

**THE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN USING LEXICAL COLLOCATION IN SENTENCES AT STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF NORTH SUMATRA**

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**Abstract**

*Collocation is combinations of words that are collocates with each other so that the words produce the right meaning. There are two types of collocation, namely lexical collocation and grammatical collocation. There have been several previous studies which found that students have low ability to use collocation. The purpose of this research is to find out the students' ability in using lexical collocation in sentences at State Islamic University of North Sumatra in the English education department. The research focuses on the students' ability to use lexical collocation in simple sentences. This study used quantitative descriptive method to find out the students' ability. The sample of this study was 40 students in class TBI-1 semester 8. To collect the data the researcher gave a test to the students. The test results show that the minimum score was 33, the maximum score was 86, the mean score was 55.78, the median score was 53, the mode was 53, and the standard deviation is 13.42. Based on the test results, it was found that the 8th semester students majoring in English at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra were unable to use lexical collocation in sentences.*

**Keywords:** *Collocation, Lexical collocation, Students' ability.*

## **Introduction**

Ability in the learning process is an intellectual ability. Kurniawan and Cahyaningtyas (2021: 297) "Intellectual ability is the ability to think, develop or control something and solve problems". According to the explanation above it can be concluded that the students will use the right target language if the students have the ability in their target language because the students can control their grammatical language that they use. In addition, Richard (2002: 4) "states that vocabulary is a basic part of language use". Students' vocabulary ability is a basic ability that must be possessed by students to support students in mastering the four skills used in the use of English. Students' ability in the vocabulary will help students fluently in using the target language and students' vocabulary skills will make it easier for students to get information that will increase the students' knowledge about the target language. Words are always combined with other words to become a sentence unit that has meaning and can transfer what you want to convey appropriately.

The use of word combinations is called collocation. Collocation is a combination of words that appear together. In line with Paltridge (2012: 121) "collocation is a combination of two vocabularies that have the possibility to appear "simultaneously". Collocation is a rule that regulates the combination of words that can collocate so as to produce meaning from the combination of words. In addition, Handayani (2019: 23) "Collocation is a collection of words that have been structured." The collection of words collocates with each other so that they become a unity.

Collocation is very important for students with English as their target language because collocation will help the students to use English naturally. Furthermore, a study conducted in Vietnam by Bui (2021: 99) stated "collocation is an important part of English because the use of collocation is a factor in increasing students' ability in speaking and writing". The use of collocation in students' speaking and writing will make the students' writing and speaking sound natural. According to Boers & Webb (2018: 4) stated "the use of collocation will show the level of students' ability in English writing or speaking". The use of collocation in writing or speaking will make students' writing or speaking look like native speakers because they use the right combination of words and it will make their speaking and writing sound naturally.

According to Tayibnapis et al (2021: 28) "student fluency in language use can be seen from their ability to use collocation". Collocation can help to improve students' abilities in their target language because the combination of words in collocation will help students in writing, and speaking and the students will use the right combination of words so that the real meaning of students' speaking and writing can be understood by other English speakers. In addition, a study conducted by Ardy et al (2018: 9) found that "students in the English department have low abilities in the use of lexical collocation". Based on the research conducted by Ardy et al, found that students majoring in English were unable to use lexical collocation and this research supported by Moehkardi (2002: 61) stated "that students often have difficulty in using collocation

and often the collocation is unacceptable" when the students using unacceptable collocation it means the students are unable in using lexical collocation.

Based on the background above the researcher conducted the study about the students' ability in using lexical collocation. Although there have been many studies discussing collocations, there are still few that discuss the students' abilities in using lexical collocations in sentences. The use of collocation is important for students majoring in English to make their English sound naturally. In this study the researchers examined the ability of students to use lexical collocation in simple sentences. This study aims to make students know their abilities and can improve their abilities after the results of the research are found.

## **Literature Review**

### **A. Ability**

Hasan (1995: 63) "Stated that ability is competence in doing one thing. Ability indicates one's ability to something at the present time, while Talent must go through a process of education and training so that a performance can be carried out in the future". Ability is a skill to do something well. The things that must be fulfilled for ability is to have knowledge and access to that knowledge and the sequence of doing certain things that lead to certain performances. Ability is a person's ability to do something so that he can do it well.

There are two types of abilities, namely intellectual abilities and physical abilities. Rapika and Sari (2017: 7) "Intellectual ability is a person's ability to carry out daily activities using clear thinking through the application of knowledge possessed by an individual". While physical ability "Physical ability is a person's ability to do something using motor nerves, namely using physical abilities" (Darminto, 2018: 1). It means a person's ability in the field of science and thinking ability is an intellectual ability and a person's ability in physical activities that use motor nerves is a physical ability. Therefore, the ability of students in the application of learning that has been done is an intellectual ability.

