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Dedication

This work is dedicated to:

My dear parents: Thank you so much for your encouragement, constant love and support throughout my life. Thank you for everything, may God grant them a long life and a perfect health. Love you both.

My dear brothers and lovely sisters: Issam, Abdou, Ouissal, Zineb, and Nour. Thank you so much for helping me whenever I needed you and offering me the suitable environment to accomplish this work. God bless you all.

To many beautiful friends kouki, Zeinouba.....Without forgetting Selma, Timou and Loulou. I do love you.

I want to thank my closest relatives who have been a source of hope and strength.

Big thanks to everyone stood by me through my life.

Dedication

I offer this work to:

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Abstract

The present master thesis has been developed at Kasdi Merbah University-Ouargla. It aims at showing the interference of mother tongue on the use of some English prepositions, especially in written production. The selected sample is thirty (30) students of first year and thirty (30) students of third year license at the Department of Letters and English Language-University of Ouargla. It is hypothesized that those students misuse English prepositions and if they do not master their usage, they will transfer from their mother tongue positively or negatively. The researchers mainly depended on a mixed research method (qualitative and quantitative methods) by using two different tools of collecting data: a test of two various activities , the first one is to fill the gaps with the appropriate preposition and the second one is a simple translation activity to translate only the preposition and the word that comes after from the context of the sentence ; and a questionnaire where the same sample was asked to answer some questions concerning students' views about prepositional systems and language transfer. The results revealed the crucial role of mother tongue when dealing with English prepositions and that mother tongue interference is the main reason behind committing errors due to the confusion that resulted from the use of grammar rules of both Standard and Algerian Arabic.

Key words: Language transfer, interference, mother tongue, prepositions, interlingual errors, intralingual errors.

ملخص الدراسة:

تم إجراء هذا البحث في جامعة قاصدي مرباح-ورقلة، بحيث تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة مدى تأثير اللغة الأم على استعمال حروف الجر في اللغة الإنجليزية خاصة على أسلوب الكتابة. تم اختيار ثلاثون طالباً من السنة الأولى و السنة الثالثة ليسانس بشكل عشوائي من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية. تم اقتراح الفرضيات التالية : بأن الطلبة يلجئون الى اللغة الأم عندما يواجهون عراقيل في استعمال حروف الجر و بالتالي هذا ما يؤدي إلى حدوث التداخل اللغوي بالإيجاب أو بالسلب.

اعتمد الباحث طريقتي النوعية و الكمية بواسطة استخدام وسيلتين لجمع المعلومات أولاً إجراء اختبار و الذي يتكون من قسمين ، الأول لملء الفراغات بحرف الجر المناسب و الثاني لترجمة حرف الجر و الكلمة الموالية انطلاقاً من السياق ثانياً توزيع استبيان يتكون من أربعة عشر سؤالاً لإثبات الفرضية و لكي يفحص الباحث وجهة نظر الطلبة حول حروف الجر و التداخل اللغوي .

في الاخير اظهرت النتائج أن للغة الأم دور مهم عند استخدام حرف الجر كما أن التداخل اللغوي بين اللغتين هو السبب الرئيسي وراء الأخطاء المرتكبة من طرف الطلبة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نقل اللغة، التداخل اللغوي، اللغة الأم، حروف الجر، أخطاء بين اللغات، أخطاء متعلقة باللغة نفسها.

