

# LEXICAL TRANSFER FROM VIETNAMESE TO ENGLISH IN *NOUN+PREPOSITION* COLLOCATIONS

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Nguyen Dieu Linh<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The paper mainly aims at analyzing lexical transfer that occurs in Vietnamese EFL writing. This study, based on theories on language transfer and errors by Lado (1957), Corder (1967), Odlin (1993), etc., investigates 67 M.A. theses mainly on linguistics written in English by Vietnamese post-graduate students to identify lexical transfer. The statistical method, error analysis, and comparative-contrastive method are employed to implement this study. The statistical method is used firstly to identify the frequency of cases of language transfer based on the numbers and percentages of vocabulary and collocation transfers. Then, the error analysis is employed to analyze errors in transfer and find out the causes to such transfer. After that, the comparative-contrastive method is followed to figure out whether there are semantic changes in the meaning of collocations when Vietnamese learners transfer collocations from Vietnamese to English. Preliminary results show that both positive and negative transfers appear in Vietnamese EFL writing due to the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese. These results, together with subsequent studies on lexical transfer, will help learners understand more about this phenomenon which can occur in their writing products.

**Keywords:** Lexical transfer; Positive transfer; Negative transfer; *Noun+Preposition* collocations, EFL writing

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<sup>1</sup>The People's Police Academy, Email: arrien\_moon@yahoo.com.

## 1. Introduction

In the process of globalization, learning foreign languages in general and learning English in specific play important roles because they are bridges among cultures, economies and peoples in different countries. This issue has been taken into consideration for a long time by local authorities, educational specialists and learners all over the world for its complexity. According to Yadav (2014), Awopetu (2016), one phenomenon which strongly affects achievements of second language acquisition is mother tongues since learners often base them when they study foreign languages, especially at the earlier stages of the process. This effect is known as language transfer including lexical transfer. Thus, language transfer is a major process in second language acquisition.

Inheriting results of research focusing on the crucial role of the mother tongue in the second language acquisition, many linguists also pay attention to the roles of collocations in English teaching and learning such as Hussein (1990) and Al-Zahrani (1998). However, there are not many studies in Vietnamese carried out with the same interest. Therefore, this study is implemented with the hope that it can help learners to gain knowledge on the effects of Vietnamese on English, thus, they can take advantage of the similarities between the two languages and avoid errors caused by the differences between them to have better learning results. Lexical transfer can occur in all aspects of language learning and teaching. However, because of many reasons such as limited time and efforts, this study only focuses on investigating the positive lexical transfer and negatives one occurred in *Noun+Preposition* collocations in M.A. theses written by Vietnamese post- graduate learners.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Language transfer and lexical transfer

Early language transfer can be traced back to the 1940 and 1950s when linguists were strongly affected by Behaviorism which

considered language acquisition as a habit formation process or in other words, the habits of using the first language can influence the second language learning. Fries (1945), one of the foremost behaviorists, together with Lado (1957), the first researcher proposing the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, emphasized on the undeniable role of the first language in the second language acquisition. Based on Behaviorism, Lado (1957) proposed the term “language transfer” with the explanation that learners will often transfer structures and meanings from their mother tongue to target languages when studying new languages. They stressed the crucial influence of learners’ mother tongue and that similarities and differences between the source language and the target language can assert or obstruct second language learning.

After a period of downplaying the role of the mother tongue from the late 1960s to the early 1980s by some representatives such as Chomsky (1965), Dulay and Burt (1974), Krashen (1984), language transfer theory has witnessed a movement in the cognitive approach with many famous linguists such as Selinker (1983), Odlin (1989), and so on. Selinker (1983) distinguished between two major types of transfer: positive and negative transfers. Positive transfer occurs due to the similarities between the mother tongue and the target language while negative transfer occurs because of the differences in forms or rules between the two languages, and learners are likely to carry the forms or rules in their first language over those in the target language blindly, especially when they anticipate some difficulties in target language expression. Consequently, the negative transfer often results in errors as well as incorrect forms and structures, which are just the results coming from the interference of the first language.

