AN ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL COLLOCATION ERRORS IN STUDENTS' WRITING

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Abstract: Mastering lexical collocation uses in learning English as a foreign language is absolutely essential to develop students' communicative skills and linguistic abilities. Most students, however, have problems with putting words together in a characteristic of "natural" English native speaker-like manner during writing. Students tend to use strange lexical collocation expressions therefore students' language production does not sound natural and carries imprecise meaning. With regard to this underlying issue, the main emphasis of the current study was lying on the investigation of the types and the causes of lexical collocation error committed by EFL students in their argumentative writing. Through a qualitative research approach applying a descriptive-analytic method, sixteen university students were chosen purposively. The data were collected from two principal sources i.e., students' writing samples and semi-structured interviews. In terms of data analysis technique, this study employed an error analysis technique developed by Ellis (1994) to analyze the obtained lexical collocation errors and applied a content analysis technique provided by Kumar (2011) to analyze the interview results. The study revealed 54 erroneousness of lexical collocation production consisting of verb + noun/pronoun (PP), adjective + noun, adverb + adjective, noun + noun, and verb + adverb combination. These errors were caused by a lack of collocation competence, native language influence, the use of synonym, overgeneralization, and approximation.

Keywords: *error analysis; content analysis; lexical collocation error*

INTRODUCTION

In writing academic essays, students need to have a good vocabulary capacity to aid them in writing the essay. It is such an essential thing because, without sufficient English vocabulary knowledge, students will not be able to understand people's expressions both in written and spoken production. Moreover, they will have difficulty writing their ideas into good sentences by using proper words. As a foreign learner of English, students are urged to understand the relationship of each word used in their writing because knowing a word means knowing the type of relations both its collocation and its relative. This is to learn how words are bound with each other in terms of both paradigmatic and syntagmatic nature (Viera, 2017) Therefore, having in-depth collocation knowledge will contribute to producing a good style of academic writing and other types of writing. The use of correct lexical collocation will make the sentence meaning of the essay sound more natural, understandable, and academic. Thus, mastering English collocation enables EFL students to use correct expressions or to say

something in different ways, and to assist students in realizing the language chunks used by English native speakers both in speaking and writing. On the other hand, the improper use of lexical collocation in academic writing will result in an unnatural writing, can cause misunderstanding for readers, and can reduce the academic value of the students' writing.

In light of the above discussion, this recent study focuses on investigating the erroneousness of lexical collocation in students' argumentative essays. An argumentative essay is considered as the research object of this study because it is one of the subjects in Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, specifically in the Department of English Education curriculum. This can be inferred that students of the English Department have studied how to write an argumentative essay properly. It is often incorporated in academic essays as the essay requires the students to use academic words, advanced grammar as well as to present powerful arguments, evidence, and logical reasons. At this point, the English Department students must have been required to use academic words, proper punctuations, and appropriate grammatical and lexical collocations in writing the essay. However, based on personal communication with two writing lecturers in Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, Faculty of Letters and Culture, Department of English Education; they inform that English Department students frequently use baby words, formulate ungrammatical sentences, and make incorrect punctuation as well in their writing (Abid & N. R. Usu, personal communication, September 26th - October 2nd, 2019). This is worsened by the issue of the erroneous use of grammatical and lexical collocation in students' writing. Therefore, students' style of writing is still influenced by their native language (NL) i.e., Indonesian Language, the less profound knowledge related to the mastery of lexical collocation, and other parts of grammar. This is revealed from several examples of errors in the use of lexical collocations that have been found in students' academic writings, such as the use of the phrase "make an effort" which is often written as "do an effort", "have an experience" which is more often written as "Make an

experience, or "heavy rain" which is written as "Thick rain or hard rain". Meanwhile, errors in the use of lexical collocations can be overcome by reading lots of English references, practicing using the correct lexical collocations, and using the correct lexical collocations continuously in oral and written communication.

