# The Study of Formal and Semantic Errors of Lexis by Persian EFL Learners

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**Abstract :** Producing a text in a language which is not one&rsquo;s mother tongue can be a demanding task for language learners. Examining lexical errors committed by EFL learners is a challenging area of investigation which can shed light on the process of second language acquisition. Despite the considerable number of investigations into grammatical errors, few studies have tackled formal and semantic errors of lexis committed by EFL learners. The current study aimed at examining Persian learners&rsquo; formal and semantic errors of lexis in English. To this end, 60 students at three different proficiency levels were asked to write on 10 different topics in 10 separate sessions. Finally, 600 essays written by Persian EFL learners were collected, acting as the corpus of the study. An error taxonomy comprising formal and semantic errors was selected to analyze the corpus. The formal category covered misselection and misformation errors, while the semantic errors were classified into lexical, collocational and lexicogrammatical categories. Each category was further classified into subcategories depending on the identified errors. The results showed that there were 2583 errors in the corpus of 9600 words, among which, 2030 formal errors and 553 semantic errors were identified. The most frequent errors in the corpus included formal error commitment (78.6%), which were more prevalent at the advanced level (42.4%). The semantic errors (21.4%) were more frequent at the low intermediate level (40.5%). Among formal errors of lexis, the highest number of errors was devoted to misformation errors (98%), while misselection errors constituted 2% of the errors. Additionally, no significant differences were observed among the three semantic error subcategories, namely collocational, lexical choice and lexicogrammatical. The results of the study can shed light on the challenges faced by EFL learners in the second language acquisition process.

**Keywords :** collocational errors, lexical errors, Persian EFL learners, semantic errors
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