The Semantic Prosody and Semantic Preference of Maximizers in Saudi EFL Writings

Mashael Alrajhi
Department of Applied Linguistics
College of Languages
Princess Nourahbint Abdulrahman University
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Abstract

Semantic prosody is the co-occurrence of words with other words that belong to a particular semantic set. A related concept is semantic preference, which is the relation, not between individual words, but between a lemma or word-form and a set of semantically related words. Previous interlinguistic studies on semantic prosody show that EFL learners often make semantic prosodic errors in communication as they rarely notice the semantic prosody of the items they learn. The study investigates the semantic prosody and semantic preference found in EFL Saudi students' writings in relation to the use of four maximizers: completely, entirely, totally, and utterly.The results are compared to findings obtained from a study by Partington (2004) in which the same maximizers were investigated utilizing data obtained from the Cobuild corpus. Results regarding semantic prosody show a significant difference. In Partington's study, utterly had an unfavorable implication whereas the other three maximizers appeared to have an even balance between favorable and unfavorable items. All the four maximizers used in the students' writings had a favorable prosody. In relation to semantic preference, many items found in the students' writings belong to a semantic set related to emotions and states of mind, which is not the case with the results in Partington's study. Another difference is that all the four maximizers exhibited a tendency to occur in the corpus with words related to absence, whereas the data collected from students' writings shows that students barely used words that relate to absence with maximizers. The similarities in collocational behavior include using the maximizers with collocations related to change, dependency and independency.

Keywords*:* semantic prosody, semantic preference, maximizers, EFL

Introduction

Learning a language necessitates not only knowing what words mean separately, but also knowing how to use them syntactically, semantically and pragmatically, and understanding the relations between them. Sinclair (1998) proposed types of relations between lexical units which include collocation, semantic prosody and semantic preference. Collocation is the co-occurrence of words with no more than four intervening words (Sinclair, 1998). It is the relationship between a lexical item and other lexical items (Partington, 2004). Semantic prosody, as Sinclair describes it, 'is the determiner of the meaning of the whole' (1998, p. 15). It is a feature that extends over more than one unit in a linear string (Stubbs, 2001). As to semantic preference, itis the restriction of regular co-occurrence to items which share a semantic feature (Sinclair, 1998).Learning English as a second or foreign language typically requires a realization of words' semantic associations. The lack of this awareness may cause pragmatic errors due to unusual collocations and inappropriate word choices that result from learners' ignorance of semantic prosody (Zhang, 2009).

Literature Review

Semantic prosody originated with Sinclair's work where he stated that certain words and phrases tend to occur in a certain semantic environment (1987). He observed that the words *happen* and *set in* associate with unpleasant events. The term semantic prosody was introduced and made popular by Bill Louw (1993), who defined it as a 'consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates' (p. 157). According to Hunston (2002), words co-occur with other words that belong to a particular semantic set and therefore have a particular semantic prosody. For example, the word *unemployment* shows a tendency to collocate with the semantic set of *statistics* (Zhang, 2009). As Partington (1998) clarifies, semantic prosody is strongly associated with connotation. On the other hand, semantic preference is closely linked to collocations. Stubbs (2001) defined semantic preference as 'the relation, not between individual words, but between a lemma or word-form and a set of semantically related words' (p.65). An example that Stubbs (2001) provides for this point is the word-form *large* which often co-occurs with words for *quantities and sizes*such as *number(s)*, *scale*, *part*, *amounts*, and *quantities*.

As to the relationship between semantic prosody and semantic preference, Partington (2004) provided comments on the complexity and use of both terms. Semantic prosody is a sub-category of semantic preference. Semantic prosody evaluates the topic and interprets its functionality. Items prefer to co-occur with favorable or unfavorable collocates.

On the other hand, semantic preference describes the phenomenon in which a particular lexical item collocates frequently with a series of items that belong to a semantic set. While semantic preference is a feature of the collocates, semantic prosody is a feature of the word node (Partington, 2004).For example, the collocates that come after the verb undergo indicate several semantic preferences such as *medical terms* (treatment, surgery, operation), *testing* (examination, training) and *change* (changes, transformations) (Stubbs, 2001). All these preferences result in a strong unfavorable prosody of the word node *undergo*, because when people undergo something, they are usually forced to do it rather than choosing to do it themselves. Therefore, the two terms interact. Semantic preference contributes to building semantic prosody, and conversely, semantic prosody 'dictates the general environment which constrains the preferential choices of the node item' (Partington, 2004, p. 151).

