LEXICAL CHALLENGES IN ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS AMONG ARMENIAN STUDENTS

SUSANNA NANYAN

National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia
International Scientific-Educational Center
Department of Foreign Languages, Lecturer
Institute of Literature after Manuk Abeghian
PhD Applicant
susanna.nanyan@isec.am

HAYK NALBANDYAN

Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation
Department of Management and Innovation
PhD in Economic Sciences, Associate Professor
ggnalbandyan@fa.ru

Abstract

In the study we investigated the possible lexical errors that Armenian students encounter while trying to speak English. This is a mixed method research and the sample of the study includes 38 undergraduate students from the Faculty of International Relations. The data was collected from the students via debates. The debates were audio-recorded and after transcribed, the lexical errors were identified and classified according to error taxonomy. Their knowledge of vocabulary was measured through a vocabulary size test in order to find the relationship between the vocabulary size and error rate.

According to anecdotal evidence, Armenian schools put the main focus on English grammar and reading and not on vocabulary and speaking. Moreover, as Nation and Meara **[24]** state, English vocabulary is complicated, with its three general aspects related to meaning use and form as well as with its many layers of meaning connected to the roots of individual words. At the same time, it has been suggested that there are a number of factors that influence the learning of a lexical item and make the acquisition of vocabulary difficult. Potentially, these factors are classified as intra-lexical traits, i.e., internal features related to the word's form and meaning. That is, vocabulary may be difficult due to various factors, such as pronunciation, grammatical class, similarity to known words, and concreteness or image ability of meaning **[23]**. Therefore, if the student fails to learn more words, it leads to errors in oral production. As mentioned above, for students to develop greater fluency and expression in English, it is essential for them to acquire more productive vocabulary knowledge **[3].** However, in Armenia, after entering university, students take ESP courses without having the command of the basics of vocabulary. In spite of the fact that students learn specific vocabulary related to their professions, they still have difficulties using that vocabulary in argumentative speech, that is to say expressing their arguments during debates or discussions.

Keywords and phrases: speaking skills, vocabulary, lexical errors, error types, vocabulary size test.

ՀԱՅ ՈՒՍԱՆՈՂՆԵՐԻ ՇՐՋԱՆՈՒՄ ԱՆԳԼԵՐԵՆԻ ԲԱՌԱՊԱՇԱՐԻ ԽՈՍԱԿՑԱԿԱՆ ՀՄՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ԴԺՎԱՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ

ՍՈՒՍԱՆՆԱ ՆԱՆՅԱՆ
ՀՀ Գիտությունների ազգային ակադեմիայի
գիտակրթական միջազգային կենտրոնի
օտար լեզուների ամբիոնի դասախոս,
Մանուկ Աբեղյանի անվան գրականության ինստիտուտի
հայցորդ
susanna.nanyan@isec.am

ՀԱՅԿ ՆԱԼԲԱՆԴՅԱՆ
Ռուսաստանի Դաշնության կառավարության ֆինանսական համալսարանի
կառավարման և նորարարության ամբիոնի դոցենտ
տնտեսագիտության թեկնածու
ggnalbandyan@fa.ru

Համառոտագիր

Սույն հոդվածի նպատակն է՝ պարզել ուսանողների խոսքում անգլերենի բառապաշարի հնարավոր սխալները։ Իրականացվել է խառը մեթոդի հետազոտություն, որի ընտրանքը ներառում է համալսարանների բակալավրի կրթական աստիճանում սովորող 38 ուսանող։ Տվյալները հավաքագրվել են ուսանողներից բանավեճերի միջոցով։ Բանավեճերը ձայնագրվել են, իսկ գրի առնվելուց հետո բառապաշարի սխալները դուրս են գրվել և դասակարգվել են՝ ըստ սխալների բնույթի։ Բառապաշարի իմացությունը ստուգվել է բառապաշարի չափելիության թեստի միջոցով՝ բառապաշարի չափի և սխալի մակարդակի միջև կոռելացիոն կապը գտնելու համար։ Համաձայն սովորույթի՝ հայկական դպրոցներում հիմնականում ուշադրություն են դարձնում անգլերենի քերականությանն ու ընթերցանությանը, և ոչ թե բառապաշարին և խոսքին։ Ավելին, ինչպես նշում են Նեյշը և Մեարան **[24]**, անգլերենի բառապաշարը բարդ է՝ իր երեք ընդհանուր ուղղություններով՝ կապված իմաստի օգտագործման և ձևի հետ, ինչպես նաև իր բազմաթիվ իմաստային շերտերով, որոնք կապված են առանձին բառերի արմատների հետ։ Միևնույն ժամանակ ենթադրվում է, որ կան մի շարք գործոններ, որոնք ազդում են բառապաշարի ուսուցման վրա և դժվարացնում են բառապաշարի յուրացումը։ Այս գործոն-ները դասակարգվում են որպես ներբառային հատկանիշներ, այսինքն՝ բառի ձևի և իմաստի հետ կապված ներքին հատկանիշներ։ Այսինքն՝ բառապաշարը կարող է դժվար լինել տարբեր գործոնների պատճառով, ինչպիսիք են՝

