

Intralingual and Interlanguage Factors Affecting usage of the English Language prepositions "in" and "on" for EFL Learners

By

***Dr. Dina A. Ali**

Department of English Language, Faculty of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia

Email: drdinaaliadel25may@gmail.com,
[00966596923965](tel:00966596923965), P.O.Box:960-Postal Code:61421.

Dr. Wijdan K. Mohammed

Department of English Language, Faculty of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia from 2012 to 2022. An Assistant Professor at Albutana University, Department of English.

Email: Drwejdan2030@gmail.com
[00249116313827](tel:00249116313827), P.O. Box:960-Postal Code:61421.

Dr. Hala Mohamed Osman Salih,

Department of English Language, Faculty of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia

Email: hsaleh@kku.edu.sa
[00966551749613](tel:00966551749613), P.O. Box:960-Postal Code:61421.

Dr.Dina Ali Abdalla ALI

is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistic at King Khalid University. She obtained her Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from the University of Gezira, Sudan (2015). Her research interests are Applied Linguistics, Literature, Translation and Psycholinguistics.

Dr. Wijdan Al Khalifah,

Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics. King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia from 2012 to 2022. An Assistant Professor at Albutana University, Department of English. She obtained her Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from the University of AL-Buttana, Sudan (2017). Her research interests are Applied Linguistics, Language Acquisition, and Semantics.

Dr. Hala Mohamed Osman Salih

is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics in the Department of English Language, Faculty of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. She obtained her Ph.D. in Psycholinguistics from University of Khartoum, Sudan (2004). Her fields of interests are Psycholinguistics, Applied Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, and ELT.

Number of researches are done in the field of Linguistics.

Abstract

The present study investigates the reasons behind the misuse of English prepositions “in” and “on”. This study tried to find out if the misuse of the English prepositions is related to the interlanguage errors (the interference of mother tongue) or related to intralingual errors (due to the English language structure itself) or there are other factors which cause the misuse of English prepositions for the university students. The data is sampled from a (Test) distributed to students almost around (40) at King Khalid University, College of Science & Arts in Ahad

Rufadia. The data analyses were done by the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) program. The findings are summarized and a concise set of recommendations for modifications and solutions are presented showing that English prepositions in general and the prepositions (in/on), in specific, are really a problematic issue for EFL learners' where the interference of mother tongue was considered to be largely responsible for language misuse and other related errors committed by learners. Mainly students substitute errors are seen in the results by inserting "in" instead of "on" and vice versa. The percentage of errors show high result of misuse. More focus is needed from instructors when teaching English prepositions as well as teaching strategies which links it to their real-life use which can help in their appropriate understanding and use.

KeyWords: Intralingual, Interlanguage, Prepositions, EFL Learners, Mother Tongue

1.0 Introduction

1.0 Background

English grammar learning for students in different educational levels includes English grammar explanations for basic grammar such as tenses, prepositions use, adverbs and adjectives.

English prepositions are a problem because different languages use different prepositions to express the same ideas. It will help students if teachers do not teach too many prepositions at the same time. In addition, it will be useful if students use prepositions in context-in a situation where the use is natural. There are about 150 prepositions in English. Prepositions are important words. In this study the researcher will shed light on the prepositions "in" and "on" and try to find out why learners misuse or get confused when using them. The research will try to find out whether the misuse is due to the interference of the mother tongue (Interlanguage) errors or due to the English structure itself (Intralingual) errors or because of the student's carelessness use of rules or may be to the way teachers present them.

All learners of foreign languages resort consciously or unconsciously to features of their mother tongue when speaking or writing a non-native language. Language interference can play vital role in the creation of learner's error even at sentence level. The prepositions, however, are grouped into simple participle and phrasal type's prepositions like other parts of speech are frequently misused. This misuse is referred to as error, which is of importance for the learner. This agrees with what was mentioned by *Corder* in (1967) where he mentioned that correcting learners' errors is substantial in three different ways: First, they tell the teacher about the progress of the learner, and therefore what remains to be learnt. Second, they supply evidence of how a language is acquired and what strategies the learner employs in learning a language. Thirdly, they are indisputable to the learning process because making errors is regarded as a device the learner uses in order to learn.