Quirk et. al. (1985) discussed the semantics and grammar of adverbials, including a thorough discussion on intensifiers which are concerned with the 'semantic category of degree' (p. 589). They distinguished between two types of intensifiers: maximizers and boosters. Partington (2004) investigated a subgroup of these adverbial maximizers which includes *completely*, *entirely*, *totally*, and *utterly*using the Cobuild corpus of general English. These items were selected because, in contrast to other intensifiers, they have a great deal in common as they share a large number of collocates (Partington, 2004). Partington's study examined the collocational behavior of these maximizers and concluded that their semantic preferences are related to 'absence', 'change of state' and (in)dependency. As to their prosody, *utterly* showed a clear unfavorable prosody whereas there was a balance between favorable and unfavorable prosodies for the other three maximizers.

In the last few decades and because of the development of technology and computers, many studies have been conducted in relation to semantic prosody and preference utilizing specialized programs and million-word corpora (Begagić, 2013). As mentioned earlier, the early works started with Sinclair (1987) who investigated the prosodies of *happen* and *set in*. His findings showed that the two terms are habitually associated with unpleasant events.

Begagić (2013) conducted a study that analyzed semantic preference and semantic prosody of *make sense*, which is one of the most common V-N collocations. She conducted the study using the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). She hypothesized that there is a significant difference in realization of semantic preference and semantic prosody in the newspaper and the academic register. The second hypothesis in her study was that semantic preference and semantic prosody can be inferred for the collocation *make sense*. The findings of her study substantiate the first hypothesis. As indicated in the results of the investigation, all the word forms of *make sense* are more frequently found in negative environments in the newspaper register than in the academic one. She justifies this phenomenon by stating that humans tend to and feel the need to talk about problematic and tragic events. In relation to the second hypothesis, it was also found to be true. All the word forms of *make sense* collocated with words that clearly constitute a semantic set. Verbs such as try, attempt, help and struggle obviously constitute the semantic set of 'difficulty'. This semantic preference for difficult situations leads to unfavorable semantic prosody. Another semantic preference that was evidently related to *make sense* was 'uncertainty' when it collocated with modal verbs in hypothetical phrases. However, because *make sense* is used in more factual and definite environments, it has a favorable semantic prosody.

Researchers have recognized the importance and necessity of semantic prosody for English as a foreign or second language vocabulary teaching and learning. Zhang (2010) conducted a comparative corpus-based study to investigate and analyze the semantic prosody of the word commit in Chinese EFL. The researcher utilized two corpora: CLEC and BROWN. The findings of the study indicate that Chinese EFL learners exhibit similar semantic prosody as compared with those of native speakers. However, even though the results showed that the semantic prosody of the word commit was similar to the one used by native speakers, they used interlanguage and unusual collocations which made their English sound unnatural and also made it sound less idiomatic.

Aydemirand Özbay (2017) examined a number of intensifiers with reference to their semantic prosodies, collocational range, restrictions, and differences. The study utilized a corpus-based approach to compare the use of adverbials in texts provided by native and nonnative academic texts. The corpora included KTUCALE (Karadeniz Technical University Corpus of Academic Learner English) and BAWE (British Academic Written English).The study aimed to analyze the maximizers: *absolutely, completely, entirely, fully, perfectly, totally* and*utterly* in terms of their semantic profiles, frequencies and percentages. Although they may be synonymous grammatically, the words that collocate with them differ semantically from each other. In relation to semantic prosody, the analysis showed that *absolutely, entirely, fully* and*perfectly* have favorable implications.

Completely showed a balance between favorableand unfavorable implications. The researchers indicated that Turkish EFL learners used *entirely, totally* and*utterly* in a way that is considered incompatible due to their lack of semantic prosodic awareness of English.

