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**Arabic Spatial Prepositions Translation and Error Analysis**

Case Study: Third Year students of English at Ouargla University

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# Dedication

*To my brother Mohammed who made it all possible.*

*To my dearest mother for her forbearance and moral support.*

*To all my closest friends.*

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*First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to Allah for His blessings and guidance that continue to enlighten our path.*

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*Finally, I would remiss without mentioning my family and friends for their love and support.*

*To each and every one of the above, I extend my deepest appreciation.*

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## **List of Abbreviation**

CA: Contrastive Analysis

EA: Error Analysis

MT: Mother tongue.

TL: Target Language

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# Introduction

## 1. Background of the study:

In this research, the researcher takes previous research.,The research was conducted by Fatima Zbar Inezan (2014), under the title “Errors in the Use of Prepositions of Place by Iraqi Students Year 2013/2014. The second research was conducted by Nunung Khurriyati (2013), under the title “An Error Analysis Of The Use Of Prepositions Of Place Of The second Year Students In Egypt in The Academic Year Of 2012/2013. This research describes the varieties of Students’ mastery on the use of preposition of place of the second year. In this research, researcher conducted “An Error analysis in using preposition by Arab students .

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Translating grammatical elements may be seen as an easy task at first, but it gets worse and heavier when it comes to find the accurate equivalence that covers both the function and the semantic feature of the grammatical word within the sentence . There are many linguistic hinders which rise while translating the grammatical elements from English into Arabic and vice versa.

This study sheds the light on the difficulties which third year students of English at Kasdi Merbah University face when translating the spatial prepositions from Arabic into English.

## 3.Rationale

The main two reasons behind choosing this topic to be investigated were : Firstly, many students of English language particularly third year students of English at Kasdi Merbah University commit errors while translating spatial prepositions from Arabic into English.

Secondly: to provide students with key suggestions that may be of help in dealing with spatial prepositions in Arabic in the process of translation.

### **Research Questions**

In order to practically tackle the subject matter , two questions are formulated seeking to approve the hypotheses correlated with :

- What are the main errors that third year students of English at Kasdi Merbah University may make when translating spatial prepositions from Arabic into English according to English Acquisition ?
- What are the reasons behind these errors in translating spatial prepositions from Arabic into English?

### **Hypothesis**

To answer these questions, we formulated the following hypotheses: The first one seeks an answer for the first two research questions:

We hypothesize that the main errors which third year students of English at Kasdi Merbah University make are :Literal translation influenced by the mother tongue (Arabic) or influenced by the SL (English). As well as generalization in using one item form more than equivalent preposition in the TT.

### **The Aim of the Study**

This study aims at making teachers aware of how to teach students to translate spatial prepositions from Arabic into English appropriately as well as students so that they may be cautious of the three prepositions in the two languages in questions.

### **Methodology**

We have adopted an error analysis by which we randomly hand over a test administrated to twenty five students of third year of English at Kasdi Merbah University at English department in the academic year 2017-2018. We then analyze their answers to identify the reasons behind the errors they may make .

## **The structure of the Study**

This dissertation is made up of three chapters; the first chapter is going to be divided into sections: The first section focuses on prepositions system in English with reference to the number and the use of various English prepositions . The second section is devoted to Arabic spatial prepositions in order to clarify the difference between prepositions system in Arabic and English.

The second chapter is devoted to spotlight on error analysis (EA). First, it represents the definition of error analysis. Second, it defines the terms error and mistake and the difference between them. Also, it shows the sources of errors including inter-lingual errors and intra-lingual errors, context of learning and communication strategies. Finally, it represents the definition of positive and negative transfer.

The third chapter which is the practical one highlighted the major errors that third year English students make when dealing with Arabic prepositions of place relation.

## **Limitation of the study**

In this study we are just limited to the spatial prepositions in Arabic mainly prepositions of position<sup>3<sup>rd</sup></sup> year students as case .

# Chapter one: Acquisition of prepositions in L2 learning.

## Introduction

As an aspect of the English grammatical system, prepositions are frequently used in speaking and writing (Morenberg, 1997). Swain(1988) states that learning to use prepositions properly is a very difficult task because one preposition can have multiple functions and there are not sufficient rules to help in the appropriate selection of the correct preposition in a particular context. Therefore, even advanced and proficient EFL learners obtain the problem in using prepositions. They exhibit different levels of performance when using prepositions for expressing particular meanings (Celce Murcia & Larsen Freeman, 1999).This chapter is concerned with prepositions of place, starting with their definition and their main uses moving to the difficulties they pose for EFL learners (the problems in using prepositions along with the sources of errors). Further, this chapter presents some approaches and techniques to teaching prepositions.

### 1.1. Definition of prepositions

Many linguists and grammarians report that English is a prepositional language. That is to say, prepositions are very important and useful parts of speech in English (Li, 2007.Frank, 1972). Mathews (1997) notes that prepositions are words that generally precede a noun phrase and indicate a syntactic relationship. Put another way, a preposition expresses a relationship between two or more objects (Mark Foley & Diane Hall, 2003).

In this vein, Quirk, et al. (1985, p.657) state that “*a preposition expresses a relation between two entities, one being that represented by the prepositional complement, the other by another part of the sentence*”. In other words, a preposition works as a connector and a linking device. Furthermore, prepositions

are traditionally divided into three categories: prepositions of place, of direction and of time (Lindstromberg, 1998). Additionally, for Andrew (20003), simple prepositions include one word and are commonly used like **at** and **in**, whereas complex prepositions consist of two words or more such as **instead of**. The mostly used prepositions of place are: **in**, **at** and **on** (Seely, 2007).