Corder agrees that studying student errors of usage has immediate practical application for language teachers. In his view, errors provide feedback and they tell the teachers something about the effectiveness of his teaching. It is important for the learner to use correct prepositions to express the intended meaning he/she want the listener to get, that's why the researcher will try to clarify the reasons behind the misuse of English prepositions (in and on).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study will try to investigate the reasons or factors behind the misuse of the English prepositions (in and on) and to find out if it is related to the interference of the mother tongue or the structure of English language itself or due to the learner's carelessness use of rule or the way they are presented separately and not within context.

1.2 Objectives of the Research

- 1- To find out the factors which lead to the misuse of the prepositions "in" and "on"
- 2- To determine that prepositions are confusing for foreign language learners.

1.3 Questions of the Research

- 1- Why do learners of English language face difficulty in using English prepositions "in" and "on"?
- 2- How does the mother tongue interference affect the use of the English prepositions "in" and "on"?

1.4 Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that intralingual and interlanguage factors affect the English prepositions used by English language learners.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The misuse of prepositions is one of the observable errors in the student's use of English in schools, different colleges and universities. This agrees with the study made by Azeez (2005) which reveals that the misuse of prepositions is one of the observable errors in the student's use of English in school. The use of prepositions after adjective is the most commonly misused. The respondents were also found to frequently commit error or misuse preposition at the end of questions.

This study aims to investigate the reason behind the misuse of English prepositions "in" and "on" and to locate whether it is due to intralingual or interlanguage factor or due to other factors as it was mentioned by Richard (1992) who regards errors as the outcome of interference between two language system by means of social, psychological and linguistic interaction. Or other reasons such as the structure of English language itself or due to the learner's carelessness use of rule or the way they are presented separately and not within context.

2.0 Literature Review

There are many factors behind the misuse of English prepositions among second language learners. Intralingual and interlanguage are one of these factors which is the focus of this research. They have been mentioned in some studies as the main reason behind the misuse of prepositions such as the study made by Azeez (2005) which reveals that the misuse of prepositions is one of the observable errors in the student's use of English in schools. The use of preposition after adjective is the most commonly misused preposition. This was followed by the misuse of prepositions after verb which was in rank table correlation. The respondents were also found to frequently commit error or misuse preposition at the end of questions. The

result of the study also shows that students were found to show and demonstrate good knowledge of preposition of place and avoid error of omission of definite articles in the use of prepositions.

Another study by *Aiyewumi* (2004) states that the major sources of error are L1 interference, L2 idiosyncrasies and inappropriate learning and application of rules. The study conducted by *French* in (1985) concedes that the rules badly learnt and wrongly applied induce errors, but he rejects the idea of L1 being the root cause of errors. *Opara* in the year (2001) considers linguistics interference as a factor which is largely responsible for language misuse and other related errors.

These writer's views fluctuate between linguistic interference, carelessness of learners and the way of learning and applying the rules. This research will try to focus on the misuse of the English prepositions "in" and "on" and to find out are they due to intralingual or interlanguage and this what distinguishes this study from the previous ones.

It was revealed by *Corder* (1967) and *James* (1998) that a mistake can be self-corrected, but an error cannot. Errors are systematic that is to say they are likely to occur repeatedly and not recognized by the learner. Hence, only the teacher or researcher would locate them, the learner wouldn't (*Gass & Selinker*, 1994). The focus on this study will be on learner's errors or misuse of English prepositions and not mistakes. [Http://abisamra03tripod.com/nendallangueacq-error analysis.htm](http://abisamra03tripod.com/nendallangueacq-error analysis.htm).

The study which was done in *Yousif* (2004) comes out that more errors were attributed to interference from Arabic than to other learning problems. Substitution errors were the most frequent in both mother tongue interference and other language learning problems errors. Also, mother tongue interference was more affected by standard Arabic than by colloquial Arabic. The major learning problem was false application and ignorance of L2 rules.

