

Lexical Collocations Ascertained in the Descriptive Writings Of the English Students

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Abstract: The current research depicts the points as pursue: 1) to portray the types of lexical collocations ascertained in the descriptive writings of the English Education students, 2) to represent the types of colloquial errors depicted in the descriptive writings of the English Education students, and 3) to describe the English Education students' difficulties in allocating the lexicons in their descriptive writings. The present study has drawn on a descriptive-interpretative qualitative design on the linguistic behaviors (lexicons) and writing skill of the research subjects holistically on the bases of the contexts of the writings that have been previously offered. The data of the current study have been analyzed by means of the interactive model. This interactive model consists of three research pathways: data reduction, data display, and conclusion/ data verification that are integrated before, being and after the data are collected. Within this model, the entire data are not reviewed (reduced): the data reduction has been carried out in several ways, for instance by selecting the descriptive writings allied to the topic of this study, i.e., colloquial lexicons. Commencing the 8 available types of colloquial lexicons, 3 (three) lexicons are not countered by the research participants, to be precise: substitution, conjunction, and exclamation. Correspondingly, these colloquial lexicons are encoded by the research participants' native (Indonesian) language intervention, lack of vocabulary, word-for-word translation and direct translation, ignorance of the rules on Indonesian and English, and lack of knowledge about the nature of collocations.

Keywords: descriptive writings; English students; lexical collocations

Introduction

In the process of writing English, there are two aspects that must be considered: vocabulary (lexicon) and grammar (syntax). From these two aspects, there is a tendency that the emphasis on writing English occurs excessively on grammar rather than vocabulary, resulting in most students having a good or even better understanding of grammar rather than vocabulary itself. This problem can be proven from the results of the grammar test in secondary schools and even up to

college which shows a significant improvement every semester, while the lexicon ability has greatly decreased.

Purportedly, the attention to lexical English is also essential to improve students' verbal and nonverbal skills in English circumstance. At the same time collocation is not integrated into the specific learning process thus special discussions are obligatory in the teaching and learning process so as to support students' abilities in the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the curriculum of the English Education Undergraduate Study Program - Jambi University, there are miscellaneous courses offered and one of them is the Semantics-Pragmatics course. For the moment, colloquial lexicons are closely related to this Semantics-Pragmatics course. In other words, this rapport is called 'Linguistics' - Productive skills' interface.

Therefore, a research with this thesis needs to be carried out in effort to provide another nuance in the field of research in general, especially in this institution with the intention of contribute to 3 objectives: 1) to portray the types of lexical collocations ascertained in the descriptive writings of the English Education students, 2) to represent the types of colloquial errors depicted in the descriptive writings of the English Education students, and 3) to describe the English Education students' difficulties in allocating the lexicons in their descriptive writings.

This research might be handy for English students seeing that a written communication model which is integrated with Linguistics studies (micro-macro). In addition, this research is constructive in enriching the Semantics and Pragmatics courses as a branch of Linguistics. Another benefit of this research is to assist students in expressing ideas when writing, especially when they complete their final project or thesis because they have been equipped and given reinforcement about micro and macro linguistics in order to get good writing results.

Although this study only focuses on observing lexical collocations, these findings be capable of confirming the implementation of Linguistics in the Indonesian context and English Education students in particular. In terms of language teaching, the results of this study contribute to the teaching of language functions, especially productive skills. Furthermore, the information obtained from this study is valuable for language teachers (lecturers) and students given that the concept of Linguistics is integrated in their nonverbal communication will affect

the way we communicate more meaningfully to them. This research is also believed to contribute ideas for other researchers.

Literature Review

There are several definitions of collocation put forward by experts to support this research; one of them is defined by O'Del and McCarty (2008: 4) that clarifies "Collocation means a natural combination of words". So, collocation is formed through syntactic units and lexical elements that occur in oral and written communication, which are formed from nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. For example, 1) take notes and heavy rain are two commonly used word combinations that qualify as collocations, 2) promise collocations with make, keep, or break, as in if I make a promise, I'll keep it, not with do or take. In addition, one may say that the president called, addressed or convened the meeting, but not the president performed the meeting, since perform does not collocate to the meeting as perform means to carry out an action. Another example of collocation is: get on a bus. However, these two instances "enter a bus" or "get in a bus" are not accepted because they go against the patterns of lexical collocation though many of the non-native speakers of English express such examples. This occurs because of the non-native speakers' inability to pair the words into the right collocations as native do.