## 1.2. What is a preposition of place?

For Leung (1990, cited in Hasan & Abdullah, 2009), “the *function of spatial prepositions is to locate spatially one object with reference to another object*” (p.609). For instance, my friend lives **in** Paris, there is a spatial relationship between “my friend” and “Paris” through the use of the preposition **in**. A preposition of place locates a specific place or shows the place or positions of a certain noun. The basic prepositions of place are: **in**, **at** and **on** (Fatima & Zubaida, 2010).

## 1.3. The main prepositions of place *in, at and on*

According to Hewings (1999, p. 208), we use **at** to talk about a place we think of as a point rather than an area, and about an event where there is a group of people:

- I arrived **at** *New Street Station* at 7.30.
- We last met **at** *the conference in Italy*.
- We were waiting **at** *the far end of the room*.
- There were very few people **at** *Joan’s party*.

We use **on** to talk about a position touching a flat surface, or something we think of as a line such as a road or river:

- Is that a spider **on** *the ceiling*? (Notice we also say **on** the wall/ floor).
- She owns a house **on** *the Swam River*.

We use **in** to talk about a position within a larger area, or something within a larger space:

- There has been another big forest fire **in** California.
- She looked again **in** her *bag* and, to her relief, there were her keys.

The table below displays how “**at**”, “**in**” and “**on**” are used in some cases:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My dream is to play <b>at</b> Wembley Stadium.</li> <li>• Didn't I see you <b>in/at</b> the pool yesterday</li> </ul> | <p>-seen as a point</p> <p>-either as within the pool itself, or a building which is a point in town</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He lives <b>in</b> Perth.</li> <li>• We stopped <b>in/at</b> Milan and Pisa in our way to Rome.</li> </ul>            | <p>-within the city</p> <p>-we use <b>at</b> when we see the cities as points on a journey, and <b>in</b> when we see them as enclosed areas where we stayed for sometime</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They were a great success <b>in/at</b> Edinburgh.</li> </ul>  | <p>-we can use <b>at</b> when we use a place name instead of an institution –here, the Edinburgh Festival; <b>in</b> suggests the city</p>                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He's <b>in</b> Los Angeles on business.</li> <li>• He's <b>at</b> Manchester studying linguistics.</li> </ul>         | <p>-staying or living there</p> <p>- a student at Manchester University</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She works <b>at</b> Marks and Spencer.</li> <li>• She works <b>in</b> a shoe shop.</li> </ul>                         | <p>-the name of a particular organisation</p> <p>- the kind of place</p>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I stopped <b>at</b> the shop on the way home.</li> <li>• I was <b>in</b> the bank when in came Sue. (Notice we say: “T works <b>on</b> a farm”, but “T works <b>in</b> a factory”.)</li> </ul> | <p>-we use <b>at</b> to talk about buildings such as the dentist’s, the supermarket, etc.</p> <p>-we use <b>in</b> to emphasise that we mean <i>inside</i> the building</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I read the paper <b>in</b> the taxi on the way.</li> <li>• I’ll probably go <b>on</b> the bus.</li> </ul>  | <p>-for travel using taxis or cars</p> <p>-for travel using bus, but we use <b>in</b> if we want to emphasise <i>inside</i> the bus,etc.</p>                                |

**Table 1: Usage of *at, in* and *on* (Hewings, 1999, p.208).**

### Semantics of Prepositions in Arabic

With the existence of over 20 Arabic prepositions, Arab grammarians consider only eight lexical items, namely, /الباء/, /اللام/, /في/, /على/, /إلى/, /من/, /عن/ and /حتى/, as prepositions of place relation. The locative prepositions in Arabic are /الباء/, /في/, and /على/ (Rahman, 1990).

Hasan and Abdullah (2009) discussed a comparison between English and Arabic prepositions, in which the Arabic preposition /في/ can be used as an equivalent of the English prepositions in, at, and on. The other preposition relevant here is /على/, which can be equivalent in English to on, over, at and onto. /في/ and /على/ are the commonly used prepositions in Arabic when transferring from English to Arabic.

Generally, the Arabic preposition /في/ denotes the sense of location in, within or inside a place (Rahman, 1990). Al-Marrani (2011) considers that the Arabic

preposition / في / has four functions; space qualifier, time qualifier, causative, and accompaniment.

Below are some examples of the spatial function:

1) الطالب في القاعة / (fii = in)

The student in the hall

The student is in the hall.

2) الطالب في الجامعة / ( fii = at)

The student in the university.

The student is at the university.

3) / سافرت في الطائرة / (fii= on)

Travelled I in the plane.

I travelled on the plane.

The Arabic preposition على, on the other hand, denotes higher in place or position on surface (Al-Marrani, 2011). For instance:

4) /ركبت على الحصان/ (ʕalaa = on)

rode I on the horse.

I rode on the horse.

5) /وضعت القلم على الطاولة/

put I the pen on the table.

I put the pen on the table.

According to Hasan and Abdullah (2009) and Al-Marrani (2011), the preposition على can be an equivalent of the English preposition over. For

6) قفزت على الحائط/

jumped I on the wall.

I jumped over the wall.

Hasan and Abdullah (2009) gave other examples which illustrate how the



preposition على could be an equivalent of the English prepositions at and onto.

Following are the examples:

7) /جلسنا على الطاولة /

We sat on the table.

We sat at the table.

#### **1.4. Potential difficulties with prepositions of place**

Celce Murcia and Larsen Freeman (2015) posit that prepositions are troublesome for an EFL learner and are among the most difficult items to master even for EFL teachers themselves. The difficulty is due to many reasons. First, English prepositions are short words that are hardly recognized in rapid speech because they are rarely stressed (Hendricks, 2010). Second, they are given a small space in English grammar books (Lindstromberg, 1996). Third, prepositions are numerous and polysemous. Therefore, even native speakers of English find them challenging because they have different meanings in different contexts (Zughoul, 1979). Fourth, Kreidler (1966) contends that prepositions have abstract and chaotic functions in addition to their idiomatic usage. Thus, they remain a stumbling block for EFL learners and teachers as well. Fifth, prepositions differ from one language to the other (Samara, 1999). Further, not all prepositions in other languages have exact equivalents in English (Scott & Trucker, 1974). Last, but not least, English prepositions play complex multi- roles and choosing one preposition is limited by its object (Levin, 1993).

