



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***USE OF VERB-NOUN COLLOCATIONS IN SPOKEN AND WRITTEN  
DISCOURSE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN IRAN***

**FATEMEH EBRAHIMI BAZZAZ**

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**USE OF VERB-NOUN COLLOCATIONS IN  
SPOKEN AND WRITTEN DISCOURSE OF  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN IRAN**

**FATEMEH EBRAHIMI BAZZAZ**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

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By

**FATEMEH EBRAHIMI BAZZAZ**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in  
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**March 2013**

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## DEDICATION

*To my late father,  
my loving mother as my first teacher,  
my supportive husband, Mohammad Taghi, and  
my caring daughters: Shiva & Sheida*



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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By

**FATEMEH EBRAHIMI BAZZAZ**

**March 2013**

**Chairman: Arshad Abd. Samad, PhD**

**Faculty: Educational Studies**

The present study tries to explore the knowledge and the use of verb-noun collocations in spoken and written discourse of English as foreign language (EFL) learners in Iran. In addition, the current study aims at examining and describing possible correlation and the differences in knowledge and use of verb-noun collocations among four groups of Iranian EFL learners representing four academic years (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior). The study also qualitatively examines the factors that influence Iranian EFL students' use of verb-noun collocations.

The participants in this study comprised of four groups of 212 male and female English students according to their academic years in the Department of English Translation, at the Islamic Azad University, Tehran North Branch

(IAUTNB) in Tehran, Iran. Data was collected by two tests: a Cloze Test, and a collocation test, and a series of six pictures for writing and speaking. The Test of Collocation was a C-Test in which there were 50 items. Each item measured a collocation from which the verb was deleted except the first letter/phoneme. This test was employed to measure students' knowledge of collocations. The Cloze Test, which has 25 blanks, was utilised to measure students' general language proficiency. To measure the use of verb-noun collocations in written discourse, there was a 60-minute task of writing story based on a series of six pictures whereby for each picture, three verb-noun collocations were measured, and nouns were provided to limit the choice of collocations. To assess the use of verb-noun collocations in spoken discourse, a 30-minute task of speaking was conducted in the laboratory in which for each picture three verb-noun collocations were measured, but nouns were not provided to observe whether participants could use them correctly.

To test the research hypotheses, Pearson moment correlation and ANOVA were employed. Results of Pearson's correlation [ $r = .532$ ,  $n = 212$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ] for the first research question showed that there was a high correlation between the students' verb-noun collocational knowledge and their overall language proficiency. Moreover, the results of the statistical analysis of ANOVA for the second research question showed that there was a significant difference in the knowledge of lexical verb-noun collocations, both between and within the four academic years,  $F(3, 208) = 20.637$  at the  $p < 0.0001$  level which is much less than  $\alpha \leq 0.05$ . The results of the statistical analysis of ANOVA for the third research question showed that there was a significant difference in the use of lexical verb-noun collocations in written discourse both between and within the

four academic years,  $F(3,208) = 21.603$  at the  $p < 0.0001$  level which is much less than  $\alpha \leq 0.05$  for written discourse. The results of the statistical analysis of ANOVA for the fourth research question showed that there was a significant difference in the use of lexical verb-noun collocations in spoken discourse  $F(3,208) = 17.498$  at the  $p < 0.0001$  level which is much less than  $\alpha \leq .05$ . Similarly, results of Pearson's product correlation [ $r = .932$ ,  $n = 212$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ] for the fifth research question showed that there was a strong correlation between the students' use of collocations both in spoken and written discourse. This finding indicates that Iranian students may have the collocational knowledge to use collocations correctly in both spoken and written discourse.

The qualitative inquiry for the sixth research question revealed that accurate usage of verb-noun collocations could be related to cultural factors, semantic factors, and positive and negative transfer. The findings also suggest that cultural bound verb-noun collocations can be emphasised in order to assist Iranian students to overcome errors in use due to differences in Iranian and Western cultures.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PENGGUNAAN KOLOKASI KATA KERJA - KATA NAMA DALAM LISAN  
DAN PENULISAN PELAJAR PENGAJARAN BAHASA INGGERIS SEBAGAI  
BAHASA ASING (EFL) DI IRAN**

Oleh

**FATEMEH EBRAHIMI BAZZAZ**

**Mac 2013**

**Pengerusi: Arshad Abd. Samad, PhD**

**Fakulti: Pengajian Pendidikan**

Penyelidikan ini menjelajah pengetahuan dan penggunaan kolokasi kata kerja - kata nama dalam lisan dan penulisan pelajar pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL) di Iran. Selain itu, kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk meneliti dan mendeskripsikan korelasi dan perbezaan dalam pengetahuan dan penggunaan kolokasi kata kerja – kata nama di antara empat kumpulan pelajar EFL Iran yang mewakili empat tahun akademik (pelajar tahun pertama, tahun kedua, tahun ketiga, dan tahun akhir). Penyelidikan ini turut mengkaji secara kaulitatif fakta yang mempengaruhi penggunaan kolekasi katakeja kata narna di kalangan pelajar EFL Iran.