Abstrait

Le présent mémoire de maîtrise a été développé à l'Université Kasdi Merbah-Ouargla. Il vise à montrant l'interférence de la langue maternelle sur l'utilisation de certaines prépositions anglaises, en particulier production écrite. L'échantillon sélectionné est de trente (30) étudiants de première année et trente (30) étudiants de licence de troisième année au Département des Lettres et Langue Anglaise-Université de Ouargla. Il est ont émis l'hypothèse que ces étudiants abusent des prépositions anglaises et s'ils ne maîtrisent pas leur utilisation, ils passeront de leur langue maternelle positivement ou négativement. Les chercheurs principalement reposait sur une méthode de recherche mixte (méthodes qualitatives et quantitatives) en utilisant deux différents outils de collecte de données: un test de deux activités diverses, la première est de combler les lacunes avec la préposition appropriée et la seconde est une simple activité de traduction pour traduire uniquement le préposition et le mot qui vient après du contexte de la phrase; et un questionnaire où le même échantillon a été invité à répondre à certaines questions concernant les opinions des élèves sur systèmes prépositionnels et transfert de langue. Les résultats ont révélé le rôle crucial de la langue maternelle lorsqu'il s'agit de prépositions anglaises et que l'interférence de la langue maternelle est la principale raison derrière les erreurs commises en raison de la confusion résultant de l'utilisation des règles de grammaire des deux Arabe standard et algérien.

Mots clés: transfert de langue, interférence, langue maternelle, prépositions, erreurs interlinguales, erreurs intralingues.

List of abbreviations:

Adj: Adjective.

CA: Contrastive Analysis.

CAH: Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis.

e.g.: For example.

EA: Error Analysis.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

FL: Foreign Language.

I.e.: It means.

L1: First language (Arabic in this study).

L2: Second Language (English in this study).

MT: Mother Tongue.

NL: Native Language.

Ø: Zero Prepositions.

SL: Second Language.

SLA: Second Language Acquisition.

TL: Target Language.

V: Verb.

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Introduction:

Language acquisition is one of the most complex aspect to be discussed .Generally, learners face difficulties mastering a foreign or a second language (FL/SL) so they tend to rely on their mother tongue (L1) knowledge to fill their gaps and to cope with their weaknesses, this is called a positive language transfer which is helpful; nevertheless, there is a negative transfer or interference and it will lead to errors.

The concept transfer was first presented by Contrastive Analysts who focused on whether L1 affects L2 or not. This research is planned to study an important part of speech which is prepositions, those small words form a basic component to show the relationships between words. Most of the students face problems with prepositions' usages which will produce errors due to mother tongue interference or confusion within the target language. This study consists of two main parts the first one is literature review which is a historical study about approaches to second language acquisition and the second chapter is about testing the hypotheses.

1-Statement of the problem:

One of the remarkable factors that affects Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is First Language (FL/L1). Historically, researchers claimed that MT interferes with SL. Adult learners, most of the time, encounter difficulties and problems when learning SL/FL due to many reasons; one of the highly confused part of speech is prepositions and their appropriate usage.

Lorincz and Gordon (2012) says that “prepositions are notoriously difficult for English language learners to master due to the sheer number and their polysemous nature” (p. 1).As Pittman (1966) describes that prepositions “have earned a reputation of difficulty if not a downright unpredictability”. Prepositions do have many forms and one preposition can have different meanings.

The reason of this study is to investigate if EFL learners (first year and third year Licence at the English department /University of Ouargla) rely on their mother tongue when using prepositions; the present study placed its concern on the crucial role of language transfer and its effect on SLA.

This research focuses on the types of errors made by those learners when dealing with prepositions as well the main problems that learners make when translating literally from their MT which will cause interference.

2- Objectives of the study:

This study is to investigate to how MT interferes with the TL (English) on the use of some prepositions, and:

- To discover to what extent learners rely on their L1 prepositional knowledge.
- To determine the most frequent type of errors in English prepositions that learners made.
- To identify the similarities and differences of the two prepositional systems.
- To point out the difficulties that face learners in using prepositions.

3- Research questions:

From the previous objectives, some research questions have formulated:

Main question:

- Do learners tend to rely directly on their Arabic prepositional knowledge to may cause interference ?

Sub questions :

- 1- Does MT affect EFL learners' written production when using prepositions negatively?
- 2- What type of English prepositions is the most difficult or the easiest for EFL learners at Kasdi Merbah University?
- 3- Does context affect the use of the appropriate preposition?