The study of lexical collocation has been conducted by many researchers in the past few decades. The first previous study was by Martelli (2004) about a study of English lexical collocations written by Italian advanced students. Martelli's study aimed to examine the errors of the learners in producing word combinations. Those lexical collocation errors were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed by using the theory of Bahns and Eldaw (1993). There were 30 essays analyzed which were taken from the Italian university students' essays. It consisted of 20,000 words for each essay. The study revealed 102 collocation errors in the essay. From those results, there were no adverb + verb collocations found, 6 were collocations in which the entire expression is involved, 50 were adjective + noun collocations, and 46 were verb + noun collocations. In conclusion, the study showed that the influence of students' L1, structural properties, and degree of fixedness of wrong collocations contributed to making errors of lexical collocation in the analyzed essay.

Moreover, Buchari (2016) carried out a study entitled an analysis of lexical collocation error in students' writing. This quantitative study focused on two types of lexical collocation errors i.e., verb+noun and adjective+noun combination, committed by students in their writing (blog). The participants were English Department students in the fifth-semester, the academic year of 2012, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo. His study provided the correct lexical collocations which were commonly used by native English writers in academic writing. Furthermore, an observation was the instrument of data collection technique on his study in which all data were collected from

the students" articles posted on their blog and were analyzed each datum by finding out the sentences with lexical collocation errors. The errors were identified by using Hausmann"s theory (1980). As a result, his study found 14 data, and the data comprised six data of verb+noun and eight data of adjective+noun. Lack of lexical collocation knowledge was one of the possible reasons behind such errors in his study.

Compared to the two previous studies, the source of data was from the students' written essays and blogs whilst the data source of this study is from a corpus of students' writing samples, particularly argumentative essays, in which the students have written the essay based on the provided topics from the lecturers during their class is ongoing. In the present study, the argumentative essay refers to an essay comprising evidence, reason, and fact provided by the writers to show their arguments and opinion. This type of essay is considered an appropriate tool to be the source of data since it will encourage the students to write the essay critically, use academic words and advanced grammar as well. Due to those aspects, it is likely the erroneous use of lexical collocation will be found in students' essays.

In contrast to both studies, the present study focuses on seven types of lexical collocation provided by Benson, Benson, and Ilson (1997). Moreover, this study intends to discover the causal factors of committing lexical collocation errors while both previous studies did not. By pointing out the factors that cause lexical collocation errors in student academic writing, students and teachers can not only get information and references about the factors that cause the errors, but they can also find out what solutions should be taken to avoid the use of lexical collocation errors in students' academic writing. Further, the theories, aims, and methods used are also different from those three previous studies with this present study. By considering this basic consideration, the main focus of this study is laying on two aspects; investigating the types of lexical collocation errors committed by students in their argumentative essay and finding

the causal factors that lead the students to commit those lexical collocation errors.

METHOD
This study was a case study that provides comprehensive explanations in order to gain a profound insight into the types and the causal factors of lexical collocation error phenomena that took place in students' writing.

The participants of this study were the students of the English Education Department Universitas Negeri Gorontalo who had enrolled in Writing for Academic Purposes Class. This research had sixteen students who became the participants. It consisted of twelve female students and four male students. They were chosen because their ability to write an academic essay, particularly argumentative essay, was significantly above the average rather than the other students in the same class. Moreover, those students' essays consisted of fewer ungrammatical sentences and the students also had an opportunity to develop their skills in writing.

The research applied two main instruments to collect the data; documentation and interview session. Documentation was employed to collect data from students' argumentative essays. There were sixteen essay documents in this study that have been taken from students' argumentative essays. Moreover, a semi-structured interview was the second qualitative data collection technique used in the present study. It was employed as a tool to discover other possible causal factors of producing lexical collocation errors in students' essays.