Zeinab in (1982) in her study found that more errors were attributable to interference from Arabic than to other learning problems. Substitution errors were the most frequent in both mother tongue interference and other language learning problems errors. Mother tongue interference were more affected by standard Arabic than by colloquial Arabic. And finally, it concluded that the major learning problem was false application and ignorance of L2 rules.

Issag in (2006) in his study found that interlingual errors (mother tongue interference, which is known as negative transfer (students translate from their mother tongue or use some norms and rules in their mother tongue). Also, positive transfer (takes place when there is an agreement between equivalents of the second language). Intralingual errors are due to the foreign of target language. Overgeneralization was also another source for committing errors as well as ignorance of rule restrictions. The study of *Lamis* in (1978) in her study found that the selection of the wrong preposition due to mother tongue interference was not in all cases. In other cases, the errors were due to the absence of the prepositions in L1 and the misapplication of rules in L2.

The study of *Jansson* in (2007) found that least errors were found in the category of basic prepositions and most errors were found in the category of idiomatic prepositions. However, the small difference between the two categories of systematic and idiomatic prepositions suggests that the learners have greater problems with systematic prepositions than what was first thought to be the case. Basic prepositions cause little or no problem. Systematic

prepositions are those that are role governed or whose usage is somehow generalizable, seem to be quite problematic to native Swedish speakers. The greater error caused was found to be interference from Swedish, and a few errors could be explained as intralingual errors. It seems as if the learner knowledge of their mother tongue strongly influences the acquisition of English prepositions.

Shakir and Yassen in (2015) in their study focused on the acquisition of English prepositions among students of Iraqi secondary school in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The major findings in this study is that the main reason for all the errors is the dominance of the mother tongue (MT) on English language (EL), especially with Arabic language which have a syntactic structure which differs from EL. The dominance and influence of one's MT is a major challenge in using the EL in the right way by Iraqi EFL learners. They are influenced by the prepositional system of their MT when they intend to use the prepositions in EL and this leads to errors and lack of idiomticity.

Andres in (2007) posted about prepositions that whether we are teachers, or we have taken a language course we know that prepositions are the first linguistic elements taught. From Andres's teaching experience he finds that the more he teaches them the more he was puzzled by the different aspects of their nature. Furthermore, some students really had a tough time seeing how they are used and where. Also, the difficulty in explaining the difference between "under" a tree and "below" a tree. Therefore, teachers -not only the learners-play a great role in solving /overcoming the problem of the misuse of English prepositions.

The study done by Douida (2014) focus on describing and testing the reality of the phenomenon of the transfer of English prepositions (at, in and on) from Arabic into English to find out whether the misuse is due to the transfer from MT or other reasons. The findings of the research come out with the result that the transfer occurs positively and negatively. Most cases were of the negative transfer from standard Arabic and the Algerian dialect and very few are of the positive one. This proves that the standard Arabic is not the only source of transfer.

Chalker (1984) said that: the prepositions (at, by, for, from, in, on, to and with) are the most frequently used prepositions in English. Thus, current research is going to discuss the results obtained from testing the hypothesis that form the basis of this study.

2.2 Philosophy of Prepositions

Cousineau (2007) defined prepositions as funny short linguistic creatures such as ; in , up , down , over, under, on etc. They are used in speech and daily actions. Language teachers or those who take language courses are aware that prepositions are considered as first linguistic elements taught because we think they are easy to grasp. Furthermore, he added from his teaching experience that the more he teaches them the more he is puzzled by different aspects regarding their nature. Some prepositions go hand by hand with static verbs, others go with movement verbs. In English, prepositions do not have a marked accent when it is said, we do not say (He went INTO his room, placing a heavy stress on the preposition itself). No wonder students from other countries have such a tough time listening to them; they are actually almost invisible and only faintly noticeable. This is why for non-English speakers trying to understand the difference between (He walked in his room & He walked into his room) is like noticing the difference between two very similar birds for those of us who know very little of birds. He added that the main point about English prepositions is that they function in a very special way. They provide us with a certain orientation in the world in which we make our lives that is to

say a connection with our world.

