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An Investigation into the Effect of the Mother Tongue (Arabic) on the Use of English Prepositions

A Case Study at Yahia Fares University of Medea

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Dedication

Praise be to Allah who guided us to this, and we would not have been guided without his guidance

How beautiful it is for a person to be generous with their most valuable people and even more beautiful is to gift the dearest of all. Here I am today, dedicating my graduation to my father, whose joy and pride are my aspirations and goals. To her whose smile is my goal, and under whose feet is my paradise, the secret of my success, the source of compassion and kindness, the most wonderful woman in existence, my dear mother.

To whom who supported me through her prayers and illuminated my path, to the greatest grandmother and aunt in the universe.

To my soulmate, my supporter my sister Sarah

To the support, encouragement, and love that Allah has blessed me with, to Ahmad, my life partner.

To the most beautiful gifts Allah bestowed upon my heart, my family Boussahmine and Kheirat

And finally, to those who walked this path with me, to those who spent five years with me on this journey, to those with whom I shared memories, conversations, joy, and happiness, my friends Selma and Nina, and to my dear friend Rima.

Asmaa Boussahmine

Dedication

This work is dedicated to:

The most precious God given gift, To my role model 'my mother' and to my father.

To my amazing, helpful sisters who have always been there to make me laugh and share in my joys and sorrows.

To those with whom I share secrets and deep discussions whenever I want. To those who understand and support every single situation I'm in, my beloved cousins.

To my beloved friends with whom I share this work, my calm diligent girl 'Asma' and my moody BRAVE young lady 'Nina'

To my inspiring teachers, who have helped me become the person I am today.

To the wonderful soul who leaves us early 'I am deeply missing you, I never knew just how painful the recognition of your departure, if only I could have you back…'

Selma Zaoui

Dedication

At this point of my life, I am considered as an adult. Yes, I know most of the time I don't act like it. As I'm getting older, I'm starting to realize how much my precious parents done and still doing for me. And, for that, I really need to truly thank my parents for everything and I'm dedicating this work for you, my lovers.

Dad, my hero or how I like to call you BADRO, thank you Habibi for always believing in me, for always giving me the support, the love and the confidence that I needed to peruse my dreams to be who I am today. Thank you for being my brother, my lover and my friend. I know for sure that you are still here with me in every step I take, it is indeed that your body has left me alone but I'm certain that your angelic soul is here with me in the sky. I have always been proud that you are my father and I always will. If I start talking from this moment of how much I love you until the end of the world I will never give you what you truly deserve. I

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Abstract

The effect of the mother tongue on the learning of a second language is one of the main issues faced by learners. The dissertation examines the effect of mother tongue (Arabic) on the use of English prepositions among EFL learners. The primary objective of this study is to examine the impact of MT, Arabic on the TL, English, to confirm the hypothesis that third year LMD students rely on their mother tongue, to identify the most common types of errors made by English language learners in relation to the use of English prepositions and to highlight the challenges they encounter when using English prepositions. The hypotheses posit that third year LMD students of the English department at Yahia Fares University of Medea misuse the most common English prepositions in their written production due to the negative interference of the students' mother tongue, in addition to the challenges they face when using English prepositions. To test these hypotheses, three data collection instruments were employed: a test, a questionnaire, administered to 44 participants aged between 20 and 24, who had been studying English for a minimum of 7 to 10 years, and an analysis of the students; exam papers, specifically their essays. The collected data aimed to determine the extent to which L1 interference was present in the participants' use of prepositions. The findings confirm that third year students indeed encounter difficulties with English prepositions, influenced by their mother tongue.

Keywords: English prepositions, mother tongue, interlanguage, error analysis, language transfer.

الملخص

يعد تأثير اللغة الأم على تعلم لغة ثانية من القضايا الرئيسية التي يواجهها المتعلمون. تبحث الأطروحة في تأثير اللغة الأم (العربية) على استخدام حروف الجر الإنجليزية بين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. الهدف الأساسي من هذه الدراسة هو فحص تأثير الترجمة الآلية، اللغة العربية على اللغة الإنجليزية، لتأكيد الفرضية القائلة يعتمدون على لغتهم الأم، لتحديد أكثر أنواع الأخطاء شيوعًا التي يرتكبها متعلمي LMD بأن طلاب السنة الثالثة اللغة الإنجليزية في فيما يتعلق باستخدام أحرف الجر الإنجليزية وتسليط الضوء على التحديات التي يواجهونها عند بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة LMD استخدام حروف الجر الإنجليزية. تفترض الفرضيات أن طلاب السنة الثالثة يحيى فارس بجامعة المدية يسيئون استخدام حروف الجر الإنجليزية الأكثر شيوعًا في إنتاجهم الكتابي بسبب التدخل السلبي في اللغة الأم للطلاب، بالإضافة إلى التحديات التي يواجهونها عند استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية. حروف الجر. لاختبار هذه الفرضيات، تم استخدام ثلاث أدوات لجمع البيانات: اختبار، استبيان، تم إجراؤه على 44 مشاركًا تتراوح أعمارهم بين 20 و24 عامًا، والذين كانوا يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية لمدة لا تقل عن 7 إلى 10 سنوات، L1 وتحليل للطلاب؛ أوراق الامتحان، وتحديدا مقالاتهم. تهدف البيانات التي تم جمعها إلى تحديد مدى وجود تداخل في استخدام المشاركين لحروف الجر. تؤكد النتائج أن طلاب السنة الثالثة يواجهون بالفعل صعوبات في حروف الجر الإنجليزية، متأثرة بلغتهم الأم

الكلمات المفتاحية: حروف جر اللغة الإنجليزية، اللغة الأم، التداخل اللغوي، تحليل الأخطاء، نقل اللغة.

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List of Abbreviations

MT: mother tongue.

FL: foreign language.

TL: target language.

EFL: English as a foreign language.

ESL: English as a second language.

LMD: License Master Doctorate.

Q: question.

L1: first language.

L2: second language.

CAH: contrastive analysis hypothesis.

CA: contrastive analysis.

SLA: second language acquisition.

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General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

The importance of learning English has grown significantly due to its global prevalence. Grammar is among the various challenges faced by foreign language learners. It is almost regarded as the most difficult aspect. Students commonly make errors while acquiring a foreign language. It is widely acknowledged by interlanguage theorists as Selinker that one's native language has a significant impact on the acquisition of a foreign language. Learners tend to apply the rules of their mother tongue when speaking or writing in the foreign language. In the case of English, learners often encounter difficulties with prepositions, which are considered a problematic area.

Prepositions are words that establish relationships between two or more words. Many linguists view the learning of prepositions as a challenge due to their abundance and the lack of specific usage rules. Consequently, learners often rely on their knowledge of their mother tongue, which frequently results in negative transfer. When Algerian students learn English, they often find themselves influenced by the structure of the Arabic language. They have a tendency to transfer the forms and meanings from their native language (Arabic) in order to construct sentences in the foreign language (English). Several theories have examined the extent to which the native language influences the acquisition of a second language such as interlanguage theory and contrastive analysis theory.

2. Statement of the Problem

Learning prepositions is recognized as one of the most significant challenges in English grammar. Researchers such as Koffi have asserted that each preposition can convey multiple relationships, which often results in confusion and misuse among learners. Algerian students, in particular, face a notable issue when it comes to using

prepositions due to the influence of their native language while acquiring a second language. This influence frequently leads to negative transfer, where students apply the rules of their mother tongue to the second language, resulting in the improper use of prepositions. The objective of this study is to examine whether the mother tongue has an impact on Algerian students' usage of English prepositions.

3. Objectives of the Study

The present study has four main objectives which are stated as follows:

- To examine the impact of the mother tongue (Arabic) on the target language (English).
- To confirm our hypothesis that third-year LMD students rely on their mother tongue.
- To identify the most common types of errors made by English language learners in relation to the use of English prepositions.
- To highlight the challenges they encounter when using English prepositions.

4. Research Questions

In order to achieve the previous objectives of the research project, three questions are addressed:

Q1: Does the influence of the MT have a positive or a negative influence on third year LMD students' performance when using English prepositions?

Q2: What are the types of errors committed by third year LMD students of English in the use of English prepositions?

Q3: What challenges do they encounter when using English prepositions?

5. Research Hypotheses

To address these particular questions, the researchers suggest the following hypotheses which state that:

- Third year LMD students of the English department at Yahia Fares University-Medea misuse the most common English prepositions in their written production due to the negative interference of the students' mother tongue (standard Arabic).
- Third year LMD students of English face challenges when using English prepositions.
- There are many types of error that are made by EFL students in relation to the use of English prepositions.

To confirm or deny the hypotheses of this study and obtain the reliable data that serve the aims of the study, three means of research are used, a students' questionnaire, a test and an analysis of students' written expression. The first and the second tools are a questionnaire and a test which were delivered to third year students of English at Yahia Fares University of Medea, as the third-year students are considered intermediate in level due to studying English language for three years. The third tool is the students' written expressions, forty-four exam papers were chosen to verify the effect of their L1 on their use of prepositions and to collect their errors in order to confirm the hypothesis of this study.

6. Significance of the Study

The present dissertation is important for several reasons. This research provides valuable insights into the mother tongue effects on the use of English prepositions, it can help on having a clear vision about the common errors that students make when using English preposition. This research can help students who are learning English as a second language; it helps in understanding English prepositions, their use, form and function in addition to providing a better understanding of the nature of English preposition errors.

7. Layout of the Dissertation

This dissertation is structured into four chapters. The first chapter is titled "Theoretical Framework and Literature Review," it delves into the fundamental aspects of the study. Initially, it provides definitions and explanations of English prepositions, exploring their uses, forms, and functions. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the intricacies associated with English prepositions, including contrastive analysis and interlanguage theories. Additionally, it examines error analysis, encompassing sources, classification, and branches. Moving on to the second chapter, "Research Methods and Approaches," the primary focus is on the methodology employed in the study. It outlines the specific methods used, the sampling approach, details about the participants, and the instruments utilized for data collection. The third chapter is titled "Results and Discussion." It primarily revolves around the presentation and analysis of the obtained findings. It explores the outcomes of the research study and provides a thorough discussion of these findings. Lastly, the fourth chapter, titled "General Findings, Implication, and Limitations," begins with a summary of the main findings of the study. Then, it reconnects the findings with the questions, theory and previous studies. Finally, this chapter encompasses an overview of the overall findings, their implications, and limitations. Finally, this chapter encountered implications, and limitations encountered during the research process.

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Section One: English Prepositions

Introduction

Castro (2013) defined "prepositions as words which show the relationship between two words in a sentence" (p. 97-108). Prepositions pose a significant challenge for English language learners, causing confusion and difficulty in both usage and comprehension. The complexity of prepositions has led many researchers to acknowledge the difficulty of teaching and learning them. Various studies and investigations have been conducted to understand the nature of this problem and the underlying reasons behind it.

This chapter aims to address the definition of prepositions as provided by different scholars. It will also present the characteristics and categories of the most commonly used English prepositions, offering explanations for each category and its respective prepositions. Furthermore, the chapter will explore the factors contributing to the difficulty of English prepositions, including the influence of learners' mother tongue on preposition usage. Additionally, it will discuss approaches that examine language transfer in relation to prepositions.

1. Definition of Prepositions

The term preposition is widely used. It has been defined by numerous researches and scholars. "Prepositions are connective words that show the relationship between nouns following one of the basic sentence elements: subject, verb, object or complement" (Wishon & Burks, 1980, p. 285).

According to Cowan (1983) "prepositions are a group of words that indicate relationship between the object of preposition and some other words in the sentence." (p. 281). Quirk (1993 as cited in Zigha & Mekili, 2018, p. 6) expressed that a preposition shows the nature of the relationship between two parts in a sentence. To clarify, it means

that the relationship is about the categorization of the preposition which includes time, place and movement in which each type of them makes meaning of prepositional sentences clear. For instance, all the family members were born on June. In this example, the preposition “on” shows the nature of the relationship in the sentence which is the time.

Prepositions can come with nouns and pronouns in a sentence called prepositional phrase. Prepositional phrase can be a noun phrase, a “wh” clause or a gerund, for example, at the mosque, from what Amina did, for releasing the video. Furthermore, the American writer Stageberg (1981) stated that “prepositions are words like of, in, on, at and to which are usually followed by a noun, noun phrase, personal pronoun or noun substitute called the object of the preposition” (p. 169). Moreover, the British linguist and grammarian Huddleston (1984) expressed that “prepositions are the subtlest and a set of small words that are closed class in the English language.” (p. 336). As any English part of speech, prepositions are divided into categories.

2. Categories of English Prepositions

English has large numbers of prepositions that are categorized into three types. This research aims to deal with the most common prepositions in each type. Prepositions can be divided into three main types which are: prepositions of time, prepositions of place and prepositions of movement.

2.1 Prepositions of Time

Prepositions of time are prepositions used to indicate time. There is a general agreement which is about that temporal prepositions are the least difficult type by learners. The following table shows the most common English prepositions of time illustrated with examples.

Table 1.1: *Use of Prepositions of Time*

Preposition of Time	Use	Example
In	Indicate general timing like years, time of the day, months, seasons and centuries.	-I graduated in 2015. -We play in the evening. -I would like to be in September. -We are in the winter. -It was created in the nineteenth century.
On	Is used for: Dates, days of the week Republic days and holidays.	-She was born on the fifth of May. -The holiday is on Friday. -On Christmas day.
At	For very specific time and age.	-You slept at 2.00. -I worked at 12.
Since	Is used to indicate the starting of an action.	-I am living there since 2010.
From … to	Used to indicate the beginning and the end of a period of time.	-The party is from 10 to 2.
Until	Is used To indicate whether another event	-Until the film is finished, I can talk.

	will take place until an event occurs.	
For	Is used for the duration of an action.	-We have been here for two weeks.
By	Is used to refer to deadlines.	-He will be here by 1.00 p.m.

2.2 Prepositions of Place

Prepositions of place are used to indicate the place. Leung (1990) maintained that "the function of spatial preposition is to locate spatially one object." (As cited in Hasan & Abdullah, 2009, p. 605). The following table shows the most common English prepositions of place illustrated with examples:

Table 1.2: *Use of Prepositions of Place*

Prepositions of Place	Use	Example
In	When something is in a place.	-The teacher is in class.
On	To show that something is on a surface. To show a certain side.	-The books are on the table. -You find the bank on the left.
At	Is used for very specific locations or for events.	-Leila is at home now but yesterday she was at a concert.
From	For origins.	-I am from Algeria.

To	Is used to indicate the moving toward a specific place.	-I always take the train to Steve's Avenue.
Through	Is used for movement from a place to another but passing by something.	-I entered there through the hall.
Between	Equals 'in the middle'.	-The cat is between the two tables.
Across	Means moving from a place to another.	-I live across the lake.

2.3 Prepositions of Movement

This type of prepositions is used to indicate directions. The following table shows the most commons preposition of movement with examples:

Table 1.3: *Use of Prepositions of Movement*

Prepositions of Movement	Use	Example
By	Means near.	-The bus station is by the church.
Next to/near	Means by the side of something.	-My apartment is next to/near yours.
Past	Means farther side of.	-She was past the car.
Under	Means below something	-I am sitting under your table.

