RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE INFLUENCE OF MOTHER TONGUE INTERFERENCE ON SUDANESE LEARNING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE COLLOCATIONS

MONA MAGZOUB MOHAMMED[1], Dr. ALI MUHAMMAD ABDALLA[2], Dr. AMIR MOHAMMED ALBLOLY[3]

[1]Kassala University, Sudan (ommohammed.moneeb@gmail.com)
[2]Associate Professor of English Language, Red Sea University, Sudan (dr.aliabdalla56@gmail.com)
[3]Assistant Professor, University of Kassala, Sudan (alblolyamir83@gmail.com)

Dr. ALI MUHAMMAD ABDALLA

Dr. AMIR MOHAMMED ALBLOLY

ABSTRACT

This research article major aim was to point out the influence of mother tongue interference on Sudanese learning of EFL collocations. The participants of this article represent (100) students majoring in English and linguistics at the University of Kassala (Faculty of education) who were split equally into two groups; the first one included (50) students studied in the 3rd year, and the second group included also (50) students studied in the 5th year. The experimental and quantitative methods were used to carry out this article adopting a diagnostic test as an instrument for data collection which was tried out on the both groups, then the students' results measured by their score in the test via the use SPSS program applied to the analysis of the collected data which revealed very major and negative influence caused by the mother tongue in creating collocation errors the students commit in addition to the learning of collocation, and the learning of English as a foreign language.

Key words: Mother Tongue Interference, Collocation Errors, EFL Learners

Introduction

No learning without goofing is the indisputable pedagogical fact that everyone knows particularly those who immersed themselves in the field of EFL learning and teaching. But the act of goofing may be spontaneous or due to external factors such as the differences lie between the learners first language from one hand, and the target language from other hand, interference coming from the learners' mother tongue whose influence is almost very tangible in the linguistic structure and component of the target language in question. In fact, learners' mother tongue can be regarded as a double-edged weapon that can either be of help in learning an extra language or can obstruct their learning a second language and therefore stand against the learners' will according to the similarities and differences that exist between the two linguistic systems of both languages. Thus, learning a language entails having a full knowledge of its linguistic systems in terms of having a linguistic competence that can be used as a shield protecting one against making mistakes and committing errors such as collocation errors that indicate to such an extent the good command learners develop so as to use the language as properly.

To highlight the influence of mother tongue interference in Sudanese learning of EFL collocation will be the main aim of the article besides achieving the following objectives:

1. To prove how mother tongue can be the main cause behind collocation errors committed by Sudanese EFL learners.

2. To show how the use of lexical collocations can be affected by the students' native language.

Statement of the Problem

English occupies the status of EFL for the majority of Sudanese learners at universities, the primary and secondary schools. However, learning English as EFL is not an easy task. According to Brown (2000), in order to master the English language, learners have to be adequately exposed to all of the four basic skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. In all, they need to know what the internationally accepted English is, apart from the variety used in Sudan. However, the standard of English among Sudanese EFL learners claimed to be on the decline, despite learning English for several years. Learners are still weak in English, almost the fourth skills. They still seem to commit errors in all aspects of language. Accordingly, learners' errors in writing and speaking when they use collocation considered to be the most common and frequent types of errors that are committed by learners. Consequently, the researchers felt more enthusiastic in conducting this article as an attempt to put the solutions at the disposal of not only EFL learners but also expertise and EFL teachers who can supply this knowledge through their teaching materials and also through the application of these solution**s** to their teaching methods and strategies.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The main objective of this study is to highlight the influence of the interference of mother tongue as the main cause of collocation errors committed by EFL learners.

In order to achieve the objective of this article, the questions below were posed as follows:

1. To what extent can the mother tongue be the cause of lexical collocation errors committed by Sudanese EFL learners?

2. On what way can the knowledge of lexical collocations be affected by the students' native language?

In accordance with the above questions, the two hypotheses were assumed. Hence, the statistical results of the article may either support or reject these hypotheses.

H1: "The major causes of lexical collocational errors pertain to mother tongue interference**".**

H2: "Sudanese students majoring in English do not have knowledge of English lexical collocation**"**.