Lee (2011) explored the semantic prosody in bilingual dictionaries and EFL learners' sentence writings. The study aims were twofold; to investigate the way in which the semantic prosody of eight lexical items are described and presented in six English-Korean dictionaries. Additionally, it analyzed how the lexical items in question were used in EFL learners' writings with reference to semantic prosody. Results indicated that the semantic prosodies were not precisely described in dictionaries. Moreover, learners' writings displayed a significant number of inappropriate uses of the investigated lexical items with regard to semantic prosody. An implication of Lee's (2011) study was that EFL dictionary editors should pay particular attention to semantic preference and collocational behavior of lexical items when providing translations of equivalents in dictionaries. Similarly, the study also suggested that educators should acknowledge the importance of semantic prosody in the EFL setting. Moreover, Lee (2011) suggested that methods of teaching vocabulary meanings by supplying students with synonyms should be retired. As an alternative, educators should raise the learners' awareness of the variability in semantic prosodies of different lexical items in both languages.

In relation to studies that were conducted on semantic prosody in Arabic, only a few studies were found. Among the early works in the area is a PhD thesis by Elewa (2004) in which he used a corpus-based analysis and the computer technology to describe classical Arabic by examining lexical collocations. The study investigated some issues in semantic relations, particularly on the subject of synonymy. By comparing and contrasting the uses of semantically related words, the corpus shows if they are absolute synonyms or not. To prove that there are subtle differences between words which can be brought out by collocations, he analyzed the collocates for a list of synonymous pairs.In relation to semantic prosody, Elewa provided an example of two lemmas in Arabic: sanah and 'aam which mean year in English. The two words are usually regarded as synonyms. However, the corpus findings indicate that the collocates of sanah are usually unpleasant. Examples include '*punishment, inflation, hardship, drought, infertility, destruction, worse, wars, weakness,epidemics'* (p. 64). On the other hand, the collocates for 'aam are positive ones. Examples include '*goodness, bride, provision, fertile, support'* (p.64).

Another study that is related to semantic prosody in Arabic is by Al-Sofi, Maros, and Bakr (2014),who conducted a study in relation to semantic prosody in the Qur'an and its features. They analyzed the semantic behavior and the implied attitudinal meanings of four verbs in the Qur'an which are thaqa (tasted), kashafa (removed), massa (touched), and ja'a (came). The findings stated that the four verbs have negative and positive semantic prosodies, not because they have implied attitudes, but because they were surrounded by negative or positive semantic environments. The study did not provide answers for the proposed questions, and it lacked depth and thorough analysis.

Purpose of the Study

Previous interlinguistic studies on semantic prosody show that EFL leaners often make semantic prosodic errors in communication as they rarely notice the semantic prosody of the items they learn (Zhang, 2009). The subgroup of adverbial maximizers that are examined in the study consists of *completely*, *entirely*, *totally*, and *utterly.* These are the same ones investigated by Partington (2004) but based on the Cobuild corpus. This study aims to investigate whether Saudi EFL learners' use of maximizers in their writings has a similar collocational behavior to that found in Partington's previous corpus-based study. It also aims to examine the implications of these maximizers as favorable or unfavorable items.

Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. Do Saudi EFL students use the selected subgroup of maximizers favorably or unfavorably?
2. Do these maximizers have a similar collocational behavior when used by Saudi EFL students compared to Partington's study?

Methodology

Data was collected from sixty-oneessays written by Saudi EFL students for their Professional Writing class (LING 223T). All the students in the sample are Saudi level-four female students enrolled in the Department of Applied Linguistics at Princess Nourahbint Abdulrahman University. They were asked to write a descriptive essay in class using the four maximizers investigated in the study listed among distracters. It was stated in the essay question that they should use each word of the listed modifiers at least once. The students were given suggested, neutral topics to write about, but also had freedom to choose any other topic if they like in order to avoid any factors that could affect their use of the maximizers and what collocates with them.

The students' writings were analyzed to examine whether their uses of the maximizers have favorable or unfavorable implications, and to compare the collocational behavior of the maximizers they used with that found in Partington's study.