2.3 Intralingual

Othman (2003:81) claims that "for the past three decades, there has been a growing number of empirical and theoretical works dealing with variation in intralingual. He goes on saying that due to the interest of SLA research in IL, attention has been recently directed to the concepts of variability and systematicity in SLA theories. Ellis (2004) declares that variability in IL is exhibited by the nature of the task in which the learners of L2 are involved. He argues that the performance of learners is varied. They do not perform in the same way. Their performance is affected by the situation in which the learners are involved. Consequently, they produce different styles in accordance with different situations. Variability in IL was defined by Foulkes and Docherty (2005:1) as follows: "Variability is one of the defining characteristics of human speech. No two voices are identical, no two utterances are the same. Variability in speech is not, however, wholly random or chaotic. Rather, it results from a number of specific sources and may form rule-governed patterns." (2015, p.127).

2.4 Interlanguage

The type of language produced by a second or foreign-language learners who are in the process of learning a new language. Interlanguage refers to the process the learners go through from the initial stage when he/she knows very little about the language getting to a final stage when he/she possesses almost complete fluency. It shows a transitional stage of the learner's development towards L2 competence Lennon (2020).

3.0 Methodology

This study is an attempt to find out the factors affecting the use of the English prepositions "in" and "on", whether its use is related to intralingual or interlanguage. That is to find out why learners misuse English prepositions and why is it a dilemma for non-English speakers. The study will be carried on (37out of 50) EFL students at King Khalid University, the college of Science and Arts in Ahad Rufadia.

3.1 Population and sample of the study

Population of the study are students of Ahad Rufadia campus at King Khalid University. 37 out of 50 EFL students were chosen randomly from different levels.

3.2 Tools of the Research

In this research, the data collection was gathered through a (Test) which was distributed to the students of Ahad Rufadia college. Data was analyzed through the SPSS (Statistical Package for social sciences).

3.3 Limitations of the Study

The current research study was conducted at the University of King Khalid -College of Science & Arts-Ahad in Ahad Rufadia.

Sentence: (1) *I went there on foot.*

Table: (1)

Frequency Table					
I went there on foot					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	30	81.1	81.1	81.1
	Right	7	18.9	18.9	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

The preposition “on” can be used as a preposition of place, time and to state how something moves with “by”. The students made substitution errors by inserting “in” instead of “on”. Those who chose the wrong option were 81.1%, while others who chose the correct option were 18.9%. So, the substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

Sentence: (2) Next time I will go by bus

Table: (2)

next time I will go by bus.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	19	51.4	51.4	51.4
	Right	18	48.6	48.6	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

The preposition “by” can be used to ‘state’ how something moves with “by”. When we translate “by” in Standard Arabic it will be “bi”, the same as “with”. Therefore, the students’ substitution error is tracked back to the negative transfer from Standard Arabic. Those who gave the correct option were “48.6%”, while those who gave the wrong option were “51.4%”.

Sentence: (3) They arrived in the morning

Table: (3)

They arrived in the morning.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	19	51.4	51.4	51.4
	Right	18	48.6	48.6	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “in” is to indicate “state”, the same as in Standard Arabic “fi”. It is used with parts of the day “in the morning”. The majority of the test-taker “51.4%” chose the wrong option, while the rest “48.6%” chose the correct option. The students’

substitution error is tracked back to the negative transfer from Standard Arabic.

Sentence: (4) Now they are at home

Table: (4)

Now they are at home.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	19	51.4	51.4	51.4
	Right	18	48.6	48.6	100.0
Total		37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “at” can be used to show multiple contexts, time or location. The test-takers inserted the corresponding preposition “in” instead of “at”. “51.4%” chose the wrong option, while “48.6%” chose the correct option because they translated the meaning into Standard Arabic. This is due to negative transfer “in” as “fi al bayet”.

Sentence: (5) She arrived at the airport

Table: (5)

She arrived at the airport					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	34	91.9	91.9	91.9
	Right	3	8.1	8.1	100.0
Total		37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “at” can be used to show multiple contexts, time or location. The test-takers inserted the corresponding preposition “in” instead of “at”. Those who chose the correct option were “8.1%”, while those who chose the wrong option were “91.9%” which is very high percentage because they translated the meaning into Standard Arabic. This is due to negative transfer “in” as “fi al bayet”.