4-Hypotheses:

It is hypothesized that:

1- EFL learners of first year and third year licence at Kasdi Merbah University misuse the English prepositions because of interference With MT.

2- If EFL learners of first year and third year licence at Kasdi Merbah University do not master the usage of English prepositions, they will transfer from Mother Tongue (Arabic) (positively / negatively).

5- Research methodology:

This research aims to have insights into the relationship between MT interference and the use of prepositions. The adopted method is a mixed research method because this research contains both open- and closed-ended questions, it implies multiple forms of data and the researcher collects both statistical and text analysis.

This research is divided into two main chapters; the first chapter (literature review) contains two sections: the first is approaches to SLA and the second one is about prepositions, their types, their use and how to overcome with their difficulties. While the second chapter is devoted for practical part to test the hypotheses.

In order to test the hypotheses, thirty (30) students from each level (first year and third year license) at the department of English – university of Ouargla were chosen randomly to answer the test and the questionnaire.

6- Rationale of the study:

English prepositions are considered as one of the difficult structures for EFL learners. The researchers tried to examine, analyse, and explain the errors made by EFL learners concerning

prepositions and to obtain a deeper ideas regarding transfer phenomenon. This research is helpful not only for teachers at the University of Ouargla but for teachers of English as a foreign language in general to understand the types and the origins of prepositional errors made by EFL learners, and to discover new systematic techniques to make those errors as a source for effective learning . Also, for students to be aware of their common errors when using prepositions to avoid doing them again

7-Limitations of the study:

Time constraints and Corona virus circumstances were the main reasons behind choosing a limited number of samples which could not be representative. The sample was chosen from one department and at one university so the results may not be generalized.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Section one: Approaches to Second Language Acquisition

Introduction:

The main reason behind learning a second language is to be able to communicate through speaking or writing and to be competent linguistically. The linguistic competence could be affected by numerous factors such as: psychological factors which are connected to the learners directly, and social factors which are related to the context where learners are in. Scholars and linguists developed some approaches to solve problems that face learners when learning a second language, consequently, facilitating the acquisition of an L2.

1. Contrastive analysis:

Introduction:

One of the most significant issues in Foreign language acquisition is whether the mother tongue affects the language learning process or not. For many years, there was a consensus among researchers and linguists that L1 shapes L2 acquisition (Whorf, 1941). They arrived at an influential theory which is Contrastive Analysis (CA), following it may contribute to a better understanding of the acquisition process of FL. CA was influenced by behaviourism, i.e. L2 learning process is depended on the already existing background of L1 habits, the psychological foundation of CA is transfer theory, substituting the L1 for the prior learning and the L2 for the subsequent learning.

1-1 Definition and objectives:

CA was first developed by Charles Fries (1945) whom noted that the learner brought with him/her the knowledge of the MT in learning FL, therefore this should be taken into account in teaching FL, it reached its heyday after the WWII till 70's. In 1957, Robert Lado stated

that comparing two languages would be helpful to predict the reasons of difficulty or ease in SL learning as a consequence of differences and similarities between MT and L2 , he developed the systematic definition of CA in his book *Linguistics across Cultures* (1957):

Those elements which are similar to the learner's native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult.

that is to say the more the L1 and L2 structures are the same the easier learning process will be and vice versa .

The main objectives of CA are summarized in Theovan Els, et al (1984:38) as follows:

- a) Providing insight into similarities and differences between languages;
- b) Explaining and predicting problems in L2 learning;
- c) Developing course materials for language teaching.

1-2 Contrastive analysis claims:

It has been stated that there are three major versions relying on CAH prediction of SLA difficulty which are:

- A- The Strong version :(a priori claim) Lado said in his book that it is the prediction of SL learning on the basis of structural differences between both languages ,in other words , it is the prediction of errors due to L1 interference .
- B- The weak version :(a posterior claim) errors can be merely explained after they are produced or observed. Also, not all errors are caused by MT; there are other sources (fatigue, slip of the tongue.....)
- C- The moderate version: Brown stated that the difficulty may happen due to parallelisms rather than differences or non-existing items.