Some other examples provided by Palmer (1981:12) and Martynska (2004:25) to clarify the idea of collocations. Palmer presented the word rancid, addled, and rotten: these words occur in different environment. Rancid usually occurs with bacon or butter, whereas addled occurs with eggs or brains. Meanwhile, rotten usually occurs with fruit. As a result, the learners are required to use them correctly with their correct collocation, for instance my mother threw (rancid, addled, and rotten) eggs in the refrigerator into the dustbin. Although all of the three words in the parentheses mean the same, only the word addled that collocates with eggs.

Similarly, Martynska (2004:25) adds some examples of collocations: “make an omelet and do your homework”. In this case, make collocates with omelet, but does not collocate with homework; whereas ‘do’ collocates with homework but does not collocate with omelet. Thus, collocations determine how words are put together in a sentence because not all words can set off together. Every word has its own collocation. Therefore, the understanding of a lexicon should be completed by understanding its collocations contextually either receptively or productively.

An idiom, on the other hand, is defined by referring to two requirements; first, being lexically complex, for instance: consisting of more than one lexical constituent and, second, being a single minimal semantic constituent. A minimal semantic constituent is indivisible into semantic constituents. Expressions such as to pull someone's leg, to have a bee in one's bonnet, to kick the bucket, to cook someone's goose, to be off one's rocker, to round the bend and up the creek are examples of idioms. Therefore, the difference between collocation and idiom can be formulated as follows: an idiom is an expression that expresses a meaning that is different from its literal meaning as the meaning of a new word. For example, kicked the bucket or bought the farm which means dead. In contrast, collocations refer to the preferred juxtaposition of words, especially the use of certain prepositions with certain words.

Consequently, the distinction between collocation and idiom can be formulated as follows: idiom is an expression that expresses one meaning which is different from its literal meaning as an individual word. For illustration, kicked the bucket or bought the farm to mean 'died'. On the contrary, Collocations refer to preferred juxtapositions of words, especially the use of certain prepositions with certain words, or the use of particular modifiers with specific words. While you might describe an argument as strong, you should collocate it to the words coffee, tea, or an alcoholic beverage. The word

powerful, on the other hand, should not occur with drink, but more to engine or people; or we use you would talk to someone, or talk with someone but not talk around someone, or by someone.

Research Method

This study makes use of a qualitative design that seeks to provide a holistic description of the linguistic behavior and writing skills of the research subjects based on the existing written context. Accordingly, this design underlines more on describing a series of cohesive devices, especially Lexical Collocations in Descriptive Writing for the English Students, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Jambi University as the research participants.

The researchers utilize purposive sampling technique. There are two stages carried out in selecting the research participants. The first stage is making criteria which is done by having a logical explanation. Based on this stage, three criteria are set: (1) students must have experience in learning English at the institution talked about early for no less than three semesters because they are considered fluent in writing English; (2) students must show willingness to be investigated (ethical issues); (3) students must show cooperation in observation (ethical issues). Based on the criteria set out above, the researchers took one class of 4th semester students out of 3 parallel classes: R001, R002, R003. The research participants obtained from class R001 for the reason that it fits the criteria that have been made. Class R001 consisted of 30 students who were used as research participants.

The researchers exploit the students' writing tasks to collect the data related to the lexical collocations when the research participants expressed their ideas in the form of English descriptive writings. The topics of the projects had been adapted to the English curriculum and the conditions at the time of the projects. The data obtained are valid and

reliable, because the topics offered to students do not deviate from the syllabus, FKIP Jambi University. The related clues to writing descriptive text such as: social function, text organization or the generic structure, and the language features are also given. Furthermore, during a group presentations in the Semantics/Pragmatics course which were taking place last semester/event, they discussed Cohesive Devices and one part of Cohesive Devices is lexical collocations that might have been explained to them beforehand. Descriptive writing tasks concern introductory, body, and concluding paragraphs. The total number of the words within the essay should not exceed 500 words. The time given to the students to write their writing tasks have been considered before time. The researchers have checked the students' papers and give some comments on them.

