct in

terms of grammar and semantic but were not quite fit to the context, thus revealing insufficient knowledge in collocations.

Possible factors and causes for deviant collocations

Usually, deviant collocations, both lexical and grammatical deviant collocations are said to occur due to intralingual and interlingual factors (Liu, 1999). The intralingual factor can be defined as an inadequate knowledge of learners in the target language. Its subcategories are an overgeneralization, use of synonym, misconception of verbs and ignorance of rule restriction.

The interlingual factor is the interference of the native language in the target language (Richards, 1967). Its subcategory is negative transfer. First language interference is being emphasized as the cause for collocational errors among the learners. It is widely known that when the learners do not know or understand the second language, they switch to their first language to find the equivalent in the second language (Bloom, 2006).

Research by Sadeghi and Pahanifar (2011) claimed that 56% of collocational errors occur because of negative transfer, while only 30% errors occur because of intralingual factors. First language influence becomes main source for collocational errors in Ridha and Al-Riyahi's (2011) research. A study that involved Indonesian EFL students recorded 72% of negative transfer, again stressing the influence of the first language (Said, 2011).

Other than first language interference, ignorance of rule restrictions are also accounted for deviant collocations as shown in the investigation of 68 sophomores of a university in Hamadan City (Hashemi, 2012). The research also highlighted the lack of collocational concept, L1 transfer and insufficient collocational knowledge as possible reasons for deviant collocations (Hashemi, 2012). In Wong's (2014) research, intralingual factor such as the use of synonym and overgeneralization was identified as the cause for deviant collocation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on two important frameworks which were employed in the data analysis process.

The frameworks are as follow:

1. Hsu's Classification of Lexical Collocations 2007
2. Modified Framework of Sources of Deviant Lexical Collocations

Hsu's (2007) Classification of Lexical Collocations

Hsu's framework is based on the classification of lexical collocations by Benson et al. (1990) and Hausmann (1999). Benson et al.'s classification, as given in Figure 2, classified lexical collocations into seven types. In Hsu's version of the classification, the first two lexical collocation types, namely L1 and L2 (two Verb + Noun patterns), are merged into one category (see Figure 2 and Figure 3).

Similar kinds of the merging of lexical collocation categories have been employed in Li (2005), Hsu (2007), Ridha & Al-Riyahi (2011) and Wong (2014). The Verb + Noun types (L1 & L2 Types) were combined to obtain more data on V+N patterns as they are deemed as very difficult, thus resulting in very low number in terms of production even among advanced learners (Benson et al., 1990). Thus, the researcher decided to apply the same method in her research because her participants represent the intermediate group, who are less likely to produce enough lexical collocations if both L1 and L2 types (Verb + Noun) were separated. The rest of the lexical collocation types from Benson et al. (L3, L4, L5, L6, L7) were relabeled terms of their sequence. For instance, L3 type was moved to become an L2 type, and so on. This arrangement shrank seven lexical collocation types or patterns into six. However, A new category proposed by Hausmann (1999) which is Noun. + Noun was added, forming the L7 lexical collocation type. This category is also used by Ridha & Al-Riyahi (2011) and Wong (2014).

Figure 2 *Lexical Collocation Classifications by Benson et al. (1990)*

| Type | Pattern | Examples |
|------|--|---------------------------------|
| L1 | Verb + Noun (V + N) | Launch a missile |
| L2 | Verb + Noun (V + N) | Cancel a mission |
| L3 | Adjective + Noun (Adj. + N) | A humble request |
| L4 | Noun + Verb (N + V) | Water flows |
| L5 | Noun of Noun (N of N) | A bar of chocolate |
| L6 | Adverb + Adjective (Adv. + Adj.) Adjective + Adverb (Adj. + Adv.) | Highly possible Sound asleep |
| L7 | Verb + Adverb (V + Adv.) | Whisper quietly |