արտասանության կարողությունը, քերականական դասը, հայտնի բառերի նմանությունը և իմաստի կոնկրետությունը կամ պատկերային կարողությունը [23]: Հետևաբար, եթե ուսանողը չի կարողանում ավելի շատ բառեր սովորել, ապա դա հանգեցնում է բանավոր վերարտադրության սխալների: Ինչպես նշվեց, ուսանողների` անգլերեն խոսույթի ավելի շատ սահունության զարգացումը կարևորվում է բառապաշարի ավելի արդյունավետ գիտելիքի ձեռքբերմամբ [3]: Սակայն Հայաստանում, համալսարան ընդունվելուց հետո, ուսանողներն անցնում են մասնագիտական օտար լեզվի դասընթացներ` չունենալով հիմնական բառապաշարի հիմք: Չնայած այն հանգամանքին, որ ուսանողները սովորում են կոնկրետ բառապաշար` կապված իրենց մասնագիտության հետ, նրանք դեռևս դժվարանում են օգտագործել այդ բառապաշարը փաստարկային խոսքում, այսինքն` բանավեճերի կամ քննարկումների ժամանակ արտահայտել իրենց անդումները:

Բառեր և բառակապակցություններ. խոսքի հմտություններ, բառապա-շար, բառապաշարի սխալեր, սխալերի տեսակներ, բառապաշարի չափե-լիության թեստ:

ЛЕКСИЧЕСКИЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ В РАЗГОВОРНЫХ НАВЫКАХ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА СРЕДИ АРМЯНСКИХ СТУДЕНТОВ

СУСАННА НАНЯН
Международный научно-образовательный центр Академии наук РА
преподаватель кафедры иностранных языков
Институт литературы имени Манука Абегяна
соискатель
susanna.nanyan@isec.am

ГАЙК НАЛБАНДЯН
Финансовый университет при Правительстве РФ
департамент менеджмента и инноваций
кандидат экономических наук, доцент
ggnalbandyan@fa.ru

Аннотация

В этой статье мы исследовали возможные лексические ошибки, с которыми сталкиваются армянские студенты, пытаясь говорить по-английски. Это смешанный метод исследования, и выборка исследования включает 38 студентов бакалавриата факультета международных отношений. Данные были собраны у студентов в ходе дебатов. Дебаты были записаны на аудио, и после расшифровки лексические ошибки были идентифицированы и классифицированы в соответствии с таксономией ошибок. Их знание словарного запаса было измерено с помощью соответствуэщего теста на выявление размерности словарного запаса, коррелирующегося с частотой ошибок.

По неофициальным данным в армянских школах основной упор делается на английскую грамматику и чтение, а не на словарный запас и разговорную речь. Более того, как утверждают Нейшн и Меара **[24],** английская лексика сложна, с ее тремя общими аспектами, связанными со значением и формой, а также с ее многочисленными слоями значения, связанными с корнями отдельных слов. В то же время было высказано предположение, что существует ряд факторов, влияющих на усвоение лексической единицы и затрудняющих приобретение словарного запаса. Потенциально эти факторы относят к интра-лексическим признакам, т.е. внутренним признакам, связанным с формой и значением слова. То есть словарный запас может быть затруднен из-за различных факторов, таких как способность произношения, грамматический класс, сходство с известными словами, а также конкретность и образность значения **[23].** Поэтому, если учащийся не заучивает больше слов, это приводит к ошибкам в устной речи. Как упоминалось выше, для того, чтобы учащиеся могли лучше владеть английским языком и выражать свои мысли, им необходимо приобрести более продуктивный словарный запас **[3]**. Однако в Армении после поступления в университет студенты проходят курсы ESP, в основном не владея базовым словарным запасом. Несмотря на то, что студенты изучают конкретную лексику, связанную с их профессиями, они все еще

испытывают трудности с использованием этой лексики в аргументативной речи, то есть изложением своих аргументов во время дебатов и дискуссий.

Ключевые слова и словосочетания: разговорные навыки, словарный запас, лексические ошибки, типы ошибок, тест на на выявление размерности словарного запаса.

Introduction

Over the years, English has become the language, which is widely understood and used in global communication. Yet many researchers **[29, p. 29]** found that learners of English as a foreign language mostly encounter difficulties in learning speaking skills rather than reading, listening and writing.