Off	Means away from.	-Don't jump of that wall.
Toward	Means in the direction of.	-Go toward the red car.

The previous tables expressed the most common English prepositions and their uses. The following title discusses the characteristics of English prepositions.

3. Characteristics of English Prepositions

A preposition is considered as a link between speech parts in the sentence such as verbs, nouns or adjectives. The following subtitles indicate: the use, the form and the function of prepositions.

3.1 Use of Prepositions

Prepositions are an important part of speech that links between two parts. Hidayet (n.d.) reported that "prepositions have always been a problem for the learners of English throughout language learning," (p. 07). They are considered tricky and difficult for EFL/ESL learners and sometimes even for native speakers.

Some prepositions are rather easy to understand, for example, the door is behind you and the kitchen is next to the bedroom. Some can be used interchangeably in some context, for instance, we spent around/about three days looking for John. Laren et al. (2016) suggested a list of interchangeably used prepositions such as: after and past, near and by, to and of, around and about and on vs. along. Other prepositions refer to time and place at the same time like in, on and at.

For these reasons, the most majority of prepositions seem to create confusion, it has always been a problem for learners to distinguish between prepositions, either it comes in at the beginning of the sentence, in the middle, or at the end. The appropriate use of preposition is an issue for EFL/ESL learners due to the appearance of prepositions in

many cases. Prepositions can appear: Before nouns e.g., she will wait for me at the bus station. As a part of phrasal verbs, these are complex verbs which consist of a verb plus a preposition and the meaning is not related to the simple verb's sense e.g.; Give up, turn on. Before gerund verbs like: for having. After adjectives as in "I am afraid of".

Most prepositions have various definitions and uses, as a result the meaning changes according to the context. The huge amount of prepositions leads to have confusion while using them. This confusion may be present in the form of preposition as well.

3.2 Form of Prepositions

Prepositions are one of the most important parts that appears in many cases, according to Larsen & Freeman et al. (2016) the appearance of preposition can be after nouns (the book of John), after a verb (Ahmed is looking for Asma) and after adjectives (this destination is good for you). Prepositions appear in the middle of the sentence, however, they also appear at the beginning, as in: by the way, are you a second-year student? And at the end of sentences as in 'wh' questions, for example; where are you from?

Some prepositions are single word prepositions (simple prepositions) like in, at and on. Some other prepositions are complex words (multi-words prepositions), for instance, next to and in front of. According to Grubic (2014), the complex word or multi-word prepositions are not limited in number and there is always possibility of creating new combination. Mackov (2012) Preposition can follow many verbs (forms of verb) as she goes on a trip. At the same time, they serve not only one function but plenty.

3.3. Function of Prepositions

The function of English prepositions is divided into seven main functions (Quirk, 1993, p. 145).

1- Head of prepositional phrase: phrase and preposition combination as in: is she really going out with this guy?

2- Noun phrase modifier: here the preposition describes the noun as in: my sons are those with red gloves.

3- Noun phrase complement: the prepositional phrase completes the meaning as in: you pick it for having more water.

4- Adjective phrase complement: the prepositional phrase completes the meaning of the verb phrase.

5- Verb phrase complement like: cook in the kitchen.

6- Adjunct adverbial: the prepositional phrase adds extra information as in: the pupils eat at the school canteen.

7- Disjunct adverbial: as in: in my opinion, teachers can help more than scientists.

These functions of English prepositions lead to a huge complexity in using and mastering them. As a result, they are considered as one of the factors of the complexity of English prepositions.

4. Classifications of Errors in the Usage of English Prepositions

Prepositions known as the most part that English foreign learners made errors in. These errors can be categorized into 3 types which are substitution, redundant and omission errors.

Starting with the substitution errors, Scott and Tucker defined substitution errors as the incorrect way of using words, this type is the most common type of errors, for example, I am talking in you (the correct preposition is “at”) , there is no justice on the world (the correct preposition here is “ in ”), she left since twenty minutes (the correct preposition is “ ago”). As for redundant errors type, they defined this type as the use of unnecessary

preposition or extra word where one word is required. For example, the students entered into the class (here "into" is unnecessary in this sentence), blame on people ("on" is unnecessary). Ramy experienced on a rough period ("on" is unnecessary). Lastly, omission errors type, unlike redundant errors type, omission is the omitting of the required preposition where it is necessary. Scott and Tucker defined it as the omission of words where it is necessary. For example, the meeting is Wednesday (here the preposition "On" is required), By the end this year ("of" is a required and necessary preposition in this example), We were born the same year.

5. Factors about the Complexity of English Prepositions

There is no doubt on the agreement of the complexity issues of English prepositions especially for learners and for teachers as well. Scholars and investigators got to the point that English prepositions are difficult for EFL learners to get and master them right. Quirk (1993) and Grubic (2004) stated that "prepositions are regarded as a difficult area in grammar learning and teaching which present a real challenge for EFL learners and teachers alike (as cited in Zigha & Mekili, 2018, p. 1). According to Loke and Anthony (2013), "Prepositions usage is one of the most challenging aspects of English grammar for learners to master."

There are several factors which make prepositions hard to learn and to comprehend. First of all, English prepositions are confusing due to the large number of them. According to Kofi (2010), "English has 60 to 70 prepositions, a higher number than most than other languages." (p. 297). In the same context "it is nearly impossible for language learners to systemize English prepositions." (Catalan, 1996, p. 171). Several scholars agreed on this factor that makes English prepositions hard to master.

Another factor that creates this complexity is the polysemous nature of English prepositions. Polysemy is a term used to refer to words that have multiple meanings.

Evans and Tyler (2006) defined polysemy as “a phenomenon where lexical material has two or more meanings.” (p. 329). Prepositions in English have variety of meanings according to the context. “Learners often become frustrated when trying to determine prepositional meaning and when trying to use them appropriately.” (Kofi, 2010, p. 299). This means that a preposition differs its meaning according to the context that it is with.

The use of prepositions in context differs from language to another; each language has its own specific system. Most learners understand and use English prepositions as their mother tongue. According to Lado (1957; as cited in Gray & Selinker, 1993, p. 2), “Individual tends to transfer the forms and the meaning and destination of forms and meaning of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture.” This leads to the appearance of wrong and inappropriate transfer.

The same prepositions hold different meanings in various languages. To clarify, a preposition can mean certain meaning in English; however, it can mean a totally different meaning in Arabic. The majority of EFL learners try to get the preposition in a foreign language, they refer it to their mother tongue which causes most of the time a poor transfer. Lam (2009) confirmed that if learners do make assumptions of semantic equivalence between the first and second language, it often results prepositional errors (p. 3). This phenomenon is called “interlanguage”. According to Selinker, this phenomenon is a system created by learners whom connect their native language and culture with their learning of the second language. To sum up all what has been said, the large number of English prepositions, polysemy and interlanguage are reasons of the difficulty of English prepositions.

Section Two: Theories of Language Transfer

1. Contrastive Analysis

The issue of learning a second language has been focused by linguistics and theoreticians. They did several approaches and theories in order to study the process deeply from all aspects. Researchers discovered some negative sides that lead to serious problems while learning and using a second language. A serious point was an issue for linguists whether the mother tongue influences on learning a second language and it usage by learners or not. Many linguists like Worf agreed on the influence of the mother tongue in language acquisition, and they made theories on this issue like the theory of constructive analysis. What is contrastive analysis theory?

1.1 Definition of Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive Analysis posits that the similarities and differences between the native language (L1) and the target language (L2) determine the ease or difficulty of language acquisition. According to CAH, learners will find it easier to acquire structures similar to those in their mother tongue, while structures that differ significantly will pose challenges.

Richards and Schmidt (2002) stated that “contrastive analysis is based on the following three maxims: “a) the main difficulties in learning a new language are caused by interference from L1; b) the difficulties can be predicted by CA; c) teaching materials can make use of CA to reduce the effects of interference”” (in Mahmoodzadeh, 2012, p. 735). Contrastive analysis theory is among the first theories which tackled this phenomenon and led to the appearance of several other theories. CA has many objectives that clarify this kind of phenomenon.

1.2 Objectives of Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive Analysis belongs to the field of Comparative Linguistics which aims to "comparing languages in order to determine potential errors for the ultimate purpose of isolating what needs to be learned and what does not need to be learned in a second-language learning situation" (Gass and Selinker, 2008, P. 96.)

Contrastive Analysis aims to discover the differences and similarities in terms of the structures between the mother tongue and the target language. Contrastive Analysis tends to explain and suppose a sufficient amount of difficulties that learners are able to face during learning a second-language. It aids language learners by developing their learning/teaching materials. CA can be applied in many fields.

1.3 Fields of Applying Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive Analysis can be applicable in multiple fields such as in second-language teaching and learning where contrastive analysis has the ability to notice the differences and the similarities between the two languages. Its objective is to develop the teaching/learning materials of language learners. It can also be applied in Sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, pragmatics and bilingualism.

Contrastive analysis has the ability to help language learners by providing an appropriate and suitable understanding of the linguistic differences between languages Contrastive analysis is able to lay a base on translation by facilitating the process of translating and interpreting, because translators already have a background on understanding the differences and the similarities between languages they are working with. Therefore, it can balance the struggle of words vs. their senses to avoid linguistic hindrance.CA proceed through four steps.

1.4 Procedures of Contrastive Analysis

According to Lado (1957), the analysis of CA has four important steps to be followed. The first step is Description; the researcher needs to give a formal description of the two languages. The second one is selection in which the researcher needs to select and choose a certain form of the two languages to be compared, such as: rules, structure, phonology, pronunciation and conjugation. The third step is Contrast/Comparison, where the researcher needs to compare and contrast the differences and the similarities between the two languages. While the final step is prediction, the researcher needs to analyze the final results of the comparison of the two languages to see if the results will be problematic or not according to the language learner. Another theory that states the effects of L1 on L2 is the interlanguage theory.

2. Interlanguage Theory

In the past couple years, researchers and linguists have been searching for a new procedures and mechanisms of teaching a foreign language or a second language, that may be able to reduce and minimize the number of errors that are committed by learners when communicating with a second language. Hence, interlanguage theory was one of the main suggestions that linguists had proposed.

2.1. Definition of Interlanguage Theory

Interlanguage theory or language transfer is one of the most relevant reasons that cause problems in second language acquisition. Transfer is a term refers to the process of uncontrolled and unconscious use of the habit behaviors in the process of using a foreign language. Learners shape their use of the foreign language according to their mother tongue by thinking in their mother tongue and misusing the second language.

The phenomenon of native language transfer is a multifaceted one that has garnered significant scholarly interest in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Since

the 1950s, researchers have delved into the influence of the native language on SLA, and as transfer theory has evolved, more linguists have directed their attention to exploring the intricate relationship between the native language and SLA.

Language transfer is a phenomenon that takes place when using or acquiring a target language, either during or after the learning process. It is also known as L1 interference, linguistic interference, or cross-linguistic influence, all of which refer to the same concept of language transfer. Essentially, language transfer occurs when learners or speakers try to apply their knowledge from one language to another. In the process of acquiring a second language, the transfer of knowledge from one's mother tongue to the target language is an inevitable occurrence. This transfer can have both positive and negative effects on language learning.

2.2 Types of Language Transfer

Language transfer or language interference is applying previous knowledge to a new learning experience. It is divided into two parts: positive transfer and negative transfer. It can be predicted by a number of differences and similarities in terms of structure between the mother tongue and the target language.

According to Lado (1957) noted that if the units and the structures of two languages are not the same, errors are likely to be generated as called negative transfer. The greater the differences between the two languages, the more negative transfer are likely to be expected.

Negative transfer happens when the learner uses his knowledge in an incorrect way. For instance, overgeneralization. It is when the learner over generalizes rules, theories and when he uses the same rule in the entire situation, for example, James plays basketball I plays basketball, so according to the simple present rule, third-person (He, She, It) is used with the verb stem (play) + inflection s. Here in this situation the second example is

incorrect in terms of grammar and conjugation. The personal pronoun I is not considered as a third- person. Therefore, the learner must not add the inflection s to the verb stem (play).

Negative transfer occurs when the learner is learning a second language, it is called by the mother tongue interference, it happens when the grammar rules and the structure of the first language affect the second language understanding, it affects pronunciation, grammar, word order and conjugation, for example, simplification. Koreans in their mother tongue do not use articles such as, a-an-the in their sentences. Therefore, instead of saying the sun is shining bright today, they say sun is shining bright today.

The second type of transfer is: the positive transfer. According to Lado (1957), if the units and the structures of two languages are the same, linguistic interference can result in correct language production (Positive transfer).

Positive transfer is a transfer which facilitates learning. It occurs if the two languages (MT) and (TL) have the same structure and they resemble each other in terms of grammar, word order, and pronunciation. The learning process will be much easier, for example, English and French languages are similar in terms of grammar system and written form, they tend to share the same alphabet and sometimes the same pronunciation of some words.

2.3 The Influence of Mother Tongue (Arabic) on Learning the Foreign Language (English)

2.3.1 Definition of Mother Tongue (MT)

Mother tongue, first language or native language are words that refer to the first language learned from birth, or the language a baby's surrounding speak, It occurs spontaneously. According to Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt's (n.d.) in Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, "mother tongue is (usually) a

first language which is acquired at home." (p.377). They defined the native language as the language which is acquired by a person in early childhood as it is spoken in the family and/or it is the language of the country where he or she is living. (p. 386).

2.3.2 Definition of Foreign Language (FL)

Foreign language, target language or non-native language are words that refer to any learnt language except the one which is learned from birth. It may be learnt as a second language. According to Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt's (n.d.) in Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, foreign language is "A language which is not the native language of large numbers of people in a particular country or region, is not used as a medium of instruction in schools, and is not used as a medium of communication in government, media, etc. Foreign Languages are typically taught as school subjects for the purpose of communicating with foreigners or for reading printed materials in the language." (p. 224).

2.3.3 The Influence of Mother Tongue on the Use of Prepositions

The influence of native language on L2 learning cannot be denied due to its impact, the interference of mother tongue is affecting learning negatively. And it can be viewed on the four language skills (writing, listening, speaking and reading). According to Mede, Tutal, Ayaz, çalisir and Akin (2014) there is a high probability of cross-linguistic influence in second language acquisition and this influence may cause some errors, which are caused by negative transfer. It was affirmed that the L1 interference categories with frequency counts of more than 100 errors (Watcharapunyawong and Usaha, 2013).

3. Error Analysis

Error analysis is an approach that examines learners' errors to identify patterns and sources of difficulties in L2 acquisition. It goes beyond the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis by considering other factors, such as intralingual errors (caused by the target

language itself) and developmental errors (stemming from the natural process of language learning).

During the process of the second language acquisition, learners obviously tend to make errors. Students' errors have been an issue for researchers, many of them got deeper in Error Analysis aiming to figure out the nature of its causes and sources. Numerous theories were created to study errors in order to discover its multiple causes and sources which lead to awareness about errors, its nature, types and sources. By knowing what have been mentioned, teachers can provide learners with strategies that may reduce the possibility of making errors, or make them notice that they already make errors even if they do not have the correct answer.

Contrastive analysis theory is one of the most theories that tackled errors. It claims that mother tongue has an impact on learning a second language. Therefore, learners make errors. Until the sixties, Stephen Pit Corder came up with a theory called Error Analysis which expressed different predictions about errors.