Figure 3 *Lexical Collocation Classifications by Hsu (2007)*

| Type | Pattern | Examples |
|------|--|--------------------------------------|
| | Verb + Noun (V + N) | |
| L1 | V (verbs signifying creation like compose music, make an impression or verbs denoting the concept of activation like set an alarm, launch a missile) + N (noun) and V (verbs signifying eradication or nullification like reject an appeal, demolish a house) + N (noun) | Pose a question, commit treason |
| L2 | Adjective + Noun (Adj. + N) | A humble request, Warm greetings |
| L3 | Noun + Verb (N + V) | The sun rises, Events start |
| L4 | Noun of Noun (N of N) | A piece of advice, a school of fish |
| L5 | Adverb + Adjective (Adv. + Adj) | Utterly stupid, really amazing |
| L6 | Verb + Adverb (V + Adv.) | Appreciate sincerely, pray earnestly |
| L7 | Noun + Noun (N + N) | Party hat, computer games |

Modified Framework of Sources of Deviant Lexical Collocations

In order to provide explanation on the sources of each deviant collocation, the researcher adopted and modified the framework by Liu (1999), which was used in his research on Collocational Errors of EFL Learners. The employment of Liu’s framework can be seen in studies by Ahmadi (2011) and Wong (2014). Besides Liu, there are many scholars who have discussed the sources of collocational errors. For example, Howarth (1998) suggested only cognitive strategies like avoidance, experimentation, overgeneralization and negative transfer. In regards to the current framework, it is more comprehensive as it involved communication strategy too. As for Bloom (2006), he cited mother tongue interference as the main source for collocational errors. Figure 4 shows the framework on sources of deviant lexical collocations used in the present research.

This research used ‘false concept hypothesized’ instead of the misconception of verbs, which was applied by Ahmadi (2011). The misconception of verbs is limited to verbs only whereas false concept hypothesized includes misconceptions on linguistic structures as a whole.

Participants

The participants were 13 Burmese refugee learners. In order to identify the intermediate learner group, 20 Burmese learners sat for PT3 English Model Paper. The researcher used real PT3 English Paper after getting permission from the Malaysian Examination Board.

Written Task

Only picture-based narrative essay was given so that the learners could express their ideas freely. Participants were given 45 minutes to complete the

Figure 4 Modified Framework of Sources of Deviant Lexical Collocations

| Strategies | Major Categorization of Sources of errors | Sub-categorization of errors |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Cognitive strategies | Intralingual transfer Interlingual transfer | a) The use of synonym b) False concept hypothesized c) Negative transfer |
| Communication strategy | Paraphrase | a) Approximation b) Word coinage |

In general, the framework highlighted two main strategies or sources, namely, cognitive and communication strategies. These strategies were linked to three major categorizations of sources of deviant collocations, which were intralingual transfer, interlingual transfer and paraphrase. This is followed by a more detailed sub-categorization of sources of deviant lexical collocational into six types, namely use of synonym, ignorance of rule restrictions, false concept hypothesized, negative transfer, approximation and word coinage.

task which was performed under time pressure because the outcome reflects learners’ cognitive abilities (Siyanova & Schmitt, 2000). The length of the essay task was limited to 180 words.

i. *Written Task*

The following figure shows the prompt for the written task.

Write an essay about your class party. Your essay should be about 180 words. You are given 45 minutes to complete this written task.

Figure 5 Class Party



The procedure of the study

The participants were given a picture based written task. Based on their written samples, lexical collocations were extracted. The lexical collocations were identified using Hsu's Classification of Lexical Collocation 2007. Later on, the lexical collocations were classified into seven types or patterns. The lexical collocations which did not fit into the identification and classification process based on Hsu's lexical collocation classification, BNC, Oxford Dictionary of Collocations (Intosh et al, 2002) and BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English (Benson et al, 1990) were deemed as deviant lexical collocations.