Results

The analysis of the essays collected from the students in the sample shows that nearly half the students committed to using all four maximizers in their essays whereas the majority of the other half included some of them. Thirty students used all four maximizers in their essays, twenty-five students used some maximizers, ranging from one to three, and six students did not use any of the four maximizers examined in this study. All the students were asked to write their essays in class depending on their own knowledge and writing skills and without the use of any dictionaries or books. They were also not allowed to check their phones or any websites. As a result of that, it is possible that those who retained from using maximizers avoided them because they did not know their meanings and therefore were not able to use them in their essays. This avoidance strategy is possibly the reason why twenty-five students did not use all four maximizers in their writings. It is important to mention that there were a few wrong uses of maximizers that were discarded from the sample. For example, a student ended a paragraph with the following sentence: 'We walked in all college's cor[ri]dors completely'. Other than the grammatical and spelling mistakes she had in the sentence, *completely* was used wrong here, possibly as a result of the student's confusion in relation to the words *complete* and *whole*, which are synonyms in Arabic. The student's wrong use is probably a result of language transfer, i.e. transferring the meanings and structure from her native tongue to her English writing.

The four maximizers that were examined in this study are *completely*, *entirely*, *utterly*, and *totally*. The analysis shows that *completely* was the most frequently used maximizer in the sample. It was used 50 times which constitutes a percentage of 31.5% of the total number of uses. In second place, *totally* was used 47 times with a percentage of 29.6%. *Utterly* was ranked third with 32 uses and a percentage of 20.1%. Lastly, *entirely* was the least used maximizer in the sample with 30 uses and a percentage of 18.9%. The following part will provide an analysis of the results of each maximizer's use with examples.

Completely

It seems that most of the students in the sample felt more comfortable using *completely* in their essays and sometimes more than once because of its common use and their familiarity with it. *Completely* was used favorably fifteen times collocating with positive words such as 'joyful', 'impressed' and 'happy'. It was used unfavorably ten times collocating with words such as 'difficult', 'hard' and 'nervous'. It is interesting though that although it was used 50 times, exactly half of these uses were neutral. The neutral word 'different' alone occurred sixteen times with *completely* in which only the context was an indication of its positive or negative implications. Other neutral words that were used include the verb 'change' and 'new'.

Entirely

The results obtained from the sample show that the number of the positive uses of *entirely* was more than twice the number of its negative uses. *Entirely* was used favorably twelve times collocating with positive words such as 'fabulous', 'wonderful' and 'happy'. It was used unfavorably five times collocating with words such as 'sad', 'stressful' and 'shocked'. Similar to *completely*, the maximizer *entirely* was used neutrally more than its positive and negative uses. Thirteen examples of using *entirely* in a neutral context were found in the data, also collocating frequently with the adjective 'different' in positive and negative contexts. Other neutral words that were used are 'new', 'unforgettable', and the verb 'remember'.

Utterly

The total number of the uses of *utterly* in the data is thirty-two. Its positive uses were a whopping number of seventeen favorable uses, which is the highest number of positive uses in all the maximizers included in the study. Examples of positive uses of utterly include collocating with 'breathtaking', 'fascinating', and 'amazed'. *Utterly* was used unfavorably ten times with words like 'nervous', 'lost' and 'awful'. The least number of neutral uses was found to be with *utterly*, recording only five instances of its use with neutral words such as 'new', 'different' and the verb 'change'.

Totally

Totally was used forty-seven times in the sample, mostly with neutral words that comprised the number of twenty-one instances. Similar to *completely*, the word 'different' was used frequently with *totally*, reaching a number of twelve uses found in positive and negative contexts equally. Other examples of neutral words include 'new', 'busy', and the verbs 'change' and 'differ'.

In relation to the positive and negative uses of *totally*, sixteen instances of positive uses were collected from the sample. Examples of positive uses of *totally* include 'mind-blowing', 'happy' and 'excited'. The number of negative uses was ten. Examples include words such as 'sad', 'difficult' and 'scary'.