3.1 Definition of Error Analysis

Error Analysis is a theory came as a reaction to Contrastive Analysis theory by Stephan Pit Corder in the 1960's. Corder (1974, p. 125) stated that "The study of errors is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. In this respect it resembles methodologically the study of the acquisition of the mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give us indications as to the learning process".

Error Analysis Theory aims to discover what the learners know and do not know. Moreover, it helps teachers to adopt a suitable way of teaching strategies for a better learning. Error Analysis is categorized into types in order to be identified.

3.2 Branches of Error Analysis

According to Keshavarz (1997) the field of error analysis can be divided into two branches, which are: Theoretical error analysis and applied error analysis. Keshavarz (2002) cited that "theoretical analysis of errors is a branch which tries to find out the process and the strategies of language learning and its similarities with students first language acquisition". In other words, its main aim is to decode or solve the strategies that are made by the learners, such as: overgeneralization and implication. Secondly, it tries to figure out how can errors occur in the learning process and what are the reasons that leads to committing these particular errors.

Applied error analysis is a branch that is concerned with designing and organizing redial materials and appropriate methodological teaching strategies in order to find a solution of the errors that have been discovered in the theoretical error analysis (Keshavarz, 2006). There is always a distinction between errors and mistakes; they are not treated the same way in terms of the linguistics viewpoint.

3.3 Errors vs. Mistakes

This part summarizes the distinction between errors and mistakes made by learners. An error is a language element which cannot be corrected by the learner himself. A mistake, on the other hand, can be either intentional or unintentional and the language user can correct it when he identifies it. Errors occur due to learners' lack of competence whereas mistakes arise due to factors such as stress, lack of attention and concentration. When second language learners make errors, they are not able to identify their errors and consequently correct them until when they have an advanced level and a high competence. Mistakes are faultiness in linguistics in both native and foreign language. Mistakes occur accidently because of some conditions like fatigue or lack of

attention. Unlike second language learners, native speakers can immediately identify their mistakes.

Corder (1967) gave a differentiation between “errors” and “mistakes”. Errors occurred because of the incomplete mastery of some language’s patterns. In other words, students do not recognize when they make an error because of the lack of competence. However, mistakes are like slips of the tongue and they occur occasionally, learners do recognize them, they are self-corrected, and they usually happened due to fatigue or lack of performance. Thus, in the field of error analysis approach, errors are classified into multiple taxonomies.

3.4 Errors Classifications

Error Taxonomies aims to classify the types of errors to the linguistic aspect that are influenced by the error. Keshavarz & Brown (2012) classified errors into two different categories:

The first category is defined as a Processed-Based Classification, this taxonomy categories errors according to the way EFL learners are committing these errors by changing the surface structure. Brown (2000, p. 288) cited four sub-categories, which are:

a) Omission: In this process the student tends to delete a necessary linguistic element. For example: (Errors are marked with *)

-Jack bought three pen* yesterday. (s)

-My mother is* doctor. (a)

b) Addition: In this process a student may add some elements that must not occur in a sentence. For example:

-Give to* me the book.

-She will to* go home.

c) Substitution: According to Jack C, Richards and Richard Schmidt’s in Longman

Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistic (2010) cited that “an error in which the learner substitutes a form from one language (usually the learner’s mother tongue) for a form in the target language”. For example:

-An Arabic speaker may say “I will go to Dubai غدا” instead of “I will go to Dubai tomorrow”.

-Jack is not afraid from* dogs. (of)

d) Permutation: The students disorder words. For example:

-Jack last night* went to the party. (Jack went to the party last night.)

-Jack always comes late* to work. (Jack always comes to work late.)

The second category is defined as a Linguistic-Based Classification: this classification categories error according to their language elements such as: phonology, grammar and syntax. This classification of errors was cited by Keshavarz (2012, p. 90) has mentioned three main types of errors:

The first type is defined as orthographic error in which it includes sounds and letter mismatch, as in: “Jack went to skul” instead of saying “Jack went to school”. Moreover, there is same spelling with different pronunciation of words or similar pronunciation of words such as: hear- here. In other words, orthographic error aims to study the speech sounds in their own cognitive features.

The second type of linguistic error is lexica-semantic error, in which it is related to the lexical properties of lexical items. Which means they tend to study meanings, for example, “My bigger brother” instead of “My older brother” this lexicon- type of error is substitution.

The last type of linguistic-based error is the morphological-syntactic error, this particular type describes how learners misuse the English tenses and how they misuse English articles, prepositions and word orders, for instance, “Jack to the university went”.

Thus, the main aim of this study is to know how sentence structures and words are formed correctly. Moreover, errors are the results of the analysis that can be extracted from various and different resources.

3.5 Sources of Error Analysis

It is known that there are multiple and various descriptions for types of error analysis. Therefore, it is required to go furthermore and ask about the main sources that lead to commit errors. Thus, according to Dulay et al. (1982) "errors take place when the learner changes the surface structure in a particularly systematic manner (p. 105)".

Errors have been classified by J. Richard et al. (2002) into two main categories as follows: Interlingual errors and Intralingual errors. First of all, interlingual error is caused when the interference of the native language (Arabic) affects the target language (English). Ellis (1977, p. 51) refers to interference as a transfer, he stated that it is the influence that a native language has on the target language and it is divided into two negative and positive types. Interlanguage occurs in the first period when the student is learning a secondary language or a foreign language. In other terms the student is still influenced by his mother tongue. Therefore, he tends to use his linguistic knowledge of his first language on some of the linguistic features of the second language. The dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1992) defines interlingual errors as the result of language transfer (LT), which is caused by the learner's first language.

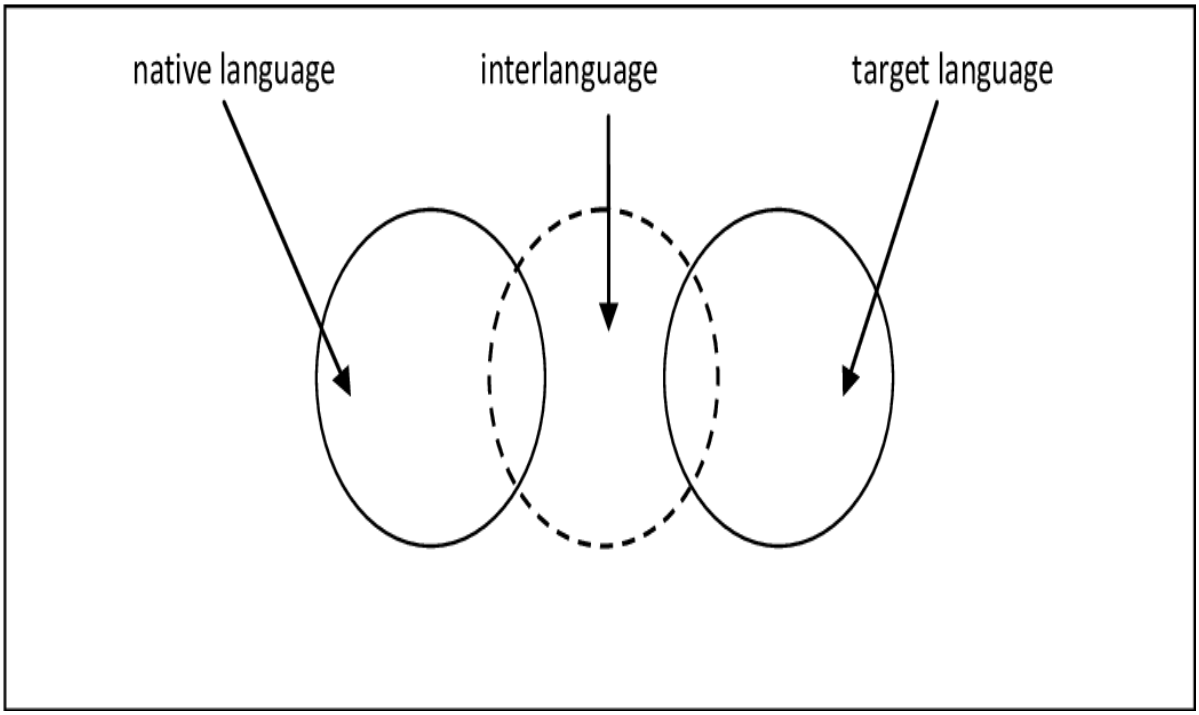


Figure1.1: *The Notion of Interlanguage (adopted from Corder, 1981, p. 17).*

Intralingual errors occur when the student's error was committed due to a certain misuse of a certain rule of the target language (TL). This type of error happens in the second language itself, when the student has an intermediate level in the target language. Richards (1971, p. 174) explained that intralingual errors are those that reflect general features of the rule learning like faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply.

4. Previous Studies

Apart from the abovementioned studies, extensive research has been conducted on the topic of the influence of the mother tongue on the second language acquisition specially in using English prepositions and errors in prepositional usage. One of the most prominent studies concerning the influence of the mother tongue in using English prepositions by Anfal ABDELDJOUAD and Khadidja GOUI at the department of Letters and English Language/ Kasdi Merbah University- Ouargla (2019/2020). the researchers aimed at

explaining the interference of mother tongue on the use of some English prepositions, their results revealed the noticed presence of mother tongue when dealing with English prepositions and that mother tongue interference is the main reason behind committing errors. Another relevant study, which analyzed and discussed to what extent Georgian ESL learners rely on their L1 prepositional knowledge in understanding prepositional usage in English by Gvarishvili (2013).

The study explained the language learning and language transfer that happens, positive and negative, shading the light on negative transfer. The focus of the study was to identify the types of errors due to negative transfer. Writings of Georgian ESL learners were collected and analyzed following these steps: collecting data, identifying errors, classifying errors, quantifying errors, analyzing source of error and remediating for errors. Most common categories of errors identified were substitution, addition, omission and overgeneralization, While the main reason was L1 interference. Another study on errors in prepositional usage by Mahmoodzadeh (2012). It was a study of prepositions in Persian and English. It showed the effect of language negative transfer and also discussed errors that have no relation with language interference. In this study English learners were given sentences to translate. Most errors were because of redundancy, omission and wrong use. The Misuse of The English Prepositions (In, On, At) by Student of English Third Year LMD's thesis at University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia as a Result of Transfer From Standard Arabic Into English aims to describe and probe the reality of the transfer of English prepositions from Arabic to English and its finding confirm the influence of mother tongue on the usage of English prepositions.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the whole chapter is devoted for defining English prepositions, explaining their uses and categories with examples. Thus, giving the use, the form and the function

of prepositions in English. The chapter discusses the factors about the complexity of English prepositions mentioning two main theories; Contrastive Analysis with its definition, objectives, procedures and fields, and the interlanguage theory with its definition, types and influence on learning the foreign language. The chapter tackled also error analysis, the branches and the classification of errors and the sources of error analysis.

Chapter Two

Research Methods and Procedures

Introduction

The fundamental objective of this study is to get into the relationship between mother tongue and second language especially the use of English prepositions. This study aims to confirm that third year EFL students make errors while using English prepositions because of the interference of their mother tongue. This chapter focuses on the design and methods used to conduct this research. First, it presents research design. Then, it deals with sampling and participants. After that, it explains data collection instruments by describing each instrument. The study relied on a students' questionnaire, a test and an analysis of students' exam papers to obtain information by collecting data.

2.1. Research Design

Research design refers to the structure that guides the research study. It outlines the procedures that researches follow. Durrheim (2004) "research design is a strategic frame work for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution, or the implementation of research strategies" (Durrheim, 2004, p.16). It can be qualitative, quantitative or a mixture of the two. A well-designed research study ensures that the data collected is reliable, valid, and relevant to the research purposes.

The research design of this study is a mixed of both quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative research is a method used in social sciences to get insights about individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and experiences. It involves the collection of data through questionnaires, interviews or tests. The collected data is analyzed by using qualitative analysis techniques to identify themes and meanings. This research analyzes a students' questionnaire, a test and exam papers of third year English language students.

2.2 Research Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate how the mother tongue (the native language Arabic) of the students (in Yahia Fares university of Medea) interferes on the use of English prepositions in academic writing. We aim to examine the impact of the mother tongue on the target language, to confirm the research hypothesis which states that third year LMD students rely on their mother tongue, to identify the most common types of errors made by English language learners to the use of English and to highlight the challenges they encounter when using English prepositions.

2.3 Research Sampling and Participants

2.3.1 Sampling Techniques

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a subset of individuals, units, or cases from a larger population to be included in a research study. In research, it is often not practical or feasible to study the entire population of interest, so a representative sample is selected instead. Sampling techniques vary depending on the research questions, study design, and the characteristics of the population. The target population of this study is third year EFL students at Yahia Fares University of Medea. Fourty students have been selected because they have an intermediate level after three years of studying English language as a specialty at university.

2.3.2 Participants

Participants in a research study refer to the individuals or entities who are actively involved in the research process by providing data or information. Participants are typically selected based on their relevance to the research question or objectives and their ability to contribute valuable insights or data. The term “participants” is commonly used in qualitative research and refers to individuals who are interviewed,

observed, or engaged in focus groups to gather qualitative data. In quantitative research, the term “participants” or “subjects” is often used and refers to individuals who are included in surveys, experiments, or other quantitative data collection methods. The study depends on third year English language students at Yahia Fares University, English department in Medea. Students’ participants were thirty students aged from 20-24. Participants were selected randomly from various groups. They are all Arabic speakers. Third year EFL students were chosen because they have a fair proficiency knowledge of English language since they have been studying it for two years as a specialty, and from middle school to high school for seven years. Moreover, participants are suitable for this study because they are most likely to understand the nature of the topic and being able to get a deep view from all aspects on their relationship with using prepositions. Consequently, the selected participants of the study can be the suitable choice for conducting reliable conclusions.

2.4 Data Collection Instruments

Collecting data is defined as the methods and the tools that researchers use to gather various information from multiple sources of evidence, proofs and corroborations in order to evaluate the researchers project and to whether confirm or deny their research hypothesis. Data collection instruments have numerous different types that researchers may use in their process of collecting data, for instance, surveys, observations, case studies or interviews. Thus, this specific study employed both the qualitative and quantitative methods to enhance researchers’ understanding of the findings. Various approaches were employed in conducting this study. Hence, we utilized a multiple-choice questionnaire and a test specifically designed for third year LMD students. Additionally, analyzing students’ exam papers, were also incorporated into this investigation.

2.4.1 Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is one of the most used tools to get information from individuals. It is a set of various and numerous questions that are given to a certain population who can help the researcher in confirming or denying his/her research hypothesis. The questionnaire of this research is a type of qualitative data collection tools that is used as a source to collect multiple information in the research process to confirm the hypothesis that the mother tongue has a huge impact on the second language particularly on the use of English prepositions. The used questionnaire is described as follows.

2.4.1.1 Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administrated to third year LMD students, at the English department, Yahia Fares University-Medea. Fourty students were chosen, the questionnaire participants were all EFL students who's their mother tongue is (Arabic). The main aim behind this questionnaire is to get an idea about student's attitudes toward English prepositions. The questionnaire consists of fourteen (13) questions all of them are written in English. All of the questions are direct, some of them concern the use of English prepositions in general and others are about the interference of the mother tongue on the foreign language in terms of the use of English preposition. It is considered as a multiple-choice question that all of the participants have the option to choose the response that suits them all. The questionnaire is divided in two main parts. The first part, is about general and personal information and about the students' level in English. It consists of four (3) different questions. as follows:

-The first question is about the participants 'age, it is a demographic question that is asked to determine whether the participants have a knowledge about the questionnaire or not. The more they are old the more they focus on the research questions.