Furthermore, lexical collocations with misspellings, wrong tense, wrong article and wrong number (singular & plural form) were deemed correct or counted as non-deviant collocations. In order to answer research question 3, the Modified Framework on Sources of Deviant Lexical Collocations was employed. Each deviant lexical collocation was assigned to a possible source of error. Additionally, input gained from an interview with participants was used as supplementary data in answering research question 3.

DATA ANALYSIS

Types of Lexical Collocations Produced by the Participants

Based on Hsu's Classification of Lexical Collocations 2007, the participants had produced a total of 93 lexical collocations. Figure 6 displays the types of lexical collocations produced by participants. Lexical collocation type is Adjective + Noun (L2) type. A similar pattern appeared in Wong's research (2014), where the participants from both high and low proficiency level produced very less number of L3 type.

On the whole, L2 (Adj. + N) and L1 (V+N) were favourite picks among learners as a current study too proved the same. The reason being, Hsu suggests, L2 (Adj. + N) and L1 (V+N) types are the earlier and easier learnt type as compared to other types (2007). Additionally, they are more prevalent in English than the rest of the lexical collocation types (Lewis, 2000).

In the present study, out of 7 lexical collocation types, the participants managed to produce 5 types. It reflected their ability in using various kinds of lexical collocation types. However, it is crucial to note that

despite the variety, the number was not strong enough to validate their collocation mastery. They seemed to have overused L2 (Adj. + N) type which recorded 53 occurrences. This figure dropped to 16 for L1 type, and the occurrences continued to decrease, hitting lowest points like 11, 11 and 2 for the rest of the collocation types. This decrease in number could be an indicator of learners' low collocational competence. In fact, in Zhang's study native speakers' produced more variety than the non-native speaker, hinting to the lack of collocational competence of learners (1993).

Lexical Collocation Types - A Closer Look

L1 (Verb + Noun) Type

From a total of 16, L1 types, 1 deviant lexical collocation was produced. Table 1 shows L1 type collocations successfully produced by the participants, whereas Table 2 highlights deviant L1 type collocations. It is noteworthy that all types of lexical collocations with the wrong tense, wrong article and misspellings were deemed correct.

Figure 6 Lexical Collocation Types

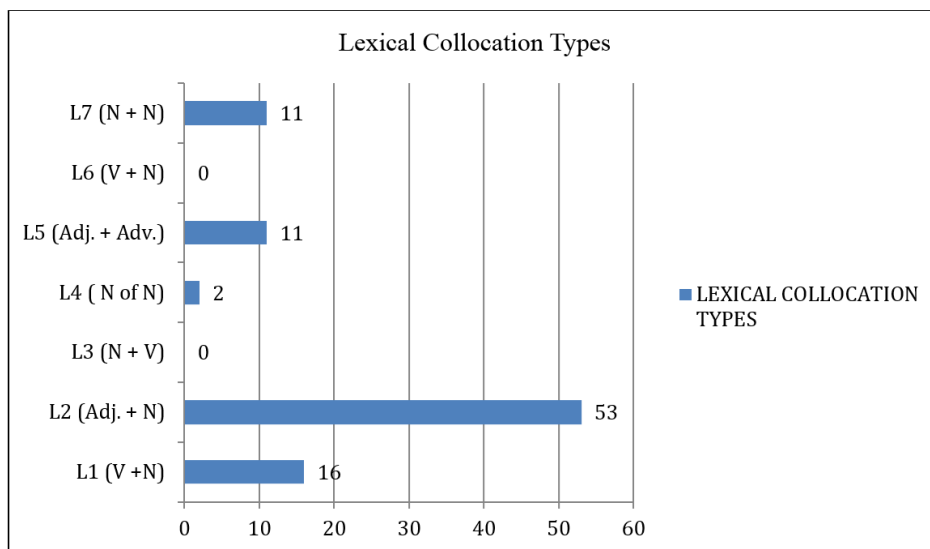


Table 1 Non – deviant L1 (Verb+ Noun) Type Lexical Collocations

| Participant | Learner Collocation |
|-------------|--|
| 5 | <i>My teacher gave speech and we all clap and shouted.</i> |
| 6 | <i>We sang song together.</i> |
| 10 | <i>We had fun by playing and singing.</i> |
| 11 | <i>Last week, my class has class party.</i> |