Sentence: (6) She arrived at the airport on time

Table: (6)

She arrived at the airport on time.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	26	70.3	70.3	70.3
	Right	11	29.7	29.7	100.0
Total		37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “at” can be used to show multiple contexts, time or location.
Res Militaris, vol.13, n°2, January Issue 2023

Here it is used to show location and “on” to show time. Both were misused by the test-taker. Those who chose the wrong option were “70.3%”, while those who chose the correct option were “29.7%”. The substitution error is due to the negative transfer from Standard Arabic.

Sentence: (7) *My teacher was angry with me*

Table:(7)

My teacher was angry with me,					
Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
	Wrong	81.1	81.1	81.1	
Right	7	18.9	18.9	100.0	
Total	37	100.0	100.0		

The English preposition “with”, if we give a translation for “by” in Standard Arabic it will be “bi” the same as “with”. The test-taker misuse the preposition “with” and used instead “to”, “81.1%” chose the wrong option, while “18.9%” chose the correct option. Therefore, the students’ substitution error is traced back to the negative transfer from Standard Arabic.

Sentence: (8) *But next time I will make him pleased with me*

Table:(8)

but next time I will make him pleased with me.					
Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
	Wrong	89.2	89.2	89.2	
Right	4	10.8	10.8	100.0	
Total	37	100.0	100.0		

The English preposition “with”, if we give a translation for “by” in Standard Arabic, it will be “bi” the same as “with”. The test-taker misuse the preposition “with” and used instead “to”, “33%” chose the wrong option, while “4%” chose the correct option. Therefore, the students’ substitution error is traced back to the negative transfer from Standard Arabic.

Sentence: (9) *She is good at her courses*

Table:(9)

She is good at her courses					
Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
	Wrong	73.0	73.0	73.0	
Right	10	27.0	27.0	100.0	
Total	37	100.0	100.0		

The English preposition “at” can be used to show multiple contexts, time or location. Here it is used to show state. The test-taker misuse “at” with “in”. Those who chose the wrong

option were “73%”, while those who chose the correct option were “27%”. The substitution error is due to the negative transfer from Standard Arabic.

Sentence: (10) *She is good at her courses except in French*

Table:(10)

She is good at her courses except in French.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	32	86.5	86.5	86.5
		Right	5	13.5	13.5
Total		37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “in” is to indicate “state” the same as in Standard Arabic “fi”. It is used with parts of the day” in French that is inside something”. The majority of the test-taker “86.5% chose the wrong option, while the rest “13.5% “chose the correct option. They substitute “on” instead of using “in”. The students’ substitution error is tracked back to the negative transfer from Standard Arabic.

Sentence: (11) *He congratulated her on her success*

Table:(11)

He congratulated her on her success.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	29	78.4	78.4	78.4
		Right	8	21.6	21.6
Total		37	100.0	100.0	

The preposition “on” can be used as a preposition of place, time and to state how something moves with “by”. The students made substitution errors by inserting “in” instead of “on”. Those who chose the wrong option were 78.4%, while others who chose the correct option were 21.6%. Because they translated the meaning into standard Arabic so, the substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

Sentence: (12) *Ali was born on the 16th of March 1992*

Table:(12)

Ali was born on the 16th of March 1992.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	33	89.2	89.2	89.2
		Right	4	10.8	10.8
Total		37	100.0	100.0	

The preposition “on” can be used as a preposition of place, time and to state how something moves with “by”. The students made substitution errors by inserting “in” instead of “on”. Those who chose the wrong option were 89.2%, while others who chose the correct option were 10.8%. Because they translated the meaning into standard Arabic so, the

substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

Sentence: (13) Don't forget to reply on your laptop

Table:(13)

Don't forget to reply on your laptop.					
Valid	Wrong	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
		29	78.4	78.4	78.4
	Right	8	21.6	21.6	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