### 1.5. Problems and errors in using prepositions of place

According to Bitchener, Young and Cameron (2005), 29, 23% of the most frequent grammatical errors do occur with prepositions. Additionally, Chodrow, Treteault and Han (2007, p.05) state that “*prepositions account for a substantial proportion of all grammatical errors by EFL learners*”. For Celce Murcia (2001), EFL learners have three main types of errors:

- A- Errors of omission: when a necessary preposition is not used in an obligatory context like I get up 07:30.
- B- Errors of commission: when an extra preposition is added like I saw at your father.
- C- Misuse of prepositions: the use of the wrong preposition which affects the intended meaning like I live at France.

In the same vein, Sinclair (1991) argues that using the wrong preposition is the commonly noticed error. Moreover, Fitikides (2002) contends that the problem with prepositions is three fold: Form, meaning and use. Thus, EFL learners confuse their meaning and misuse of prepositions.

### 1.6. Sources of errors in using prepositions of place

It is a challenging task to determine the exact source of errors due to their vague and complex nature. Koruti and Djelia (2013) consider that errors are made because of the following reasons:

- A- Negative transfer:** errors occur when a learner transforms his mother tongue rules to the target language. This transfer can be negative and is called interlanguage interference because there is no one to one equivalence between MT and English prepositions (Brown, 1987. AL-Bayatti, 2013).
- B- Intralingual transfer:** errors occur because the target language is learned partially. Brown (1987) mentions overgeneralization errors which involve the incorrect application of the target language rules in different contexts.

Also, ignorance of rule restriction which means “*applying rules to contexts which they do not apply*” (Richards & Sampson, 1974).

**C- Context of learning:** These errors are due to the fact that some teachers see that simple prepositions are easy to master .So, they give them little attention and present them poorly or do not mention them at all (Brown,1987).

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, this chapter dealt with acquisition of prepositions in L2 learning . . We reviewed the definition of prepositions . Also, we discussed the potential difficulties with preposition of place , problems and errors in using prepositions of place. As far as we tackled the sources of errors in using place prepositions.

# Chapter two: Error analysis as new discipline in applied linguistics.

## Introduction

Error analysis (EA) is new discipline that is dated back to 1960s as an alternative to contrastive analysis (CA), in order to treat learners' errors as a feedback opportunity for researchers to determine learning strategies based on those errors.

This chapter is devoted to spotlight on error analysis (EA). First, it represents the definition of error analysis. Second, it defines the terms: error and mistake and the difference between them. It shows also the sources of errors including interlingual and intralingual errors, context of learning and communication strategies. Finally, it tackles the definition of positive and negative transfer.

## 1.1 Error Analysis

Error Analysis has been defined -in linguistics- by a lot of scholars. According to Carl James (1998), "Error analysis is the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes, and consequences of unsuccessful language."(p.1) i.e. When a student learning a foreign language commits an error ;it studies the causes of that error. According to Susan M. Gas& Larry Selinker (2008), "Error analysis is a type of linguistic that focuses on the errors of learners make in producing the target language and the target language form itself". (p.102) According to Douglas Brown (2002), error analysis as a study of learners' error which is based on the fact that learners do make errors, and that these errors can be observed, analyzed, and classified to reveal the system operating within the learners .In addition, Richards and Schmidt (2002), define it as "The study and analysis of the errors made by second language learners."(p.184)

## 1.2. Distinction between Errors and Mistakes

Error and mistake are two different things in terms of definition and essence. (Carl James 2008,p.78) mentioned that intention played a decisive role in the error and mistake definition. According to him, error is unintentionally deviant and is not self-corrected while a mistake is either intentionally or unintentionally deviant and it is self-corrected. He adds that error cannot be self-corrected by the learner until further relevant input has been provided and converted into

intake by the learners. In other words, the learner needs to be provided by a further relevant learning before they can correct themselves. Meanwhile, mistakes can be corrected by the learners by simply pointing out to them (p.83). On the other hand, Pit Corder has another definition of error and mistake as stated in Carl James. He upholds the competence versus performance distinction. According to him, mistakes are of no significance to the process of language learning since they 'do not reflect a defect in our knowledge' but are traceable to performance failure, such as memory lapses, spelling pronunciations, tiredness, strong emotion, etc. The learner is normally aware of them immediately and can correct them with more or less complete assurance. On the contrary, errors are everything that mistakes are not: they are significance; they do reflect knowledge; they are not self-correctable; and that which only learners of an L2 make(pp. 78—79). Based on the definition above, it can be said that error is systematic deviance of the grammar norms which is made by the learner intentionally; it reflects his knowledge since it is not caused by performance failure, and it cannot be self-corrected by the learner. Meanwhile, mistake is not systematic deviance which is made by the learner either intentionally or unintentionally; it is caused by performance failure, such as fatigue, memory lapses, etc., and it can be self-corrected by the learner.

## **2.Types of Errors**

Errors are related to learners, and they differ from one student to another. That is why many linguists have divided them into types which are called taxonomy .It is very important to classify the types of any error that often arises in the L2 learner's speech and writing. In this context, the linguist, Dulay (1982) formulates a *Surface Taxonomy Strategy* in terms of classifying errors in a sentence. (p.138) They include:

### **2.1. Omission**

"Omission error is characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well formed utterance" (p.154)Students formulate an incomplete sentence by omitting any morpheme. The grammatical morphemes much more frequently omitted than content morphemes"

E.g:

- *Ahmed studious student.*
- أحمد طالب مجتهد .