Based on the classification of language transfer by Selinker (1983), De Angelis & Selinker (2001), Ringbom (2001) clarified lexical transfer into two main types: transfer of form and transfer of meaning. The former contains the use of L1 words, without the adaptation to

target language norms or not, when producing in the target language. These are occurrences of code-switching (Ringbom, 2001, p.60). Meaning-based lexical transfer errors are derived from the transfer of semantic patterns of the L1 into target language words, in the form of calques and semantic extensions (Ringbom, 2001, p.60).

Working within the issue of transfer in lexis, Odlin (1989) paid attention to the phenomenon of loanwords. Lexical borrowing or loanwords are just one example illustrating the phenomenon of lexical transfer. The author viewed transfer as a cross-linguistic process which resulted from not only learners' mother tongue but also any previous languages learners gain. Jarvis (2009, p. 99) defined lexical transfer in a later study as "The influence that a person's knowledge of one language has on that person's recognition, interpretation, processing, storage and production of words in another language". Meanwhile, Wong (1981) and Chen (2020) also studied how mother tongues affect target languages. They draw out a conclusion that the former has strong effects on the latter in both positive and negative aspects. When the first language is an obstacle for the target one, errors can occur. Webber (1993) stated that the most common causes of errors in non-native English speakers are lexical in nature, due to mother tongue interference. Further underlining the importance of lexicon, more recent studies suggest lexis and grammar structures are the most difficult aspects to correctly reproduce in a second language in the different stages of language acquisition (Al- Jarf, 2000; Carrió, 2004). In the literature, the process of lexical transfer has been shown to be influenced by the linguistic distance between a given the first language (L1) and the second language (L2) (Cenoz, 2001), the learner's proficiency level in both L1 and L2 (Herwig, 2001), the status of both L1 and L2 (De Angelis & Selinker, 2001) and how recently L1 is used at the time of L2 use (Hammarberg, 2001).

In Vietnam, many studies were conducted to investigate language transfer. Hoang (1965) and Duong (2009) studied the phonetics transfer from Vietnamese to English. They came to a conclusion that

Vietnamese learners often have difficulty in producing some initial or ending English sounds or [tʃ][dʒ][ʃ][ʒ] because of the lack of knowledge on pronunciation. Tran Thi Kim Tuyen (2015) and Ho Ngoc Trung (2017) carried out researches about vocabulary errors Vietnamese learners often make when they use words about body organs or vocative words. They all agreed that the similarities and differences between the mother tongue and the target language bring learners advantages as well as disadvantages while learning English. In other words, learners can base on the similarities between two languages to use the new language correctly while the differences between them can make users find it difficult to remember and use the target one in the correct way as the native. However, most of the research on language transfer in Vietnam is mainly on grammar, phonetics. Not many studies are implemented on the effect of the first language on the use of a series of words.

## **2.2. Errors**

Corder (1967), Richard (1971) and Ellis (1994) agreed that errors are forms only used by learners, not by native speakers. Learners study target languages but they don't master the rules in the new languages. As a result, they can create new forms which are different from the original forms native speakers use. Thus, learners make errors when using these forms. For example, two correct collocations are "make a cake" and "do homework". If learners don't know them, they can create wrong collocations such as "make homework" or "do a cake". These are errors committed by learners because they cannot clarify the differences between two verbs "make" and "do". Therefore, they tend to use collocations habitually.

Mentioning about errors, Corder (1967) clarified errors into two types which are intralingual error and interlingual error. The formal ones are caused by the inner structures of the language while the latter are created by the effects of the mother tongue on the target language. Based on Corder's clarification, other linguists went deeper into errors

in different fields of languages. Lexical errors have traditionally been classified according to formal, vocabulary-related considerations or from a semantic perspective. The most well-known formal classification of lexical errors (James, 1980: 145) is: mis-selection (wrong word choice), misformation (words that are non-existent in the L2 but exist in L1) and distortion (words that are non-existent in both the L2 and the L1).