-The second question is about the participants self-description; it is an option type of

questions, its aim is to see what students think about English and how much they assess themselves.

-The third question is about the duration and the length of how long the participants have been studying English.

-The fourth question is about the difficulty of English Grammar according to the participant's point of view. It is a yes/no type of questions.

The second part is about the English prepositions, the use and the interference of L1 on L2. It consists of ten (10) various questions that differ from 'wh' questions, to yes/no questions and to optional questions.

-The fifth question is the first asked question about prepositions, it is yes/no type of question. Its aim is to determine whether the participants face some struggles and difficulties concerning the use of English prepositions.

-Q6 is a percentage type of questions, that defines the participants' mastery of English prepositions. Its objective is to see the level of the students in terms of English prepositions.

-Q7 is an optional type of questions, that helps the researcher in determining the most common type of English prepositions that participants face some challenges with.

-Q8 is about the knowing the most confusing placement of English prepositions; whether it is at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the sentence.

-Q9 is about the factor that leads participants to have some confusion in terms of English prepositions.

-Q10 is the first question to be asked about the mother tongue interference. It is to see if Arabic has some similarities with English.

-Q11 is about the students' mindset, if they think in their MT while using EP. This

question aims to know if the L1 is still affecting students' way of thinking. It is a yes/no type of question.

-Q12 is about the impact of the native language (Arabic) on the target language (English). Its objective is to determine whether the main source of committing errors in grammar learning is due to language transfer.

-Q13 is about other factors that may affect second language students' learning process. Its aim is to see if there are other factors that are able to highly affect the process of learning a SL other than mother tongue interference.

-Q14 is about language transfer, if the NT is capable to help the students in having the ability to differentiate the appropriate, suitable use of English preposition in a sentence.

2.4.2 Students' Test

The test was administrated to third year LMD students, at the English department, at Yahia Fares University-Medea. Fourty students were chosen. Therefore, the aim of this test is to confirm or deny whether the mother tongue is able to strongly affect the usage of the English prepositions. The test is divided into two main parts, the students were given a sufficient amount of time to answer the questions of the test in an easy, comfortable way, the participants were given two exercises, each exercise was purposefully selected to investigate the errors that students make when using the English prepositions. In the first exercise they were asked to fill in the gaps by choosing the appropriate preposition, while the second exercise tackled the translation of five (5) different sentences.

2.4.2.1 Description of The Test

As stated above, the test is divided into Two parts. The first part is considered as fill in the blanks with the appropriate preposition, it is an exercise that contains thirteen (13)

sentences in which the participants were asked to choose between numerous options, one of these options has the correct preposition to fill in the blank with. The test options were all the most common used prepositions to select from: «by- on- at- in- with- of- to». Moreover, as for the selection of the correct prepositions, they were selected as follows:

-The preposition should be chosen in two sentences: sentence10 and 12.

-The preposition should be chosen in three sentences 1, 2 and 13.

-The preposition should be chosen in two sentences: sentence 3 and 4.

-The preposition should be chosen in the fifth sentence.

-The preposition should be chosen in sentence eleven.

-The preposition should be chosen in three sentences: 6, 8 and 9.

-The preposition should be chosen in sentence seven.

While the second part, is considered as a translation exercise that contains five sentences (5), the participants 'were asked to translate the given sentences from (Arabic) to (English) using the suitable English preposition in each expression.

2.4.3 Description of Students' Exam Papers

This particular research is conducted as both an experimental study and as an analysis study. Hence, the researchers retrieved students 'exam papers from the administration, the papers belong to third year LMD students, the English department, at Yahia Fares University Medea. The papers' content is expressed in a form of essays that were written by third year students as an exam of the Civilization module. Fourty-four (44) exam papers were precisely chosen according to the students' number of errors in terms of the use of English prepositions, especially the spatial prepositions (in- on- at) due to their manipulative types; they can be placed as types of time and of place.

2.5 Data Collection Procedures

The researchers conducting this study took an unconventional approach by n directly interacting with their target subjects, who were third-year LMD students at the English department of Yahia Fares University-Medea. Instead, they utilized digital means to distribute the data collection instruments, which included questionnaires and tests. These instruments were sent to the participants through Facebook groups and Messenger, where the students were members. Students were informed at the beginning of the questionnaire and the test that their answers will remain confidential, that they were used only for research purposes to confirm researchers' hypothesis that "mother tongue has an impact on the English prepositions in terms of written production". The data collection of the test took about fifteen (15) days whereas the questionnaire took approximately about seven days. Thus, concerning the exam papers of thirty students' where all retrieved from the administration of the English department of Yahia Fares University.

2.6 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are terms used to evaluate the quality of a research. This research is an investigation about the influence of mother tongue interference on the use of English prepositions in written production. The study aims to come up with the validity of the hypothesis, and seek to confirm the interference of the mother tongue. Therefore, a questionnaire, a test and students exam papers are used as suitable instruments to collect data of the research.

Conclusion

The use of English prepositions is a challenging issue for second language learners. Thus, English prepositions are known for been tricky to be used due to their different usages, their main aim is to show the relationship between words in a sentence structure. The present chapter describes the research methods and procedures that have been used

in conducting this research. It presents the qualitative and the quantitative research methods that have been used in the research design, its sampling and participants. Hence, it describes data collection instruments which are students' questionnaire, test and students' exam papers, the researchers described each instrument with details.

Chapter Three

Presentations of the Results and Data Analysis

Introduction

This particular chapter attempts to give a report on the procedures that are followed in collecting the research data in order to provide a meaningful interpretation, analysis and discussion of the main obtained results of the research instruments. The third chapter is devoted as the practical part of the research study, for this purpose, the results of students' questionnaire, test and students' exam papers are analyzed on the basis of the appropriate and inappropriate usages of English prepositions. The investigation aims to infirm or confirm the researcher's hypothesis that states that third year LMD students of the English department at Yahia Fares University misuse English prepositions due to the interference of their mother tongue (Arabic).

3.1 Data Presentation and Analysis of the Test (Third Year LMD)

The test is submitted to fourty (40) LMD students that are chosen randomly to fill in the gaps of thirteen (13) sentences, by choosing the appropriate English prepositions. While the second part of the test is given to the participants to make the translation of five (5) sentences from Arabic to English.

3.1.1 Part One

Sentence 01: *the bride has a ring* ***on*** *every finger.*

Table3.1: *Correct VS. Wrong use of prepositions in the first sentence*

Sentence	Correct answer	Wrong answer	Total
Number	15	25	40
percentage	37.5%	62.5%	100%

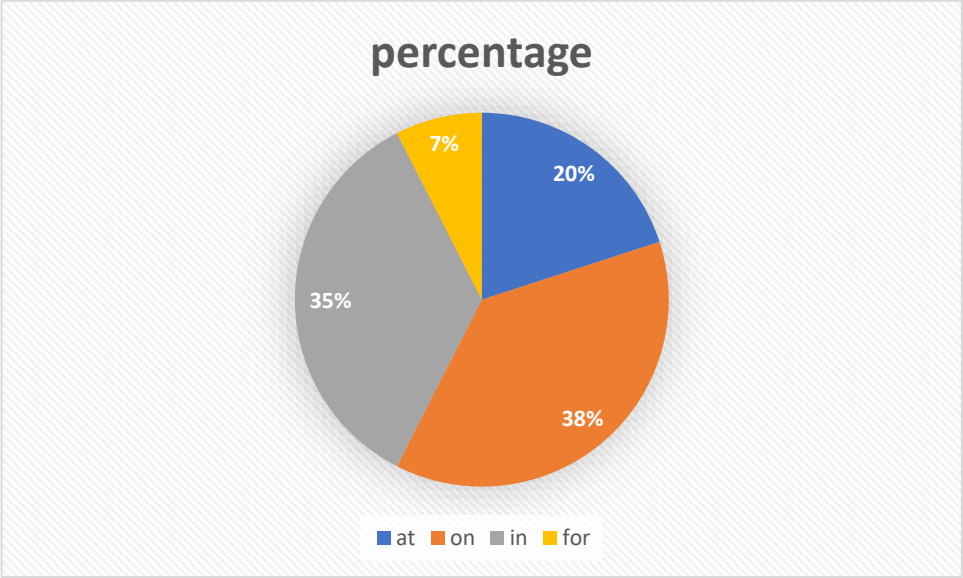


Figure3.1: *The usage of preposition in the first sentence*

The results of the table and the pie chart above demonstrate that 37.50% (15) of the students choose the correct preposition ‘on’ which is used with surface of something. While the other twenty-five 62.50% participants choose the wrong answers, they are divided as ‘in’ 35% (14 participants), ‘at’ 20% (08 participants) and lastly ‘for’ 07.50% (03 participants). Hence, the majority of the students make a substitution error, they use the preposition ‘in’ due to the interference of their mother tongue (Arabic), they use a negative transfer from the Arabic preposition ‘في’ ‘لدى العروسة خاتما في كل إصبع’, ‘ the bride has a ring on every finger’ whereas the other students use the preposition ‘at’ considering that each finger has a ring and each ring takes a place in the brides’ hand. Therefore, the appropriate preposition is ‘on’ because it is for a fact that accessories are on people not in them.

Sentence 02: We arrived **on** time.

Table 3.2: *Correct VS. Wrong use of prepositions in the second sentence*

Sentence	Correct use	Wrong use	Total
Number	17	23	40
Percentage	42.55%	57.5.5%	100%

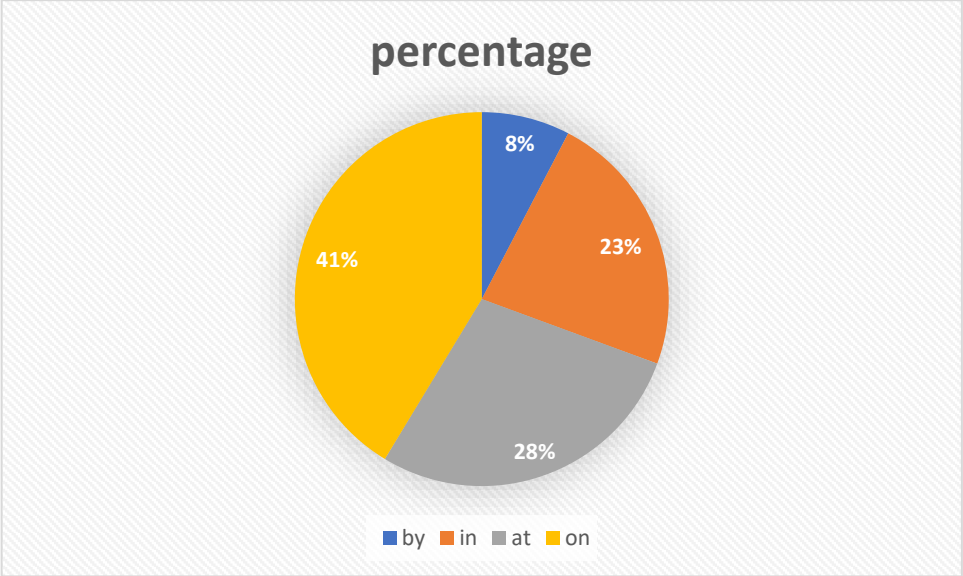


Figure 3.2: *The usage of preposition in the second sentence*

The presented graph and table illustrate the response statistics of the participants regarding sentence two. Out of the total participants, 42.5% (17 students) correctly choose the preposition 'on', while 27.5% (11 students) select 'at'. The remaining students opt for 'in' or 'by'. It is important to note that the preposition 'on' signifies a precise moment in time. The influence of the participants' mother tongue Arabic can be observed in the incorrect answers, as the Arabic equivalent would be 'وصلنا في الوقت' 'we arrived on time'.

This suggests that students make substitution errors due to negative transfer from their mother tongue.

Sentence 03: I was not satisfied **at** finding the chaos in the house.

Table 3.3: *Correct VS. Wrong use of prepositions in the third sentence.*

Sentence	Correct use	Wrong use	Total
Number	3	37	40
Percentage	7.5%	92.5%	100%

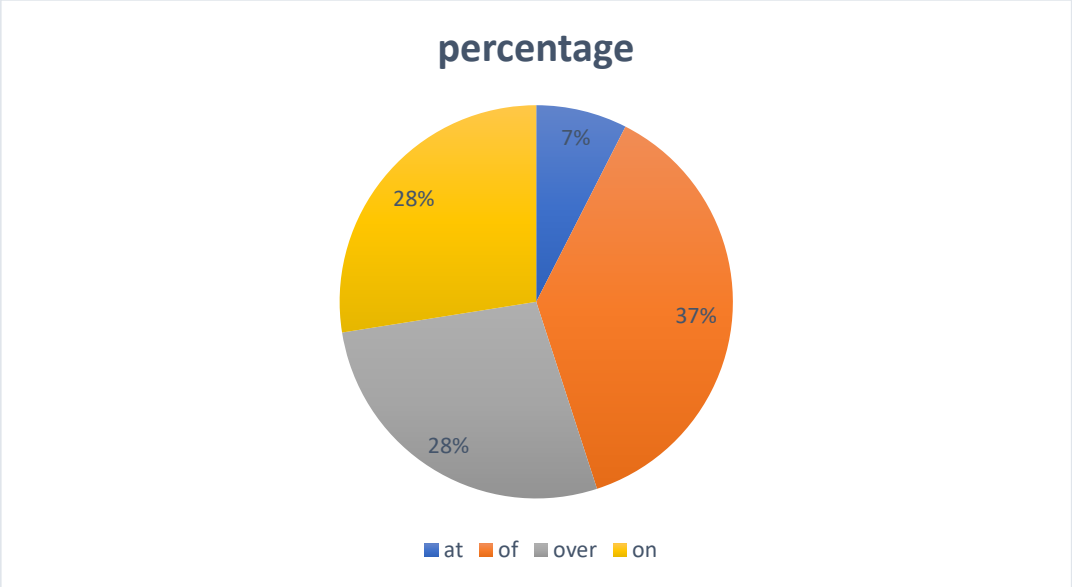


Figure 3.3: *The usages of prepositions in the third sentence*

Results of the table and the statistical circle above demonstrate that 7.5% (03) of the participants choose the correct answer which is the preposition ‘at’. The prepositions that are chosen by students instead of ‘at’ are: ‘of’ (15), ‘over’ (11), and ‘on’ (11). Students answer wrongly due to the interference of the native language (Arabic), they transfer negatively since in Arabic we use the preposition ‘عن’ by saying ‘ لم أكن راضيا عن وجود

الفوضى في المنزل', 'I was not satisfied at finding the chaos in the house'. Students who answer in a wrong way, they make substitution error.