Students frequently produce errors in a nominal sentence by omitting the verb (to be) of the sentence. This error is due to the influence of the L1.

## 2.2 Addition

While omission describes the absence of something important in sentence structure, there is an opposite called addition errors. It can be characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance. There are three types of addition; double markings, regularizations, and simple additions. (p.156)

Addition errors which classified into double markings are found in negative sentence:

*Ahmed did not drank your milk.*

The sentence uses double marking to indicate past form by representing both auxiliary and the verb

Other types of addition, which are separated to double markings, are regularizations and simple additions. They are:

*He putted his book on the table.*

*A my friend travelled to London.*

Both of the sentences show addition; the first shows regularization by adding suffix –ed in the irregular verb, and the second indicates simple addition by adding the indefinite article a.

## 2.3 Misinformation

Misinformation errors are characterized by the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure. Misinformation usually comes in the form of: regularizations, archi-forms, and alternating forms. (p.158)

Students usually misinform the sentence because they are influenced by syntax of L1. Sometimes learners use wrong morphemes and they ignore important morphemes which can cause ambiguity.

**E.g:**

- *Making yourself agile, play football.*

Here in this sentence, the subject (you) is omitted which makes it ambiguous. Without a subject, a sentence cannot be well understood.

## 2.4 Misordering

Misordering errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or a group of morphemes in an utterance. (p.162)

Misordering may occur due to the influence of L1 or the ignorance of L2 sentence structure.

Eg:

- *She yesterday went to the market.*

The incorrect position of the adverb of time was made by a learner in L2 as they did in the L1.

- ذهبت البارحة الى السوق

### 3. Causes of errors

Most linguists formulated the sources of error basing on the influence brought by the L1 to the L2. The easiest classification of error sources have been initiated by Richard(1982), "Competence errors are classified according to their sources: interference errors, intralingual errors, and developmental errors"(p.58)

#### 3.1 Interlingual Errors

According to Jack Richard 1980), the term "interference" and "interlingual" has similar connotation found in determining source of error. Interference or interlingual is errors caused by interference of the learner's mother tongue.(p.173)

Dulay(1982) describes that interlingual errors are similar in structure to a semantically equivalent phrase or sentence in learner's native language. (p.171)

Here are some examples of error produced by an Arab speaker:

- *The weather cloudy.*
- *He lied on me.*

To know if there is an interlingual error and existence of similarity, the sentence in L2 translated into Arabic as the L1. The first sentence indicates an interlingual errors; the learner interfered with L1 structure so that they produce The weather cloudy rather than The weather is cloudy because the translation in Arabic shows the similarity; الجو مغيم which interferes learner's English sentence.

The second one, the error made because they transfer their L1 structure into L2 structure. The translation of the L2 sentence is: كذب علي.

In Arabic, the phrase (كذب علي) is semantically and grammatically correct. If this phrase is translated into L2 *lied on me*, it is incorrect. The phrase in English is expressed idiomatically *lied to me*.

### **3.2 Intralingual Errors**

According to Jack C Richards (1980), intralingual errors are those which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply. (p.174)

Intralingual errors can be detected based on their characteristics:

#### **3.2.1 Overgeneralization**

It means that a learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language. It involves generally the creation of one deviant structure in the place of the target language structure for example: *she will tries*.

The learner knows she plays, she wears, she sings, etc. but for using –s after the modal auxiliary is prohibited. The learners overgeneralize the rule of suffix –s that is used only after the third person in simple present tense.

#### **3.2.2 Ignorance of rule restrictions**

It involves the application of rules in a wrong context where they must not be applied. An example *he is made me to rest* through extension of the infinitival complements. The learner ignores the use of make which is not followed by to and a verb. Here, the learner can make another sentence like:

*He asked/wanted/invited me to go.*

#### **3.2.3 Incomplete application of rules**

It involves a failure to fully develop a structure. The common teaching device used is question. Typically, they are not used to find out something, but as means of eliciting sentences. (p.177) Thus, learners of L2 English have been observed to use declarative word order in question, understand? In the place of an interrogative word order. Have you understood? Or Do you understand? This type of intralingual error corresponds to what is often referred to as an error of transitional competence.

#### **3.2.4 False concepts hypothesized**

According to Rod Ellis (1994), this source of errors arises when the learner does not



fully comprehend a distinction in the target language. For example, the use of "was" as a marker of past tense in "One day", it was pattern found with the majority of verb that take happened.(p.59)

The form may be understood to be the corresponding marker of the present tense; *he is speaks French*. Sometimes, in narrative text can be found the continuous form instead of the simple past: elsewhere, it can be encountered some confusion between too, so, and very, between come and go, and so on. These errors are sometimes due to poor gradation of teaching items.(p.178)

### **3.2.5 Developmental Errors**

Rod Ellis (1994)mentions in his book "Developmental errors occur when the learners attempt to build up hypotheses about the target language on the basis of limited experience" (p.54)

Dulay(1982) also describe developmental errors as the errors similar to those made by children learning the target language as their first language. (p.165)

For example, little boy visit his grandmother. Learner omits the marker of definite article the before the subject and the past tense marker –ed invisited. This kind of error also found in the speech of children learning English as their first language.

### **3.3 Context of learning**

Context of learning as another source of errors committed by learners who learn a target language. Teacher, textbook besides the situation in the classroom affect the context of learning in one way or another. According to Brown (1980), "Context refers, for example, to the classroom with its teacher its material in the case of school learning or the social situation in the case of untutored second language learning." (p.174)This means that when learners make errors, these errors can be the result of the teacher's way of explanation or the faulty structure of the textbook that leads to a faulty presentation by the target language. As a result, erroneous predictions about students' learning based on their L1 language and culture have occurred regardless of social factors, such as the contexts, and the purpose of their learning to write, or their age, race, class, gender, education, and prior experience.