1-3 the application of contrastive analysis:

CA can be applied in many fields such as:

-Historical linguistics

-Second language teaching
-Second language learning
-Sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, bilingualism, pragmatics and others cultural-related areas.

-Translation

-Language therapy

1-4 Procedures of contrastive analysis:

According to Lado (1957), the analysis of CA has four steps to follow:

- Description: the researcher describes the two languages.
- Selection: s/he selects forms to contrast.
- Comparison: comparing the two linguistic systems to predict the areas of difficulty and similarity.
- Prediction: the researcher will judge the results of comparison to see if they will be problematic for the learners or not.

2. Error analysis:

As a result of lack of error prediction by CA and claiming that the only source of errors is MT interference. Thus, researchers started to seek another approach which is Error Analysis (EA). Fisiak (1981, 7) mentioned that "The value and importance of Contrastive Analysis lies in its ability to indicate potential areas of interference and errors. Not all errors are the result of interference. Psychological and pedagogical, as well as other extra linguistic factors contribute to the formation of errors."

Stephen Pit Corder was the father of EA through his article (1967) "*The significance of learners' errors*" based on Chomsky's view of first language acquisition, Corder focused in his paper on the active role of the learner.

2-1 Definition of EA:

Corder (1974, p125) stated that "The study of errors is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. In this respect it resembles methodologically the study of the acquisition of the mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give us indications as to the learning process."

According to Sharma (1980):

Error analysis can thus provide a strong support to remedial teaching.

Richards & Schmidt (2010) define EA as the study and analysis of the errors made by SL learners.

2-2 Errors vs. Mistakes:

According to Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt's in *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (2010) "A **mistake** made by a learner when writing or speaking and which is caused by lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspect of performance. Errors are sometimes classified according to vocabulary (**lexical error**), pronunciation (**phonological error**), grammar (**syntactic error**), misunderstanding of a speaker's intention or meaning (**interpretive error**), production of the wrong communicative effect, e.g. through the faulty use of a speech act or one of the rules of speaking."

2-3 Classification of errors:

They are classified as follow:

Process-based classification of errors (Brown, 2000):

A- Omission: deleting some linguistic elements .For example: I am learn French.

B-Addition: redundancy in a sentence .For example: Give **to** me water.

C-Substitution: according to the Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt's in *Longman*

Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (2010):

An error in which the learner substitutes a form from one language (usually the learner's first language) for a form in the target language. For example a French speaker may say "I'll be leaving domain" instead of "I'll be leaving tomorrow."

D- Permutation: the incorrect order of words. For example: They yesterday went to the party.

2-4 Sources of errors:

There are two main sources of errors which are: interlingual errors and intralingual errors.

A-Intralingual errors:

According to Jack Richards (1974,p.174):"Intralingual errors are those which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rule, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply .Developmental errors illustrate the learner attempting to build up hypotheses about the English language from his limited experience of it in the classroom or textbook. "

While Richards (1970) amalgamated the two factors intralingual and developmental errors into one notion "intralingual errors".

Richards (1974:174-81) declared four classification of intralingual errors as the ones will be mentioned:

1-Over-generalization: Jakobovits in Richards (1974:174) said that generalization is when learners generalize their formulated general concepts in the target language, some may stimulate the learning process, and others may not.

For example: the teacher instructed his/her students to change the sentence structure to change continuous form:

She cleans the room —————> She is cleans the room.

2-The learner's problems in sentence structure: it includes the use of unstructured units and applying rules where they are not possible (ignorance of rule restriction + incomplete application of rules).

For example : the teacher gives instruction to each pair of learners , one of them asks a question ,the other responds , then the teacher examines how the question-answer rules would be applied e.g.



Figure1: an example “Learner’s problems in sentence structure”

3-False concepts hypothesized: learners cannot differentiate between TL semantic items that may lead to false concepts hypothesized.