Sentence 04: *We would like to write your name **at** the top of the page.*

Table 3.4*: Correct vs. wrong use of prepositions in the fourth sentence*

Sentence	Correct use	Wrong use	Total
Number	13	27	40
Percentage	32.5%	67.5%	100%

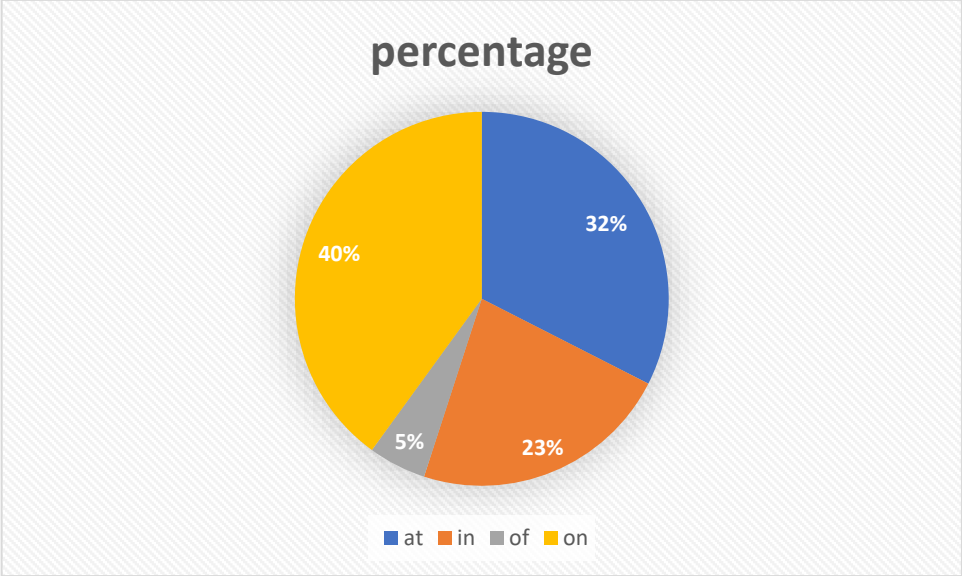


Figure 3.4: *The usages of prepositions in the fourth sentence*

The results of the table and the pie chart above demonstrate that 32.50% (13) of the students choose the suitable answer which is 'at' whereas the other remained students (27) 67.50% use the incorrect prepositions, they are divided as follows: 'in' 22.50% (09 participants), 'at' 40% (16 participants) and 'of' 05% (02 participants), therefore, most of the students tend to think first in their mother tongue (Arabic) and then they translate it to the second language (English), that is why they use the wrong prepositions 'in' and

‘on’ due to the negative interference of their mother tongue (Arabic), in Arabic we say ‘أكتب اسمك في أعلى الورقة‘ write your name at the top of the page’.

Sentence 05: We must keep **in** something for the serious situation.

Table 3.5: *Correct VS. Wrong use of prepositions in the fifth sentence.*

Sentence	Correct answer	Wrong answer	Total
Number	12	28	40
percentage	30%	70%	100%

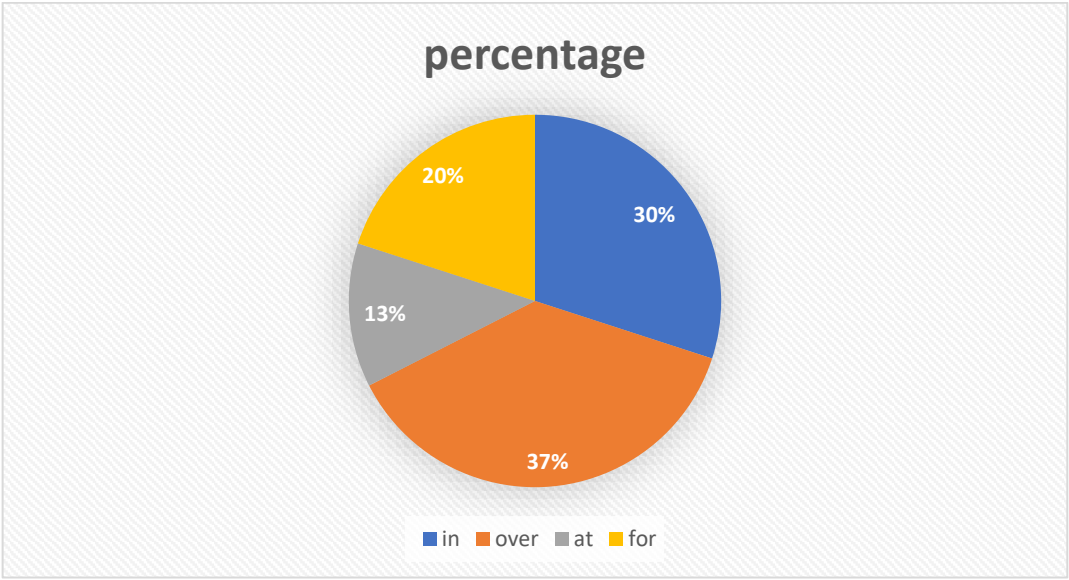


Figure 3.5: *The usages of prepositions in the fifth sentence*

Results of the table and the statistical circle above demonstrate that 30% (12) of the participants choose the correct answer which is the preposition ‘in’. 70% of the students have chosen ‘over’, ‘at’ and ‘for’ instead of ‘in’. Wrong answers are done by most of the students because of the interference of the mother tongue. They make a negative transfer by thinking in Arabic and they make substitution error.

Sentence 06: Jack is married **to** Sandra.

Table 3.06: *Correct VS. Wrong use of prepositions in the eighth sentence.*

Sentence	Correct answer	Wrong answer	Total
Number	22	18	40
percentage	55%	45%	100%

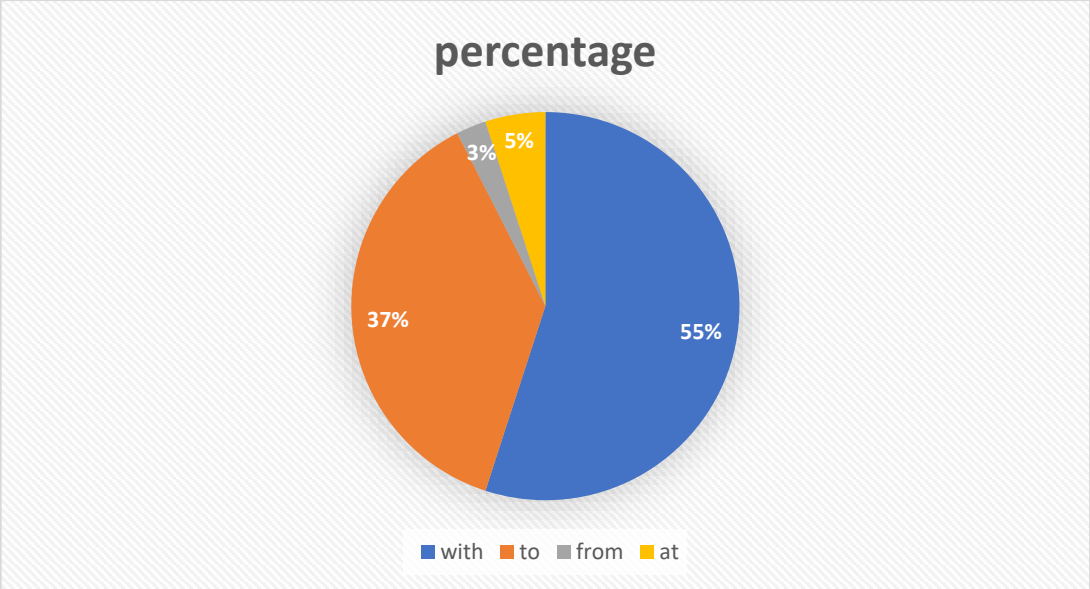


Figure 3.6: The usage of the prepositions in the sixth sentence

The results of the table and the statistical pie above show that only 45% of students guess the right answer which is 'to' whereas 45% of them fail to use it. Eighteen students use 'from' (1 student), 'with' (22 students) and 'at' (2 students) instead of 'to' due to the negative transfer from their mother tongue since in Arabic we use in this sentence the preposition 'من' or 'مع' by saying 'جاك متزوج من ساندرا' 'Jack is married to Sandra'. As a result, students make the substitution error.

Sentence 07: The government robbed the briber **of** his possessions.

Table 3.7: *Correct VS. Wrong use of prepositions in the seventh sentence*

Sentence	Correct answer	Wrong answer	Total
Number	7	33	40
percentage	17.5%	82.5%	100%

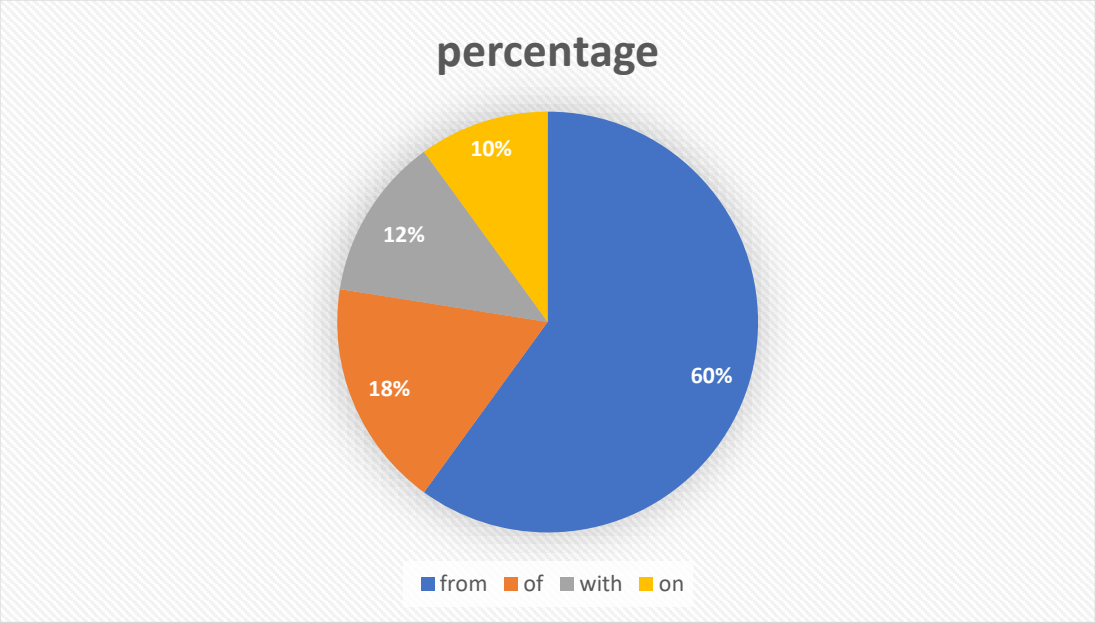


Figure 3.7: *The usages of prepositions in the seventh sentence*

Out of forty students; only seven students insert the right answer “of”. The other thirty-three students choose "from’, "on" or "with" as follows: "from" (24 students), "on" (4 students) and "with" (5 students). The majority of the students transfer negatively the preposition ‘from’ from the Arabic preposition ‘من’ by saying ‘ سلبت الحكومة المرتشي من ممتلكاته ‘, ‘the government robbed the briber of his possessions’. Students who use "from", "on" or "with" make a substitution error.

Sentence 08: The lovely couples are related **to** each other **by** the bond of marriage.

Table 3.8: *Correct VS. Wrong use of prepositions in the eighth sentence*

Sentence	Correct answer	Wrong answer	Total
Number	9	31	40
percentage	22.5%	77.5%	100%

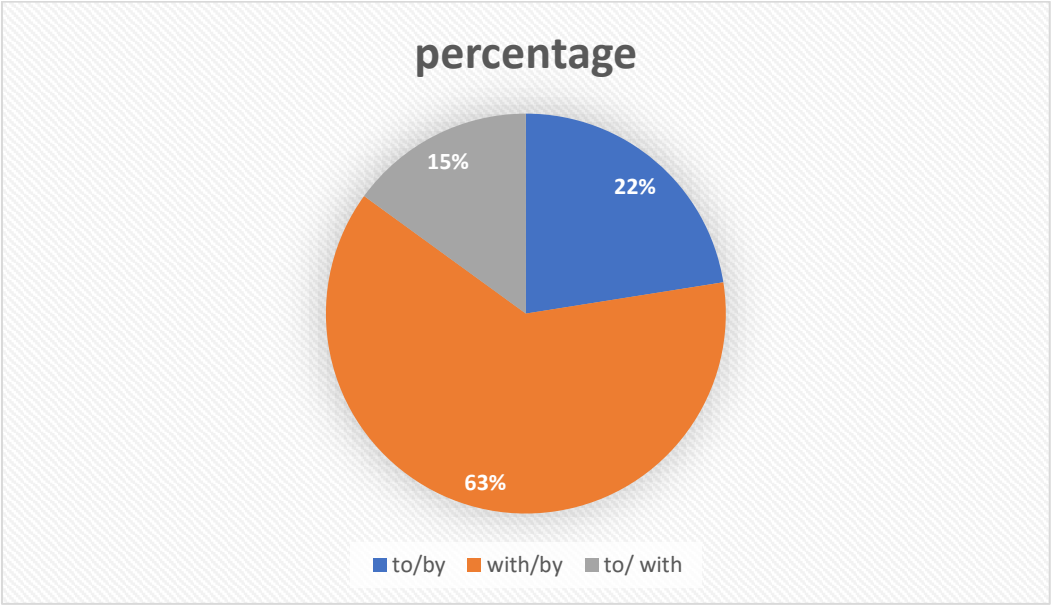


Figure 3.8: *The usages of prepositions in the eighth sentence*

In this sentence, the percentage of wrong answers (77.5%) is higher than the percentage of correct ones (22.5%). Nine students get the right answer "to/by", while, the rest of students choose either "with/by" (25 students) or "to/with" (6 students). Students who use "with/by" find that they can be correct as in their mother tongue, so they negatively transfer the use of the prepositions "مع" in this sentence. In contrast to students who used "to/by", they have an advanced level which made them guess the correct

preposition. In this sentence, students who used wrong prepositions made the substitution error.

Sentence 09: There is no exception **to** this issue.