The preposition “on” can be used as a preposition of place, time and to state how something moves with “by”. The students made substitution errors by inserting “in” instead of “on”. Those who chose the wrong option were 78.4%, while others who chose the correct option were 21.6%. Because they translated the meaning into standard Arabic so, the substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

Sentence: (14) Your watch is different from Ali's

Table:(14)

Your watch is different from Ali's.					
Valid	Wrong	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
		26	70.3	70.3	70.3
	Right	11	29.7	29.7	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

The preposition “from” to refer to the place something started from or to show the relation between the noun and other part of the sentence.) students inserted “from” to say “meni”. Those who chose the wrong option were “70.3%”, while those who chose the correct option were “29.7%”. They chose “by” instead of “from”. Because they translated the meaning into standard Arabic so, the substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

Sentence: (15) Aziz will visit us on Monday

Table:(15)

Aziz will visit us on Monday					
Valid	Wrong	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
		22	59.5	59.5	59.5
	Right	15	40.5	40.5	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

The preposition “on” can be used as a preposition of place, day, time and to state how something moves with “by”. The students made substitution errors by inserting “in” instead of “on”. Those who chose the wrong option were 59.5%, while others who chose the correct option were 40.5%. Because they translated the meaning into standard Arabic so, the

substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

Sentence: (16) Aziz will visit us on Monday at noon

Table:(16)

Aziz will visit us on Monday at noon.				
Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Wrong	20	54.1	54.1	54.1
Right	17	45.9	45.9	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “at” can be used to show multiple contexts, time or location. Here, it is used to show time. The test-taker misuse “at” with “in”. Those who chose the wrong option were “54.1%”, while those who chose the correct option were “45.9%”. The substitution error is due to the negative transfer from Standard Arabic.

Sentence: (17) Suzi is interested in English

Table:(17)

Suzi is interested in English,				
Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Wrong	16	43.2	43.2	43.2
Right	21	56.8	56.8	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “in” is to indicate “state”, same as in Standard Arabic “fi”. It is used with parts of the day” in English that is inside something”. The majority of the test-taker “43.2% “chose the wrong option, while the rest “56.8% “chose the correct option. Those who substitute “on” instead of using “in” were few.

Sentence: (18) So I am sure of her success in it

Table:(18)

so I am sure of her success in it.				
Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Wrong	29	78.4	78.4	78.4
Right	8	21.6	21.6	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “in” is to indicate “state”, the same as in Standard Arabic “fi”. It is used with location, position or inside something” success in something”. The majority of the test-taker “78.4% “chose the wrong option, while the rest “21.6% “chose the correct option. They substitute “on” instead of using “in”. The students’ substitution error is tracked back to the negative transfer from Standard Arabic.

Sentence: (19) She insisted on going with him

Table:(19)

She insisted on going with him.					
Valid	Wrong	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Wrong	31	83.8	83.8	83.8
	Right	6	16.2	16.2	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

The preposition “on” can be used as a preposition of place, day, time and to state how something moves with “by”. The students made substitution errors by inserting “in” instead of “on”. Those who chose the wrong option were “83.8%”, while others who chose the correct option were “16.2%”. Because they translated the meaning into standard Arabic so, the substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

Sentence: (20) The plane will take off at 7 in the evening

Table:(20)

The plane will take off at 7 in the evening.					
Valid	Wrong	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Wrong	29	78.4	78.4	78.4
	Right	8	21.6	21.6	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “in” is to indicate state, same as in Standard Arabic “fi”. It is used with parts of the day “in the evening”. The majority of the test-taker “78.4%” chose the wrong option, while the rest “21.6%” chose the correct option. Because they translated the meaning into standard Arabic so, the substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

Sentence: (21) In my opinion, she is right

Table:(21)

In my opinion, she is right.					
Valid	Wrong	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Wrong	20	54.1	54.1	54.1
	Right	17	45.9	45.9	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “in” is to indicate “state”, same as in Standard Arabic “fi”. It is used with parts of the day, point itself and inside something “in my opinion”. The majority of the test-taker “54.1%” chose the wrong option, while the rest “45.9%” chose the correct option. Because they translated the meaning into standard Arabic. So, the substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

Sentence: (22) She was born in Kosti

Table:(22)

She was born in Kosti					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	16	43.2	43.2	43.2
	Right	21	56.8	56.8	100.0
Total		37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “in” is to indicate “state”, same as in Standard Arabic “fi”. It is used with parts of the day and place” in Kosti -the place”. The majority of the test-taker “43.2% “chose the wrong option, while the rest “56.8% “chose the correct option. Those who substitute “on” instead of using “in” were few.