The research data are analyzed by means of an interactive model. This model is also plainly hence during the research, the data obtained can be simultaneously analyzed. This interactive model consisted of three research lines, namely: data reduction, data display, and conclusion/verification data which are integrated before, medium and after the data collected and this domain is introduced by Miles and Huberman (2014: 11-12).

In the interactive model, not all of the collected data from the students' writings tasks were analyzed because there ought to be data reduction. Data reduction in this study was carried out in several ways, such as through simplifying writing or focusing on writing related to lexical collocations. After drawing the conclusions and conducting verification, data reduction and data display necessitate to be reviewed whether the results of data analysis are in accordance with the expected data. If the results of data analysis do not match, then the data analysis process is carried out again using the three paths that exist in this model. If the results of data analysis are good, conclusions are drawn about the use of lexical collocations on the topics mentioned earlier.

Results and Discussion

In line with the background and problems that have been disclosed previously, the results of this applied research are:

- 1). As one of the semantic devices, lexical collocations which consist of 8 types (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, substitution, preposition, conjunction, exclamation), only 5 types are implemented by the research participants in their descriptive writing, namely nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, and adverbs.
- 2). From the results of data analysis, the following describes the use of lexical collocations in descriptive writings of English education students, which are described as follows.

a) Topic of writing: Parking lot at UNJA

... in order to prevent the students from bringing in personal vehicles. ... in order to prevent the students from riding on their motor cycles (verb). The writer of the sentence miswrites of the word 'bring' and preposition.

b) Topic of writing: Bus Transportation

Transsiginjai bus is drastically changed with other buses because this bus allows a special station to depart and stop,

The sentence requires collocations so as to complete its meaning. ... to depart from and stop at (verb),

3). Topic of writing: Cafeteria at FKIP

Furthermore, ... has a wide variety of diverse foods that can be seen in the

Furthermore, ... has a wide variety of foods that can be seen in the (adjective).

This sentence is superfluous hence the word 'diverse' is pointless overgeneralization).

4). Topic of writing: Gazebo at English Programme

... on each pole to make students comfortable to linger in this gazebo

Datum 4 is revised as this ... on each pole to make the students feel comfortable to stay at/about (verb). The student uses wrongly of the term/word.

5). Topic of writing: Gazebo at English Programme

This gazebo's design model is hexagon-shaped, Case 5 is superfluous and overgeneralization. Briefly, the sentence should be like this: The design of the gazebo is hexagon (noun),

6). Topic of writing: Gazebo at English Programme

The seats on this gazebo are made by surrounding the table in the middle.

Instance 6 is mistreated of (nouns) and (prepositions). The seats of this gazebo are made for surrounding the table. Thus, it is incorrect collocations.

7). Topic of writing: Cafeteria at FKIP

The reasons why cafeteria at FKIP is popular are the place is clean well-equipped, and have friendly server. This sentence has no collocation hence the word 'server' is used for someone who helps a priest at Mass. It is better to have a collocation 'salad-servers' (it is often jointed together). Actually, the writer of this descriptive writing may say 'has friendly waiters' instead of using the word 'server.' The reason that makes the cafeteria at FKIP is popular because it is clean, has friendly waiters, and has well equipment (noun).

8) Topic of writing: Gazebo at English Programme

Until now, In the sense gazebo at English programme is still ... a place to do group assignments. This phrase 'until now' means not any more (preposition). In fact, the writer should say 'up to now' (still going on or continue).

9). Topic of writing: Gazebo at English Programme

Some students also have laptops ..., the laptops will die if operated without being recharged. The word die does not collocate with laptop (verb). Die is merely used for living thing.

10). Topic of writing: Lake at Jambi University

Jambi University has complete facilities ... many more.

Many (adjective) is used with plural nouns in purely affirmative sentences or many may be used in interrogative sentences. Meanwhile, more is used for comparative case. So, many does not collocate with more.

11). Topic of writing: Parking lot at UNJA

Everyone who brought vehicle has to queue in turn if they want to entered exited Jambi University. In sentence (11), it is in the wrong collocation seeing that the collocation of 'queue' is 'up'. Accordingly, evidence (11) should be as this "Everyone who drive a car/motor cycle has to queue up (verb) when he/she wants to enter the gate of Jambi University".