Table 3.9: *Correct vs. Wrong use of prepositions in the ninth sentence*

Sentence	Correct answer	Wrong answer	Total
Number	3	37	40
percentage	7.5%	92.5%	100%

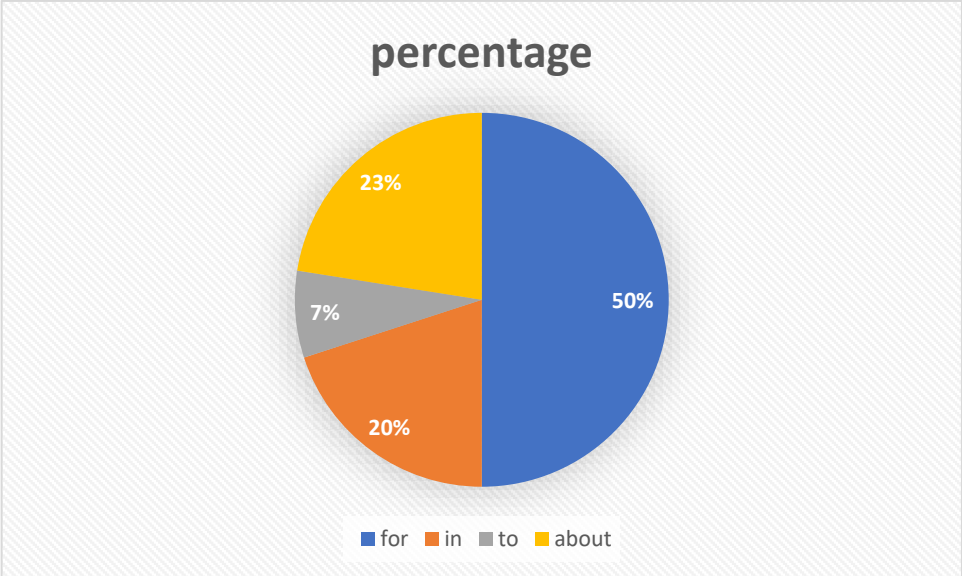


Figure 3.9: *The usages of preposition in the ninth sentence*

The results of the table and the pie chart show that only 07.50% (03) of the students use the correct preposition "to", its equivalent in standard Arabic is "الى", and that what we call positive transfer unlike the majority of the participants 92.50% (37) who choose the wrong prepositions, they are divided as "in" 20% (08 participants), about 22.50% (09 participants) and the most used preposition was "for" 50% (20 participants). Hence, it was

clear that the majority of the students misuse the preposition "to" and they substitute it with the other prepositions especially "for". Consequently, the reason behind using this inappropriate preposition is the interference of L1. In Arabic we say "لهذه المشكلة" that explains why half of the participants select the preposition 'for' instead of 'to'.

Sentence 3.10: Tourist traveled **by** a boat to the other part of the island

Table 3.10: *Correct VS. Wrong use of prepositions in the tenth sentence*

Sentence	Correct answer	Wrong answer	Total
Number	17	23	40
percentage	42.5%	57.5%	100%

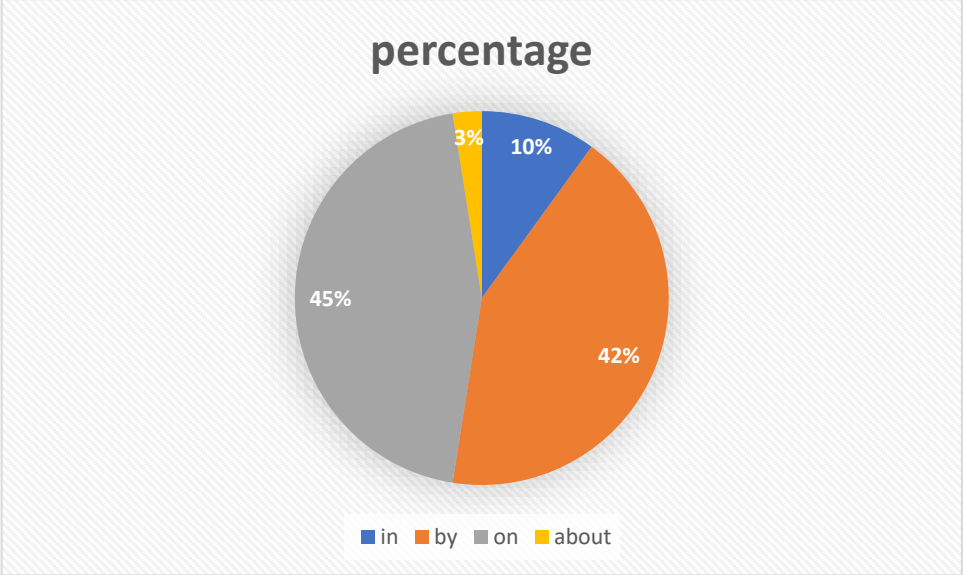


Figure 3.10: *The usages of the prepositions in the tenth sentence*

The results of the table and the circle graph above demonstrate that 42.50% (17) of the participants choose the appropriate preposition "by" while the other 57.50% twenty-three participants use the inappropriate prepositions which are divided as follows: "on"

45% (18 participants), "in" 10% (04 participants) and lastly "about" 02.50% only (one participant). Hence, the participants make a substitution error by using the prepositions “in”, “on” and “about”. Eighteen of students use the preposition "on" because of the interference of their mother tongue, they make a negative transfer by thinking in their mother tongue and they make a literal translation to the sentence from Arabic to English. that is why the most common use preposition is "by" rather than "on" because "on" in Arabic is the preposition "ala".

Sentence 11: She has cut her finger **with** a knife.

Table 3.11: *Correct VS Wrong Use of Preposition in the Eleventh Sentence.*

Sentence	Correct use	Wrong use	Total
Number	19	21	40
Percentage	47%	53%	100%

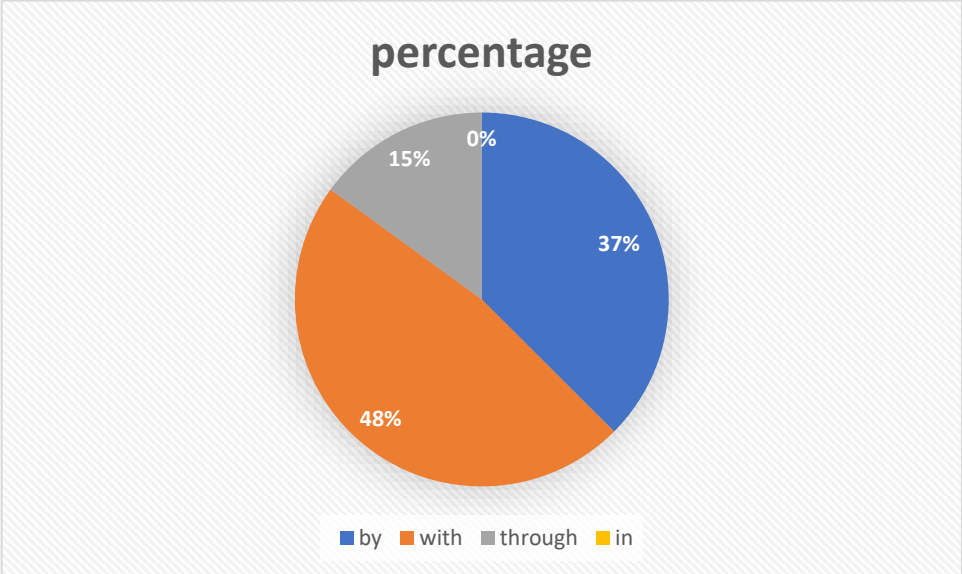


Figure 3.11: *The usages of the prepositions in the eleventh sentence*

This graph shows the statistics of participants' answers on sentence eleven, 47.5% of the participants (19 students) choose the appropriate answer "with". Unlike the 52.5% of the participants (21 students) choose the wrong prepositions "through" and "by". They make a substitution error because of negative transfer which reflects the effect of their mother tongue (Arabic) on choosing the right preposition.

Sentence 12: Sam went **by** car.

Table 3.12: *Correct VS Wrong Use of Preposition in the Twelfth Sentence.*

Sentence	Correct use	Wrong use	Total
Number	20	20	40
Percentage	50%	50%	100%

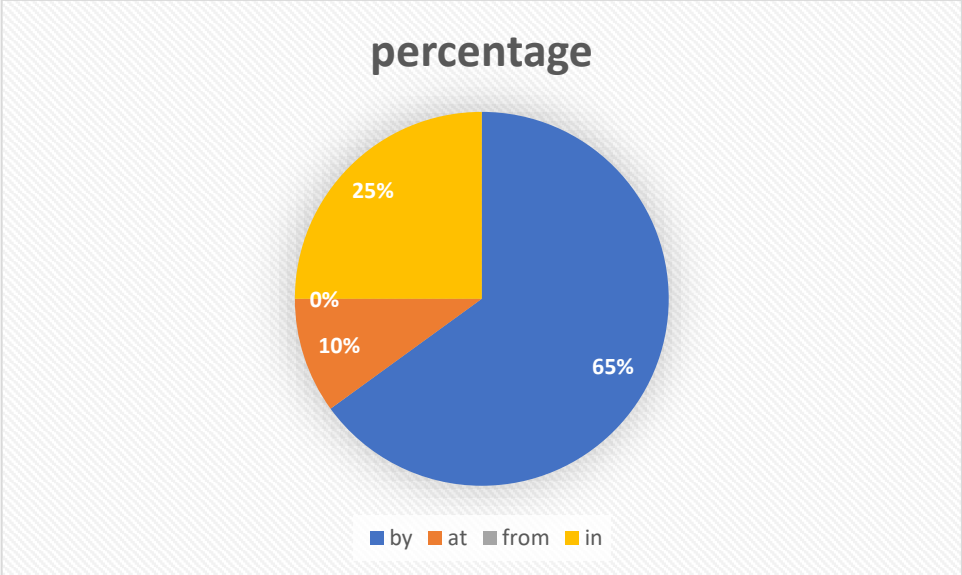


Figure 3.12: *The usages of prepositions in the twelfth sentence*

This graph and table present the statistics of participants' answers on sentence twelve. The majority of the answers are right in this sentence, 65% of the participants (26 students) choose the appropriate preposition 'by' however the other (14 students) answer

wrongly. 25% chose the preposition ‘in’, 10% choose ‘at’ and no student choose the preposition ‘from’ ‘0%’. The reason behind committing this substitution error goes for the lack of practicing because we use the preposition ‘by’ to describe how someone travels. As a result, misusing this preposition goes back to the lack of practicing.

Sentence 13: There is a lot of dirt **on** the carpet

Table 3.13: *Correct VS Wrong Use of Preposition in the Fourteenth Sentence.*

Sentence	Correct use	Wrong use	Total
Number	20	20	40
Percentage	50%	50%	100%

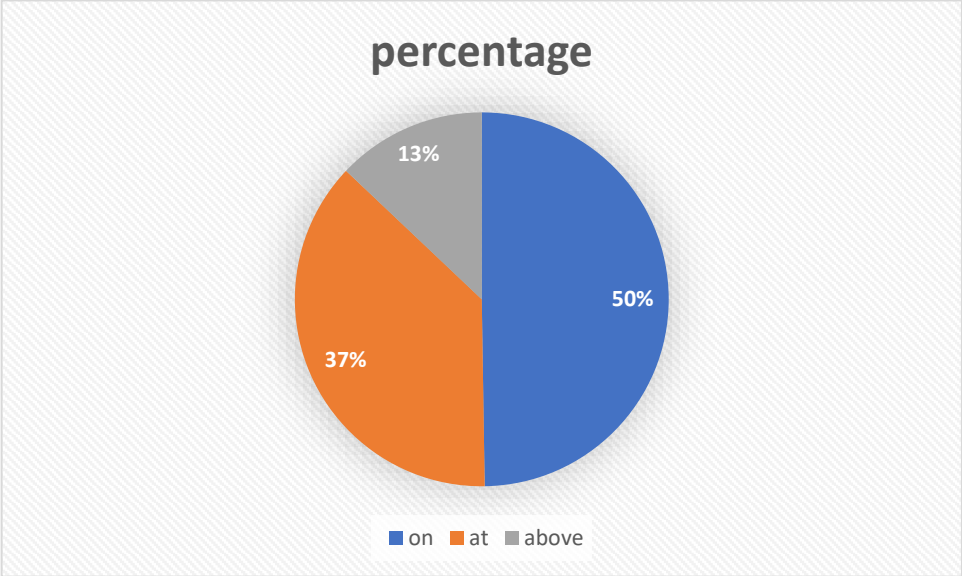


Figure 3.13: *The usages of prepositions in the thirtieth sentence*

This graph and table present the statistics of participants’ answers on the fourteenth sentence. The results of the table and the pie chart above demonstrate that 50% (15 students) of the students guess the correct preposition ‘on’ which is used with surface of something. While the other fifty 50% participants choose the wrong answers, they are

divided as follows: ‘above’13% (14 participants), and ‘at’ 37% (15 participants). Hence, the majority of the students make a substitution error because of the negative transfer from the mother tongue.

3.1.2 Part Two

الجملة 01: تؤثر مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي على المراهقين

The answer: social media **affects teenagers**

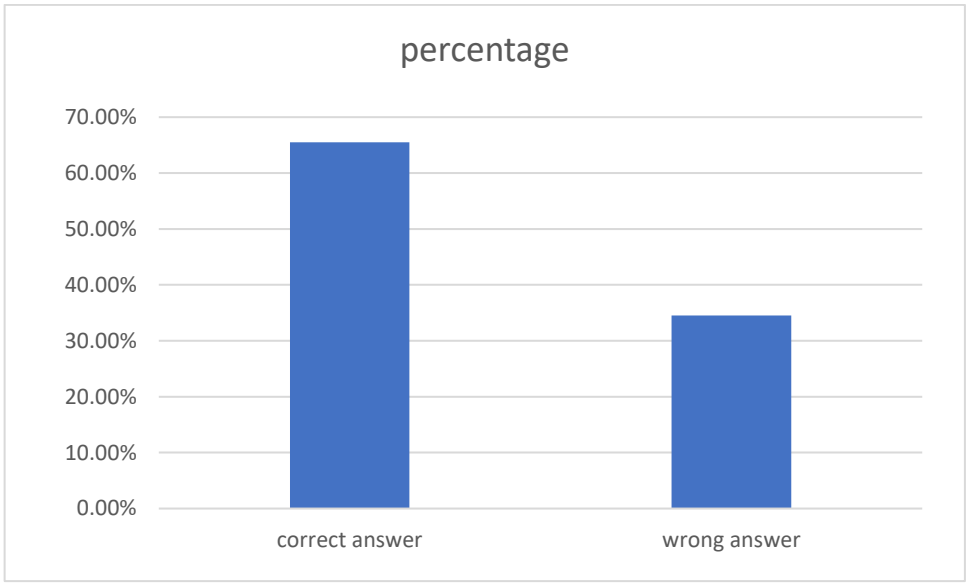


Figure 3.15: *Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word in sentence 1.*

الجملة02: لم أكن راضيا عن نتائج الامتحان

The answer: I was not satisfied **with** the exam results

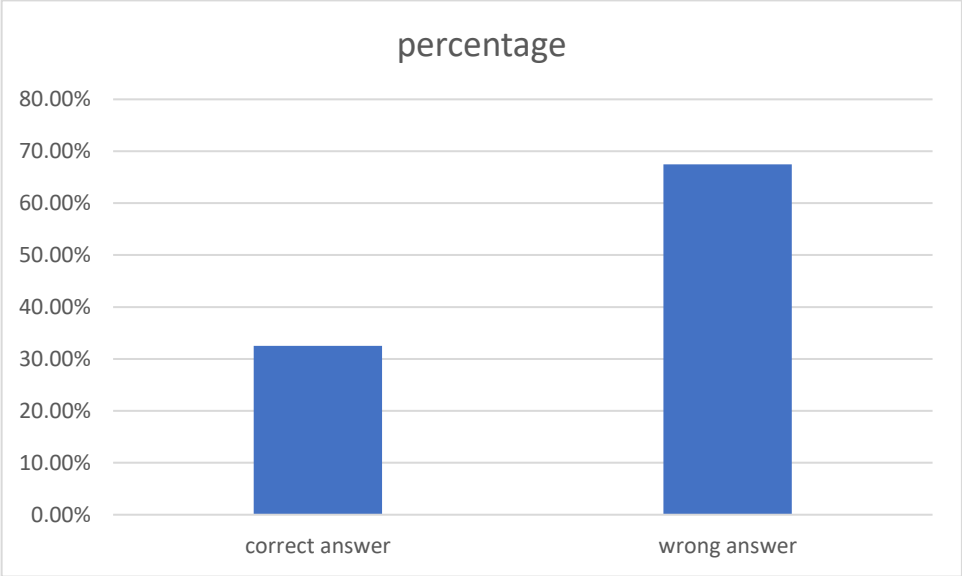


Figure 3.14: *Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word in sentence 2.*