### **3.4 Communication Strategies**

Brown (1994) “A communication strategy is the conscious employment of verbal or nonverbal mechanisms for communicating an idea when precise linguistic forms are for some reason not readily available to the learner at a point in communication.” (p.174)

To sum up, there are some sources that may lead learners to commit errors when learning target language. Interference of native language to the target language, lack of competence of the target language, the learning environment and learners’ learning strategies are the most known factors that affect the learning process of the target language.

### **4.Positive transfer**

Positive transfer is a beneficial part of first language to second language; this happens when two languages share the same characteristics. This kind of transfer rarely occurs. For that reason, it has not been that tackled as done with the negative transfer ,which takes all the parts of transfer. It is not fair to focus on negative transfer and ignore the other one, “since cross-linguistic similarity which may generate positive transfer is an integral part of the whole cross-linguistic influence set” (Yu, 2004). Allen and Corder (1975) maintain that: “positive transfer helps new learning, for instance, it is easy to learn to pronounce aspirated voice less stops in second language if the language also has aspirated voice less stops.” (As cited in |Nassira Lemesara, 2015, p.34)

### **5.Negative transfer**

Negative transfer for some linguists refers to interference. (Weinreich, 1995, p.24), is one of them. He talks about this in terms of positive and negative transfer. He states that when a process of second language learning takes place, those linguistics phenomena which are similar in form, meaning and distribution are regarded as facilitating the process, and transfer is seen as positive, if they are dissimilar, the transfer is considered negative and acquisition is viewed as distorted because the two structures differ. The phenomenon involved in these difficulties called interference. (p.34)

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, this chapter dealt with error analysis (EA) as new discipline in applied linguistics. It took a contributes greatly to check learner's linguistic performance when learning a target language. We reviewed its definition. Also, we discussed the distinction between errors and mistake, the types of error which can be classified into errors of omission, addition, selection and misordering and the significance of errors. As far as we tackled the causes and sources of errors.

# **Chapter Three :Error of investigating translation of spatial prepositions from Arabic into English.**

## **Introduction**

The main purpose of this chapter is to highlight the major errors Third year English students make when dealing with Arabic prepositions of place relation. The data were obtained from a diagnostic test of Arabic prepositions of place relation given to third year English students, to test their proficiency in using the afore-mentioned prepositions.

The resultant errors are examined, analyzed and tabulated with the aim of finding out the sorts of problems Algerian students face in using Arabic prepositions of place relation as well as the real causes behind such problems.

The purpose of this chapter is to find out points of similarity and difference in the use of prepositions of place relation in English and in Arabic. The comparison of all uses, particularly the position ones, mentioned in chapters one, is the main concern of this study. This comparison will show the differences between the two languages, which may constitute the real problem Arab learners face in using prepositions of place relation. Differences and similarities in these areas can easily be detected by the reader if he/she goes through the aforementioned chapters, which are intended to give the reader a general idea of the prepositional systems in the two languages.

It is hoped that the teaching and learning of English prepositions of place relation will be facilitated by amplifying and clarifying problematic areas.. Thus, all spatial senses of each English preposition are compared with their counterparts in Arabic, in order to ascertain whether these senses are conveyed in a similar or different fashion. As has been mentioned above, differences in propositional usage are likely to prove problematic to Algerian learners of English.

## **The test :**

The test consists of the guided translation of ten Arabic prepositions into English. This part is mainly intended to test how far the interference phenomenon affects the students when translating Arabic spatial prepositions into their English counterparts. It is designed as a guided translation test so that errors other than those involving prepositions are avoided.

### **1. The Sample**

The sample includes (25) twenty five students of third year English from the Department of Ouargla University.

Students have randomly been chosen from the whole number of students in the classroom. The choice of the third year students is due to the fact that they have studied translation since the second year and they studied the grammatical rules including prepositions in their first year.

#### **1.Data Analysis**

Read the following Arabic sentences carefully and than fill in the blanks with appropriate English prepositions of place relation which can denote the some meanings conveyed by the Arabic ones:

1- First Sample:

صعد الناس إلى السفينة جميعا.

All the people went --- the ship.

Correct answer : " All the people went aboard the ship."

The most frequent error committed by the examinees is either the use of the preposition "on" or = "to" or the null form. The cause of these

errors is that, to denote this sense in Arabic, the following are possible:

صعد الناس على ظهر السفينة

(ascended the.. people on board the ship)

صعد الناس على السفينة

(ascended the people on the ship)

صعد الناس إلى السفينة

(ascended the people to the ship)

Or

صعد الناس السفينة

(ascended the people the ship)

which all mean "people got aboard the ship."

The students who thought of the first choice, used either "on board" or the correct preposition aboard. But, on the other hand, the students who thought of the other options, used the incorrect prepositions on, to, and the null form respectively . The use of the preposition "onto" was accepted as another correct answer.

| correct responses | Incorrect responses |    |      |      |    |    |      |    |    |     |
|-------------------|---------------------|----|------|------|----|----|------|----|----|-----|
| 0                 | above               | at | Onto | into | Of | On | over | to | up |     |
| aboard            | 2                   | 1  | 1    | 1    | 1  | 12 | 1    | 1  | 1  | 100 |

## 2- Second sample:

c. They built another bridge ..... this river. بني جسر آخر فوق هذا النهر

Correct answer: All the people went across the ship.

### Meaning in English:

The preposition **across** is used to express the idea of "stretching from one side to another".

### Meaning in Arabic:

The preposition /فوق/ is used to indicate the same meaning.