Discussion

The analysis of the data collected from students'writings reveals a huge difference in comparison to the analysis obtained from Partington's study. Observations obtained from a corpus showed that *utterly* tended to have unfavorable implications, whereas the other three maximizers, *totally*, *completely* and *entirely*, appeared to have an even balance between favorable and unfavorable items. On the other hand, all the four maximizers used in the students' writings exhibited a tendency to collocate with pleasant words more than negative ones.Surprisingly, and contrary to the results in Partington's study that were obtained from a corpus, the cases in which students used *utterly* with favorable implications were significantly higher than the cases in which they used the maximizer in an unfavorable way.This answers the first research question on semantic prosody which aimed to investigate whether Saudi EFL students use the maximizers favorably or unfavorably.

The second question posed in the study relates to semantic preference, particularly the collocational behavior of the maximizers, and whether students use a similar one to the behavior obtained from the corpus. According to Partington (2004), the major types of semantic preference include 'factual' – 'non-factual', 'absence', 'change', 'emotions' and perhaps 'dependence' – 'independence' (p.148-149). Because the results showed that the semantic prosody of the maximizers used by EFL students differed from the one obtained from the Cobuild corpus, it is expected that the semantic preference found in the students' writings will also be different. As Partington (2004) explains, if the prosody is bad, then preferences such as 'absence' or 'change' may as well be connected to it since, in human psychology, 'the presence of something is preferable to its absence' (p. 147).As previously explained, *utterly* exhibited a clear unfavorable prosody in Partington's study, and the other three maximizers appeared to have a balance between favorable and unfavorable items. Because none of the four maximizers investigated by Partington showed favorable prosody, their preferences basically expressed a general state of 'absence of a quality', 'change of state', and an additional preference for *entirely* which is '(in)dependency' (p.148).On the other hand, all the four maximizers used in the students' writings tended to have a favorable prosody, which in turn affects their semantic preferences. The following part will discuss the major types of semantic preferences that were found in EFL students' writings.

Emotions and State of Mind

The data shows that students mostly used the four maximizers in the company of words relating to emotions and states of mind, which is not the case in Partington's study. The use of emotions is prevalent in the current study in both positive and negative environments. For example, *completely* was used with words such as 'relieved', 'comfortable', 'joyful' as positive descriptions of emotions, and with 'tired', 'nervous' and 'shocked' in negative environments. *Utterly* was used with positive emotions such as 'grateful', 'excited', and 'amazed', and also with negative emotions and states of mind such as 'disappointed', 'nervous', and 'lost'. *Totally*also appeared with positive and negative emotions in numerous environments. Examples include 'mind-blowing', 'emotional', and 'good' expressing positive emotions, and 'sad', 'afraid', and 'scary' expressing negative ones. *Entirely* co-occurred with positive emotions such as 'perfect', 'wonderful', and 'fabulous', as well as negative ones like 'shocked', 'stressful', and 'sad'.

Absence of a Quality

Contrary to the results found in Partington's study, the analysis of the data collected from EFL students' writings shows that students overall did not use words that express a sense of absence or lack of a quality. The only times they used words related to this semantic preference were two instances with the word 'lost', one instance with the verb 'miss' to express absence from classes, and one instance with the verb 'have' to express ignorance in the sentence 'I totally have no idea'. This could be partially attributed to the fact that they used all four maximizers with favorable implications, hence the possibility of absence is not that common.

Change of State

In accordance with the results in Partington's study, this semantic preference was found frequently in the data collected from students' writings. In fact, it was very dominant and clearly noticeable.The most frequently used words in this semantic preference are 'different' and 'change'. The word 'different' alone occurred in the students' writings thirty-four times with the four maximizers. As for the verb 'change',it was found in the data seven times indicating change and transformation. Examples are the sentences 'totally changed my life' and 'completely changed my relationship with my sisters'. Other words that express change of state include the verbs 'be' and 'come'. For example, a student talked about her father and how he had always wanted her 'to be a teacher'. Another described being accepted in the college and the major she picked as a dream that totally 'came true'.