الجملة02: لم أكن راضيا عن نتائج الامتحان

The answer: I was not satisfied **with** the exam results

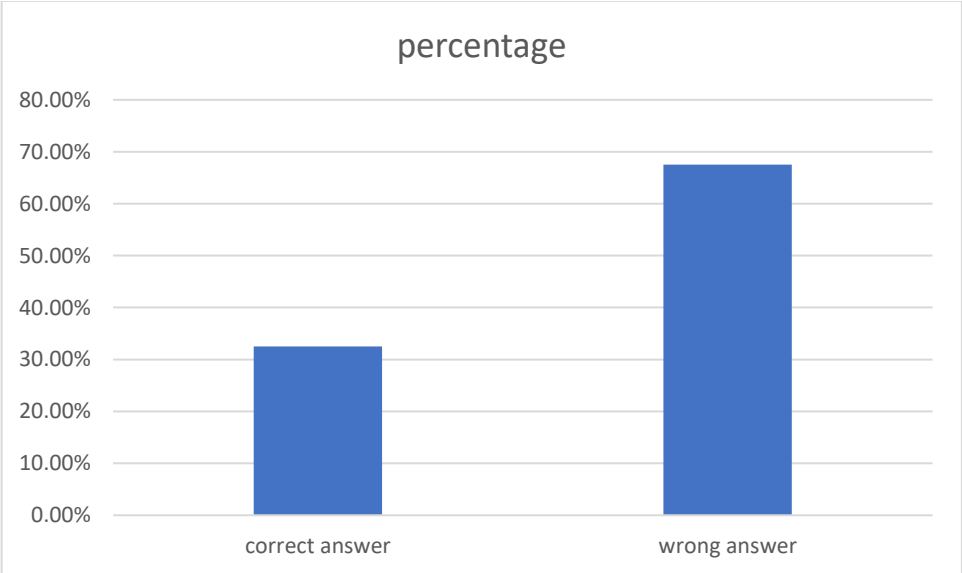


Figure 3.15: *Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word in sentence 2.*

الجملة 03: يجب أن ينهي عمله بحلول يوم الأربعاء

The answer: He must finish his work **by** Wednesday

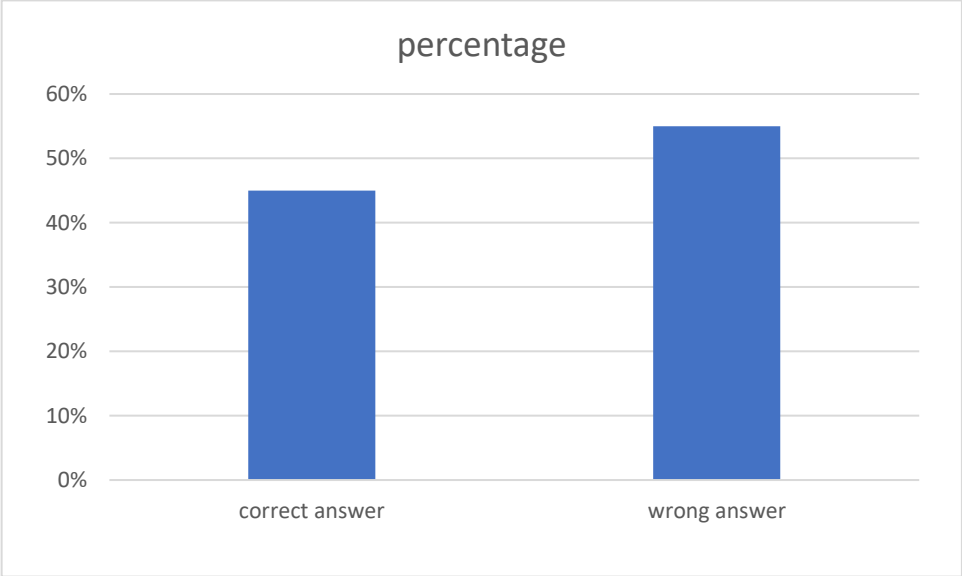


Figure 3.16: *Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word in sentence 3.*

الجملة 04: ذهبت إلى المنزل عن طريق الخطأ

The answer: I went home **by** mistake

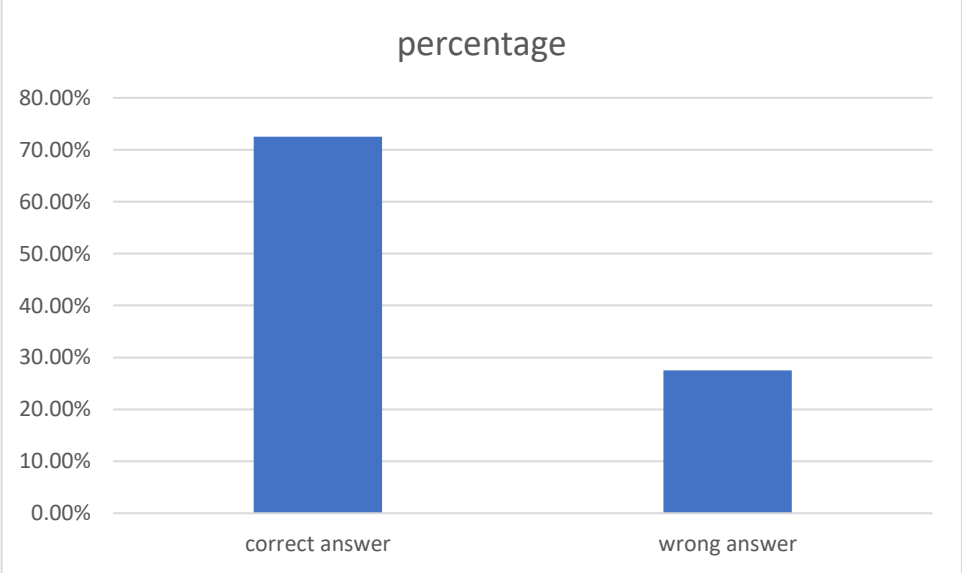


Figure 3.17: *Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word in sentence 4.*

الجملة 05: يعمل الطلاب على انهاء مذكرة التخرج

The answer: The students are working **<u>on</u>** completing their dissertation

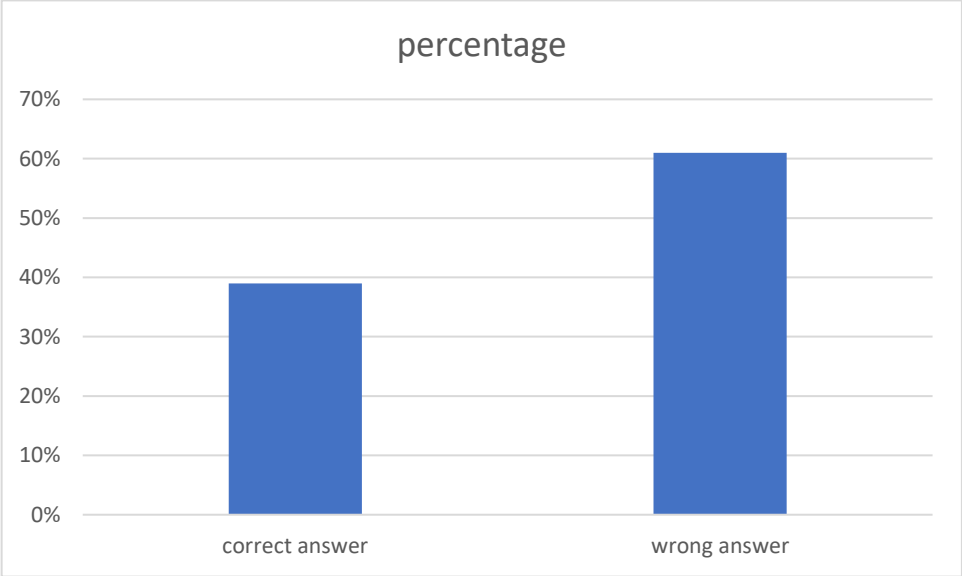


Figure 3.18: *Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word in sentence 5.*

The data of this activity are all gathered through students' translation of the five (5) sentences. The results of the column graphs above demonstrate that the majority of the participants approve that they commit a literal translation to the given sentences instead of concentrating on the meaning of each sentence and that leads to the misuse of English prepositions. The participants' prepositional errors are all due to the interference of their mother tongue (standard Arabic), it can be a negative or a positive interference. For instance, the first sentence there is no need to put the English preposition "on", it is considered as a "Redundant type of error."

In the second, third and fifth sentences, most of the students fail in translating the sentences correctly by putting the inappropriate English prepositions and that is due to the negative interference of the L1, students make a "substitution type of error." In the fourth sentence, the majority of the participants use the appropriate English preposition

“by” in their sentence translation and that is due to the Positive interference of the L1 (Arabic) on the L2 (English).

3.2 Data Presentation and Analysis of the Students’ Exam Papers

In order to conduct the analysis of the exam papers, a total of forty-four papers from third year LMD students were select and examine to evaluate their usage of English prepositions in their essays. The findings reveal that students commit errors in three different categories: substitution, redundant, and omission. The majority of errors fall into the substitution category, accounting for 70% of the errors with 28 participants. Eight students (20%) make redundant errors, while the remaining four students (10%) make omission errors. Table 3.2.1 provides a visual representation of the percentage of incorrectly used prepositions.

Table 3.2.1: *Percentages of errors in using prepositions*

Prepositions	Substitution error	Redundant error	Omission error	Number of students	Percentages
between	2	0	0	2	4.5%
At	6	0	0	06	13.6%
On	8	0	0	11	25%
In	8	0	2	10	22.7%
To	0	8	2	8	18.1%
For	3	0	0	3	6.8%
Of	4	0	0	4	9.3%

In this specific category, the preposition 'on' was find to be the most commonly misused, with eight students making errors in its usage. Additionally, the preposition 'in' is misused by eight students in this error category. Six students make mistakes with the

preposition 'at', while 4 students struggle with the preposition 'of'. Among the remaining students, 3 make errors with the preposition 'for', 2 with 'between', and no students commit mistakes with the preposition 'to'. According to the table, the majority of errors (70%) fall into the substitution category.

Regarding the substitution errors, students replace the preposition 'in' with 'on' and 'at' in sentences such as 'in the United States of America' and 'in 1894'. They also substitute the preposition 'of' with 'in' in the sentence 'the president in America'. Furthermore, the preposition 'in' is incorrectly used instead of 'on' in the sentence 'in April 1894'. In the redundant category, 20% of the errors are observed, specifically with the preposition 'to'. Examples of such errors include 'the writer reaches to his aim', 'it joined to the war', and 'has joined to the congress'. In these instances, students unnecessarily add the preposition 'to', resulting in redundant errors. The omission category of errors occurs when participants omit the required preposition. For instance, in the sentences 'the meeting was April 1894' and 'to play the role America', 4 students (10%) fail to include the prepositions 'on' and 'in' at the appropriate places.

3.3 Data Presentation and Analysis of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is one of the most used tools in researches to get information from individuals. In this study, students' questionnaire is the third instrument used to collect data. This particular tool contains sixteen (13) questions that are given to fourty third year LMD students at Yahia Fares University.

Section one: Personal Information

Question one: Participant's age

Table 3.3.1: *Age distribution among participants*

Level	Age
Third year LMD	Between 20/24 years old

Question two: Participants self-description

Table 3.3.2: *Participants self-description*

State of students	Students who are good enough to be English language students	Students who must study English to get a good career	Students who have no desire in studying English but it is okay
Percentage	42.5%	40.4%	16.7%

The third question "what describes you the best?" aims to have a clear image about the student's purpose behind studying English language, the highest percentage of the statistics goes to students are good enough to be English language student. Almost the same percentage goes to students who must study the language to get a good career while the least percentage goes to those who have no desire in studying English.

Question Three: Participants' duration of studying English.

Table3.3.3: *Students' journey of studying English*

Participants who studied English less than 7 years	Participants who studied English more than 7 years
50.3%	49.7%

This question "how long have you been studying English?" is based on students' expertise or experience with English language to get a board range of perspectives. The majority of the participants have been studying English since middle school.

Question Four: Is English grammar difficult for you?

Table3.3.4: *English grammar difficulty*

Is English grammar difficult?		
Yes, it is	No, it is not	It is not difficult, but tricky
54.8%	2.3%	42.9%

This is a "yes/no" type of question "is English grammar difficult for you?" which leads us to know if the participant considers English grammar easy or difficult. 54.8% of the students find it easy to be used while it is tricky for 42.9% of them due to some reasons which are: the huge amount of grammar rules, it contains a lot of exceptions, the lack of use and due to teachers.

Section Two: Prepositions and Interference.

Question Five: Do you have difficulty with English prepositions?

Table3.3.5: *English preposition difficulties*

Are English prepositions difficult?		
Yes	No	Not really
45.2%	21.4%	33.3%

This is also a "yes/no" type of question "do you have difficulties with English prepositions" the aim behind asking this question is to know whether English prepositions are difficult to be understood by EFL students. The statistical chart shows that 45.2% and 21.4% of the participants did not consider EP as an issue. The rest of the participants (33.3%) agreed that EP are confusing because of the interference of their native language (Arabic).

Question Six: How much do you estimate the percentage of your mastery of English prepositions?

Table3.3.6: *The percentage of students' English preposition mastery*

State of students	Students who have an average level	Students whom are under average in level	Students who have an advanced level
percentage	59.5%	9.5%	31%

Question six: "how much do you estimate the percentage of your mastery of English prepositions?" The objective of this question is to know the student's level in terms of English prepositions. 59.5% (25 students) rate themselves to the average in mastering them, 31% (13 students) have an advanced mastery (80%), while the rest of participant have an under average level (20%).

Question Seven: Which type of prepositions do you struggle with the most?

Table 3.3.7: *The most difficult type of preposition*

Type of prepositions	Prepositions of time	Prepositions of place	Prepositions of movement
Percentage	23.8%	16.7%	59.5%

The question "which type of preposition do you struggle with the most?" has an only main objective which is knowing the most difficult type of prepositions according to students.59.5% of the student vote for prepositions of movement, 23.8% for preposition of time and preposition of place is the easiest one since only 16.7% of the student choose it.

Question Eight: If you have difficulties with prepositions, is it more confusing with prepositions which are placed at the beginning, in the middle or at the end?

Table 3.3.8: *English prepositions' placement*

Placement of Prepositions	Percentage
At the beginning	19%
In the middle	66.7%
At the end	14.3%

This question "if you have difficulties with prepositions, is it more confusing with the ones that are place at the biggening, in the middle or at the end?" aims to know the most confusing placement of English prepositions. The majority of the students (66.7%) choose option B "in the middle" due. 19% choose option A "in the beginning" Were the least confusing preposition are the ones at the end.