### Problems

There will be a problem of replacement here because the Arabic preposition /عبر/ is not used to denote this sense. The students may use either over or above, the counterparts of the Arabic preposition /فوق/, instead of the correct preposition across.

The most frequent error made by the students here is the use of the preposition over, the literal translation of the Arabic preposition /فوق/, which is used in Arabic to denote the same sense. In Arabic, the preposition /عبر/ (across) is not used to denote this sense.

| correct responses | Incorrect responses |    |    |       |    |      |    | 100 |
|-------------------|---------------------|----|----|-------|----|------|----|-----|
| Across            | Above               | at | in | along | of | Over | On |     |
| 0                 | 2                   | 1  | 1  | 1     | 1  | 9    | 1  |     |

3- Third sample:  
Don't lean --- the wall.

لا تتكى على الجدار

Correct answer:  
"Don't lean against the wall."

### Meaning in English

The preposition against is used to denote the meaning "in contact with".

### Meaning in Arabic:

To indicate the same meaning in Arabic, the preposition /9alaa/ is used.

### Problems

There will be a problem of replacement here since the Arabic prepositions /عكس/ /ضد/ are not used to indicate this sense. The students may use the preposition on, the literal translation of /على/, instead of against.

| correct responses | Incorrect responses |    |    |      |    |    |    |     |
|-------------------|---------------------|----|----|------|----|----|----|-----|
| Against           | beside              | by | to | upon | of | On | At |     |
| 0                 | 2                   | 1  | 1  | 1    | 1  | 9  | 1  | 100 |

### 4- Fourth sample:

My friend built a house--- the trees.      بنى صديقي دارا بين الأشجار

Correct answer: My friend built e house among the trees

Swan (1980: 50) argues that the distinction between the use of among and between depends on our perception of things. Between is used when we see the surrounding objects separately, i. e. each one is



clearly distinct from the others. Among, on the other hand, is used when there is a collection of things that we do not see separately,

e. g. He built a house **among** the trees.

Bryant (1962: 38) has stated almost the same thing. Between is used in reference to two or to more than two in expressing the relation of a thing to other surrounding things severally and individually. Among is used to express a relation to them collectively and vaguely. Therefore, we would not say "the space lying among three points" or "a treaty among three powers" or "the choice lies among the three candidates".

The most frequent error made by the examinees is the use of either between instead of among or vice versa.

The main cause of this error is twofold. First, in Arabic, there is only one preposition, /بين/, which is used to denote all the senses denoted by both English prepositions. The second reason is the overlapping my English between the two prepositions in relation to more than two persons or things.

| correct responses | Incorrect responses |         |        |         |     |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------|--------|---------|-----|
| among             |                     | between | Inside | through |     |
| 3                 |                     | 1       | 1      | 1       | 100 |

#### 5- Fifth sample:

Fatima was studying --- Ouargla University      كانت فاطمة تدرس في جامعة ورقلة

Correct answer: Fatima was studying at Ouargla University.

The most frequent error made by the examinees in this sample is caused by the overlapping phenomenon between the two prepositions "in" and "at". when used in

addresses , the highest number of errors made by the students is the use of the preposition "in" instead of "at".

Though the two prepositions in and. are, sometimes, interchangeable, the use of in instead of t. in these two examples is not accepted in English.

| correct responses | Incorrect responses |  |    |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |
|-------------------|---------------------|--|----|--|--|--|--|--|--|-----|
| 12                |                     |  | in |  |  |  |  |  |  | 100 |
| At                |                     |  | 13 |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |

#### 6- Sixth sample:

اشترينا تذاكرنا من محطة العاصمة الرئيسية

We bought our tickets ..... Algeria Central Station.

Correct answer: We bought our tickets at Algeria Central Station.

In the sixth sample , only four of 25 examinees used the correct preposition .

Most of the students used the preposition "from", the counterpart of the Arabic preposition / من/ which is used to denote this sense 21 students used the preposition from instead of " at"..

| correct responses | Incorrect responses |  |      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------|---------------------|--|------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 4                 |                     |  | From |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| At                |                     |  | 21   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

#### 7- Seventh sample :

سقطت الكتب من على الرف.

The books fell .....the shelf.

Correct answer: The books fell off the shelf.

## Problems

There is a problem of replacement here since, in Arabic, there is no exact equivalent of the preposition "off". The students may use "from", the literal translation of /من/, instead of "off". Sometimes, to denote a similar sense in Arabic, the compound preposition /من على/ (from on) is used, e. g./

سقطت الكتب من على الرف

(fell the books from on the shelf)

The books fell off the shelf.

Thus, if the students think of this option, they will use the incorrect compound preposition "from on", the literal translation of /من على/, instead off .

| correct responses | Incorrect responses |  |      |    |         |  |  |  |  |     |
|-------------------|---------------------|--|------|----|---------|--|--|--|--|-----|
| 0                 |                     |  | From | Of | From on |  |  |  |  | 100 |
| Off               |                     |  | 20   | 3  | 2       |  |  |  |  |     |

## 8- Eighth Sample

يرتكز السقف على أربعة أعمدة

The roof of the building is supported ..... four pillars.

(supported ceiling the building DM four pillars)

Correct answer: The roof of the building is supported on four pillars.

Meaning in English :

The preposition "on" is used to convey the idea of "a means of support from beneath".

The meaning in Arabic: The same meaning is conveyed by the preposition /على/.

### Problems

No problems are expected here since the two prepositions "on" and /على / are equivalent.

| correct responses | Incorrect responses |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |
|-------------------|---------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| 100               |                     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0 |
| On                |                     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |

### 9- Ninth Sample :

She fell ..... her cot.

سقطت من مهدها

**Correct answer:** She fell out of her cot.

The meaning in English:

The preposition "out of" is used to express the meaning "from within" or "from inside".

The meaning in Arabic: The preposition /من/ can indicate the same meaning.