Related Literature Review

Collocation in First-and Second-language Acquisition

The existence of collocations and thus their influences on both first and second language acquisition and teaching has been acknowledged by the majority of linguists in this field. According to Bloom (1973, cited in Miyakoshi, 2009), young children acquiring their first language produce unanalyzed chunks that an adult would recognize as multi-morphemic, such as *lemme-see, i-wanna-do-it.* This phenomenon questions the validity of the general assumption that most children start producing only one word at a time. Supporting the same point of view, the results of Fillmore's study (1979) shows striking similarities in the use of formulaic sequences such as *I wanna play, Do you wanna play? I gotta hurry up, shuddup your mouth* between the two groups of her subjects. In her study, Fillmore examined the acquisition of formulaic speech of five Spanish-speaking learners of English paired with their counterparts (English-speaking children) for one year. She explains that children began to learn these expressions as unanalyzed or whole chunks, and later, after gaining confidence in their use, they start segmenting them into individual units. She comments:

"Once in the learner's speech repertory, they become familiar and therefore could be compared with other utterances in the repertory as well as those produced by the speaker. Their function in language learning process is not only social but cognitive too since they provide the data on which the children were to perform their analytical activities in figuring out the structure of the language" (p. 29).

Wray (2002) also claims that first language learners focus on large strings of words and decompose them only as much as they need to, for communicative purposes. She describes several essential roles of collocation in learning the first language. By using collocations, young children supplement gestures and other non-linguistic

behaviors when conveying salient messages prior to the development of their rule-governed language. Thus, children store and use complex strings before developing their grammatical knowledge. For example, a child may produce the string *what's-that?* before knowing the internal makeup of 'wh-questions. Another role that their use of collocations can play is to "reduce the child's processing load once novel construction is possible". This allows the child to maintain fluency while obtaining control of processing. The significant role of collocations in children's first language acquisition also was highlighted by Peter (1983). The results of her study revealed that young children use both analytical (inferential) and gestalt (holistic) strategies to acquire their first language. Children start employing utterances used by adults in the form of formulas. They store such formulas and later reuse them creatively as both analyzed or segmented units and unanalyzed or whole chunks.

In the field of second language acquisition, as claimed by Wray (2002), children seem to have many advantages over adults with regard to the acquisition of collocation. Naturally, children become involved with other children, who are very lenient of incomprehension, and in various types of "ritualized play" that presents them with highly anticipated, constant, and contextualized language. On the contrary, adults avoid the shock of being a non-speaker of a new language by choosing not to communicate with other peers. Such advantages can facilitate the second language acquisition process in general, and assists children to sound native and idiomatic in their use of formulaic expressions in particular. Wray (2002) also claims that adult second language learners reveal themselves by not knowing the grammatically possible ways of conveying a message that sounds idiomatic to native speakers. The reason, she maintains, is that an adult language learner starts with individual units and then builds them up, whereas a first language learner begins with large and complex units and never segments them unless it is necessary:

"Phrases and clauses may be what learners encounter in their input material, but what they notice and deal with our words and how they can be glued together". (p.206).

Nevertheless, Ellis (1984) emphasizes the role of formulaic language in second language acquisition. He indicates that holes or chunks can form an entire script of L2 performance such as with greeting sequences. In a study, Ellis points out that three ESL learners employed some sort of formula as a communication fridge strategy (e.g., *how do you do? I wanna, I can't speak English).* He determines that formulas are common in both classroom and naturalistic settings and are utilized by L2 learners to decrease the learning burden while increasing communicative demands. Although collocations were not the focus of that study, rather were included under the umbrella of formulas, this does not undervalue the importance of collocations.

To sum up, research in the area of both first and second language acquisition highlight the role of collocations in language acquisition. While collocations are important building blocks in children's language acquisition, this researcher agrees with other researchers that collocations also play a significant role in adult second language learning. The relevance of these findings to the current study lies in the need for developing ESL/EFL learners' collocational knowledge, which results from the process of learning and from storing the collocations they encounter.

Interference of the Mother Tongue

Foreign language learners tend to transfer negatively already known words and group of words from Arabic into the target language because of interference. They do translate expressions (either consciously or unconsciously) from L1 (Language1) into L2 (Language2) due to "interlanguage" or "errors of competence" [Corder (1975), Nemser (1971), Richards (1971), and Selinker and Lamendella (1978)], which is a huge problem that hinders learners' performance in the target language. Errors of competence could be "fossilized" (Selinker 1972; Selinker and Lamendella 1978) if the learner, as claimed by Huxley, "stops adapting hypotheses before reaching full mastery of the target language. For example, he/she may continue to speak with a "foreign accent," despite apparent ability, opportunity, and motive to attain native-speaker pronunciation patterns." Huxley, F. C. (1986).