For example:

She was went to the cinema (the learner bears in his/her mind that ‘was’ is used for expressing the past simple tense)

B- Interlingual errors:

Interlingual errors are identified as transfer or interference errors. Those errors are as a result of the negative role of MT on the acquisition of TL rules. So that the learners ‘language is located somewhere on a continuum between MT and the TL.

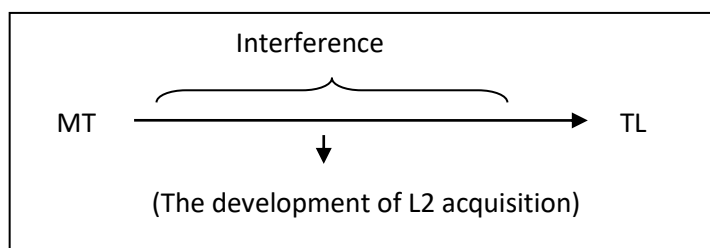


Figure2: The learner’s development of L2.

Lado(1964),Richard(1974,p.173),Brown(1980,p.160),Corder(1981),and Chelli(2013) did emphasize on the idea that the learner’s patterns (habits) of MT are obstacles when learning TL rules .

Some scholars asserted on some interlingual errors 'causes:

Transfer Error (Allen&Corder, 1974), Mother tongue interference (Touchie, 1986), and Literal translation (Al-Khresheh, 2010).

3. Language transfer:

It has been argued that MT has a remarkable effect on TL acquisition, Language learning and language teaching. Language transfer was a significant notion in language acquisition that many schools dealt with in their studies .Historically, Behaviourists claimed that the problems that learners face are due to the habits they created from their MT, rather than TL difficult rules. Fries (1957 as cited in Gass & Selinker, 2008, p.95) who stated:

The basic problems arise not out of any essential difficulty in the features of the new language themselves but primarily out of the special set created by the first language habits.

3-1 Definition of Language transfer:

Transfer: according to Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt's in *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* Transfer is:

(In learning theory) the carrying over of learned behaviour from one situation to another .

Language transfer: according to Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt's in *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* language transfer is:

The effect of one language on the learning of another.

Odlin(1989,p.27) defines it as :

The influence of ensuing from similarities and difference between the TL and any other language that has been antecedently (and maybe imperfectly) acquired.

Another definition by Gass(1996,p.321) who deals with language transfer as positive transfer only :

The use of NL (or other language) data on the acquisition of L2 (or an additional language).

3-2 Types of language transfer:

There are two types which are:

I. Positive transfer:

According to Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt's in *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*:

Positive transfer is transfer which makes learning easier, and may occur when both the native language and the target language have the same form. For example, both French and English have the word table, which can have the same meaning in both languages.

Dulay et al (1988, p.97) declare:

...positive transfer is the automatic use of L1 structures in L2 performance when the structure in both languages is the same resulting incorrect utterance.

Although the similarities between the two languages may lead to problems as it is called "false cognate" in English or "les faux amis" in French. Consequently, the more the two languages are similar, the less errors will occur.

II. Negative transfer:

According to the dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics" Negative transfer, also known as **interference**, is the use of a native-language pattern or rule which leads to an error or inappropriate form in the target language¹. For example, a French learner of English may produce the incorrect sentence am here since Monday instead of I have been here since Monday, because of the transfer of the French pattern Je suis ici depuis lundi ("I am here since Monday").

Osgood (1949, cited in Ellis, 1997, p.15) says that negative transfer is:

The effect of a specifiable interpolated activity upon the retention of previously learnt activity.