In terms of data analysis technique, this study employed an error analysis technique developed by Ellis (1994) to analyze the obtained lexical collocation errors and applied a content analysis technique provided by Kumar (2011) to analyze the interview results. All the data were then analyzed and described in more detail by using the theory of Benson et al., (1997) about the seven types

of lexical collocation that cover the Combination of verb + noun/pronoun (prepositional phrase), Combination of verb + noun, Combination of adjective + noun, Combination of noun + verb, Combination of noun + noun, Combination of adverb + adjective, and Combination of verb +adverb. The use of English Collocation dictionaries was also involved in supporting the data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results
The erroneousness of the obtained collocations error in students' essays was verified in the following dictionaries; Longman Collocation Dictionary and Thesaurus (LCDT), English Collocation Dictionary (ECD), British National Corpus (BNC), Oxford Collocation Dictionary (OCD), and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). These dictionaries were used to consult and to confirm the obtained collocation form either the collocation was correct or error. The result reveals 54 erroneousness of lexical collocations production in students' argumentative essays. The 54 erroneousness are spread out into five types of collocation errors; Verb + Noun / Pronoun (PP), Adjective + Noun, Adverb + Adjective, Noun + Noun, Verb + Adverb. The results are provided in the following table.

Table 1. *The errors of lexical collocation production in students' argumentative essay*

No	Types	Number of Cases
LC1	Verb + Noun/ Pronoun (PP)	32
LC2	Adjective + Noun	11
LC3	Adverb + Adjective	8
LC4	Noun + Noun	2
LC5	Verb + Adverb	1
LC6	Verb + Noun	0
LC7	Noun + Verb	0
	Total	54

The table shows the various lexical collocation error types according to their number of occurrences in students' essays from the most to the least frequent errors. It can be seen that students largely deal with verb + noun/pronoun (prepositional phrase) combination problems. It has 32 errors in which this combination reaches the highest number of the erroneousness of lexical collocation production in students' essays. However, lexical collocation errors of noun + verb and verb + noun combination are not found, because students rarely use it and, when they do, use it correctly. The lexical collocation error subtype with the highest frequency is probably the most difficult or tricky for EFL students to use, while those with lower frequencies or no errors do not need to be considered the easiest for EFL students to use. Thus, only five collocation errors out of seven lexical collocation types are discovered in this study.

Furthermore, the interview session reveals several factors that commonly lead the students to commit lexical collocation errors in the essay. Lack of knowledge becomes the main cause of committing errors in the essay. The students inform that they only know a few about lexical collocations yet do not understand them well. Moreover, they are only familiar with some examples of lexical collocation such as a greenhouse, take a shower, have dinner, and make an agreement. The other reasons are the use of synonym strategy, overgeneralization of rules, approximation, having no more time to check the collocation, and mother tongue influence. These causes are believed behind such errors.

Discussion
The Lexical Collocation Errors in Students' Argumentative Essay
The research data is presented in tables that aim to display the data into lexical collocation errors and their suggested corrections. It also aims to make the readers easier to identify the types of lexical collocation errors in students' writing. The table 2 below presents the findings of the types of lexical collocation

errors in the use of Verb + Noun / Pronoun (PP).

Table 2. *Verb + Noun/Pronoun (PP)*

Data	Lexical Collocation Error	Suggested Correction
1	Get effect	Have effect
2	Reach dream	Achieve dream
3	Create project	Undertake project
4	Open business	Start business
5	Build creativity	Develop creativity
6	Increase experience	Broaden experience
7	Made reason	Explain a reason
8	Make employment	Create employment
9	Provide friendship	Make friends
10	Post thoughts	Express thought
11	Find advantages	Have advantages
12	Preserving the mother tongue	Maintain the mother tongue
13	Using English	Speak English
14	Success in our education	Succeed in our education
15	Run an event	Organize an event
16	Broaden chance	Improve/Maximize chance
17	Gives everything excellent	Affords everything excellent
18	Increase creativity	Develop creativity
19	Support the tourism sector	Promote the tourism sector
20	Take a determination	Require a determination
21	Promote business	Expand/Develop business
22	Sharing happiness	Bring happiness
23	Maintain image	Reinforce/Improve image
24	Involves the cost	Cover the cost
25	Promote the merchandise	Sell the Merchandise
26	Make the account	Set the account
27	Make comment	Post/Leave comments
28	Change the privacy	Protect/Safeguard the privacy
29	Become trend	Reflected trend
30	Provide invitation	Send an Invitation
31	Design events	Organize events
32	Increase ability	Develop the ability