Teachers have to urge learners to think in the target language as far as possible in order to avoid translating the L1 collocations into the L2 since these translations would lead to errors in writing or speaking.

Also, ignorance of collocations results in translating words and word combinations from the target language to the L1 which leads to wrong collocations that negatively affect fluency as claimed by Philip, J (2007).

"Students generally encounter words in their literal sense first, match them to a translation equivalent in their L1, and from then on, unless instructed otherwise, use the word in calqued forms of the L1 phraseology. The relative success of this strategy effectively masks the underlying problem, which is more serious than simply getting collocations wrong. Persistent calquing actually prevents students from acquiring a sense of the word's conceptual range in the L2, negatively affecting textual fluency and cohesiveness" (ibid).

Consequently, Arabic affects learners' production of English and makes it full of mis-collocations which are the result of negative transfer for Arabic collocations into English. Thus, teachers have to help the learners by making them notice the difference between collocations of each language. What is a common collocation in Arabic isn't necessarily so in English and vice versa?

Errors and Collocations

As the researcher's concern is investigating collocation errors, it is essential not to neglect what linguists contribute to the area of errors. Errors have become a field of interest not only for teachers but for linguists and psychologists as well. Gass and Selinker, (1994). Dulay and Burt (1974) state that errors have played an important role in the study of language acquisition in general and in examining second and foreign language acquisition in particular. In the applied linguistics community, it was Corder (1975) who first advocated the importance of errors in language learning process. From the errors that learners make, one can determine their level of mastery of the language system. He observed that the learners' errors are indicative both of the states of the learners' knowledge and the ways in which a second language is learned. It can be said that linguists pay considerable attention to language errors in a broad sense. Thus, the researcher can narrow down this general view of exploring errors into investigating collocation errors in particular.

Boundary between Error and Non-Error

There is a distinction between errors and non-errors. Foreign language learners make *errors* largely and systematically because of the paucity of their knowledge of the target language. In this case, they have not learned the correct form. Once they have been taught or have noticed that native speakers do not produce such forms, it is supposed that those learners will say or write these forms consistently. In the case that the learners produce right forms, but in other times they are unable to produce the accurate one, these inconsistent deviations are called *mistakes.* Also, mistakes can be self-corrected while errors cannot be. Hence, errors are systematic deviations that occur repeatedly and they are not recognized by the learner. Yet, there is another type of the wrong usage which is neither a mistake nor an error and can happen to anyone at any time. This is described as *slips of the tongue* or *slips of the pen* which may be due to lack of concentration, shortness of memory, fatigue. Native speakers suffer from producing slips in the same way as learners of the language. For example, a presenter of BBC's Radio 4 said: achieving *to strive* instead of *striving to achieve.* Ellis, (1997), and James, (1998).

Types of Errors

There are different ways of categorizing errors. Corder (1975) suggests following steps in EA research:

A collection of a sample of learner language (This is according to the size of the sample, the medium to be a sample and with regard to the learners' ages and L1 background). Identification of errors. He points out the need to distinguish 'Errors' from 'mistakes'. This is clear from the fact that Corder's (ibid) distinction between errors of competence and performance suffers from serious practical limitations. This distinction is based on the discrepancy between the learner's knowledge of language rules and his actual use of language. The root of this notion is Chomsky's (1965) famous distinction between 'competence' and 'performance'. However, this distinction is too abstract to capture concrete problem of second language learning. Corder, (ibid) also points out that sentences can be 'overtly idiosyncratic' (i.e. they are ill-formed in terms of target language rules and covertly idiosyncratic, (i.e. sentences that are superficially well formed but when their context of use is examined are clearly grammatical.

Description of errors, which involves a comparison of the learner's idiosyncratic utterances with a reconstruction of those utterances in the TL (assessing a grammatical description to each error). Explanation of errors, which is an attempt to identify the psycholinguistic cause of the errors. Abbott (1980) claims that *'the aim of any EA is to provide a psychological explanation'.* Evaluation of errors. This stage involves assessing the seriousness of each error in order to take principal teaching decisions. EA evaluation is necessary only if the purpose of the EA is pedagogic. However, Coder's (1974) distinguish errors of competence and performance; he argues that EA should investigate only errors. This distinction is based on the discrepancy between the learner's knowledge of language rules and his actual use of language.