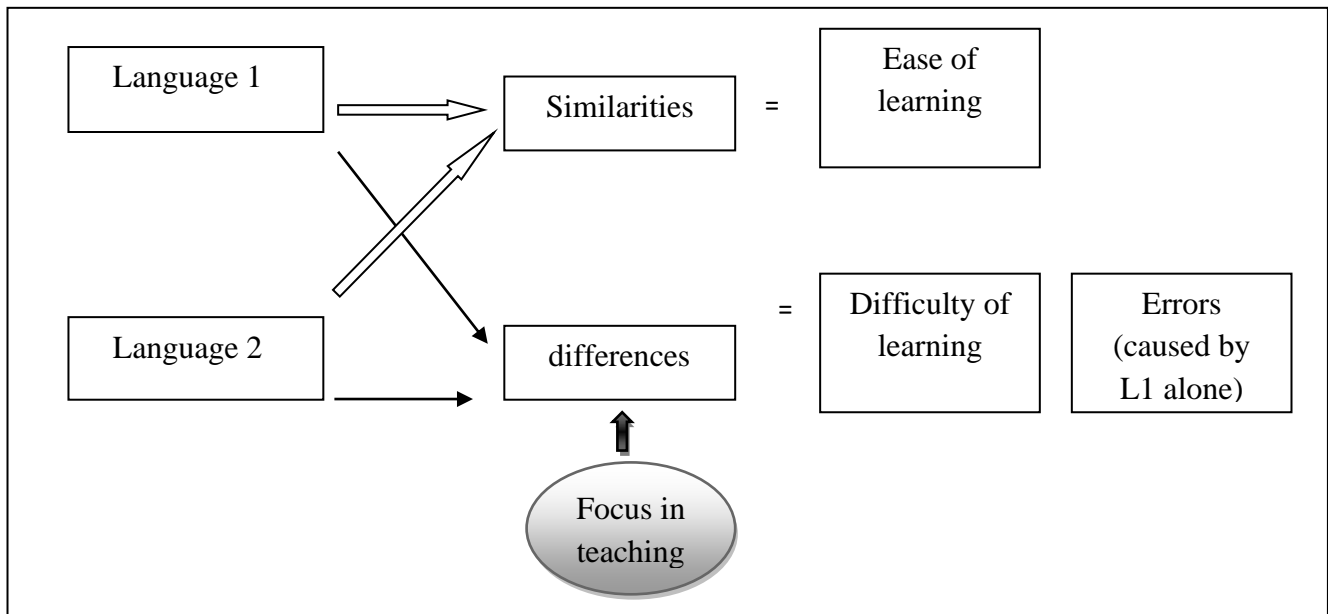


Figure3: procedures of CA

(Applied linguistics: Master course (part2).Dr.Drid (2018-2019))

3-3 the influence of Mother Tongue (Arabic) on learning the Foreign Language (English):

3-3-1 Definition of Mother Tongue (MT):

It is also called (native language, first language). It is the first language that the child acquires at home, it occurs spontaneously.

According to Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt's in *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* MT is:

(Usually) a first language which is acquired at home.

3-3-2 Definition of Foreign Language (FL):

It is also called (non-native language, target language) .It is the language that the learners learn in formal settings with a purpose.

According to Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt's in *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* FL is "A language which is not the native language of large

numbers of people in a particular country or region, is not used as a medium of instruction in schools, and is not widely used as a medium of communication in government, media, etc. Foreign languages are typically taught as school subjects for the purpose of communicating with foreigners or for reading printed materials in the language."

3-3-3 The influence of Mother Tongue on Foreign Language:

There are psychological(due to L1 habits) and sociological (when people from different linguistic background come into contact with each other) individual factors that affect the foreign language learning process which have been proved scholarly, such as age, motivation, aptitude ...etc. While there was an attention to the role of MT; how MT interferes with FL?

Interference is the overlap between linguistic and grammatical elements. According to Dulay, et al in Bhela (1999) says:

Interference as the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language into the surface of the target language. (p.22)

According to Weinreich (1953) in "*Languages in Contact*" interference is:

Those instances of deviation from the norm of either language which occurs in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language will be referred to as interference phenomena. (p.1)

Interference according to Ellis (1997) refers to interference as 'transfer', which he says:

The influence that the learner's first language exerts over the acquisition of a second language. (p.51)

Interference of MT is the negative transfer of the MT structures that may lead to a wrong combination between the two systems; irregularities are the main cause of the interference .It is the deviation from linguistic norms in the spoken and written languages. It happens when the learner borrows some structures from his/her MT. The more the learner has a good command over the two languages, the less interference will happen.