Because not many studies in Vietnam took lexical transfer from Vietnamese to English in a series of words such as collocations into consideration, this paper aims at clarifying the effect of the mother tongue on the target language in *Noun+Preposition* collocations. Therefore, the research questions of the study are:

- *What types of positive and negative lexical transfers occur in Noun+Preposition collocations?*
- *If yes, what are the reasons for these transfers?*

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research methodology**

This qualitative research is carried out by three methods: the statistical method, the error analysis method and the comparative comparison method. The first one is used to list the numbers and percentages of vocabulary and collocation transfer, thus, identify the frequency of cases of lexical transfer. The second one is to figure out the causes of transfer from the results of analyzing errors of transfer. The third method is to find out how the ways learners transfer from Vietnamese to English are affected by the similarities and differences between the two languages.

#### **3.2. Participants**

Collocation is a wide aspect of English which cannot be covered in such a study. Therefore, this study only focuses on lexical transfers

in *Noun+Preposition* collocations in 67 English M.A. theses written by Vietnamese post-graduate learners. All the theses collected were written by postgraduatepost-graduate students at Hanoi National University-University of Foreign languages and International studies, Hanoi University, Hanoi Open University and Science Military Academy from 2010 to 2021. These institutions were chosen because they are among those of prestigious training ones in Vietnam with high-qualified M.A. theses written in English which can partly reflect the level of post-graduate students. The theses were collected in this period of time with the hope that those new ones can present clearly Vietnamese learners' ability in using English at postgraduatepost-graduate levels. Moreover, in order to write M.A. theses in English, writers must achieve a relatively high level of foreign language ability (at least level 4/6 or higher according to the 6-level Foreign Language Competency Framework for Vietnam by the Ministry of Education and Training). They have gone through a long process of learning and accumulating language. Therefore, their use of English will be sustainable, which can reflect the characteristics of Vietnamese people using English.

### **3.3. Data collection and analysis**

To investigate the positive and negative lexical transfer, the study has come through three major stages. Firstly, collocations between Nouns and Preposition are collected from 67 M.A theses in the form of word files or converted into word files. Then, they were coded, filtered and accessed their contexts by the Antconc software 4 in terms of types of collocation. This software is designed by Prof. Laurence Anthony at Waseda University, Japan and is assessed as an advanced text analysis application which can provide details about texts. To be more specific, texts are, firstly, labeled as NN (noun), JJ (adjective), VV (verb), IN (preposition), etc. by Tagant - a piece of software in Antconc software. Then, they are put in Antconc and each type of collocation is filtered. For example, if users want to find all the

collocation between Noun and Preposition, they can type NN#IN in the software and this type of collocation will be listed out. Secondly, the Oxford Collocations Dictionary and Vietnamese- English Dictionary are used to check and classify all these findings. The former was designed in the basement of the Oxford English Corpus which consists of about 2.1 billion words and considered by English linguists. Therefore, it is employed as a trustworthy source to identify the correctness of collocations used by Vietnamese learners. The latter is based on Oxford Advanced Learners which is a notorious source. It gives various explanations and instructions to uses of words in different contexts. To illustrate, when a collocation *research on*, it will be checked by the Oxford Collocations Dictionary. If the collocation appears in the dictionary, it can come to a conclusion that the combination is correct, and vice versa. Then, the correct collocation is compared with the meaning in the Vietnamese-English Dictionary to see whether its meaning is similar to each other in the two languages. If the meaning is coincided, it is temporarily summed up that lexical transfer is employed. Finally, causes for lexical transfer occurring in these collocations from Vietnamese and English are mentioned.

#### 4. Results

The data collected from 67 theses are presented from the highest percentage to the lowest. This can show clearly which collocations of Noun and Preposition are frequently used and which groups are often used correctly or incorrectly. Therefore, the reasons for these usages can be anticipated.