Generally, as students' fluency and expression in English develop, they need to acquire more productive vocabulary knowledge. However, due to the reason that our reality is constantly changing, English vocabulary becomes challenging **[26].**

According to anecdotal evidence, Armenian schools put the main focus on English grammar and reading and not on vocabulary and speaking. Moreover, as Nation and Meara **[24]** state, English vocabulary is complicated, with its three general aspects related to meaning use and form as well as with its many layers of meaning connected to the roots of individual words **[13; 14].** At the same time, it has been suggested that there are a number of factors that influence the learning of a lexical item and make the acquisition of vocabulary difficult. Potentially, these factors are classified as intra-lexical traits, i.e. internal features related to the word's form and meaning. That is, vocabulary may be difficult due to various factors, such as pronounce ability, grammatical class, similarity to known words, and concreteness or image ability of meaning **[23].** Therefore, if the student fails to learn more words, it leads to errors in oral production. As mentioned above, for students to develop greater fluency and expression in English, it is essential for them to acquire more productive vocabulary knowledge **[3]**. However, in Armenia, after entering university, students take ESP courses without having the command of the basics of vocabulary. In spite of the fact that students learn specific vocabulary related to their professions, they still have difficulties using that vocabulary in argumentative speech, that is to say, expressing their arguments during debates or discussions.

Research studies on vocabulary and speaking proficiency are limited in scope and smaller in number than those on vocabulary and reading proficiency **[15].** However, some studies have shown the greater importance of vocabulary in speaking proficiency compared to other linguistic elements such as pronunciation and grammar **[16; 17; 21]**. Nonetheless, based on the available publications, there have been conducted studies on investigating language errors only in written production in Armenia **[4; 22].** Since testing speaking requires much effort and it is time-consuming, what is more, the standardized speaking tests are expensive, and Armenian universities cannot afford them. Therefore, as vocabulary can be used as an indirect measure of language skills and it is more practicable as there is a wide range of reliable standardized vocabulary tests consequently, it is the most practicable option to indirectly assess speaking. For that case, a vocabulary size test was implemented in the research.

The purpose of the study is to identify the most commonly encountered lexical errors that hinder Armenian students to convey their thoughts in English accurately. Furthermore, the study aims to find a relationship between students' vocabulary size and the error rate, and finally recommend pedagogical implications based on the findings and collected data.

Research questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

• What are the lexical errors in the argumentative speech of Armenian university students?

• What are the most frequent error types and what are the causes?

• What is the relationship between vocabulary size and error rate ?

Literature Review

The importance of vocabulary in communication

Words are the means to express meanings and, accordingly, they are the basic elements of verbal communication. If one speaker does not know a word and produces it incorrectly, communication will suffer **[2]**. As Thornbury **[31]** states, the lack of lexical knowledge often leads to frustration and even embarrassment. Al- Roud,**[5]** emphasizes the importance of vocabulary rather than grammar stating that learners might often instinctively recognize the importance of vocabulary for their learning. As Schmitt **[26]** notes, "learners carry around dictionaries and not grammar books". In addition, if the vocabulary is relevant for communication, then a deficient lexical competence and lack of lexical knowledge will also affect interaction.

Furthermore, many learners acknowledge the importance of vocabulary acquisition stating that it is the lack of vocabulary, which prevents them from speaking or reading **[32]**. Some researchers as well **[2]** came to the conclusion that vocabulary plays a more crucial role in interaction than grammar does. In reality, we do not have to be grammatically correct in order to communicate effectively, but we need to be correct with our use of lexis.

Vocabulary tests are effective placement or diagnostic tests generally since they tap very important 'enabling' knowledge and they test a large number of items at one time, allowing reliable decision-making **[6, p. 34].**

For example, Laufer and Nation **[18]** in their study state that a vocabulary size test, which is a diagnostic test that measures the size of the learners' vocabulary, is a reasonable measure of vocabulary growth and the results of the research distinctly show the proficiency of the consecutive frequency levels of the test. In relation to this, Koizumi & In'Nami **[16]** point out that among many lexical aspects, vocabulary size has been considered the principal one due to the importance of the form-meaning link for vocabulary use. In this matter, Beglar & Nation **[23]** designed a vocabulary size test which measures foreign learners' receptive vocabulary. The test consists of 14,000 most frequent word families in English.

Language errors and their causes

"Language learning, like any kind of human learning, involves committing errors" **[33, p. 75].** Researchers suggest different variations to the definition of the word error. While giving the definition of error, they often compare error and mistake.

Errors vs. Mistakes

According to Dulay, errors are deviations from a selected rule of language performance. Lennon **[20]** defines an error as a linguistic form, which in the same context of performance is not produced by the speakers' L1 equivalents. James **[8]** as well, claims that errors are not exactly what the learner produces, they are the oddity in the learner's L2 system and therefore, they have no connection with the learners' L1, but only with the target language. In this case, Brown (2000) distinctly defines errors and mistakes stating that a "mistake" is a performance error, which occurs when the learner fails to use the structure in a proper way, whereas an "error" is a notable variation of the developed grammar of a native speaker, indicating the interlanguage competence of the learner. James **[8]** on the other hand, identifies a slip, an odd mistake or a systematic error. A slip is expected to happen due to self-correction, a mistake needs feedback, while an error requires full correction of errors.