Weinreich differentiates in his book *Languages in contact* (1953:41-47) three types of interference which are:

A-Phonological interference: covers phoneme and sound system.

B-Grammatical interference: covers morphological and syntactical interference, it occurs when the learner borrows grammatical patterns from the MT and applies them in the TL.

C-Lexical interference: covers when one vocabulary interferes with another.

3-3-5 Factors causing language interference:

Weinreich (1970:64-65) states four factors which are:

- 1) Speaker's bilingualism background
- 2) Disloyalty to Target language
- 3) The limited vocabularies of target language mastered by a learner
- 4) Prestige and style.

Conclusion :

EA came as an alternative approach to CA in the process of SLA to show that MT is not the only source of all errors and to emphasize on the active role of the learner. Error analysts propose a remedial process in which they classify errors according to their types and sources and pay attention to the notion of language transfer with a classification of its types which are positive and negative transfer. The latter (interference) is of a main concern in the acquisition of the TL system.

Section Two: Prepositions

Introduction:

English grammar(syntax) is one of the most significant language patterns that needs to be learned or mastered by EFL learners because it is helpful to construct a good sentence so coherent and cohesive units .Students may have basic knowledge of grammar rules but most of them still have errors in connecting those units due to the lack of prepositional knowledge or to the negative transfer of MT interference .Preposition is one of the most important subject matter that should be taken into account by teachers respectively .

4. English and Arabic prepositions (Features, forms, usages and uses of prepositions):

There is an obvious difference between the two prepositional systems as follows:

4-1 English prepositions:

English and Arabic are two different systems because they belong to different language families. Hence, each language has its own prepositional system. The following section will introduce cross-linguistic comparison between them. Prepositions are defined as: according to Webster's new English dictionary (1976) a preposition:

A word or expression that combines with a noun or pronoun to form a phrase. (p.395)

Wishon & Burks (1980):

Prepositions are connective words that show the relationship between the nouns following and one of the basic sentence elements: subject, verb, object or complement. (p.285)

Also, Brown (2003: p, 570) tackles the preposition's function is:

To connect a noun or a pronoun to another word in a sentence. It also shows how that noun or pronoun is related to the other word.

According to Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt's in *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* a preposition is:

A word used with nouns, pronouns and gerunds to link them grammatically to other words.

English prepositions are around 120, and they are not governed by exact rules. It can be used with different parts of speech to link between grammatical elements, some prepositions used with the same word to convey a different meaning, and they are of two types: simple (closed class, that is to say we cannot invent new single prepositions) and complex (open class because new combinations could be invented) (Grubic, 2004). Simple or single-word prepositions such as: in, on, at, under, onto, etc., and complex or multi-word prepositions such as: as well as, by means of, owing to, with a view to, in regard to, etc

Most English prepositions are of multi-functions i.e. they can be used in different ways and take different places in the sentence construction depending on the context .Was (2006)

suggested three functions of prepositions:

A- They can link a noun to another noun: e.g. He buys a basket of fruits.

(Noun) (Noun)

B- They link a noun to an adjective: e.g. she is keen on birds.

(adj) (Noun)

C- They link a verb to a noun: e.g. they go to school.

(V) (Noun)

The following diagram shows a summary of the possible functions that prepositions can

have.