**Table 1:** An overview of language transfers in Noun+ Preposition collocations

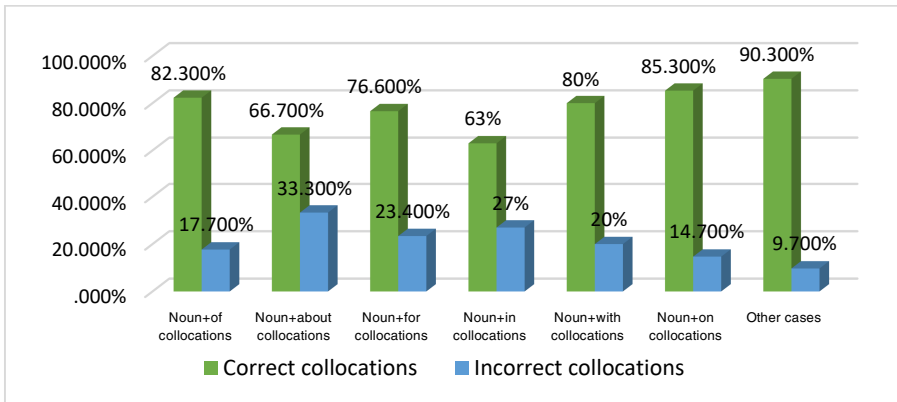
Noun+ preposition collocations	Noun+of collocations	Noun+ about collocations	Noun+for collocations	Noun+in collocations	Noun+ with collocations	Noun+on collocations	Other cases
344	79	63	47	46	44	34	31
100%	22,9%	18,3%	13,7%	13,4%	12,8%	9,9%	9%



The table shows that, among 344 *Noun+Preposition* collocations, *Noun+Of* collocations ranks at the top (22,9%), next are *Noun+About* collocations (18,3%), *Noun+For* collocations (13,7%), *Noun+In* collocations (13,4%), *Noun+With* collocations (12,8%), *Noun+On* collocations (9,9%) and other cases (9%).

When analyzing collocation, it is necessary to go further inside subgroups of collocation. Data collected from comparing the correct and incorrect collocations in each subtype of *Noun+Preposition* collocation will be presented in the chart below.

**Figure 1: An overview of correct and incorrect collocations**



The data presents that, in *Noun+Of* collocations, the correct collocations account for 82.3% and the incorrect ones are 17.7%. The correct and incorrect collocations in *Noun+About* collocations are 66.7% and 33.3% respectively. Those in *Noun+For* collocations constitute 76.6% for correct collocations and 23.4% for incorrect ones. *Noun+In* collocations are divided into 63% and 27% for correct and incorrect collocations respectively. The collocations of Noun and With contain 80% correct ones and 20% incorrect collocations. In *Noun+On* collocations, there are 85.3% correct collocations and 14.7% ones. In other cases, 90.3% correct collocations are found and 9.7% incorrect ones are investigated. Generally speaking, in all subtypes of *Noun+Preposition* collocations, the correct collocations outnumber the incorrect.

#### 4.1. Equivalent transfer in Noun+Preposition collocations

##### 4.1.1. In Noun+Of collocations

According to the Vietnamese – English Dictionary (2003), *of* has 14 meanings. Among those, the 14<sup>th</sup> meaning *in relation with* accounts for 42,6% which is the highest percentage. This meaning can be found in some expressions such as *situation of, act of...* At the second ranking is the 1<sup>st</sup> meaning *belonging to sbd/sth* (38,8%) which appears in *function of, form of...* The 7<sup>th</sup> meaning *consist of* (12,9%) is the third frequently-used one. It is employed in expressions such as *number of, variety of...* It can be seen that the meaning of the examples mentioned above are easily guessed based on the meanings of each constituent of the combination. Take this sentence below as an example:

**In English:** After that, I focused on the differences in culture, manners and customs, which cause differences in the *use of idioms and proverbs* based on cats and dogs in Vietnamese and English. (Nguyen, 2013: 60)

**In Vietnamese:** Sau đó, tôi tập trung vào sự khác biệt về văn hóa, phong cách và phong tục – những điều đã gây ra sự khác biệt trong *cách sử dụng củathành ngữ và tục ngữ* dựa trên hình ảnh mèo và chó trong tiếng Việt và tiếng Anh.