Richards (1971) classifieds errors into:

Interlingual errors coming from differences between L1 and L2.

Intralingual errors coming within the language itself. He identifies four types of intralingual errors :

Overgeneralization (caused by the learners' failure to observe the boundaries of a rule, such as *I wonder where are you going).*

Ignorance of rule restrictions, failure to observe the restrictions of existing structures (closely related to overgeneralization), e.g. *the man who I saw him*

Incomplete application of rules, where the occurrence of structure whose deviance represents the degree of development of the rules required to produce acceptable, for instance;

Teacher: Do you read much?

Student: yes, I read much.

Teacher: What does he have to do?

Student: He has to write the address

False concepts hypothesized,i.e. faulty comprehension of distinctions in the TL e.g. the lift is leaving the office building.

Furthermore, Lott (1983) distinguishes three categories:

1.'Overextension of analogy' which occurs when the learner misuses an item because it shares features with an item in the L1.

2.'Transfer of structure' arises when the learners utilize some L1 feature (phonological, lexical, grammatical, or pragmatic) rather than that of the TL. This is what is generally understood as 'transfer'.

3.'Interlingual/ intralingual errors' arise when a particular distinction does not exist in the L1. Ellis (1997) claims that it is not easy to distinguish transfer and intralingual errors, and even more difficult to identify the different types of intralingual errors that Richards (1971) describes.

Freeman and Michael (1991) identify a number of errors taxonomies presented by different researchers. According to Gorge (1973) errors were attributed to simplification or redundancy reduction. Selinker (1972) labels other types of communication-based errors (communicative strategy), and induced errors. He explains errors which were brought about by a teacher's presenting two linguistic items in a way which created confusion in the mind of learners.

Freeman and Michael (1991) claim that EA fails to account for all the areas of the SL in which learners have difficulty. Gass and Selinker (1994) argue that one of the major criticisms was the total of errors in the absence of other information. That is one need to consider errors as well as no errors to get perfect information of a learner's linguistic behavior. The second difficulty with EA is the determination of what an error is. Brown (2000) claims that the shortcoming in EA is an overemphasis on production data as it also fails to account for the strategy of avoidance. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) mention that EA suffers from a number of limitations (i.e. an incomplete picture of learner language because it examines only what learners do wrongly and ignores what they do correctly. Also, EA cannot account for learners' avoidance of certain L2 forms, they say. From the previous review, it should be noted that EA had achieved a fundamental position in the 1970s, replacing CA and it was one of the first methods used to explain learner language. The first stage in applying an EA was to collect a sufficient and specific sample of learner language. It could also be collected cross-sectionally or longitudinally. The second step is the identification of errors in the sample; EA should investigate only errors (distinguishing errors from mistakes or competence vs. performance). The third stage consists of

description (linguistically or surface strategy). The fourth stage involves an explanation of errors psycholinguistically. Finally evaluation, in the majority of causes an error may be attributed to more than one cause. So, errors may be traceable back to both L1 and other than L1 sources.

A considerable note that can be made in this regard is that in many instances, it is not an easy matter to make a clear-cut decision for attributing the collocational error to only one of the above-mentioned types. Probably, many processes might equally occur simultaneously and reinforce each other. Littlewood, (1984). For example, when some Arab learners of English says to *open the radio* instead of *turn on the radio*, this error may be a literary translation of the Arabic colloquial expression افتح الراديو*(iftah er radio)* or it may be an overgeneralization error, as the learners may generalize *open the door/window* and say erroneously *open the radio.* Another example, *shattered silence* instead of *break silence* can be a false analogy to مزق جدار الصمت *(mazzaqa jeddara assamt)* or it may be an imitation of a literary style as mentioned above. In the current study, the term *error types* are adopted and used for specific reasons. Most of the other terminologies such as *sources, causes,* and *factors* potentially imply a broader meaning rather than *error types*. Such a broad meaning may extend to include teaching.