Question Nine: According to you, prepositions are confusing due to?

Table 3.3.9: *Reasons of the challenges faced while using prepositions*

Reasons behind the difficulty of English prepositions	Percentages of the students' answers
The huge number of prepositions	21.4%
Hesitation and fear of making mistakes	23.8%
Lack of practice	54.8%

"According to you, prepositions are confusing due to?" This question aims to know the factors that lead students to be confused while using English preposition. the lack of practicing is seen by 54.8% of the participants as a main factor, the subsequence factor is being hesitated and feared of making mistakes was selected by 23.8%. 21.4% of

the student selected the third factor which is due to the huge number of English prepositions.

Question Ten: Do you think that your mother tongue (Arabic) has similar grammar rules as English?

Table 3.3.10: *Similarity between the English and Arabic grammar*

Answers	Yes	No
Percentage	19%	81%

This question "do you think that your MT has similar grammar rules as English?" aims to determine whether the participants consider Arabic and English prepositions are governed by the same rules. 81% of the participants were aware for a fact that English and Arabic are different in terms of the prepositional system and grammar rules. The minority of students (19%) choose the inappropriate answer.

Question Eleven: Do you find yourself thinking in your mother tongue while using prepositions?

Table 3.3.11: *Mother tongue interference on students' thoughts*

Answers	Yes	No
Percentage	64.3%	35.7%

This question sorts out if the participants translate sentences in their L1 (Arabic) to distinguish the suitable English preposition. Most of the students (64.3%) agree on the answer 'yes'. 35.7% type the answer 'no' that they directly think in English when using them.

Question Twelve: Do you believe that due to your mother tongue interference you commit errors in learning grammar?

Table 3.3.12: *Interference of mother tongue is a reason of making errors?*

Answers	Yes	No
Percentage	59.5%	40.5%

This question is divided into two parts. The first part “do you believe that due to your MT interference you commit errors in learning grammar?” main’s objective is to determine whether the main source of committing errors in grammar learning is because of language transfer. 59.5% agree that the interference of L1 is one of the main factors. Thus 40.5% disagree. The second part of this question intends to know if there are other factors that can negatively affect the process of learning a second language. The students suggest the following source:

- Lack of practicing and speaking in English.
- The second language (French) interference.
- The sentence structure and the complexity of tenses
- Overgeneralization
- The confusion between simple prepositions and phrasal verb

Question Thirteen: “does your mother tongue helps you to distinguish the appropriate use of prepositions?”

Table 3.3.13: *Percentage of answers about the mother tongue help*

Answers	Yes, it does	No, it does not	Sometimes it helps and most of the time leads to wrong answers
Percentages	9.5%	19%	71.4%

In this particular question, the aim is to determine whether the learners' mother tongue (L1) can assist them in making a clear distinction when using English prepositions in sentences. The findings indicate that 71.4% of the participants acknowledged that their L1 occasionally provides assistance, but more often than not, it leads them to incorrect answers. On the other hand, 19% of the respondents state that their L1 does not provide any help, while the remaining 9.5% agreed that their L1 does offer some assistance.

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter gives the general results, analyses and discussions of the tools that are used to collect the wanted research data which are a students’ test, exam papers (essays of third year LMD students) and a questionnaire. This chapter is the practical aspect of the research study. It provides a detailed analysis of each tool used to confirmed or deny the hypothesis. The study suggests that the interference of one’s mother tongue (in this case Arabic) is one of the primary reasons behind the incorrect usage of English prepositions.

Chapter Four

Discussion of the Results and Pedagogical Implications

Introduction

In this chapter, the focus is on reviewing and summarizing the main findings presented in the previous chapter, with a clear connection to the theoretical framework as well as the research questions. The data analyzed in this study includes the students' exam papers, test results, and questionnaire responses. Additionally, this chapter offers pedagogical implications and recommendations based on the findings. The limitations of the study are also addressed, and suggestions for further research are provided as well.

4.1 Discussion of the Findings

4.1.1 Summary of the Findings

The analysis of the obtained results revealed that the number of students' wrong answers is higher than the number of correct answers in the given activities (test and exam papers) which revealed that third year LMD students of the English department have different types of issues when it comes to using commonly used English prepositions. These issues lead students to commit errors such as substituting commonly used prepositions and omitting the most required English prepositions. Furthermore, the analysis of the conducted data instruments (questionnaire, test and exam papers) highlights that one of the main primary causes for the inappropriate usage of English prepositions in written production is the interference of the mother tongue (standard Arabic) on the second language (English). The research findings indicated that most of the students tend to translate literally the given sentences from English to Arabic when they face some difficulties in terms of choosing the correct preposition and that leads to the negative impact of the mother tongue.

The questionnaire revealed additional factors contributing to these errors, as explained by the students who participated. The majority of respondents make errors because of the lack of practice, indicating that insufficient language practice results in mistakes. Another factor mentioned by the students was the complexity and the large of English prepositions, which often confuses language learners.

To sum up, this research findings supported the hypothesis of this study. The hypothesis that third year LMD students of English department at Yahia Fares University-Medea misuse the most common English prepositions in their written production due to the negative interference of the learners' mother tongue (standard Arabic).

4.1.2 Reconnecting Findings to the Research Questions and Hypotheses

The findings of the present research are useful and can help answering the questions of the dissertation which are:

Q1: Does the influence of the MT have a positive or a negative influence on third year LMD students' performance when using English prepositions?

The obtained findings of the question twelve and thirteen of the questionnaire shows that a high percentage of the participants agree on the interference of the mother tongue while using English prepositions.

Q2: What are the types of errors committed by third year LMD students of English in the use of English prepositions?

The results of the test which consist of thirteen sentences and five sentences to be translated answer this question by highlighting the three common types of errors which are substitution, omission and redundant.

Q3: What challenges do they encounter when using English prepositions?

The obtained results of question ten of the questionnaire demonstrate that the main challenges faced by students are due to the huge number of prepositions, fear of making mistakes and lack of practice.

Consequently, the results support the hypotheses of the dissertation which state that third year LMD students of Yahia Fares University of Medea misuse the most common English prepositions in the written production due to the negative interference of the students' mother tongue, third year LMD students when using English prepositions and the existence of various types of error that are made by students in relation to the use of English prepositions. First, the results of the test and the exam papers confirm the hypotheses. The obtained answers from the test and the exam papers demonstrate that students think first in Arabic and then make literal translation from their mother tongue in order to use the appropriate prepositions. Lastly, the obtained results figure out the types of error stated in our hypothesis.

4.1.3 Reconnecting the Findings to the Theory

The findings are consistent with the interlanguage theory, which posits that second language learners develop a linguistic system that is influenced by their mother tongue. According to this theory, learners' interlanguage systems are dynamic and constantly evolving, as learners encounter new input and adjust their linguistic systems accordingly. In this case of prepositions, EFL students' interlanguage systems is influenced by their mother tongue, leading to transfer errors and other challenges in the use of English prepositions.

4.2 Recommendations of the Study

English prepositions are renowned for their diversity, as they follow distinct rules compared to other languages. Consequently, using prepositions correctly in written texts or sentences can be highly challenging, leading to various difficulties for English teachers

and learners. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations propose multiple strategies to overcome the misuse of English prepositions in written production. Various scholars have suggested different methods for English teachers and learners to easily tackle preposition difficulties. Firstly, learners should consider memorizing prepositions by creating tables or collocations that organize them according to their type and meaning. They can also practice through exercises or quizzes focusing on different types of prepositions. Secondly, learners can enhance their familiarity with the various uses of English prepositions by listening to songs, podcasts, or watching movies that incorporate a wide range of prepositions.

English teachers can adopt alternative approaches to teaching English prepositions as well. The traditional approach involves teaching or learning prepositions within their context, but its effectiveness is limited as it does not guarantee the learners' ability to recognize and employ prepositions effectively. Lam (2009) emphasized that learners had learned prepositions in a context-specific manner without predictability (p 3). On the other hand, the collocation approach focuses on teaching prepositions through blocks, chunks, and collocations. Mueller (2011, as cited in Larsen-Freeman et al., 2016, p.38) highlighted that second language learners' success is partially attributed to their knowledge of collocation. This approach proves more beneficial when supported by real usage data. Lastly, the prototype approach is a meaning-based method where learners are taught based on the dominant meaning of a particular preposition, as each preposition has multiple meanings but only one prototype meaning.

4.3 Suggestions for Further Research

In this particular study, the researchers utilize three instruments (a student's test, analysis of students' exam papers and a student's questionnaire) to collect research data. For future research, it is recommended to employ a broader range of instruments, such as

a pre-test and a post-test, to obtain more comprehensive findings. Additionally, since this study focused solely on third-year LMD students, it would be beneficial for future studies to include students from different levels of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. This could involve high school students or first and second-year LMD students, as many EFL students face challenges when using English prepositions in written production.

Furthermore, future research can contribute by addressing the same research problems and hypotheses while incorporating different theoretical frameworks. For instance, the application of Contrastive Analysis theory could provide valuable insights. Another avenue for exploration is conducting the research across three languages: Arabic, French, and English, in order to achieve more robust findings. Overall, these suggestions aim to enhance the scope and depth of future research on the use of English prepositions, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

4.4 Limitations

The current research has several limitations that the researchers of this study encountered, which should be taken into account in future research. Firstly, the rules governing the use, forms, and functions of prepositions were extracted from various grammar books and dictionaries, such as the Cambridge University dictionary. However, the sheer number of prepositions and the explanations provided by different grammarians resulted in confusion while gathering the necessary information.

The second limitation pertains to the data collection tools, namely the questionnaire and the test. Initially, the intention was to conduct a pre-test, two instructional sessions to explain the uses of prepositions, and a post-test. However, due to time constraints, the researchers had to rely on only one test and analyze the exam papers of third-year students. The participants' answers were often flawed, which may have led to the

possibility of inaccurate data collection. Additionally, the exam papers were obtained from the administration, posing challenges in conducting a detailed analysis of preposition usage in the students' essays.

Conclusion

EFL learners often encounter difficulties when it comes to English prepositions. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Algerian EFL learners face significant challenges in understanding and utilizing the English prepositions "in," "on," and "at." These learners demonstrate a lack of proficiency and understanding in the usage of these specific prepositions, resulting in difficulties in effectively using them.

General Conclusion

English prepositions pose significant difficulties for English language learners, including non-native speakers. These prepositions differ in their functions and characteristics compared to Standard Arabic prepositions, leading to confusion among Algerian EFL students. The biggest issues that were faced by second language learners' is to choose the appropriate English preposition, otherwise the whole meaning of the sentence could be changed only by selecting the inappropriate one.

The study of this research aimed to examine the impact of MT on the TL, to confirm that third year LMD students rely on their mother to identify the most common types of errors made by English language students in relation to the use of English prepositions, and to highlight the challenges when using English prepositions. The researchers of this study rely on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Forty third year LMD students at Yahia Fares University at Medea are chosen to be the sample participants through passing a test and a questionnaire in addition to a students' exam papers as another instrument in order to validate the findings. The qualitative and quantitative methods revealed that when students' face some confusion or uncertainty in selecting the appropriate English prepositions, they tend to use their previous knowledge of their native language (Arabic) by translating literally the giving sentences from Arabic to English which leads to negative transfer. Furthermore, after analyzing the conducted tools, researchers divulged that negative transfer was the primary factor which leads EFL students to commit different types of errors in terms of the use of English prepositions, the indicated factor leads students to commit errors such as substituting commonly used prepositions and omitting the most required English prepositions. The results of the students' exam papers analyses revealed that the most problematic English prepositions are in- on- at.

To sum up, from the results shown above, this research study supports the hypotheses that third year LMD students of English department at Yahia Fares University-Medea misuse the most common English Prepositions in their written production due to the negative interference of the learners' mother tongue (standard Arabic), third year LMD students face challenges when using English prepositions and the existence of various types of errors that are made by EFL students in relation to the use of English prepositions.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Students' Test

Dear students,

This test is distributed as a part of research study that seeks to get a clear image about the difficulties that students encounter with English prepositions of: time, place and direction. We truly appreciate your participation.

Exercise 1: Fill in the gaps with the correct English prepositions

1-The bride has a ring .....every finger. (At- in- on- for)

2- We arrived .....time. (By- in- at- on)

3- I was not satisfied .....finding the chaos in the house. (At- of- over- on)

4- We would like to write your name .....the top of the page. (In- of- at- on)

5- We must keep .....something for the serious situation. (over- in- for- at)

6- Jack is married .....Sandra. (With- to- from- at)

7- The government robbed the briber .....of his possessions. (From- of- with- on)

8- The lovely couples are related .....each other .....the bond of marriage. (to/by-with/by- to/with)

9- There is no exception .....this issue. (For- in- to- about)

10- Tourist traveled .....a boat to the other part of the island. (In- by- on- about)

11- She has cut her finger .....a knife. (By- with- through- in)

12- Sam went .....car. (By- at- from- in)

13- There is a lot of dirt .....the carpet. (On- at- above)

Exercise 2: Translate the following sentences from Arabic to English

الجملة 01: تؤثر مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي على المراهقين

الجملة02: لم أكن راضيا عن نتائج الامتحان

الجملة 03**:** يجب أن ينهي عمله بحلول يوم الأربعاء

الجملة 04: ذهبت إلى المنزل عن طريق الخطأ

الجملة 05: يعمل الطلاب على انهاء مذكرة التخرج

Appendix B: Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is a part of research study which seeks to get a clear image about the understanding and the difficulties that students face with English preposition of time, place and movement. Your collaboration is essential in terms of collecting the necessary data from this questionnaire. keep in mind that all responses you provide will remain confidential. Please read each question carefully and answer as accurately as you can. You may ask for help if something is not clear for you.

Question 1: Participants' age.

Question 2: What describes you the best?

- I am good enough to be an English language student.
- I must study English to get a good career.
- It is not my desire in studying English, but it is okay.

Question 3: How long have you been studying English?

Question 4: Is English grammar difficult for you?

- Yes, it is.
- No, it is not.
- It is not difficult, but it is tricky.

Question 5: Do you have difficulties with English prepositions?

- Yes.
- No.

- Not really.

Question 6: How much do you estimate the percentage of your mastery of English prepositions?

Question 7: Which type of prepositions do you struggle with the most?

- Preposition of time.

- Preposition of place.

- Preposition of movement.

Question 8: If you have difficulties with prepositions, is it more confusing with prepositions which are placed at the beginning, in the middle or at the end?

- At the beginning.

- In the middle.

- At the end.

Question 9: According to you, prepositions are confusing due to?

- The huge number of English Prepositions.

- Hesitation and fear of making mistakes.

- The lack of practicing.

Question 10: Do you think that your mother tongue (Arabic) has similar grammar rules as English?

- Yes.

- No.

Question 11: Do you find yourself thinking in your mother tongue while using prepositions?

- Yes.

- No.

Question 12: a) Do you believe that due to your mother tongue interference you commit errors in learning grammar?

- I agree.

- I disagree.

b) Do you think that the only source of errors is the mother tongue interference or there are other sources? If so, suggest some.

Question 13: does your mother tongue helps you to distinguish the appropriate use of prepositions?

- Yes, it does.

- No, it does not.

- Sometimes it helps, but most of the time it leads me to wrong answers.