In this sentence, the author employed *use of* to express *cách sử dụng của thành ngữ và tục ngữ*. These are distinguished features of the objects. Therefore, the writer can base on the similar meaning between English and Vietnamese and transfer from his mother tongue to the target language.

##### 4.1.2. In Noun+About collocations

According to the English-Vietnamese Dictionary (2003), the preposition *about* has 3 meanings. Among those, the 3<sup>rd</sup> meaning *about sbd/sth* consists of 84% and appears in many expressions such

as *attitude about, information about...* Other meanings only account for 16%. The 3<sup>rd</sup> meaning can be recognized in some contexts as:

**In English:** That is to say, if most of the teachers have the same *opinion about* a certain item of errors occurring above, it would be considered a common error. (Nguyen, 2015:62)

**In Vietnamese:** Điều đó có nghĩa là, nếu hầu hết các giáo viên đều có chung *ý kiến về* một lỗi nhất định ở trên, nó sẽ được coi là lỗi phổ biến.

In this sentence, the writer wants to express the meaning *ý kiến về* so he bases on the mother tongue to transfer into English. Thus, he creates a correct collocation as *opinion about*.

#### 4.1.3. In Noun+For collocations

The English-Vietnamese Dictionary (2013) lists 18 meanings of the preposition *for*. The meaning used with the highest percentage is the 13<sup>th</sup> meaning *in relation with...* (68,6%) which appears in many expressions such as *tendency for, data for...* Meanwhile, the second meaning *aim/ function* ranks at the second position (31,4%). This meaning is employed in many collocations, for example: *reason for, rationale for...*

Take the sentences below as an example to illustrate the lexical transfer used in these collocations.

**In English:** Secondly, it suggests some *solutions for* both the teachers and learners in teaching and learning vocabulary. (Nguyen, 2013: 7)

**In Vietnamese:** Thứ hai, luận văn đưa ra một số *giải pháp cho* giáo viên và học viên trong việc dạy và học từ vựng.

The aim of the writer in this context is to convey the meaning *giải pháp cho*, so, he uses the collocation *solutions for* because the meaning of the preposition *for* in English is similar to that in

Vietnamese. Therefore, the author can create a correct collocation by basing on his first language.

#### 4.1.4. *In Noun+In collocations*

The preposition *in* has been mentioned with 14 meanings in the English-Vietnamese Dictionary (2013). Among those, the 13<sup>th</sup> meaning *about... ranks at the first position with the highest percentage of usage (89,7%)*. This meaning is used in many phrases such as *responsibility in, equivalence in...* Other meanings account for a small percentage (10.3%). The sentence below illustrates the 13<sup>th</sup> meaning.

**In English:** There was a significant *increase in* the number of tourists visiting Vietnam with 5 million foreign tourist arrivals, 28 million domestic tourist arrivals, and the estimated revenue of tourism services was VND 96 trillion. (Nguyen, 2012:11)

**In Vietnamese:** Có *sự gia tăng* đáng kể về số lượng khách du lịch đến Việt Nam với 5 triệu du khách nước ngoài và 28 triệu khách nội địa, và thu nhập ước tính của dịch vụ du lịch là 96 nghìn tỉ.

In this sentence, the writer wants to convey the meaning *sự gia tăng... về...* This meaning contains two parts: a noun and a preposition. Therefore, the writer bases on the first language to create a collocation as *increase in* because the components of this collocation in Vietnamese are coincident with those in English and their meanings are also similar to each other.