Causes of errors

As Maicusi and Lopez state, errors happen due to interference when the learners transfer native language word forms or expressions into the L2. They also indicate that interference takes place whenever there is a difference between the mother tongue and the target language. Furthermore, Touchie **[33]** states that there are mainly two major sources of errors in second language learning. The first source is interference from the native language, which is defined as interlingual errors, while the second source can be referred to as intralingual and developmental factors: errors caused by the interaction of forms in the target language **[28].**

Carrió-Pastor and Mestre-Mestre **[7]** also add conceptual errors, which occur as a result of confusion between concept and term.

According to Wilkins **[35],** when learning a foreign language an individual already knows his mother tongue, and it is the native language which he attempts to transfer. Dodigovic, Man, and Jing **[10]** state that the learners may believe that English follows the same structure and form as their language, as a result, it can cause L1 lexical transfer errors. The transfer may prove to be justified as the structure of the two languages may be similar, in that case, it is called "positive transfer" or "facilitation"- or it can be unjustified because the structure of the two languages are different- in that case "negative transfer"- or "interference" is happening**[35].**

Touchie **[33]** classifies intralingual errors into eight types, while Shekhzadeh and Gheichi **[28]** identify only two of them: Overgeneralization and transfer of training.

Overgeneralization: when the learners use one form or construction in one context and extend its application to different other contexts where it is not applicable. For instance, overgeneralization includes the use of "corned" and "goed" as the past tense

forms of corne and go and the omission of the third person singular s under the heavy pressure of all other endless forms as in I go **[33, p. 78].**

Transfer of training: when the errors are caused by the teacher, teaching materials or the order of presentation. These errors also happen because of the hypercorrection of the teacher.

As Touchie **[33]** states, language errors involve all language components: the phonological, the morphological, the lexical, and the syntactic.

Thornbury **[30]** classifies errors into three types:

Lexical errors that include, for instance, choosing the wrong word for the meaning the students want to express.

Grammar errors include producing faulty structures, which may involve wrong verbal tenses, incorrect verbal forms, and syntax problems, among others.

Discourse errors are those "which relate to the way sentences are organized and linked in order to make whole texts" **[30, p. 114].** As this study investigates lexical errors in speech let us now analyse only lexical errors.

Lexical errors and their types

According to Schmitt **[26],** native speakers claim that lexical errors are more severe than grammatical errors, as they are more likely to lead only to formal errors without impacting meaning **[12].** Augustin Llach **[2]** compares the utterances made by L2 learners and states that even though the sentence might be grammatically correct, the lexical error is the major factor that prevents students from communicating correctly. Additionally, among second language learning errors, lexical errors happen most often, occurring as frequently as three times more than grammatical errors **[12].** Due to their negative impact on communication, lexical errors are considered the most serious types of errors among different types of judges. Lexical errors are believed to be very damaging to communication because they influence the meaning of the message **[2].**

As Shalaby, Yahya & El-Komi **[27]** suggest, appropriately selected words promote well-structured language, which helps L2 learners transfer the exact thoughts they have in their minds. On the contrary, if they make lexical errors it leads to misunderstanding and confusion.

In general, there are three main consequences of lexical errors. First, errors adversely affect comprehension, because of their presence the listener fails to comprehend the message, and errors can be the source of misunderstandings, since, because of them ambiguous messages are occurring. In the end, errors irritate the hearer, or may also cause amusement and hilarity, or even satirize the learner and consequently obstruct communication. Augustin Llach **[2]** states that identification of lexical errors is not an easy task. Therefore, many taxonomies have been created for this purpose.

Shalaby, Yahya & El-Komi **[27],** Augustin Llach **[2]** and Carrió-Pastor & Mestre-Mestre **[7]** identify two major categories: semantic errors and formal errors (produced due to confusion of two similar words).

Of the semantic errors, the primary type with the highest frequency of occurrence is the confusion of sense relations **[27, p. 80].** Next in frequency after L1 transfer are the use of a word with inappropriate meaning and wrong near synonyms. Formal errors are fewer than semantic errors.

In the research, conducted by Dodigovic, Li, Chen and Guo **[9],** six-type error taxonomy is used which includes, context, collocation, part of speech, spelling, word form and structure. The most frequent error type is the word form error type, which is defined as the wrong word: when the learner does not know the correct form of the word. The other frequent types are context, structure and collocation errors respectively. Similarly, Wells **[34]** in his study identifies "wrong word" as the most common error from semantic area. On the other hand, collocations are found as the second most frequent error type. The results of his study show that the number of lexical errors is significant when compared to the number of total errors. Lexical errors made up more than half of all other errors of language learners, which once again proves them to be the most serious ones.