Table 2 L1 (Verb + Noun) Type Deviant Lexical Collocation

| Participant | Learner Collocation | Target Collocation |
|-------------|--|--|
| 3 | <i>In the school each class we used to celebrated class party.</i> | <i>In my school, each class organizes class party.</i> |

L2 (Adjective + Noun) Type

L2 type lexical collocation is the preferred, and easy type as per the current study as a total of 53 L2 type was identified. Only ten deviant lexical collocations were found. Table 3 and Table 4 show L2 type collocations.

With reference to L5 (Adv. +Adj.) type collocations, usage of general adverbs like *very* and *really* are common in non- deviant and deviant collocations produced by the participants. On the same vein, it is said that learners frequently use adverbs like “*very*”, “*really*”, “*so*” and so on (Granger& Rayson, 1998).

Table 3 *Non- Deviant L2 (Adjective + Noun) type Lexical Collocations*

| Participant | Learner Collocation |
|-------------|---|
| 3 | It was a <i>happy day</i> . |
| 5 | My teacher is a <i>good man</i> because he bring us food. |
| 6 | After that, we had <i>great time</i> with our friends. |
| 11 | Class party is the <i>best time</i> of the year. |

Table 4 *Deviant L2 (Adjective +Noun) Lexical Collocations*

| Participant | Learner Collocation | Target Collocation |
|-------------|--|--|
| 3 | Students have <i>relaxed day</i> | Students had a <i>relaxing day</i> |
| 5 | We listened to <i>sadful songs</i> and we cry like baby. | We listened to sad songs and cried like babies. |
| 7 | They had <i>nice performance</i> . | They delivered a <i>wonderful performance</i> . |
| 10 | That was <i>really tired day</i> but we was happy. | That was a <i>really tiring day</i> but we were happy. |

L5 (Adverb + Adjective) Type

Table 5 and 6 show non- deviant and deviant L5 type lexical collocations found in participants’ written samples respectively.

Besides that, the low occurrence of adverbs in participants’ written samples could also be related to the claim that adverbs are optional where a sentence can still be formed without it (Hinkel, 2004).

Table 5 *Non- Deviant L5 (Adv. + Adj.) Type Lexical*

Collocations

| Participant | Learner Collocation |
|-------------|--|
| 2 | The food was <i>really delicious</i> . |
| 6 | It was <i>really fun</i> and we cannot forget it. |
| 8 | She was <i>very happy</i> because she sing for us. |

Table 6 *Deviant L5 (Adverb + Adjective) Lexical Collocations*

| Participant | Learner Collocation | Target Collocation |
|-------------|---|---|
| 13 | The cake are <i>really- really big</i> . | The cakes were <i>really big</i> . |
| 13 | The boy was <i>really-really funny</i> . | The boy was <i>really funny</i> . |
| 13 | The class party was <i>really- really awesome</i> . | The class party was <i>really awesome</i> . |

Moving on, upon investigating deviant L5 type lexical collocations, it was observed that the participants had tendency to repeat adverbs in a sentence (refer Table 6).

L7 (Noun +Noun) Type

The participants produced 11, L7 (Noun + Noun) type lexical collocations. three were deviant collocations. Table 7 displays instances of correct collocations followed by Table 8 which highlights deviant collocations.

word coinage are the strategies highlighted in Liu’s (1999) framework.