Approaches to Error Analysis

The growing interest of investigating errors types led apparently to the rise of error analysis. Error analysis can be defined as an examination of those errors committed by learners in both spoken and written medium. Mohideen, (1996). It is worth noting that error analysis gives a picture of the type of difficulty learners are experiencing (Norrish, (1994). Richards (1971) justifies the importance of error analysis as it functions as input to the theoretical discussion. In the phase of evaluation, error analysis offers appropriate feedback on the design of remedial curricula. Similarly, Mohideen (1996) indicates that error analysis is useful in ESL/EFL because it reveals the problematic areas to language teachers, syllabus designers, and textbook writers. In this regard, due to the fact that foreign language learners lack the automation of collocations which may result in errors that hinder their learning English, the analysis of collocation errors is strongly believed to be adopted in this study as an effective way to help English language students overcome difficulties.

Various approaches to error analysis are formed basically for investigating errors. Corder (1971) identified a representative model for error analysis. His model can be summarized as followed. The initial step requires the selection of a corpus of language followed by an identification of errors. The errors are then classified. The next step, after giving a grammatical analysis of each error, it is demanded to give an explanation of different types of errors. Gass and Selinker (1994) add additional two steps: analyzing sources of error and offering a remedy for errors. In another attempt for analyzing errors, Norrish (1994) states that there are fundamentally two main approaches to error analysis. The first one is to set up categories of errors, based on a set of preconceptions about the learners' most common problems. This approach has an advantage of being easier and quicker to carry out because errors are indicated on a list of categories. However, the drawback of this approach is that the issue is prejudged since errors can be sorted out only in terms of predetermined error types. The second approach is to group the errors as they are collected in particular areas. Such approach has the advantage of allowing the errors themselves to determine the categories chosen. By a process of sorting and re-sorting errors, the categories will eventually define themselves. From the standpoint of the researcher, it can be stated that Corder's approach (1971) to error analysis matches with the second approach offered by Norrish (1994) because both approaches basically tend to identify errors types and classify them from the corpus itself. The mechanism of error analysis which is followed in this study is developed in the light of Corder's approach along with the prescription approach of error analysis mentioned by Norrish. In other words, the researcher sets three categories of collocation errors types. The first category examines collocation error types out of the students' responses. For the other two categories of collocation types, they are prescribed to determine errors in this respect.

Methodology

Method and design of the study

In order to achieve the objective of the article, the experimental and quantitative methods were used to obtain the data that can achieve the purpose of the article and be accessible for measurement without the

interference of the researchers. The article design was highly structured and set to measure the interference of mother tongue in causing collocation errors committed by EFL learners.

Subjects

The subjects of the present article are two types of participants: Students of EFL distributed among two groups. The first target group is the 3rd year students, and the second targeted group is 5th year students of English at the Department of English language and linguistics, from the faculty of education at University of Kassala according to the academic calendar (2015-2016). Their overall number is composed of (100) students; they were treated as one experimental group. That is, (50) students from the third year, and (50) students from the fifth year distributed equally. They are aged between (17-22) and study English as a foreign language. Students under investigation were homogenous in terms of their linguistic, educational system, the field of study and age.

Instrumentations

This article used the test as data collection instrument. To check the validity of the test, three copies of the test were handed over to EFL expert teachers. They wrote down their comments, suggestions, at the end of the test. According to their comments, suggestions, the number of the questions were reduced from seven to five. The test included six major types of lexical collocations selected and adapted carefully to suit the proper level of the students. It consisted of five sections. Section one is for multiple choice, whereas section two is for sentence completion, section three is for correcting the underlined verb, section four is or matching, and the last section (5) is for underlining the collocations. Under each section, there is the number and the page of exercise. The test was administered to the students in both groups to diagnose to what extent their mother tongue can be the cause of collocation errors, obstruct their learning of collocations in general, and can interfere with the process of learning a foreign language.

Procedure

The test was used as the main tool for data collection. The researchers followed particular procedures and steps in collecting the data. Collocation test consists of (55) items was administered to the students during the academic year (2015-2016) at Faculty of Education department of English language and linguistics. It took about (90) minutes for all the subject to finish. Having finished the test, the test materials were collected and stored by numbers.

Data Analysis

Statistical techniques were conducted to analyze the article data. These techniques are frequency, percentage, one sample t-test, paired sample t-test, independent sample t-test and face and content validity the reliability of the test using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) in the analysis of the data obtained by the designed test.

The results of the test have been collected and counted in order to measure the significant results that may help the researchers recognize the influence of mother tongue interference in the EFL learners' collocation errors.