Lexical errors in oral production

Vocabulary knowledge enables listeners to identify syntactic relationships, a requirement for sentence comprehension. Listeners must first be able to isolate individual words from the speech stream of speakers, using the word information to interpret and understand the message. In other words, oral comprehension relies on vocabulary knowledge **[7]**. The quality of oral production is influenced by the presence of lexical errors in the discourse **[2]**. According to Tatham and Morton **[29]**, many people state that they can understand a language, but it is hard for them to speak. Furthermore, Thornbury **[31, p. 27]** in his study shows that English learners admit speaking is the hardest skill to acquire by answering the question "which aspects of your English do you most want to improve?" They claim that appropriate knowledge of grammar makes it easy to communicate. However,sometimes it is hard for them to find words in order to express their thoughts. Nonetheless, as Biber **[6]** claims, academic speaking skills such as participating in classroom debates or giving a presentation require not only a large amount of vocabulary knowledge but also grammatical sophistication and discourse competence.

Speech errors most of the time occur because of a lack of vocabulary knowledge.

In her study, Kovac **[17]** distinguishes three subcategories:

a) idioms, collocations, functional and content words, errors of derivational morphology

b) unintentional use of L1 lexemes

c) non-existent words.

She states that most of the time lexical errors occur due to incorrect selection of L2 lexical units.

Operating in a spoken English environment requires more vocabulary (4000 - 4500 words) than previously thought (2000 words), and the amount required depends on the spoken context **[1, p. 48].** The quality of oral production is influenced by the presence of lexical errors in the discourse **[2].**

126

In Levelt's theory **[17]** content and functional words and idioms and collocations are known as "lexical entries". Errors of derivational morphology, for instance, intelligent instead of intelligence, also belong to the category of lexical errors, because derivations in Levelt's model of the lexicon represent different lexical entries **[10].** According to the theory, vocabulary holds a major position in composing a statement with the appropriate meanings, although other types of knowledge, including syntactic, morphological, and phonological, non-linguistic world knowledge and communication approaches, are also essential. The model designates further the necessity of size, depth, and processing speed of vocabulary knowledge in speaking, because speakers use both structure-meaning words and the syntactic and morphological information associated with each word in the mental lexicon, considerably fast, lexical retrieval is called for smooth and effective communication **[16].**

As Poulisse **[25]** states, the results of speech error studies show that most of the time lexical errors happen as a result of faulty L2 lexical accesses. In the sense that lexical errors imply a lack of vocabulary knowledge and inadequate use of vocabulary, they contribute negatively to language assessment **[2].** Moreover, Koizumi and In'Nami **[16]** state that L2 learners with bigger and deeper vocabulary knowledge can perform lexical searches more quickly and without difficulties.

Anecdotal evidence shows that Armenian students also make lexical errors during communication and vocabulary knowledge is the main issue. The current study seeks to investigate lexical errors in their speech, their causes and further categorization.

Methodology
The Study

The research required a mixed methodology, with components of both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The study addresses the following research questions:
- What are the lexical errors in the argumentative speech of Armenian university students?
- What are the most frequent error types and what are the causes?
- What is the relationship between vocabulary size and error rate?

Participants
There were 38 participants in the study, 19–22-year-old Armenian undergraduate students from the faculty of International Relations. They are in their second, third and fourth year of studies. The native language of the students is Armenian. The large majority of them additionally speak Russian, even though English is considered their first foreign language. Apart from English, they study other foreign languages including Persian, Arabic, Turkish, French, German, Spanish, Chinese and Japanese.

Instruments

The instrument of the study is the vocabulary size test (VST). For the study, we used the test designed by Paul Nation which can be found at https://www.lextutor.ca /tests/levels/recognition/1_14k/.

Speech data was collected via debates. Each group held one debate, the participants already gave their consent verbally during data collection. During the debates, the participants' speech was recorded and later transcribed. Errors were examined in light of the error taxonomy proposed by Dodigovic, Li, Chen, Guo **[9].**

Error Taxonomy
Lexical Errors

Context errors, Word form errors, Collocation errors, Structure errors, PS errors

Data Collection

We have already received oral consent from the participants. They were informed that they were going to take a vocabulary size test in the framework of research. The participants took part in debates as well. During the discussion, they were audio-recorded. They were aware that participating in the debate was voluntary and they would not be recorded unwillingly.

The vocabulary size test was conducted with 38 students. Nevertheless, only 30 students were able to participate in the debates due to the fact that the rest of the participants had a relatively small vocabulary size. Hence, they either could speak Armenian or did not speak at all.