The table presents 32 errors of verb + noun/pronoun (PP) combination in which this combination most frequently occurs in students' writing. Most of the verb + noun/pronoun lexical collocations presented in this section are semantically transparent. It goes involving in the transparency of both elements of the word in which this category includes words whose meaning can be predicted by deciphering the word in its constituents and analyzing their meaning separately. For example, (32) *develop ability* as the suggested correction of *increase ability*. When this collocation is parsed into *develop* and *ability*, its meaning can be derived from each element which means *mengembangkan kemampuan.* This fact is also supported by Benson et al., (1997) statement - that is, some lexical collocations are semantically transparent in which the meaning of the combination is still predictable and understandable from the lexical items used of the combination.

In terms of restriction types, most of the committed lexical collocations errors are unrestricted. It means that such lexical collocation whose constituents both the collocator/verb and the base/noun of the combination can be collocated with a few other possible collocates. For example, the noun *business* can co-occur with possible verbs namely, *start, set up, run, expand, develop,* and *establish.* Such loose

collocation is supposed to be fully understood by students.

These findings are directly proportional to Shitu's (2015) finding in her study where this verb + noun/pronoun (PP) combination also reached the highest number of errors with 100 occurrences. In contrast to Shitu's (2015) study, Martelli's (2004) and Buchari‟s (2016) findings are inversely proportional to this current study in which students largely deal with adjective + noun combination problem. It can be recognized that from the finding of previous studies and this current study, verb + noun/pronoun (PP) and adjective + noun collocations are seen as more prone to errors.

Besides the collocation errors in the use of Verb + Noun / Pronoun (PP), collocation errors were also found in the use of Adjective + Noun. Here is the table that explains it.

Table 3. *Adjective + Noun*

Data	Lexical Collocation Error	Suggested Correction
33	Annoying lesson	Boring lesson
34	Comfortable place	Ideal place
35	Aesthetic view	Wonderful view
36	Popular topic	Hot topic
37	Difficult Lesson	Harsh Lesson
38	Different Subjects	Vocational Subjects
39	Verbal Questions	Relevant Questions
40	Non-Educational Job Opportunity	Non-Civil Service Job Opportunity
41	Varied Job Opportunity	Ample Job Opportunity
42	Obvious Point	Important Point
43	Dissimilarity Point	Different Point

As provided in table 3, this combination reaches the second-highest number of lexical collocation errors production. 11 erroneousness is discovered in students' essays. Such occurrences are quite logical because it is usually adjectives that have attributive functions and modify a noun in a noun phrase. As been explained by Benson et al., (1997) that adjectives in this type take a role as the collocates/collocator, and the noun itself take a role as the base. For example, *a pitched battle, a formidable challenge, a crushing defeat, a rough estimate, an implacable foe, a sweeping generalization,* etc.

For the type of restriction, most nouns in the above example have a medium to a low degree of restriction, which means that they can collocate with a relatively large range of adjectives. The wrong choice of adjectives may be due to the fact that this type of restriction is arbitrary that is not semantically motivated. Such this notion is also claimed by Martelli (2004) in her study that Italian advanced students committed errors of adjective + noun combination due to the arbitrary convention of a language. For example, the reason why the *tight condition* is considered error while *strict condition* is considered non-error; this is not the result of the semantic features of the two adjectives but from a rather arbitrary language convention. In conclusion, students commit erroneousness of adjective + noun collocation because they cannot determine one appropriate adjective to modify the noun head, thus a certain communicative purpose is not achieved well.