12). Topic of writing: FKIP Cafeteria

This caferatia provides free Wi-Fi access which is very helpful for students.

The writer of instance (12) writes excessive words 'free and access' at the same time. These excessive words the so called 'overgeneralization' hence the writer of the instance is deficient in knowledge of collocation. As a matter of fact, the sentence is like this ... free (adjective)Wi-Fi which is very helpful for students to use.

13). Topic of writing: Lake at Jambi University

Make an essay usually an assignment who students take language major. In the case of (13), the student inappropriately constructs a collocation. The proper sentence is as this: "Language students usually write essays (verb) as their assignments".

14). Topic of writing: Lake at Jambi University

After studied in class students collage of Jambi University are enjoying their time around of lake like sleep in the shelter, relax a mind above a tree. Datum (14) is considered as the inappropriateness of writing collocation. Accordingly, the sentence should be: "After studying in the class, the students of Jambi University often spending their time by sitting around the lake, sleeping on the shelter, and relaxing their mind under (preposition) the trees."

15). Topic of writing: Lake at Jambi University

There are some places/buildings in around the lake, such as There are more than five gazebos in around lake. This fault is incorporated as overgeneralization. The review of instance (15) as this: ... around (adverb) There are more than five gazebos around the lake.

16). Topic of writing: Cafeteria at FKIP

Cafeteria at FKIP is one of facilities that provide from Jambi University. Datum (16) is categorized as miscollocate. The improve sentence should be: "The cafeteria at FKIP is one of the facilities which is provided by (verb) University of Jambi".

17). Topic of writing: Cafeteria at FKIP

My opinion for these rules is better and makes more discipline because many people in cafeteria at FKIP. All over again, instance (17) has occurred because the writer of the sentence is deficient in collocation. The sentence is modified like this: "In my opinion (preposition), for these rules are better at making people in the cafeteria of FKIP more discipline."

18). Topic of writing: Lake at Jambi University

Tasik Tun Lake is the best choice for students to relaxing after class, making assignments, or just playing around and taking some pictures. This error is labeled as deficient in colloquial verb that can be improved in the vein of: “.... doing assignments (verb),”

19). Topic of writing: Bushes at UNJA

To compare with other Universities that have a clean and tidy environment, Jambi university is surely out of the league. Instance (19) is classified into overgeneralization hence this (adverb), i.e. surely does not need a collocation. In short, “To compare with other universities that have clean and tidy environments, Jambi University is surely does not like those ones”.

20). Topic of writing: The Effect of Covid-19

In the other hand, along learnring process teachers and students get some roblems in online learning such The sentence is miscollocated, simply the (preposition) in is adjusted into on.

21). Topic of writing: The Effect of Covid-19

Most of all teaching and learning process at English Program doing by online. The last evidence (21) is redundant and overgeneralization because the writer has written most and all at the same time, in fact the writer just write most (adverb).

Conclusion

From the results of exposure and data analysis, it is known that some students of the English Education Study Program, FKIP Jambi University are already able to use cohesive devices (lexical collocations) in descriptive writing when they do the tasks given by the lecturer (researcher). In addition, there are also among the research participants who are not fit when implementing the 8 types of lexical collocations when the data collection is carried out. Of the 8 types of lexical collocations, only 5 were implemented

by the research participants, including: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, and preposition.

Looking at these findings, it can be concluded that the research subjects have realized lexical collocations well, although not in totality. Of the 8 types of lexical collocations that exist, 3 (three) collocations that are not used by the research subjects are: substitution, conjunction, and exclamation. Because they are still 4th semester students at strata-1 so this is still natural. In other words, the research subjects are in a position as novice writers who do not have much experience in implementing micro and macro linguistic elements with productive skills (speaking and writing) such as substitution, conjunction, the most classic thing is because bI is not the mother tongue of the research subject, so the intensity of its use is very limited. Another thing that can be concluded why they don't use exclamation? Because the context of data collection in this study is formal and usually exclamations occur in informal contexts

In improving the process of learning English that is harmonious and more meaningful, it is recommended that education practitioners and students realize the elements of micro and macro linguistics with productive skills (speaking and writing) when interacting both formally and informally. For further researchers, they can conduct research with the theme of cohesive devices and their descriptions with other BI skills with different contexts and research subjects (not only students), different strata and with other theories.

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