Data Analysis

As mentioned above, this study is mixed methods research that involves quantitative and qualitative elements. The qualitative data was collected through audio recordings. It was further subjected to coding the types of lexical errors and then categorizing them according to the taxonomy provided by Dodigovic, Li, Chen, Guo **[7].**

To find the most frequent error types, we performed descriptive statistical analysis to measure the percentages of the errors. Each type of lexical error was coded in the software accordingly; more particularly, five main categories of errors were shown by their percentages, in order to reveal the most common lexical error types of Armenian students' argumentative speech in English.

Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between vocabulary size and the error rate.

Results

According to the taxonomy proposed by Dodigovic, Li, Chen, Guo **[7]** 80 lexical errors were identified in the speech of 30 students out of 38. As can be seen in figure 2, five categories of lexical errors were distinguished: context, collocation, word form, structure and part of speech. Among the five error types, the context errors were seen as

the most frequent ones with 43.8% (35 errors). Students generally had issues with choosing the appropriate word to complete the sentence or expression in their speech. Whereas context errors hold the major part in the pie chart, word form error follows with 22.5% (18 errors). The structure and collocation errors follow the word form error. The latter is equal in number (12,5%). Eventually, PS (8.5%) errors are seen as the least frequently occurring as compared with the other four types of lexical errors. The students made the above-mentioned errors due to the following reason: the instruction is mainly based on teaching the language through content, that is, students enrich their vocabulary via new texts and articles, consequently no particular attention is paid to distinguishing between parts of speech, collocations, word forms and structures.
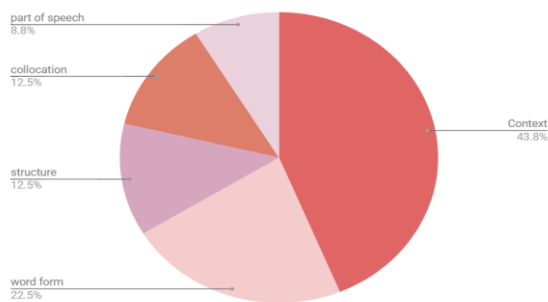

Figure 2.The pie chart of errors.

Table 1

Error Taxonomy with examples

Criteria	Explanation	Example	Correction
Context	wrong word (e. g. "pupil" instead of people)	Don't answer to the point.	answer >>> speak
Collocation	words used together(e.g. From little ages)	When you see it by book.	by book>>>> in book
Word Form	The form of the word (e. g. "continue" vs. "continues") number has increase	The number has increase.	increase>>> increased
Structure	Sentence structure required by a particular word(they are used for reading)	People can continue smoke.	People can continue smoke>>>People can continue to smoke.
PS	part of speech	They can easier break the tablets.	easier >>> easily

Note: In this table, the researcher illustrated all the five categories of lexical errors, their examples and correct forms.

In the process of data analysis and error explanation, the researcher identified two types of sources of errors, while recognizing and classifying the lexical errors: interlingual, the process of the interference from the mother tongue into the target language and intralingual errors, which are caused due to the result of the target language difficulty and partial learning of the rules in the target language.

Surely, all the students learning English as a foreign language mostly rely on their mother tongue, thus Armenian students are no exception, as well. In their speech, many students would think about how to say a certain word or sentence in Armenian, and then they would translate the words into English. Consequently, in that event, the students transfer some words or expressions from their native language, and most of the time they transfer them negatively.

Table 2

Examples of interlingual and intralingual errors.

Interlingual Errors	Intralingual Errors
It depends *from* the situation. >>> It depends *on* the situation. Կախված է իրավիճակ*ից*. Kakhvats e iravichakits.	They portray many *example* >>> They portray many examples.
People can continue *smoke*. >>> People can continue *to smoke*. Մարդիկ կարող են շարունակել *ծխել*: Mardik karogh en sharunakel tskhel.	The quality are enough.>>> The quality is enough.

The above table describes the examples of both interlingual and intralingual errors. The first example of the first column shows that the student made a collocation error by saying "depends from" instead of "depends on", because in Armenian, the correct version is "depends from". Hence, this is a typical example of an interlingual error. Another example of interference of the mother tongue is the structure error in the sentence "People can continue to smoke". In Armenian, the infinitive of the word "to smoke" is "ծխել" which is used without a preposition before the word. Here, while speaking the student negatively transferred the sentence from her mother tongue into the target language without the preposition. At the same time, the second column illustrates the lack of knowledge of the target language, as the plural form of the noun in English forms by adding "s". Here we see that the student missed the letter "s" while speaking. The second example of intralingual error refers to the singular form of English. This time the student confused the two forms (singular and plural) of the target language.