### Problems

There could be a problem of replacement here since, in Arabic, there is no exact equivalent of the preposition "out of". Instead of "out of", the students may use "from", the literal translation of the preposition /من/, which is used to indicate this sense.

خرج السارق من الباب

The burglar came ..... the door.

The burglar came out of the door.

The meaning in English:

The meaning indicated by the preposition "out of "here is "from" or "through something to the outside".

The meaning in Arabic:

The preposition /من/ indicates the same meaning.

هل تستطيع استخراجها لي من الثلاجة؟

Could you take it ..... the fridge for me?

Could you take it out the fridge for me?

(could you take it out for me from the fridge? /

The meaning in English:

The preposition out of is used to express the idea of "removing something from the place where it is enclosed or stored".

The meaning in Arabic :

The preposition /من/ preceded by the verb /أخرج/ can convey the same meaning.

| correct responses | Incorrect responses |  |    |      |  |  |  |  |     |
|-------------------|---------------------|--|----|------|--|--|--|--|-----|
| 0                 |                     |  | of | from |  |  |  |  |     |
| Out of            |                     |  | 3  | 22   |  |  |  |  | 100 |

10- Tenth sample

السماء فوق رؤوسنا

The sky is ..... our heads.

Correct answer : The sky is over our heads.

the sky over/above heads our.

The meaning in English:

The preposition "over" is used to indicate the meaning "directly above".

The meaning in Arabic:

The same meaning is indicated by the preposition /فوق/.

### Problems

There will be no problem if the students think of over and /فوق/ as equivalent.

However, the students may be confused about whether to use "above" or "over".

This confusion is due to overlapping between these two prepositions in English as well as the fact that the Arabic preposition /فوق/ represents both of them .

- فرشت قطعة قماش فوق المنضدة.

- She spread a piece of cloth ..... the table.

Correct answer :

She spread a piece of cloth over the table.

(spread she a piece cloth over/ above/on the table)

### Problems

Apart from the problem mentioned in above, there will be a problem of replacement if the students think of the preposition /9alaa/. They may use the preposition "on", the literal translation of /على/, instead of "over".

- وضع اللص قناعا على وجهه.

The burglar put a mask .....his face.

The correct answer : The burglar put a mask over his face.

(put the burglar a mask on face his)

The meaning in English

The preposition over is used to indicate the meaning "in front of and covering".

The meaning in Arabic

The preposition /على/ is used to denote the same meaning.

Problems

There will be a problem of replacement here since the preposition /فوق/ is not used to convey this meaning in Arabic. The students may use the preposition "في", the literal translation of /على/, instead of "over"

## **Discussion of findings**

Most of the errors found herein are due to : The interlingual errors An interlingual error is a significant source of error for all learners. Interlingual error is an error which results from language transfer, that is, which is caused by the learner's native language.

Language transfer is the effect of one language on the learning of another. One of language transfer may occur is negative transfer or interference; is the use of a native language pattern or rule which leads to an error or inappropriate form in the target language.

The results of this study indicated that there are students errors in the use of spatial prepositions, especially the preposition of position.

Differences in source language and target language make students feel it challenge . The cause of students to make errors because of lack of knowledge about the use and function of prepositions. Therefore students made the same errors because of the lack of understanding that students get in school and at university as well. From result of the test, there are 25 students of all respondents shows that total of student's errors in using prepositions place and time reaching 225 errors and the average percentage of errors made by students about 98 %. In addition, out of total 10 questions, there are 22cases of errors caused by interlingual errors. Furthermore, 19 cases of errors caused by intralingual error.

These results indicated that there was low comprehension of students in understanding the types and functions of prepositions of place and time.

The errors that translation students are expected to make are due to several different causes. Among these there are two main ones both of which have already been mentioned.



The one is caused by interference from the native language and the other is caused by interference from other structures in English prepositions are difficult for any EFL learner because he/she usually relates them to his /her own MT (Arabic) prepositional system. The difficulty is also caused by the difference in number, meaning and usage of the prepositions in the MT and EF languages. Verbs and other parts of speech play a great role in the omission, addition and selection of a wrong preposition in English, which may affect the whole meaning of the idea intended by the learner. In addition to this, idiomatic usage of English prepositions makes them difficult to learn even by native speakers of the language.

To sum up, we can reconfirm that there are two major types of preposition problems which third year license students continue to reformulate it . First is the use of an incorrect preposition, second the use of an unnecessary preposition. These preposition problems are said to stem from the interference of the learners' mother tongue. In other words, multilingualism seems to influence learners to produce ungrammatical constructions containing prepositions.

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# Abstract

Prepositions are difficult to be translated because their meaning is often vague and the choice of the correct preposition is often arbitrary. This research aims at shedding light on the difficulties of translating the spatial prepositions from Arabic into English, more specifically, the study presents a general overview about the prepositions and it makes a contrastive analysis attempting to identify and clarify the common different usages of prepositions in both languages. Moreover, it aims at exploring the main sources that make the difficulties and errors in the process of translation. Findings reveal that the EFL learners face problems related to the use and translation of the temporal prepositions purposing to make the learners aware of their uses and to improve their translation.

**Key Words:** Prepositions, spatial prepositions, contrastive analysis, errors, translation.

## ملخص

تعد حروف الجر صعبة في الترجمة لان معناها غير واضح دائما واختيار حرف الجر الصحيح يكون غالبا اعتباطيا. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على صعوبات ترجمة استعمالات حروف الجر المكانية من اللغة العربية إلى اللغة الإنجليزية وقدمت هذه الدراسة فكرة عامة على حروف الجر في كلتي اللغتين ودراسة مقارنة بينهم من أجل تحديد أنواع لاستعمالاتهم المختلفة. وتهدف أيضا على تبين أهم الأسباب التي تسبب الصعوبات و الأخطاء التي تحدث في عملية الترجمة. وقد أكدت النتائج على أن الطلاب واجهوا مشاكل فيما يخص استعمال و ترجمة حروف الجر المكانية بغية توعية الطلاب باستعمالها و التحسين من ترجمتهم لها .