In addition, Hadiono (2021: 6) "Ability means having the power to do something and ability is something that a person has from birth and through a process of learning and experience". This means that ability is a situation in which a person can perform physical or mental activities which he or she was born or which were obtained through the learning process and through experience.

In line Soehardi (2003: 24) stated "Everyone has the ability to do a mental or physical job such as studying". The ability to learn is intellectual ability that obtained from the experience of students in the learning process. As explained above, there are abilities that are obtained from birth and there are abilities that are obtained through experience. The ability of students in learning shows how well students undergo the learning process and how capable students are in applying the knowledge that has been obtained through the learning process that has been carried out.

Ability in learning English means that students can use English correctly. Students' ability in collocation is obtained through the learning process. When talking about abilities, it means that students are able to use their abilities in their target language. The Students' ability in English can be seen from the correct use of English.

## **B. Definition of Collocation**

At first collocation appeared introduced by Firth in Carter & McCarty (1988: 32) Firth "stated that collocation is a combination of words that still appear simultaneously". Collocation is a combination of words that occur together naturally and collocate with each other. The combination of words in collocation produces a meaning, because the combination of words is related to each other. The combination of words in collocation is a combination of words that can be quickly understood by a competent English learner. word combinations in collocation are word combinations that appear to native users of the target language. For EFL learners, the use of collocation is very helpful in improving language skills, because the use of language will sound naturally like native of English.

Collocation is part of the discussion of vocabulary, because collocation is a combination of words that collocate. as according to Harmer (2001: 20) "vocabulary does not only appear as a single word but vocabulary can also appear simultaneously or is often called collocation". There are vocabularies that appear together have different context meanings. Vocabulary has the same meaning and there is no difference in meaning from one vocabulary, but vocabulary can have different context meanings. The use of collocation will be immediately understood by competent language learners instantly.

## **C. Classification of Collocation**

### **1. Lexical Collocation**

- 1) Verb (Transitive) + noun/pronoun (prepositional phrase)

In the type of lexical collocation V + N/P the verb shows the word creation or activation such as:

creation:

Compose a music

Activation:

Set a record

Collocation in this type is a collocation that cannot be predicted about the combination of words because the collocation of this part is arbitrary or can change. The uncertainty of the form in the lexical collocation of verb + noun/pronoun causes EFL learners to have difficulty in applying this type of collocation. non-native must

use a guide in order to be able to write or speak with the correct collocation of the verb indicating creation or activation.

Verbs + noun

in type V + N the verb denotes eradication and cancellation.

Example:

Revoke a license

Reject a license

2) Adjective + noun

In some cases, several adjectives can be used with the same noun, for example:

Strong coffee/ weak coffee

Strong tea/ weak tea

3) noun + verb

In this section the verb describes the type of action performed by a person or thing, for example:

bees buzz

bomb explodes

Blood circulates (clots, congeals, flows, runs)

4) Noun + Noun

In this section nouns will explain nouns where the larger unit of the noun will be the unit of meaning. Example: a herd of buffalo a bouquet of flowers

5) Adverb + Adjective

The adverb in this section means very, but not all sentences can be collocation with very.

Example:

deeply absorbed

hopelessly addicted

closely acquainted

## 6) Verb + Adverb

In this section the verb is collocated with an adverb.

Example:

Argue heatedly

affect deeply

### 1. Grammatical Collocation

1. Noun + Preposition
  - a. Example:
  - b. Pity for
  - c. comments about
2. Noun + to Infinitive
  - a. Example:
  - b. Trouble to digest
3. Noun + that clause
  - a. Example:
  - b. Made a *promise that* she would do
4. Prepositions + noun
  - a. Example:
  - b. By accident
  - c. in advance
5. Adjective + preposition
  - a. Example:
  - b. If we directly judge people from what we see it is similar to slander.
6. Adjective + that clause
  - a. Example:
  - b. It's *essential to t*
  - c. ype the letter
7. Verb + to infinitive

- a. Example:
  - b. She starts to work
8. collocation consisting of 19 English verb patterns

#### **D. The Importance of Collocation**

According to Fox (1998: 3) "student knowledge of collocation is as important as student's knowledge of grammar, because collocation is a way for students to be able to produce language like native". Collocation is very important for EFL learners, because the combination of words in collocation helps EFL learners to produce writing or pronunciation like native speakers. the use of collocation will increase the level of students' ability in English, because by learning about collocation, students can reach a proficient level in English.