Moreover, this case seems somewhat similar to the verb + noun/ pronoun combination problem, where the lexical collocation errors presented in table 4 are largely semantically transparent. This semantic transparency can be recognized when the collocation is parsed and analyzed separately. For example, (37) *harsh lesson* as the suggested correction of collocation error *difficult lesson* means one that teaches us something in an extremely unpleasant way.

Another type of collocation error that was discovered in students' writing was the use of Adverbs + Adjectives. These findings can be seen in the following table.

Table 4. *Adverb + Adjective*

Data	Lexical Collocation Error	Suggested Correction
44	Obviously Save	Perfectly Safe
45	Very interested	Passionately Interested
46	Mostly Popular	Enormously Popular
47	Very Good	Extremely Good/Great
48	Very Concerned	Deeply Concerned
49	Very Difficult	Incredibly Difficult/Arduous
50	Very important	Highly important
51	Very popular	Hugely popular

Another erroneousness of lexical collocation is the combination of adverb + adjective in which students produced 8 collocation errors in this type. As having been noted by Benson et al., (1997) that this type of collocation, the adverb takes a role as a collocator of the base adjective such as *deeply absorbed* and *strictly accurate*. All know that adverb serves to describe a verb which is frequently called adverb of manner. However, in this case, the adverbs serve as intensifiers which are usually used to add emphasis. As presented in the table that all adverb + adjective collocations committed by students have no adverbs that perform the intensifier function properly. For example, the adverbs *obviously* and *mostly* do not strengthen the meaning of the adjectives *safe,* and *popular.*

For the type of restriction, most lexical collocation errors in this type are regarded as unrestricted or loose collocation. As clearly noted by Moehkardi (2002) that unrestricted or loose collocations are freely combinable to certain words. For instance, the adjective *safe* can be collocated with adverbs *completely, perfectly, totally,* and *really*. Such adverbs are appropriate within the context. Since the adverbs act as an intensifier of the adjective in order to strengthen the meaning of its combination,

students need to check the combination in a collocation dictionary to ensure that the collocation produced has a precise meaning.

Furthermore, most of the adverb + adjective lexical collocations presented in the table are semantically transparent. Collocation meaning can be predicted by parsing the combination into its constituents and analyzing their meaning separately. For example, (32) *highly important* as the suggested correction of *very important*. This combination represents something vital. To produce an academic essay, the adverb *very* should be replaced by *highly* to greatly strengthen the meaning of the adjective *important*.

Furthermore, the improper use of Noun + Noun collocation found in students' writing is shown in the following table.

Table 5. *Noun + Noun*

Data	Lexical Collocation Error	Suggested Correction
52	Internet quota	Internet access, Data plans, Credit, Mobile data plan
53	Staging course	Staging of events

A literal translation and lack of lexical collocation competence are probably the causal factors that drive students to commit these collocation errors. Such lexical collocations demonstrate a strong relationship between each noun element. The two lexical collocations, in this case, do not fulfill their role as a base and a collocator, hence it does not carry an exact meaning within the context. As stated by Benson et al., (1997) that this combination indicates the unit that is associated with a noun. These errors are assumed as contextual error and word choice error in which ESL students commit these errors because they incorrectly choose proper collocator nouns to collocate with the base.

Furthermore, a remark on semantic

transparency and restriction type of the data found is also explained. First of all, as seen in the table that noun + noun collocations produced by students are semantically transparent. Their meaning is predictable, both writers and readers can recognize the meaning easily (Benson et al., 1997). In this case, the produced collocations do not correspond with the meaning of their Indonesian equivalents, for example, (52) *internet quota* is a translation result of *quota internet*. Additionally, (53) *staging course* is not equivalent to the intended meaning by students.