Figure 2 shows that there were more interlingual errors rather than intralingual errors in the argumentative speech of Armenian students.
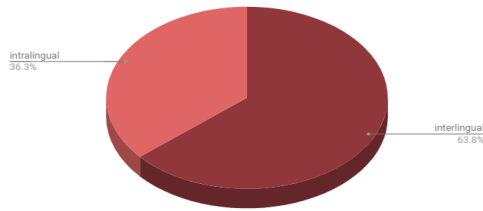
Figure 3. **The causes of Errors**

The results of the study showed that there is a strong negative correlation between vocabulary size and context errors, word form errors and structure errors. This means that as students' vocabulary size (7000, 7500) increases, the error rate decreases. Moreover, there is a statistically significant negative correlation between context and vocabulary size at the level of 0.01. Consequently, the findings of the research show that the students who have a bigger vocabulary size (7000, 7500) tend to make fewer context errors in their speech compared to the students with a smaller vocabulary size (5100,5300).
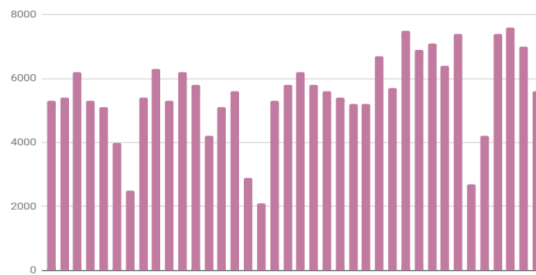

Figure 5. Vocabulary size of students of International Relations

The figure shows that the students' vocabulary size ranges from 2000 to almost 8000. The average score is between 4000 and 6000.

Discussion

Through the identification, classification and analysis of lexical errors in students' argumentative speech, it is found, that Armenian students' lexical errors mainly include context errors, word form errors, structure errors, collocation errors and part of speech errors. The results of the study suggest that Armenian students face more difficulties with choosing the correct word (43.8 % of the total number of lexical errors). These errors are mainly interlingual errors, however intralingual errors can also be found in the context error category. In the research done by Wells **[34]** wrong word errors are in the first place among all the lexical errors. He suggests that these errors might not only occur because of interference of first language but also, they can occur due to intralingual factors when the students have the certain word in their receptive vocabulary but they do not know whether it is correct to use in the particular context or not**[11]**Word form errors follow context errors. Unlike in the study done by Dodigovic, Li, Chen, Guo**[9]**where the context errors

131

were in third place after word form and PS errors respectively, our findings show that students made a relatively small number of word form errors compared to context errors. The variation between these results and theirs could be attributed to the fact that our errors occurred during oral production, whereas they analysed written errors considered AWL words, hence, as Levelt [21] states L1 speakers conduct the processes of producing the language in parallel and automatically, without using substantial cognitive resources, that is, they do not have to time to think of a proper word in order to use it in their speech.

The findings of the research request us to contemplate the causes of these lexical errors. As mentioned above the majority of errors made by students were caused due to the interference of L1.

Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that there are five main categories of lexical errors in oral production: context errors, word form, structure, collocation and part of speech.

The result of the data analysis showed that there were both interlingual and intralingual errors in the students' speech. The collected data as well showed that among five categories of lexical errors, there were more interlingual errors rather than intralingual errors, which means that the interference of native language plays a significant role in students' lexical errors. However, even though the intralingual errors were in relatively small numbers they still caused lexical errors which supports the fact that there are some areas that students have not yet acquired in their target language as well.

Among all the five categories context errors were in the first place. The sequence of errors is as follows:

Context, Word Form, Structure, Collocation, Part of Speech.

The research showed that there is a negative correlation between vocabulary size and some of the errors (context, word form and structure). There was also a statistically significant negative correlation between students' vocabulary size and context errors, which once again proves the fact that the lack of lexical knowledge affects the learner's speech and that the richer students' vocabulary size is the less they are likely to make lexical errors in their speech.

Limitations and Future Research

The main limitation is the framework of the study, which only includes the students from faculty of International Relations and only Armenian students took part in the research. Consequently, the results cannot refer to the whole population. The study examines only the oral production of English as well.

There are some areas that future research may be considered. To illustrate, the researcher would recommend studying not only argumentative speech but generally students' oral production with several topics in order to gather more lexical errors that can occur during speaking. Further study can also include the participants from other programs rather than only from International Relations.

References

1. Adolphs, S. and Schmitt, N. "Lexical coverage of spoken discourse". Applied Linguistics 2003.24, 4: 425–438.

2. Agustín-Llach, P Vocabulary teaching: Insights from Lexical Errors. TESOL. 2017. International Journal 63, 12(1).

3. Alqahtani, M. The importance of vocabulary in language learning and how to be taught. International Journal of Teaching and Education, Vol. III(3), 2015 pp. 21-34., 10.20472/TE.2015.3.3.002

4. Aleksanyan, R. *Analysis of the Errors in Armenian Speakers' English Writings: The Role of the Negative L1 Transfer*. (Unpublished master's thesis) 2015, American University of Armenia. doi:http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/1219

5. Al- Roud, A.. Problems of English Speaking Skill that University Students Encounter from Their Perspectives. *British Journal of Education, Society & Behavioural Science,18*(3) 2016

6. Biber, D., Connor, U., & Upton, T. A. *Discourse on the move: using corpus analysis to describe discourse structure*. Amsterdam: Benjamins Publishing Company. 2007.