Furthermore Hunston & Francis (2000: 270-271) states that "student knowledge of collocation can help students understand a text, because by knowing collocation students do not need to see the text word for word". EFL learner's knowledge of collocation can help to understand text through the meaning of words that collocate and appear together. In learning English, EFL learners often interpret word by word in a text and it making difficult for EFL learners to understand a text. Collocation can help the students easier to understand text without interpreting the text word by word.

#### **E. Using Online Collocation Dictionary**

Online collocation dictionary is a way to increase knowledge about collocation at the intermediate to advanced level because the dictionary is one source that can provide information about the language being studied. A self-study is very important and online collocation dictionary can be a source of information about collocation for students who study independently. In line Cao and Deignan (2019: 234) "Equip intermediate and advanced students' ability on collocation independently is more useful than learning collocation through the teaching process". Through independent learning students will further improve their abilities in collocation because students will dig as deep as possible information according to their needs in their second language.

Collocation dictionary show the written data about word and word that collocate each other and it help EFL learner to know about types word that can collocate each other and types of word that can't collocate each other. There are several online collocation dictionaries to make the students easier to find out information about word they used and find out is that word can collocate each other or can't collocate each other.

## F. Sentence

Sentence is a combination of words that have meaning. Rafida (2017: 37) There are three basic types of sentences, namely: simple sentences, compound sentences and complex sentences.

### 1. Simple Sentences

Simple sentence is a sentence that consists of one subject and a verb and produces a complete thought. In line with Oshima & Hogue (1998: 155) states that simple sentences are formed with one object and one verb, consisting of a compound subject and one verb, or consisting of a compound subject and a compound verb.

Examples:

- 1) *I eat* meatball every Sunday

The sentence above is a simple sentence consisting of a subject and a verb.

- 2) *Rina and Tono* are eating meatball

The sentence above is a simple sentence consisting of a compound subject

### 2. Compound Sentences

Compound sentences are sentences that consist of two or more simple sentences that have more than one independent clause. Oshima & Hogue (1998: 155) "a compound sentence is a sentence that has two or more independent clauses". Independent clauses in compound sentences are combined using coordinating conjunctions such as: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.

Examples:

- 1) I like meatballs; I don't like satay

The sentences above are compound sentences which are combined using Punctuation

- 2) I like meat ball, but I don't like satay

The sentences above are compound sentences which are combined using a conjunction

### 3. Complex Sentence

Rafida (2017:38) "complex sentences are sentences that consist of a combination of dependent clauses and one or more independent clauses". Dependent clauses are the same as simple sentences or independent clauses, but dependent clauses do not have a complete thought. Dependent clauses begin with a subordinate conjunction, such as: after, even though,

because, because, while, even if, even though, if, even though, unless, until, whatever, when, whether, while.

For example:



- 1) I never eat satay because I don't like it

The sentence above is a complex sentence that begins with an independent clause.

- 2) Because I don't like satay, I never eat it.

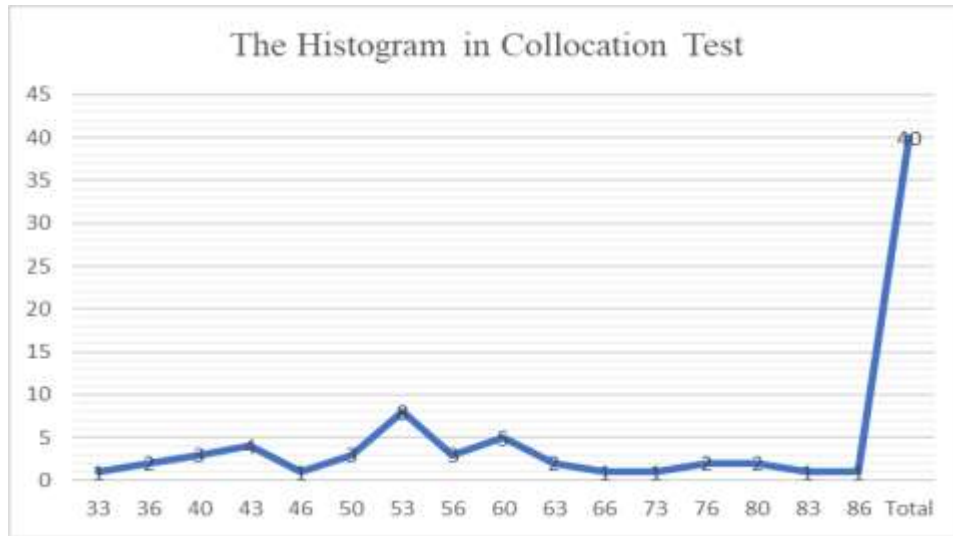
The sentence above is a complex sentence that begins with a dependent clause. If a complex sentence begins with a dependent clause, a comma is placed before the independent clause, but if it is preceded by an independent clause, a comma is not placed.