Thus, the deviant collocations were analyzed based on the earlier mentioned framework to yield explanation on deviant lexical collocations. Besides the framework, the researcher also used input from the participants through the interview procedure. Four participants were interviewed to strengthen the analysis. However, it is important to note that the input of participants was used as supplementary

Table 7 Non – Deviant L7 (N +N) Type Lexical Collocations

| Participant | Learner Collocation |
|-------------|---|
| 2 | We play <i>computer games</i> with our friends. |
| 9 | our <i>class monitor</i> ask us to clean the classroom. |
| 12 | Teacher said we can bring <i>board games</i> . |

Table 8 Deviant L7 (Noun+Noun) Lexical Collocations

| Participant | Learner Collocation | Target Collocation |
|-------------|--|--|
| 5 | During <i>movie time</i> , we watched movie in class. | During <i>movie session</i> , we watched a movie in class. |
| 5 | It was <i>food time</i> . | It was <i>food session</i> . |
| 6 | Some of my friends are going to their <i>own country</i> . | Some of friends are returning to their <i>home country</i> . |

Table 9 Possible Sources of Deviant Lexical Collocational

| Use of Synonym | False Concept Hypothesized | Negative Transfer | Approximation | Word Coinage |
|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 7 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 0 |

Sources of Deviant Lexical Collocations

Overall the participants had produced 19 deviant collocations. Sources of deviant collocations were explained using the Modified Framework of Sources of Lexical Collocational Errors. The framework has listed six strategies or sources widely used by learners in deviant collocation productions. The use of synonym, ignorance of rule restrictions, false concept hypothesized, negative transfer, approximation and

while Modified Framework of Sources of Lexical Collocational Errors was the main reference. Table 9 shows possible sources of deviant lexical collocations to occur in participants’ written samples.

It can be concluded that the use of synonym is the primary source for deviant lexical collocations in participants’ written samples. It suggests learners’ incompetency in English language (Richards, 1973).

Life as a refugee would have affected their language learning as access to education was difficult both back in their home country and host country like Malaysia. Apart from the intralingual source, interlingual source, which is negative transfer, has an equal share as other sources too. It has been proven in the present study that the first language of a learner does affect one's language acquisition. However, the participants of the present study seemed to have lost touch with their first language, being away from homeland because there are not enough sources to support their first language development. The only exposure they receive is through the interaction with family and their own community (field notes). This condition is also due to heightened emphasis on English which will determine their future in the countries that they will resettle. Through the interview, the participants expressed their lack of knowledge in their first language.

1995). In other words, whenever a learner could not think of a semantically equivalent collocation in his or her first language, he or she will rely on a synonym to express the target collocation. This also happens due to minimal vocabulary where the learner overuses common words and sees a word as a single unit without understanding about collocation. Table 10 shows examples of deviant lexical collocations that used a synonym.

The deviant collocation "traditional food" by Participant 10 is not acceptable, according to British National Corpus and Oxford Dictionary of Collocations. Just by relying on the meaning of the word "traditional" the participants might have formed "traditional food", without knowing that the construction is not acceptable. Additionally, none of the students was aware of the word "cuisine" because they had used "food" a common term in other constructions too.

Table 10 Examples of Deviant Lexical Collocations caused by The Use of Synonym

| Participant | Learner Collocation | Target Collocation |
|-------------|--|--|
| 10 | Some of them bring <i>traditional food</i> | Some brought <i>traditional cuisines</i> |
| 13 | My teacher weared a <i>party cap too</i> | My teacher wore a <i>party cap too</i> |

Table 11 Examples of Deviant Lexical Collocations Caused by Negative Transfer

| Learner Collocations | Burmese Version | Target Collocations |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| We celebrated class party. (P3) | Ngo doe thin (we) dan parte (party) pwe kyin- pa(celebrate) ge de (suffix to indicate past tense) | We organized class party. |
| It was movie time. (P5) | A da yoke shin (it was) <i>kyi bo(movie) achane be(time)</i> . | It was movie session. |
| It was really- really big. (P7) | De har ga daw (it was) <i>ta-ge ta-ge (really- really)kyi de (big)</i> . | It was really big. |

The Use of the synonym

The use of synonym was the main source of deviant lexical collocation in learners' written productions. Use of synonym occurs because of the attempt of a learner applying open choice principle (Farghal and Obiedat,

Negative Transfer

Negative transfer occurs because of interference of the first language (L1). Many types of research have indicated negative transfer as the main cause for the occurrence of deviant collocations (Bahns, 1993;

Bloom, 2006). The current study interviewed the students to identify L1 interference.