Analysis of Hypotheses in Relation to the Test

H1: *"The major causes of lexical collocational errors pertain to mother tongue interference"*

Table (1): One sample t-test for the first hypothesis

Expected mean	Mean	St.d.	t-value	d.f	p-value
3	1.70	0.76	-12.05	49	0.000

The above table(1) showed that the p-value equal(0.000) less than the significance level (0.05). And that means there is a statistical difference between the expected and the actual means. When the actual mean (1.70) is less than the expected mean (3) this ensures the truth of the first hypothesis that *"The major causes of lexical collocational errors pertain to mother tongue interference".*

Table (2): Statistics for errors refer to the mother tongue influence

Possible source of collocation errors	Number of errors	Percentage
interlingual (negative transfer)	1078	95%
Intralingual (overgeneralization, the use of improper synonyms	372	33%

The above table (2) showed that interlingual errors are the most common types of errors made by Sudanese EFL students. They constituted 95% of the total number of errors, whereas intralingual errors constituted only 33%. Based on these results, it was concluded that first language interference in the production of lexical collocation was rather great. This result showed that the impact of 1st language on the use of lexical collocations seemed to be very guaranteed.

H_1: **"***Sudanese students majoring in English do not have knowledge of English lexical collocation***"**.

Table (3): One sample t-test for the second hypothesis

Expected mean	Mean	St.d.	t-value	d.f	p-value
6	3.46	1.47	-12.19	49	0.000

The above (3) table indicated that the p-value equal (0.000) is less than the significance level (0.05), and that means there is a significant statistical difference between the expected and the actual means. When the actual mean (3.46) is less than the expected mean (6), these rates confirmed the acceptance of the above hypothesis that "*Sudanese students majoring in English do not have knowledge of English lexical collocation*", and this due to the difference between lexical collocation in both students' languages: The first language and the target one.

Paired sample t-test for the students' performance

.Skill		Mean	St.d.	t-value	d.f	p-value
Verb+ Noun (V+N)		3.72	1.126	-4.30	49	0.000
Adjective + Noun (Adj +N)		3.66	1.287	1.54	49	0.130
Noun + Verb (N+V)	3rd class	3.08	1.152	-5.20	49	0.000
Noun+ Noun (N+N)		2.34	1.081	-4.18	49	0.000
Adverb + Adjective & Verb +Adverb Adv + Adj & V + Adv)		3.69	.796	-6.74	49	0.000
Adjective+ Noun(Ad j+ N)		3.76	1.222	- 1.06	49	0.297
Noun +Verb(N+V)	5th class	5.68	1.671	- 4.65	49	0.000
Noun+ Noun (N+N)		2.78	.910	- 4.06	49	0.000
Adverb + Adjective &Verb + Adverb Adv + Adj & V + Adv)		4.27	1.440	- 6.45	49	0.000

The above table indicated that p-value is zero in both tests. Each lexical category denoted that the p-value is less than mean's value. According to the means' value, the above table clearly reflected how the categories of lexical collocation have been problematic for the students according to their performance in both tests. As a result, these statistics outputs positively proved the truth of the second hypothesis which is "*Sudanese students majoring in English do not have knowledge of English lexical collocation*", Thus, in the view of the researchers, the students' lack of English lexical collocation caused them to commit errors when they try to use lexical collocation.

In conclusion, it was observed that all the above-discussed results and findings are in line with the hypotheses and the objectives of the article which explored the influence of mother tongue as the main cause of collocation errors committed EFL learners. Also, mother tongue was one of the causes obstruct the learning of collocations, and finally how its interference with the process of learning a foreign language in general.

Discussion

According to the statistics, it was clear that the learners' mother tongue was the main cause of the students' lexical errors due to the wide gap of differences between the two languages and the student's inability to correctly use lexical collocation in their course of learning English as a foreign language.

 According to the students' scores in both tests, it was supposed that the interference of mother tongue was particularly the most noticeable cause behind collocation errors committed by EFL learners. Besides its influence in obstructing the way, learners follow to learn a foreign language.

All the subjects in both groups have had the same amount of exposure to teaching materials of lexical collocation in one semester and all of them studied English as the main discipline.