## **Methods**

This study using descriptive quantitative method. This study focus on examining the studets' ability in using lexical collocation in simple sentences.the sample of this research were the students on 8 semester english education department at the state islamic university of north Sumatra. To collect the data the researcher gave a test to the students that consist of 40 students. The test consist of 30 number which were multiple choices regarding lexical collocation. to analyze the data the researcher used pcentage formula, mean, median, mode, and standart deviation. In this study if the average score of the students' reach 75, the students are able in using lexical collocation in sentences but if the score is below 75 the students are called unable in using lexical collocation in sentences.

## Results and Discussion

**Figure 1** Histogram Distribution Frequency Score



Based on the results of research conducted at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra, it was found that the highest score of the students was 86 and the lowest score of students was 33. Then the most students got a score of 53 where there were 8 students who got a value of 53.

**Table. 1.** The Students' Ability in Using Lexical Collocation in Sentences

No	Score	Frequency	Percentage	Status
1	33	1	2,50%	Unable
2	36	2	5,00%	Unable
3	40	3	7,50%	Unable
4	43	4	10,00%	Unable
5	46	1	2,50%	Unable
6	50	3	7,50%	Unable
7	53	8	20,00%	Unable
8	56	3	7,50%	Unable
9	60	5	12,50%	Unable
10	63	2	5,00%	Unable
11	66	1	2,50%	Unable

12	73	1	2,50%	Unable
13	76	2	5,00%	Able
14	80	2	5,00%	Able
15	83	1	2,50%	Able
16	86	1	2,50%	Able
17	Total	40	100,00%	
Mean			55.78	
Median			53	
Mode			53	
Standard Deviation			13,42	

Based on the table above, it was found that the mean score of the students' test results was 55.78, the median score was 53, the mode was 53 and the standard deviation was 13.42. From the test results, the mean score is 55.78 and the figure is below 75, which means 8th semester students in the English education department at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra Unbale in using lexical collocation in sentences.

The results of this study are in line with Irfan (2021) in his research it was found that the students in the English department at the Muhammadiyah University of Mataram had a low ability to use collocation. The results of research conducted by Muhammad Irfan are in line with this study, where in this study it was found that students majoring in English education in semester 8 were unable to use lexical collocation and in Muhammad Irfan's research it was found that students had low abilities in using lexical collocation.

Pratiwi (2020) in her research found that the students have a low ability to use lexical collocation. In Pertiwis' study, it was found that only 30% of students had good ability in using lexical collocation while 70% of students had low ability in using lexical collocation and the cause of the low ability of students is the lack of knowledge of students about lexical collocation. The findings of this study are also the same as the results of research conducted by Pertiwi, namely in this study students were unable

to use lexical collocation in sentences, and students who were able to use lexical collocation were 15% and those who were unable were 85% where the results of students who were unable were higher than the results of research conducted by Peritiwi.

Furthermore, Ahmed (2008) in his research in Iraq found that students made many errors in the use of collocation and only 29.70% were able to use lexical collocation correctly. The cause of the error is the same as the results of Peritiwi's research, namely the lack of students' knowledge about collocation. In this study also found other things that cause errors in the use of collocation, namely differences in the rules for using their source language, namely Iraqi and the target language, namely English. The results of the study found the same results as this study where it was found that students were unable to use lexical collocation. However, the scores that students get were different. In Ahmed's research, it was found that 29.70% of students were able to use lexical collocation correctly while in this study it was found that 15% of students were able to use lexical collocation correctly. Ahmed's research used a different method from this research, in Ahmed's research used a qualitative method, namely error analysis, and focuses on analyzing errors made by students when using lexical collocation. While this research used descriptive quantitative and focuses on finding students' ability to use lexical collocation in sentences. Although this study has a different method, the results found were the same where students were unable to use collocation.

Based on the results of the study it was found that students were unable in using lexical collocation in sentences. This result is also supported by several previous studies which found that students were unable or made an error when using collocation. Based on previous research it was found that most of the causes of students being unable to use lexical collocation were caused by the lack of knowledge of students about collocation and differences in the rules of language use. It is not only EFL learners who have low abilities and make errors in the use of collocation but it was found that ESL learners also have difficulty in using collocation. The use of

collocation correctly can be done with a collocation dictionary where students can look up the word to be used and what words can collocate with that word.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the tests that have been given to students in this study, it was found that the 8th semester students majoring in English were unable to use lexical collocation in sentences because it was found that the average score of students from the test results was 55.78 while students who were able to use lexical collocation in sentences the average value must reach 75.

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