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KEYWORDS AND THEIR COLLOCATIONS IN IRANIAN STUDENTS' WRITTEN TEXTS: A CORPUS LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

This talk will share results of my study that aimed at discovering the thematic preferences of Iranian students' writing, trying to answer the research question of related to the most and the least frequent keywords and collocations of the students' texts. To achieve this aim, I applied corpus linguistic techniques (Kennedy, 1998; Lopriore, 2013; Sinclair, 2004). First, I constructed a corpus of 50 students' texts, a total of 72 scripts, running at 15,633 tokens. The topics students could choose from were about the anxiety in class, the best English texts they have ever written, the reason they study English, their fantasies and dreams, and their good/bad memories. After briefly explaining the procedures of corpus design, I will present the results of the analysis. The study involved a probe into the frequency of the use of keywords occurring in the texts about each topic. The study revealed the high frequencies of classroom in texts related to the students' anxiety, motivate when students wrote about studying English, text in the best English texts students wrote, fantasy in texts students wrote about their fantasies and dreams, and memeory in the texts in which students described their memories. In addition, I will also discuss what we can learn from the collocations of the keywords, with the aim of documenting research trends in the students' written texts under investigation and making predictions for the mistakes which occur in the Iranian EFL students' written texts, leading EFL teachers to figure out how familiar Iranian students are with English lexical items and the use of their collocated terms.

Keywords: applied linguistics, research trends, predictions