Moreover, as for the restriction, all noun + noun collocations taking place in students' essays are restricted. It means that the lexical collocation has limited occurrences with other words (Moehkardi, 2002). For instance, the noun *internet* can only go together with *connection* or *access* to express that we need credit to stay online. However, there are other ways to express *paket internet,* such as data plans, credit, data, or mobile data plan, and internet connections, such these expressions are equivalents to *paket data* or *paket internet* in Indonesian expression.

Such findings, moreover, are discovered in Shitu's (2015) study. There were 67 error occurrences in analyzed essays. The following are some illustrative examples of collocation errors in her study; educational circular instead of educational circle, academic help support instead of academic assistance, education formats in place of education systems, etc. These errors are assumed as contextual error and word choice error in which ESL students commit these errors because they incorrectly choose proper collocator nouns to collocate with the base. Moreover, this occurs because the intended meaning does not seem appropriate within the context. Thus, Shitu's findings are somewhat similar to this study; students commit the errors due to the wrong choice of noun collocator. Even though the total number of errors is significantly different, it shows that students' ability to produce lexical collocation is completely different from one another.

The last finding regarding collocation errors in students' writing is the use of Verb + Adverb collocation which is presented in the following table

Table 6. *Verb + Adverb*

Data	Lexical Collocation Error	Suggested Correction
54	Learn English Seriously	Learn English A Lot

The last issue of lexical collocation error in students' essays deals rather with the combination of verb + adverb. This combination consists of verbs and adverbs, in which the adverb serves to describe the way people do things. For example, *speak quietly, read carefully, explain briefly, etc*. It seems that easy, however, students still commit an error of this combination in which they collocate an incorrect adverb *seriously* to describe verb *learn*. Such error also takes place in Shitu's (2015) study, in which this collocation error has 40 occurrences. For example, *study deeply* in place of *study hard*. Students commit this collocation error due to the influence of the Hausa language as their mother tongue. In addition, this lexical collocation is regarded as a contextual error (Shitu, 2015).

As clearly shown in the table, the verb + adverb combination produced by students is semantically transparent. It can be recognized when the collocation is parsed and analyzed its meaning separately. For example, *learn a lot* as the suggested correction of collocation error *learn seriously* which means one that studies hard to gain knowledge or skill he aims for. However, the meaning of the combination does not correspond with the meaning of its Indonesia equivalents. In other words, this collocation is such an Indonesian style.

In terms of restriction type, moreover, this lexical collocation error occurring in students' essays is restricted. It is because the chosen word that will be collocated to one another word is definite (Moehkardi, 2002). In this case, the base *learn* only goes together with adverb *a lot* as its collocator that is appropriate within the context and intended

meaning.

The Causes of Lexical Collocation Error in Students' Argumentative Essay

Lack of Collocation Competence

It is not wondering that inadequate mastery of collocation frequently leads students to commit erroneousness because it is not the main concern on English language teaching as a foreign language, especially in writing subjects. This phenomenon may occur because English collocation is not included in compulsory English subjects, moreover, the students are not constantly exposed to English collocation. Therefore, many English Department students have no in-depth lexical collocation knowledge and commit many collocation errors. For example, *(9) provide friendship* instead of *make friends, (40) non-educational job opportunities* in place of *non-civil service job opportunities, (42) obvious point* in place of *important point,* and *(52) internet quota* in place of *internet access, data plans, credit, mobile data plan.* These errors represent the collocation of verb + noun/pronoun (PP), adjective + noun, and noun + noun.

Native Language Influence

Besides the lack of collocation competence, NL influence is believed to have a huge impact on second language production, particularly in lexical collocation formation. Most students confirm the erroneousness of lexical collocation taking place in their essays due to the negative transfer from students' native language into English. In other words, students' mode of native language thinking influences them to commit lexical collocation errors. For example, *(1) get effect* instead of *have effect, (3) create project* in place of *undertake project, (4) open businesses* in place of *start business, (34) comfortable place* instead of *ideal place, (37) difficult lesson* in place of *harsh lesson.* Several previous studies also had drawn the conclusion that native language influence is one of the most significant factors that contributes to driving EFL students to commit errors in collocation production (Shitu, 2015; Mashharawi, 2008; Littlewood, 1984).