Dependence and Independence

In Partington's study, the collocates of *entirely* seemed to encompass a wider range of senses than the other senses found with other maximizers by including dependence and independence. In comparison to the results of the current study, the findings show that *entirely*was also found in the company of words relating to independency and dependency. Examples of independency include 'entirely proud of my progress' and 'entirely ready to try new things'. An example of dependency was found collocating with *entirely* in the phrase 'entirely raised by my sisters'. As for other maximizers, no collocations related to this semantic preference were found except a single independency sense found in the use of the word 'responsible' with *totally*. Therefore, the results in the students' writings seem to be similar to the ones obtained from the Cobuild corpus.

To sum up and to answer the second research question of the study, when the four maximizers were used in students' writings, their collocational behavior was not identical to the one obtained from the corpus. The analysis shows that there are some similarities and differences. As explained in detail above, many items found in the students' writings belong to a semantic set related to emotions and states of mind, which is not the case with the results in relation to the four maximizers in Partington's study. Another difference that was found is that all the four maximizers exhibited a tendency to occur in the corpus with words related to absence, whereas the data collected from students' writings shows that students barely usedwords that relate to absence or lack of a quality with maximizers. As to the similarities in collocational behavior, the maximizers were used in students' writings with collocations related to change, which was also the case with the results obtained from the Cobuild corpus. In addition, *entirely* was used with collocates relating to dependency and independency in both findings.

General Observations

Some students used the maximizers in their essays as though as they were used in spoken informal English, especially with the word *totally*. Examples include 'I totally love traveling' and 'I totally think' to express an opinion. Astudent described her experience as 'completely fun'. *Entirely* was also used informally in the sentence 'you will entirely be a mess'.

The data collected for this study shows that a number of students tended to use the maximizers with rather unusual collocations. This could be attributed to their lack of knowledge regarding the proper collocations of the words and how they are usually used. Examples include the use of *utterly* with 'special', and the use of *entirely* with 'nice'.Such unusual collocations and incompatible uses were found in the literature as explained earlier with other nationalities of EFL learners like Chinese and Turkish learners. This 'unexpectedness' is not a new phenomenon to semantic prosody (Zhang, 2009, p. 3). Where there is conformity to words' primings, fluency will be the result (Hoey, 2007). Diverging from the normal collocational patterns can happen intentionally or unintentionally. When it is done purposefully, it is usually the result of a deliberate desire to achieve creative effects. Irony is a great example of this 'collocational clash' (Louw, 1993, p. 30). Using unusual collocations can also happen unintentionally as an error in communication made by nonnative speakers of a language (Zhang, 2009). As Louw(1993) explains, this may happen 'if the speaker is young or is not using his or her first language' (p. 36).Although some uses of maximizers were inclusive of unusual collocations, they were included in the study for two reasons. Firstly, the study aims at examining the collocational behavior of the maximizers when used by EFL students in comparison to the behavior described in Partington's study which was obtained from a corpus. Secondly, even with unusual collocations, they still provided either positive or negative implications which is related to the first research question of the study.

Another observation in relation to the analysis of the data is related to the use of maximizers with neutral words. Students tended to use the maximizers with neutral words way more than using them with positive and negative collocations. For example, *completely* was used fifty times, half of which were with neutral words. Also, students used *totally* and *entirely* with neutral words more than pleasant or unpleasant words. It was only the case of *utterly* in which students refrained from using the maximizer with neutral words, and as shown in the data only used it neutrally five times.

Conclusion

In summary, the present study investigated the semantic prosody and semantic preference found in EFL Saudi students' writings in relation to the use of four maximizers: *completely*, *entirely*, *totally*, and *utterly*. The results were compared to findings obtained from a study by Partington (2004) in which the same maximizers were investigated utilizing data obtained from the Cobuild corpus. The findings in relation to semantic prosody show a significant difference. In Partington's study, *utterly* had an unfavorable implication whereas the other three maximizers appeared to have an even balance between favorable and unfavorable items. All the four maximizers used in the students' writings had a favorable prosody.

As to the findings regarding semantic preference, many items found in the students' writings belong to a semantic set related to emotions and states of mind, which is not the case with the results in Partington's study. Another difference is that all the four maximizers exhibited a tendency to occur in the corpus with words related to absence, whereas the data collected from students' writings shows that students barely used words that relate to absence with maximizers. The similarities in collocational behavior include using the maximizers with collocations related to change, dependency and independency.