Para peserta dalam kajian ini adalah termasuk empat kumpulan pelajar yang terdiri daripada 212 pelajar lelaki dan pelajar perempuan yang mengambil Bahasa Inggeris mengikut 4 tahun akademik yang berbeza di Jabatan

Terjemahan Bahasa Inggeris, di Islamic Azad University, Tehran Cawangan Utara (IAUTNB) di Teheran, Iran. Data dikumpul melalui dua ujian: ujian mengisi tempat kosong di dalam petikan, dan ujian kolokasi, dan satu siri gambar yang mengandungi enam keping gambar untuk penulisan and lisan. Ujian kolokasi adalah C-Test yang mengandungi 50 item. Setiap item digunakan untuk mengukur kolokasi di mana kata kerja akan dipadamkan kecuali huruf pertama. Ujian ini digunakan untuk mengukur pengetahuan pelajar tentang kolokasi. Uji mengisi tempat kosong di dalam petikan yang menggunakan 25 tempat kosong untuk mengukur kemahiran umum bahasa pelajar. Tugas menulis cerita berdasarkan siri gambar enam keping selama 60 minit digunakan untuk mengukur penggunaan kolokasi kata kerja – kata nama dalam penulisan. Setiap gambar digunakan untuk mengukur tiga kolokasi kata kerja – kata nama, dan kata nama telah disediakan untuk menghadkan pilihan kolokasi. Tugas untuk ujian lisan di makmal selama 30 minit digunakan untuk menilai penggunaan kolokasi kata kerja - kata nama dalam wacana lisan. Setiap gambar digunakan untuk mengukur tiga kolokasi kata kerja - kata nama, tetapi kata nama tidak disediakan untuk melihat kemampuan para peserta menggunakan kolokasi dengan betul.

Untuk menguji hipotesis kajian, korelasi Pearson dan ANOVA digunakan. Keputusan [ $r = 0,532$  n p = 212,  $<01$ ] korelasi Pearson bagi soalan kajian yang pertama menunjukkan bahawa ada korelasi yang tinggi antara pengetahuan kolokasi pelajar dan kemahiran umum bahasa pelajar. Selain itu, hasil analisis statistik ANOVA untuk soalan kajian yang kedua menunjukkan bahawa ada perbezaan yang signifikan dalam pengetahuan leksikal kolokasi kata kerja – kata nama, kedua-duanya di antara dan di dalam lingkungan empat tahun

akademik yang berbeza,  $F(3, 208) = 20637$  di  $p < 0,0001$  tahap yang jauh lebih kecil daripada  $\alpha \leq 05$ . Keputusan analisis statistik ANOVA untuk soalan kajian yang ketiga menunjukkan bahawa ada perbezaan yang signifikan dalam penggunaan leksikal kolokasi kata kerja – kata nama dalam wacana lisan dan penulisan di antara dan di dalam lingkungan empat tahun akademik,  $F(3,208) = 21,603$  di  $p < 0,0001$  tahap yang jauh lebih kecil daripada  $\alpha < 0.05$  untuk wacana bertulis dan untuk  $F$  wacana lisan  $(3,208) = 17,498$  pada  $p < 0,0001$  tahap yang jauh lebih kecil daripada  $\alpha < 0.05$ . Pada masa yang sama, hasil korelasi produkt Pearson [ $r = 0,932$  n  $p = 212, <01$ ] untuk soalan kajian yang keempat menunjukkan bahawa ada hubungan yang signifikan di antara penggunaan kolokasi pelajar di dalam wacana lisan dan bertulis. Oleh yang demikian, dapat disimpulkan bahawa pelajar Iran bukan hanya memiliki pengetahuan kolokasi malah, dapat menggunakan kolokasi dengan betul dalam wacana lisan dan penulisan.

Siasatan kualitatif bagi persoalan kajian keenam mendedahkan bahawa penggunaan koleksi kata keajara – kata nama berkaitan dengan faktor budaya, faktor-faktor semantik, dan pemindahan positif dan negatif. Dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa koleksi kata nama-kata kerja boleh ditekankan untuk membantu mereka mengatas kesilapan dalam penggunaan yang disebabkan perbezaan budaya antara budaya Iran dan barat.