7. Carrió-Pastor, M. L., & Mestre-Mestre, E. M.. Lexical errors in second language scientific writing: Some conceptual implications. *International Journal of English Studies,14*(1). doi:10.6018/ijes/14/1/154361 Encuentro: revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas, 2000, n.11, p. [168]-173. 2014 ISSN 1130-7021

8. Dodigovic, M.. *Artificial intelligence in second language learning: Raising error awareness*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters 2005.

9. Dodigovic, M., Li, H., Chen, Y., & Guo, D. The Use of Academic English Vocabulary in the Writings of Chinese Students. *English Teaching in China,5*, 13-20 2014.

10. Dodigovic, M., Ma, C., & Jing, S.. Lexical transfer in the writing of Chinese learners of English. *TESOL International Journal,12*(1), 2017 issn 2094-3938.

11. Dodigovic, M., Jeaco, S., & Wei, R.. Trends in Vocabulary Research. *TESOL International Journal,12*(1), issn. 2094-3938. 2017

12. Gass, S. & Selinker, L. Second language acquisition: An introductory course (3rd ed.). NY: Routledge.

13. Hakobyan N., Gevorgyan S., Petrosyan L., Khachatryan A. The Problem of Personal Development in the Context of Social Anomie Wisdom. 22 (2), pp. 7-14.2008 wisdomperiodical.com

14. Hakobyan N., Khachatryan A., Vardanyan N. Marginality and Ethno-Cultural Environment. Paradigmata poznani, Sociosfera-CZ . 2018. Pp. 44-51. sociosphera.com

15. Khamkhien, A. Teaching English Speaking and English Speaking Tests in the Thai Context: A Reflection from Thai Perspective. *English Language Teaching*. 2010

16. Koizumi, R., &In'Nami, Y.. Vocabulary Knowledge and Speaking Proficiency among Second Language Learners from Novice to Intermediate Levels. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research,4*(5). 2013

17. Kovac, M.. Speech Errors in English as Foreign Language: A Case Study of Engineering Students in Croatia. *English Language and Literature Studies,1*(1). 2011 doi:10.5539/ells.v1n1p20

18. Laufer, B., & Nation, PA vocabulary-size test of controlled productive ability. *Language Testing,16*(1), 36-55 1999. doi:10.1191/026553299672614616

19. Llach, A. M.. Lexical errors and accuracy in foreign language writing. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. 2011

20. Lennon, P.. "Error: some problems of definition and identification", in Applied Linguistic, vol. 12, num. 2, Oxford, pp. 180-195, 1991.

21. Levelt, W. J. M.. Speaking: From intention to articulation. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 1991

22. Levonyan, E. Error Analysis of L2 Academic Writing. 4th Student Research Conference – June 12, 2015

23. Nation, I.S.P. and Beglar, D. A vocabulary size test. The Language Teacher, 31(7), 9-13. 2007

24. Nation, P., & Meara, PVocabulary. In N. Schmitt (Ed.), *An introduction to applied linguistics*(2nd ed.) pp. 252-267. 2010 London: Hodder Education

25. Poulisse, N. A theoretical account of lexical communication strategies. In R. Schreuder & B. Weltens (Eds.). The bilingual lexicon pp. 157-189. 1993 Amsterdam: Benjamins.

26. Schmitt, N. *Vocabulary in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press. 2000

27. Shalaby, N. A., Yahya, N., & El-Komi, M. Analysis of Lexical Errors in Saudi College Students' Compositions. Ayn, Journal of the Saudi Association of Languages and Translation 2(3), 65-90,2009.

28. Shekhzadeh, E., & Gheichi, M.. An Account of Sources of Errors in Language Learners' Interlanguage. IPEDR,26, 159-162 2011.

29. Tatham, M., & Morton, K. Speech Production and Perception 2006. doi:10.1057/9780230513969

30. Thornbury, S. How to Teach Grammar. Essex: Longman 1999.

31. Thornbury, S. How to teach speaking. Harlow, England: Longman 2005.

32. Thornbury, S. How to teach vocabulary. Harlow: Pearson Educated Limited 2015.

33. Touchie, H..*Second Language Learning Errors Their Types Causes, And Treatment*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation The University of Texas at Austin 1986

34. Wells, N. *A lexical error analysis of advanced language learners writings*. (Unpublished master's thesis), University of Wisconsin-River Falls 2013

35. Wilkins, D. Linguistics in Language Teaching . London: Edward Arnold 1999