They were (100) students split into two groups equally as one sample. It was concluded that the influence of mother tongue was the main cause of collocation errors committed EFL learners, also was one of the causes that obstruct the students' knowledge of collocations, and finally its interference with the process of learning a foreign language as a whole. Based on the above-mentioned facts, the two hypotheses were proved as there was a significant influence for the learners' mother tongue in the lexical collocation errors they commit and their lack of knowledge of collocation in English.

Finally, in order to eradicate the influence of the students' mother tongue in learning collocation and EFL, the article recommended that:

- Learners' knowledge of collocation in both languages should be enhanced and increased.
- Authentic teaching materials of collocation must be provided with remedial work given to learners.
- Also, new teaching methods of collocation should be adopted by teachers to enhance the students' knowledge on how collocation errors can be corrected, reduced and avoided.

References

1.   Abbott, G. (1980).Toward a more rigorous analysis of foreign language errors. International Review of Applied linguistics.3:123-130.
2.   Bloom. L. (1973). One word at a time. The Hague: Mouton
3.   Brown, H.D(2000).Principles of Language Learning and Teaching.4th Edition. Longman . Person Education: San Francisco state university.
4.   Corder. S. (1975). The Significance of Learners' Errors. In Richards, 1. (ed.) (1984).*Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition.* (pp.19-27). London: Longman.
5.   Chomsky, N. (1965). Aspects of the Theory of Syntax. C:.lIl1hridgl:. MIT Press.
6.   Corder, S. (1971). "Idiosyncratic errors and Error Analysis". In Richards, J. (ed.)(1974). *Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*.(pp.158-171). London: Longman.
7.   Dulay. H. & Burt, M. (1974).You Can't Learn without Goofing: An Analysis of Children's Second Language Errors. In Richards, J. (ed.) Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition. (pp. 95-123). London: Longman.
8.   Ellis, R, and Barkhuizen, G. (2005). Analyzing Learners' Language. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
9.   Ellis. R. (1997). Second language acquisition. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
10. Ellis. R. (1984). Formulaic speech in early classroom second language development. In Handscombe, J. Orem, R. A. & Taylor, B. P. (Eds.), *On TESOL* '83(pp. 53-65). Washington, DC: TESOL.
11. Freeman, D. and Michael, H.(1991). An Introduction to Second Language Acquisition Research. London: Longman:59-61.
12. George, H.V(1973). Common Errors in Language Learning. Rowely, Mass: Newbury House.
13. Huxley, F. C. (1986). *Contrasting Semantic Structures in English and Arabic: Problem and Promise in Second Language Learning*. Anthropology & Education Quarterly, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Jun. 1986), p: 67-99.

Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the American Anthropological Association. University of Pennsylvania Press and Roseberry, R.L. (1998). *An Evaluation of a Genre-Based*.

14.   James, C. (1998). Errors in Language Learning and Use: Exploring Error Analysis.New York: Addison Wesley Longman Limited.

15.   Littlewood. W. (1984). Foreign and Second Language Learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

16.   Lott, D. (1983). Analysis and Contracting Interference errors. English Language Teaching Journal37:250-61.

17.   Miyakoshi, T. (2009). Investigating ESL learners' lexical collocations: The acquisition of Verb + Noun collocations by Japanese learners of English. ERIC. E0513117.

18.   Mohideen, H. (1996). "Contributory Factors to Students' Errors with Special Reference to Errors in Written English". *The English Teacher*, 25/4. Available December 10, 2006, from www.melta.org.my/ET/1996/main4.html.

19.   Nemser, W.(1971). Approximate Systems of Foreign Language Learners.IRAL,9:115-23.

20.   Norrish, J. (1994). Language Learners and their Errors. London: Macmillan Press.

21.   Peters, A. (1983). The units of language acquisition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

22.   Philip, G. (2007). *"..and I dropped my jaw with fear"- The role of corpora in teaching phraseology*. Paper read at the 7th Teaching and Language Corpora Conference (TaLC) 2006. Paris, 1–4 July 2006.

23.   Richards, J. (1971). A Non-Contrastive Approach to Error Analysis. *English Language Teaching* No. 25 (p. 204-219).

24.   Selinker, L. & Lamendella, J.T. (1978). Two perspectives on fossilization in interlanguage learning. *Interlanguage Studies Bulletin,* 3(2), 143-91.

25.   Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics,* 10(3).209-31.

26.   Wray. A. (2002). Formulaic Language and the Lexicon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.