#### 4.1.5. *In Noun+With collocations*

According to the English-Vietnam Dictionary, the preposition *with* has 16 meanings. Among them, the 9<sup>th</sup> meaning which means *about.../ in relation with...* is used most frequently (55%) in many collocations such as *trouble with, matter with*. Ranking at the second position is the 1st meaning *with the presence of ...* (42%). For

example, *interview with*, *accommodation with*... and other meanings are used less than those two (3%). Take the sentence below as an illustration:

**In English:** Firstly, we have just known that modals can also appear in *the perfect aspect with a have + -en construction*. (Nguyen, 2010: 44)

**In Vietnamese:** Trước hết, chúng ta biết rằng động từ tình thái có thể xuất hiện trong *thể hoàn thành với cấu trúc have + en*.

In this sentence, the writer wants to express the meaning *cái gì với cái gì* to mention the adhere. Therefore, he uses the first meaning of *with*.

#### 4.1.6. In Noun+On collocations

Among 14 meanings listed in English – Vietnamese Dictionary (2013), the preposition *on* is used most frequently with the 5<sup>th</sup> meaning *about*... (90%) in many expressions such as *compliment on*, *influence on*.... Other meanings just constitute 10%. These percentages show that Vietnamese prefer using the 5<sup>th</sup> meaning in most cases. For instance:

**In English:** There has not yet been any *research on* all the six stop consonants. Several authors have studied one or two certain consonants of the six only. (Dao, 2012:14)

**In Vietnamese:** Chưa có *ngiên cứu* nào về 6 phụ âm tắc. Các tác giả mới chỉ đi sâu vào tìm hiểu 1 hoặc 2 phụ âm trong số đó.

In the sentence above, to express the meaning *ngiên cứu về*, the writer combines the noun *research* with the preposition *on*. The correct collocation *research on* is created because of the similarity in meanings of the preposition in two languages. In Vietnamese, people can say *ngiên cứu trên* so the author translates the preposition into English and creates a correct collocation.

## 4.2. Inequivalent transfer in Noun+Preposition collocations

### 4.2.1. In Noun+Of collocations

Although many collocations consisting of the preposition *of* are used correctly, many are in the wrong use. The 1st meaning *belonging to...* causes the most difficulties (50%) for writers to use so it is found in wrong collocations, for instance: *similarity of*, *difference of*, etc. The 14<sup>th</sup> meaning in *connection with ...* also causes troubles (50%) for writers in other cases such as *tendency of*, *reason of*, etc. For example:

**In English:** This study is aimed at describing the features of English nominal clauses in “Gone with the wind” and their Vietnamese translation versions to find out the *differences and similarities of* nominal clauses in the two languages in order to offer suggestions for teaching English nominal clauses to Vietnamese learners. (Nguyen, 2012:11)

**In Vietnamese:** Mục đích của nghiên cứu là miêu tả đặc trưng của các mệnh đề danh tính tiếng Anh trong tác phẩm “Cuốn theo chiều gió” và các bản dịch tương đương để tìm ra *những điểm khác nhau và giống nhau của* mệnh đề danh tính trong hai ngôn ngữ để từ đó đưa ra một số gợi ý cho việc dạy mệnh đề danh tính tiếng Anh cho học viên người Việt.

In this sentence, instead of using the correct combination *differences and similarities between* according to Oxford Collocations Dictionary, the author uses *differences and similarities of* because of the habits of using *những điểm khác và giống nhau của* in Vietnamese. Therefore, he bases on his mother tongue and translates into English which leads to an incorrect combination.

### 4.2.2. In Noun+About collocations

In this type of collocation, while the 3<sup>rd</sup> meaning *about...* takes account of 75% of cases used incorrectly such as *concept about*, *awareness about*, etc., other meanings consist of 25%. For example:

**In English:** The findings about teachers' *concepts about* the effects of elicitation in teaching vocabulary came as no surprise to the researcher as those benefits have been widely acknowledged by a number of authors worldwide. (Ta, 2015:34)

**In Vietnamese:** Các kết quả về *quan điểm* của giáo viên về ảnh hưởng của việc gợi ý đối với việc dạy từ vựng hóa ra không đáng ngạc nhiên với các nhà nghiên cứu như các lợi ích đã được nhận ra bởi rất nhiều tác giả trên thế giới.