Sentence: (23) She was born in Kosti in 1999

Table:(23)

She was born in Kosti in 1999.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	26	70.3	70.3	70.3
	Right	11	29.7	29.7	100.0
Total		37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “in” is to indicate “state”, same as in Standard Arabic “fi”. It is used with parts of the day, period of time and inside something” in 1999-year”. The majority of the test-taker “70.3% “chose the wrong option, while the rest “29.7 % “chose the correct option. Because they translated the meaning into standard Arabic so, the substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

Sentence: (24) It is very hot in Summer

Table:(24)

It is very hot in Summer					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	23	62.2	62.2	62.2
	Right	14	37.8	37.8	100.0
Total		37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “in” is to indicate “state”, same as in Standard Arabic “fi”. It is used with parts of the day, period of time and inside something” in Summer-season”. The

majority of the test-taker “62.2%” chose the wrong option, while the rest “37.8%” chose the correct option. Because they translated the meaning into standard Arabic so, the substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

Sentence: (25) It is very hot in Summer in some African countries

Table:(25)

It is very hot in Summer in some African countries.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	29	78.4	78.4	78.4
	Right	8	21.6	21.6	100.0
Total		37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “in” is to indicate state same as in Standard Arabic “fi”. It is used with parts of the day, period of time and inside something” in Summer-season”. The majority of the test-taker “78.4%” chose the wrong option, while the rest “21.6%” chose the correct option. Because they translated the meaning into standard Arabic so, the substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

Sentence: (26) She is jealous of her sister

Table:(26)

She is jealous of her sister.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	31	83.8	83.8	83.8
	Right	6	16.2	16.2	100.0
Total		37	100.0	100.0	

The English preposition “of” is to indicate “state”, same as in Standard Arabic “min”. It is used with possession; something belongs to the object or physical surfaces” Jealous of and not from”. The majority of the test-taker “83.8%” chose the wrong option, while the rest “16.2%” chose the correct option because they translated the meaning into standard Arabic so, the substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

Sentence: (27) They left South Africa for Morocco on Tuesday

Table:(27)

They left South Africa for Morocco on Tuesday.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong	18	48.6	48.6	48.6
	Right	19	51.4	51.4	100.0
Total		37	100.0	100.0	

The preposition “on” can be used as a preposition of place, day, time and to state how something moves with “by”. The students made substitution errors by inserting “in” instead of “on”. Those who chose the wrong option were “48.6%”, while others who chose the correct

option were “51.4%” because they translated the meaning into standard Arabic so, the substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

Sentence: (28) *Ahmed lives in his old neighborhood*

Table:(28)

Ahmed lives in his old neighborhood.					
Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
	Wrong	18	48.6	48.6	48.6
Right	19	51.4	51.4	100.0	
Total	37	100.0	100.0		

The English preposition “in” is to indicate state, same as in Standard Arabic “fi”. It is used with parts of the day, period of time and inside something” in his old neighborhood”. The majority of the test-taker “48.6% “chose the wrong option, while the rest “51.4% “chose the correct option. Because they translated the meaning into standard Arabic. So, the substitution error is due to the negative transfer.

4.Results and Discussion

English prepositions are considered as one of the most problematic issues and dilemma in English language because of different reasons related to their nature and use. Langendon (1970, p.86), said” “the same relation may be introduced by a variety of prepositions and also the same preposition may be used to introduce many different relation”. In other words, one preposition could be used to suit different positions which holds the same meaning, (cited in DOUIDA, 2014, p11). As mentioned by Chalker in (1984) that the most frequently used prepositions are (at, by, for, from, in, on, to, and with). Our present study focuses on two of these prepositions (in and on) and the researchers try to find out the misuse of these prepositions and the reason behind this misuse from the results obtained from testing the hypothesis that form the base of this study. The hypothesis stated that intralingual and interlanguage factors affect the English prepositions used by university students. This was realized from the results obtained from the test and the misuse of the English prepositions. In the discussion (in and on) were given as prepositions of place and as prepositions of time.