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** حروف الجر ، حروف الجر المكانية ، دراسة مقارنة ، الأخطاء ، ترجمة.

## الملخص

### المقدمة

تعتبر حروف الجر من أهم العناصر التي لها أثر كبير في إظهار المعاني وفي فهم الكلام في كل اللغات ، وتختلف كل لغة على الأخرى في التراكيب النحوية وأنواعها. ولقد وضحت هذه الدراسة التعريف بحروف الجر في اللغتين الانجليزية والعربية وأنواعهما واستعمالاتها خاصة حروف الجر المكانية. تهدف هاته الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على بعض المشاكل والصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلبة أثناء تعاملهم مع استعمال حروف الجر الزمنية وفي ترجمتها من اللغة العربية إلى اللغة الإنجليزية. وسيتم من خلال الفصول التعرف على حروف الجر في اللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية مع ذكر بعض من أنواع الحروف الجارة وتبيين بعضا من المشاكل التي قد يواجهها الطلاب في دراساتهم. تتسلسل فصول البحث على النحو التالي .

### الفصل الأول : اكتساب حروف الجر من تعلم اللغة الثانية

#### تعريف حروف الجر :

حروف الجر في اللغة الانجليزية تعمل على ربط الاسم بالفعل أو الصفة من أجل تبين العلاقة بينهم ومن أجل إبراز المعاني وفهم الكلام. مثال: **in – at – on** .

#### أهم حروف الجر المكانية واستعمالاتها :

نستعمل **at** عند الحديث عن المكان كنقطة بدل منطقة مثل :

I arrived **at** New Street Station at 7.30.

ونستعمل **on** عند حديثنا عن حالة تلامس على سطح مستوي مثل:

She owns a house **on** the Swam River.

ونستعمل **in** عند التحدث عن منطقة واسعة او فضاء مثل :

There has been another big fire **in** California.

أخطاء إستعمال حروف الجر المكانية :

أ- أخطاء الحذف مثال :

I get up 07.30

حيث تم حذف حرف الجر **at**

ب- سوء إستخدام حرف الجر مثل:

I live at France

ت- أخطاء العمولة : وذلك عند إضافة حرف جر زائد مثل:

I saw at your father.

## الفصل الثاني : تحليل الأخطاء

### 1- انواع الأخطاء:

أ- خطأ الحذف مثل : أحمد طالب مجتهد / Ahmed studious student

ب- خطأ الإضافة مثل : A my friend travelled to London

بإضافة الحرف A

ت- معلومات خاطئة مثال : Making yourself agil, play football

هنا تم حذف الضمير you مما شكل غموضا في معنى الجملة .

ث- سوء في الترتيب مثل : She yesterday went to the market

والصحيح ذهبت إلى السوق البارحة عوض ذهبت البارحة إلى السوق .

## الفصل الثالث : الفصل التطبيقي

لاختبار الفرضية التي تفيد بأن طلاب سنة الثالثة ليسانس انجليزية يواجهون بعض الصعوبات في ترجمة استعمالات حروف الجر المكانية من اللغة العربية إلى الانجليزية، قمنا بإجراء اختبار لمجموعة من 25 طالبا حيث تم اختيارهم عشوائيا وكان الاختبار يحتوي على تمرين أول الذي يختص بملء فراغات النص والتمرين الثاني اختص بترجمة 10 جمل تشتمل على أغلب أنواع حروف الجر المستعملة في اللغة العربية.

بعد إجراء الاختبار تم تحليل نتائج الطلبة كما يلي:

- كان استعمال حروف الجر من قبل الطلبة غير دقيق وذلك بسبب نقص التركيز وغموض بعض الجمل الذي أثر على نتائجهم سلبيا.  
- يقدم الطلبة ترجمة دقيقة و مناسبة اذا كانت الجمل تحتوي على حروف جر مألوفة الاستعمال من قبل.

- عندما تتضمن الجملة أكثر من حرف جر واحد أو تركيب غير مألوف لا يصيب أغلب الطلبة في تقديم الترجمة المناسبة لها.

يتضح أن أغلب الطلبة الذين اختبروا لم يقدموا الترجمات المناسبة مما يدل على أنهم يواجهون صعوبة في استعمال وترجمة حروف الجر المكانية وعليه يمكن الحكم على صحة فرضية البحث التي قدمناها في بداية هذا العمل والتي تؤكد على الاختلاف في استعمالات حروف الجر في اللغة العربية والانجليزية.



جامعة قاصدي مرباح - ورقلة-

كلية الآداب و اللغات الأجنبية

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية



مذكرة:

ماستر أكاديمي

ميدان: الآداب واللغات

إختصاص: الترجمة و علم الترجمة

من إعداد: بوزيد حمزة

بعنوان:

ترجمة حروف الجر المكانية و تحليل الأخطاء

العينة : طلبة السنة الثالثة إنجليزية في جامعة قاصدي مرباح - ورقلة-

مذكرة مقدمة لاستكمال متطلبات نيل شهادة الماستر في الترجمة و علم الترجمة

نوقشت علنيا :

بتاريخ 2018/05/31

أمام اللجنة المكونة من:

جامعة قاصدي مرباح ورقلة

جامعة قاصدي مرباح ورقلة

جامعة قاصدي مرباح ورقلة

سعدون فريدة

أحمد نور الدين بلعربي

د. كوداد محمد

❖ رئيس اللجنة:

❖ المشرف :

❖ المناقش :

❖ الموسم الدراسي: 2017 / 2018