It can be seen that, the way of using *quan điểm của ... về...* is a popular use in Vietnamese. Therefore, the author bases on the first language and translates the expression into English as *concepts about* because of the similarity between *về* in Vietnamese and *about* in English which leads to an incorrect collocation. According to the Oxford Collocations Dictionary, the correct collocation is *concept of*.

To sum up, in each group, the percentage of collocations used correctly outnumber those used incorrectly. Users can find it easy to use collocations whose meanings are equivalent between English and Vietnamese correctly such as *situation of, equivalence in, interview with*, etc. Nevertheless, prepositions are the elements which can cause learners difficulties in using many collocations, for example: *similarities of, concept about*, etc. because these prepositions have different meanings.

## 5. Discussion

The results answer the two research questions. Firstly, both positive and negative transfers occur in *Noun+Preposition* collocations. The former transfer occurs in all subgroups of *Noun+Preposition* collocations while the latter appears in a small number. In other words, the number of correct collocations used is much higher than the incorrect ones which means that learners are good at using these collocations. Secondly, there are some reasons for the occurrence of positive and negative transfers. The results indicate

that writers of the theses investigated tend to use collocations which are similar between English and Vietnamese correctly while they often commit errors when using those which are less common or have no similarities between the two languages. Besides, it can be temporarily inferred that the positive transfer appears in collocations which are equivalent between English and Vietnamese. Therefore, writers can base on the habits of using collocations in Vietnamese to translate them into English and create correct collocations. Moreover, these authors prefer using popular and easy-to-remember collocations which can be used correctly. However, users often make mistakes in those which are different between the two languages. Although they also use word-for-word translation methods to make collocations, mistakes are still committed because learners don't use them correctly in their mother tongue. They use Vietnamese as a base to guess combinations in English without the proper understanding of collocations. As a result, when they translate them into English, they can use unsuitable elements of collocations or in other words, they misunderstand synonyms or convey incorrect meanings. The findings of this study coincided with those before, for example, Lado's, Odlin's, Wong's, Chen's which concluded that the mother tongue plays a crucial role in the second language acquisition and has positive effects in the process of second language acquisition when there are similarities between it and the target language while it can be an obstacle when differences between those languages appear.

## 6. Conclusion

This study discusses language transfer in *Noun+Preposition* collocations. At the level of master, learners are good at using collocations. Besides, the similarities and differences between the two languages can lead to the positive and negative transfers in writing. This result suggests that to be good at writing, it is necessary for writers to develop composing strategies such as planning, organizing, reviewing and editing in the mother tongue because learners often base on their first language to translate into the target language.



Therefore, the habits of using their mother tongue have strong effects on the way they use English. If they use Vietnamese in proper ways, they can translate many collocations from Vietnamese to English correctly and vice versa, the incorrect use of the source language will lead to mistakes in the target one. To do this, learners also need to master the use of their mother tongue. Furthermore, it can be seen that the writers are at a high level so they can use many collocations correctly. It means that the higher English levels of proficiency learners are at, the more successfully they may transfer collocations from Vietnamese to English. This, then, suggests that English teachers should help their learners to be knowledgeable about their grammar and lexis. When they are highly proficient in English, they can use transfer skills effectively and they can avoid code-switching or directly translating from Vietnamese to English, which can lead to negative transfer.

Regarding this paper, because of limited time and effort, some limitations are exposed. However, they can transcend in future studies. First of all, this research only focuses on investigating lexical transfer in *Noun+Preposition* collocations. It leaves out the gap of other lexical aspects such as *Verb+Preposition* collocations, *Noun+Verb* collocations, etc. Secondly, data were only collected from analyzing writing products which are M.A. theses. Therefore, other studies can obtain data from interviews or questionnaires which can support the conclusion. No matter what way the research is broadened, it is hoped that learners can base on the results achieved from them to improve their future writing products as well as extend their knowledge in English which can help them use English more effectively.

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