Based on Table 11, Participant 3 had produced a deviant collocation which is *“celebrated class party”* and its Burmese equivalent is *“parte in pa”*. According to Participant 3, in Burmese sense, they use *“celebrate”* for parties and festivals. It is hence proven that the participant would have directly translated the collocation, which is a clear sign of negative transfer.

Moving on, Participant 5 had produced *“movie time”* which is actually a direct translation. The participant had explained in the interview that Burmese say *“kyi bo achane”* (movie time) not movie session. *“Achane”* means time and the word is also used to indicate a time slot or session where a particular activity takes place. With that understanding, the participant would have produced deviant collocation such as *“movie time”* and *“game time”*.

Participant 7 produced three deviant collocations with a similar pattern where the participant repeated the word *“really”* twice. According to the participant, Burmese do repeat the word *“ta ge”* (really) in their day to day conversations though it is not applicable in formal writings.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Theoretical Implication

This study calls for change in “grammar – vocabulary” dichotomy, which is subscribed by most of the second language learning settings. Malaysia is no exception as the incorporation of phraseology is yet to be popularized among young learners, despite continuous recommendations from past studies done in Malaysian context (Normazidah Che Musa, Koo & Hazita Azam, 2012). In relation to that, the occurrence of deviant lexical collocations in participants’ writings of the present study revealed their lack of awareness about collocations. They mostly practice single word learning and use typical dictionaries (field notes). Both participants and language teachers were not aware of the existence of collocation dictionaries (field

notes). It has often been quoted that learners are not sensitive in realizing the co-occurrence of words as they are only trained to look at a single word (Lewis, 2000).

In order to implement collocation teaching, the lexical approach by Lewis (2000) should be implemented. Learners must be made to “see and sense” collocations in any discourses they come across. Noticing Hypothesis by Schmidt (2010) claimed that by noticing the important linguistic structures, learners would be able to enhance their language acquisition. Similarly, through ‘noticing’ learners will familiarize themselves with collocations and ultimately will become more sensitive with co-occurrence of words.

Pedagogical Implication

Language Teachers

The study strongly recommends the inclusion of collocational teaching in a second language learning setting. It can be done by introducing the use of collocation dictionaries, native corpus like British National Corpus and so on. Besides that, teachers can focus on certain types of collocations, particularly those involving high- frequency verbs and adjectives. As per the current study, the focus should be given to L4 (N of N) type as it was the most problematic collocation type for the participants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Instruments

As the present study used written task, upcoming studies can employ other methods like fill-in-the-blanks, multiple-choice questions and translation task to investigate learners’ comprehension on collocations. This technique can help to specify the collocations learners struggle with.

Other than that, future studies can use different writing genres in like argumentative, factual, and so on. It is because collocation productions vary depending on the essay tasks assigned to the participants. By

employing different types of the genre it will assist in understanding participants' collocation productions.

CONCLUSION

This study managed to draw insights on lexical collocational productions of Myanmar refugee learners in Malaysia. It was done in the hope to better facilitate the "unvoiced group" in Malaysia in terms of English language learning. Helping them improve their English language will guarantee a better future upon residing in first world countries like Canada. Most importantly, the study intends to see the inclusion of collocational teaching in Malaysian context Malaysia aspires to excel in English language acquisition.

Above all, the inclusion of collocational teaching is the key point of this study. By highlighting the significance of collocations, the study attempts to create awareness among educators, curriculum designers, policymakers and learners. Those are the people who have the capacity to bring changes to the current vocabulary teaching and learning.

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