The Use of Synonyms

The further causal factor of lexical collocation error production is the use of synonyms. The students substitute one component of the collocation for its synonym. This phenomenon occurs because English Department students are required to use academic words and advanced grammar as well to construct their English essay seems more academic and sounds natural. Therefore, the students apply this strategy by replacing informal words with academic ones to achieve that purpose. Most students, however, fail to apply the synonym strategy because some English words cannot be collocated randomly with other words. For example, *(2) reach a dream* and *(33) annoying lesson*; these take place because the students substitute the verb *achieve* for the verb *reach* and the adjective *boring* for the adjective *annoying*, as the correct collocations are *achieve a dream* and *boring lesson.*

Overgeneralization

Overgeneralization is yet another causal factor of lexical collocation errors identified in students' argumentative essays. This occurs due to students' faulty understanding of distinctions in the target language which is being learned. In other words, the English Department students generalize one word that can be utilized to express many different things. For example, students may prefer to use a verb *make* instead of *create* and a verb *take* instead of *require*. It represents that students may assume that such verbs are not delexically verb, therefore they freely overuse those verbs to collocate with some nouns. For example, *(20) take a determination* instead of *require a determination*, *(7) make a reason* instead of *explain a reason*, and *(8) make employment* in place of *create employment*. Similarly, some previous researchers (Zughol & Abdul-Fattah, 2001; Duan & Qin, 2012; Shitu, 2015; Al-Khresheh, 2016) also had concluded that many EFL students' collocational errors take

place because the students tend to generalize the acquired foreign language knowledge, namely formulating rules based on their learning experience to apply these rules to a new language. EFL students tend to extend the use of certain grammatical rules, expressions, or linguistic items into different contextual uses in the target language in which it should not be applied.

Approximation
An approximation is another source of lexical collocation errors in the present study. It refers to the use of incorrect structures or vocabulary items (Dravishi et al., 2011). In the current study, the English Department students do not use appropriate word classes in producing lexical collocation. They put a verb to act as an adjective in their essay. For example, *(44) obviously save* instead of *perfectly safe*. This collocation is regarded as erroneousness, both the collocator *obviously* and the base *save*. Furthermore, the students also use a noun to act as a verb and collocated with a noun as well. For instance, *(14) success in our education* in place of *succeed in our education*.

CONCLUSIONS
Concerning the research findings, Students' collocation competence was still below average despite they have accomplished ample compulsory subjects such as Writing for General Communication, Writing for Professional Context, Writing for Academic Purpose, Basic English Grammar, and Advanced English Grammar subject. Students largely dealt with the problem of verb + noun/pronoun (PP) combination rather than other types of lexical collocation. Additionally, these collocation types encompassed the errors of adjective + noun, adverb + adjective, noun + noun, and verb + adverb combination. However, lexical collocation errors of noun + verb and verb + noun combination were not covered because students rarely used it and, when they did, applied it correctly.

Furthermore, in response to the second aim of this study which was to find out the causal factors of lexical collocation error; this study revealed that those errors took place because students' low-level exposure to collocation, therefore, they do not have profound knowledge of lexical collocation in terms of writing an academic essay. Moreover, students' native language influence (i.e., Indonesia language) also played a fundamental role in making collocation errors. This occurred due to students' mode of native language thinking influences them. Equally important, the use of synonym strategy, overgeneralization, and approximation were regarded as other significant factors in committing lexical collocation errors. Therefore, the findings of the current study then corroborate the earlier findings presented by Martelli (2004), Shitu (2015), and Buchari (2016) and discover such undeniable facts concerning the causes of lexical collocation errors that occurred in EFL students' writing.

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