For future work, it is recommended to investigate the use of negation with maximizers and analyze the effects of negation on the collocates. For example, a student in the data collected for this study expressed her opinion with the sentence 'I wasn't entirely sure about the subject'. Although in this example *entirely* collocates with 'sure' which has a favorable prosody, it is preceded by the negation word 'not'. In the current study, this issue was not considered because not enough data related to negation was available to be analyzed. However, for future work, this topic can be investigated, and results can be compared to studies on maximizers as well as other collocates.

As shown in the results of the analysis, the most dominant semantic preference in students' writings related to emotions and states of mind. This could be affected by gender, since all participants were females who have the tendency to use words related to emotions more than males. For further research, it is suggested that the sample would include both male and female participants.

Using a corpus that offers data related to Saudi learners would be a great idea for research in order to be able to generalize the findings and avoid individual differences. Such corpus does not exist at the moment and that is why the current study was conducted on EFL Saudi students' writings that were obtained from classroom work. Hopefully, it would be available in the future and the present study can be replicated using that corpus.

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Appendix (A)
Essay Question

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Course Title: Professional Writing
Ministry of Education	Course Code and Number: LING 223 T
Princess Nourahbint Abdulrahman University	Exam duration:
College of Languages	Total Marks:
Department of Applied Linguistics	Number of Questions:
Academic Year: 2018 – 2019	Number of Pages:
Semester: Second	Version:

جامعة الأميرة نورة بنت عبد الرحمن
Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University

Name: _____**Serial number** _____
ID Number: _____ **Section:** _____

Q. Write a descriptive essay on one of the following suggested topics, or on any topic of your choice. Use the words in the box <u>at least once</u>.
- A childhood memory
- My first day as a college student
- My last travel experience
- Latest changes in Saudi Arabia
-The last book I read

> *completely, just, entirely, very, totally, almost, utterly, recently*

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Appendix (B)

Analysis of maximizers' uses in the data

Maximizer	Positive (favorable)	Negative (unfavorable)	Neutral
Completely 50	Joyful Normal Fun Relieved Happy Comfortable Impressed Excellent Positive Happy Normal Thankful Understandable Happy Beautiful 15	shocked Difficult shut Tired Bad Nervous Difficult Nervous Hard Hard 10	Different (+) Different (+) Different (+) Different (+) Different (+) Different (+) Different (+) Different (+) Different (-) Different (-) Different (-) Different (-) Different (-) Different (-) Different (-) Different (-) Changed my day (+) Changed my relationship with my sisters (+) Changed my mind (+) Changed my thoughts (+) New (+) New (-) Clear (-) Covered by snow (-) Unforgettable (+) 25
Entirely 30	Proud of my progress fun Perfect like nice Rich with culture Fun Wonderful Good Fabulous Ready to try new things Sure 12	shocked Hungry Sad Stressful You will entirely be a mess. 5	Different (+) Different (+) Different (+) Different (+) Different (-) Big (+) Remember (-) Huge (-) Unforgettable (+) New (-) Entirely cold (-) Entirely raised by sisters (+) Unforgettable (+) 13
Utterly 32	Fascinating Delicious Helpful grateful special in awe pure breathtaking useful excited	Awful Shocked Bad Disappointed Tired Bad Nervous Shocked Hungry Lost	New start (+) White like a blank page (-) Something in my life utterly Changed like my personality and language (+) Utterly huge buildings (-) Different (-) 5

	enjoyed my time beautiful beautiful amazed excellent good fluent 17	10	
Totally 47	Mind-blowing Love travelling Excited Good Emotional Happy Happy Surprised Excited Excited Happy Nice Responsible dreams totally came true Happy Nice 16	Missed my classes Totally have no idea Nerve-wrecking A mess Sad Shocked Difficult Lost Afraid Scary 10	Different (+) Different (+) Different (+) Different (+) Different (+) Different (+) Different (-) Different (-) Different (-) Different (-) Different (-) Different (-) Differ from each other (-) Changed my life (+) Changed my view (+) New (+) New (+) New (+) Wants me to be a teacher (+) Busy (-) think (+) 21