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I owe gratitude to Islamic Azad University, Tehran North Branch for providing facilities for collecting data and for granting me leave for three years to pursue my studies. I am also grateful to the Dean of the faculty, Dr. Golitabaror to give permission to carry on the study in the faculty. My appreciation is also goes to my colleagues in Islamic Azad University, Tehran North Branch especially Dr. Ahmady, Mrs. FotovatAhmady, Mrs. Khair, Mrs. Akbari, Miss Haghani, Mrs. Tavana, Miss Aqa Mir Memehdi, Dr. Nikupoor, Mr. Jaberi, Mr. Sifarian, and Mr. VusughYazdani. I would like to thank the students of Islamic Azad University, Tehran North Branch for their cooperation in taking part in this study.

I am endlessly thankful to my husband who is also my best friend. He continuously encouraged me and supported me morally and financially through these years of my study and research. My PhD degree and this thesis would not have been achieved without him.

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## APPROVAL

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 5 March 2013 to conduct the final examination of Fatemeh Ebrahimi Bazzaz on her thesis entitled "Use of Verb-Noun Collocations in Spoken and Written Discourse of Foreign Language Learners in Iran" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Members of the Thesis Examination Committee were as follows:

Prof. Madya Dr. Habsah bt Ismail  
Faculty of Educational of Study  
Univeriti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairman)

Y.Bhg. Prof. Dr. Jayakaran a/l A.P. Mukundan  
Faculty of Faculty of Educational of Study  
Univeriti Putra Malaysia  
(Internal Examiner)

Dr. Ghazali b Hj Mustapha  
Faculty of Faculty of Educational of Study  
Univeriti Putra Malaysia  
(Internal Examiner)

Y. Bhg. Professor Dr. Hilary Nesi  
Coventry University  
(External Examiner)

---

**NORITAH OMAR, PhD**

Assoc. Professor and Deputy Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: March 2013

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted in partial as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

**Arshad Abd Samad, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Faculty of Educational of Study  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairman)

**Ismi Arif Ismail, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Faculty of Educational of Study  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

**Nooren Noordin, PhD**

Senior Lecturer  
Faculty of Educational of Study  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

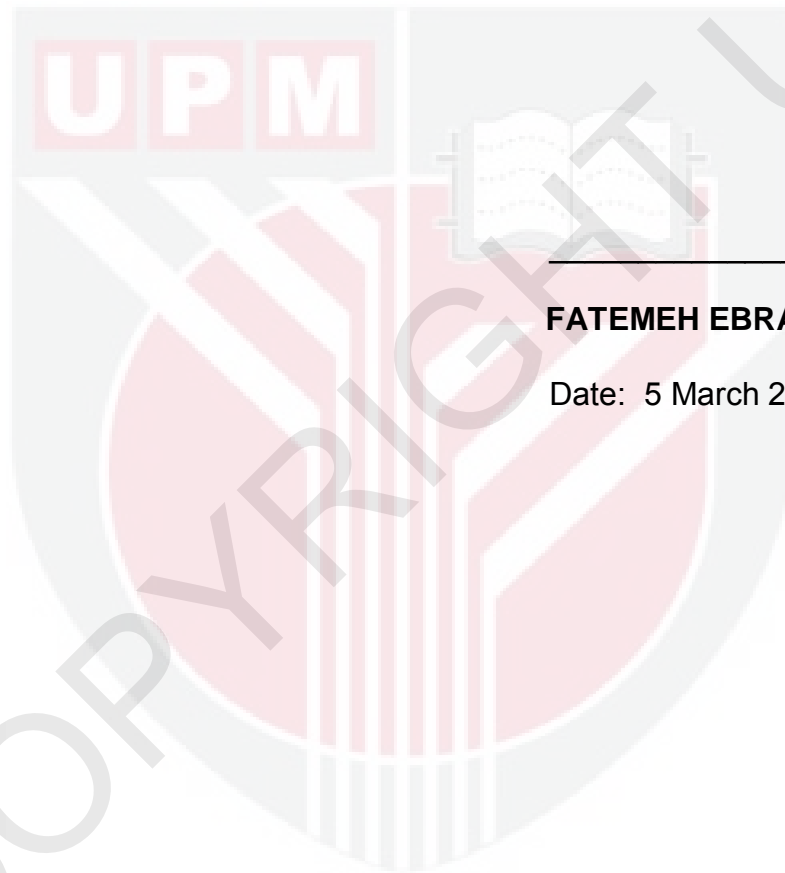
**BUJANG BIN KIM HUAT, PhD**

Professor and Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.



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**FATEMEH EBRAHIMI BAZZAZ**

Date: 5 March 2013



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