Finally, as Opara (2001) said that; the linguistics interference is a factor which is considered to be largely responsible for language misuse and other related errors committed by learners. The English prepositions as mentioned in the studies and researchers’ view in this study, agreed with the view that prepositions are really a problematic issue for learners of English as a foreign language and for non-native speakers in general. The final results of the research have proved what have been hypothesized and found that interference of mother tongue (interlanguage) and intralingual factors leads to the misuse of English prepositions, but interlanguage played the major role in the misuse of prepositions and this was seen in the response of the respondents. Since not all English prepositions have an equivalent in Arabic and vice versa, and because prepositions in both languages are polysemous. Also, the use of prepositions differs between the two languages depending on the situation and the meaning they are supposed to convey. As seen from the respondents, most of the misuse was on the simple ones “on” and “in”. When more focus is given from instructors as well as practices,

the learners will be capable of achieving better understanding and appropriate use.

Acknowledgment

The authors extend their appreciation to the Deanship of Scientific Research at King Khalid University for funding this work through Small Groups Project number (RGP. 1/189/43 Academic Year 1443H).

References

- Aiyewumi, et. Al. (2004). Remedial English for professional students. Kaduna, Lantern printers.
- AL Atta, Zeinab (2003). Some Common Prepositions and Students Error.
- Alami, Lamis (1978). An analysis of the use of some English prepositions by a group of Arab learners.
- Azeez, M.O. (2005). Misuse of propositions among Secondary School Students in Niger's – An unpublished college final year project.
- Chalker, S. (1984). Current English Grammar. London: Macmillan Publisher.
- Cousineau, Melo, Andres. (2007). Rarefactions: What is a preposition?
- Corder, S. P. (1967). The Significance of Learners' Errors. *IRAL*, 5, 161-170.
- Douida, Meryem (2014). The Misuse of The English Prepositions (In, On, At) as a result of Transfer from Standard Arabic into English. LMD University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia.
- Ellis, R. (2004). The Definition and Measurement of L2 Explicit Knowledge. *Language Learning* 54,227-275.
- Foulkes and Docherty (2005:1). *IJALEL* 4(3):123-131, 2015 127. International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature.
- French F.G. (1985). Common Errors in English: London, Oxford University Press.
- Gass, S. M., and Selinker, L. (1994). Second Language Acquisition: An introductory course.
- Habash, Al Salam, Zeinab. (1982). Common Errors in the use of English prepositions in the written work of UNRWA students at the end of the preparatory cycle in the Jerusalem area.
- Issag, M. Elhadi. (2006). Prepositions problem encountered by secondary school students in writing English composition. The case of Khartoum East school-3rd year students.
- Jansson, Hanna. (2007). Native Swedish Speakers Problems with English prepositions.
- James, C. (1998). Errors in Language Learning and Use: Exploring error analysis. New York: Pearson Longman.
- Langendoen, D.T. (1970). Essentials of English Grammar. USA: Library of Congress Catalogue.
- Lennon, P. (2020). The Foundations of Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Routledge.
- Opara S.C. (2001). Applied English Linguistics: Lagos, t-excel publishers.
- Othman, (2003). Variation in interlanguage. Theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence.
- Richards, J.C. (Ed), (1992). Error Analysis. Perspectives and L2A.Longman group Ltd.
- Shakir, Hani, and Yaseen, Bilat. (2015). Acquisition of English Prepositions among Iraqi Secondary School Students in Kuala Lumpur-Malaysia. Australian International Academic Centre, Australia.
- <http://abisamra03.tripod.com/nada/languageacqerroranalysishml>.
- Yousif, M. Yousif. (2004). Errors Committed by Sudanese English students when misuse English preposition in written composition.