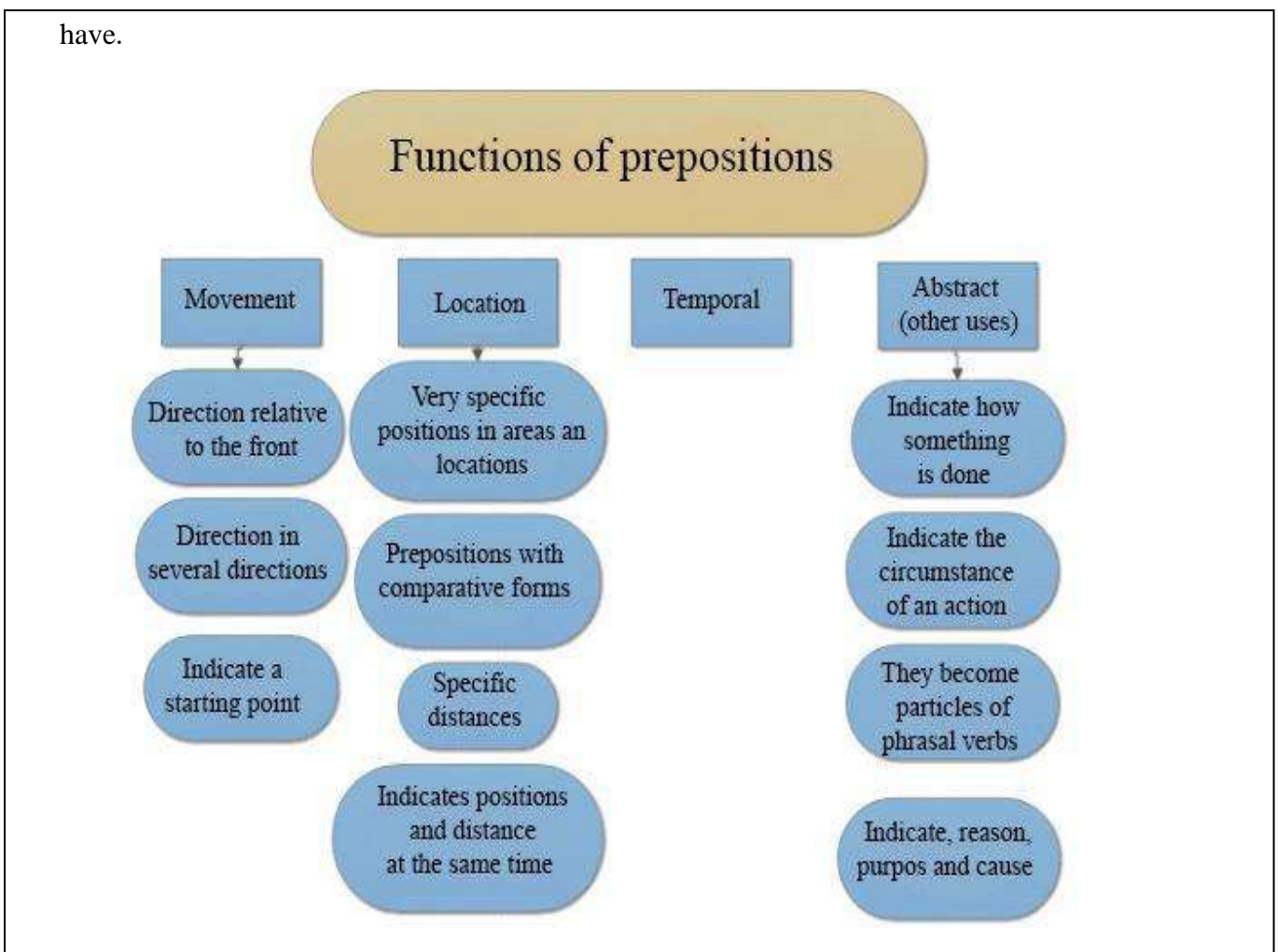


Figure4: Different functions of English prepositions in sentence.

Adapted from Sinclair,J.(2011,p.589) .

Moreover, prepositions can be placed at the beginning of the sentence which are termed as Pied-piping prepositions such as: **with** whom did you go? Or, they may take place at the end of the sentence (preposition stranding), for instance: where is the book that I ask you **about**? The following diagram shows a summary of the possible locations where prepositions can appear:

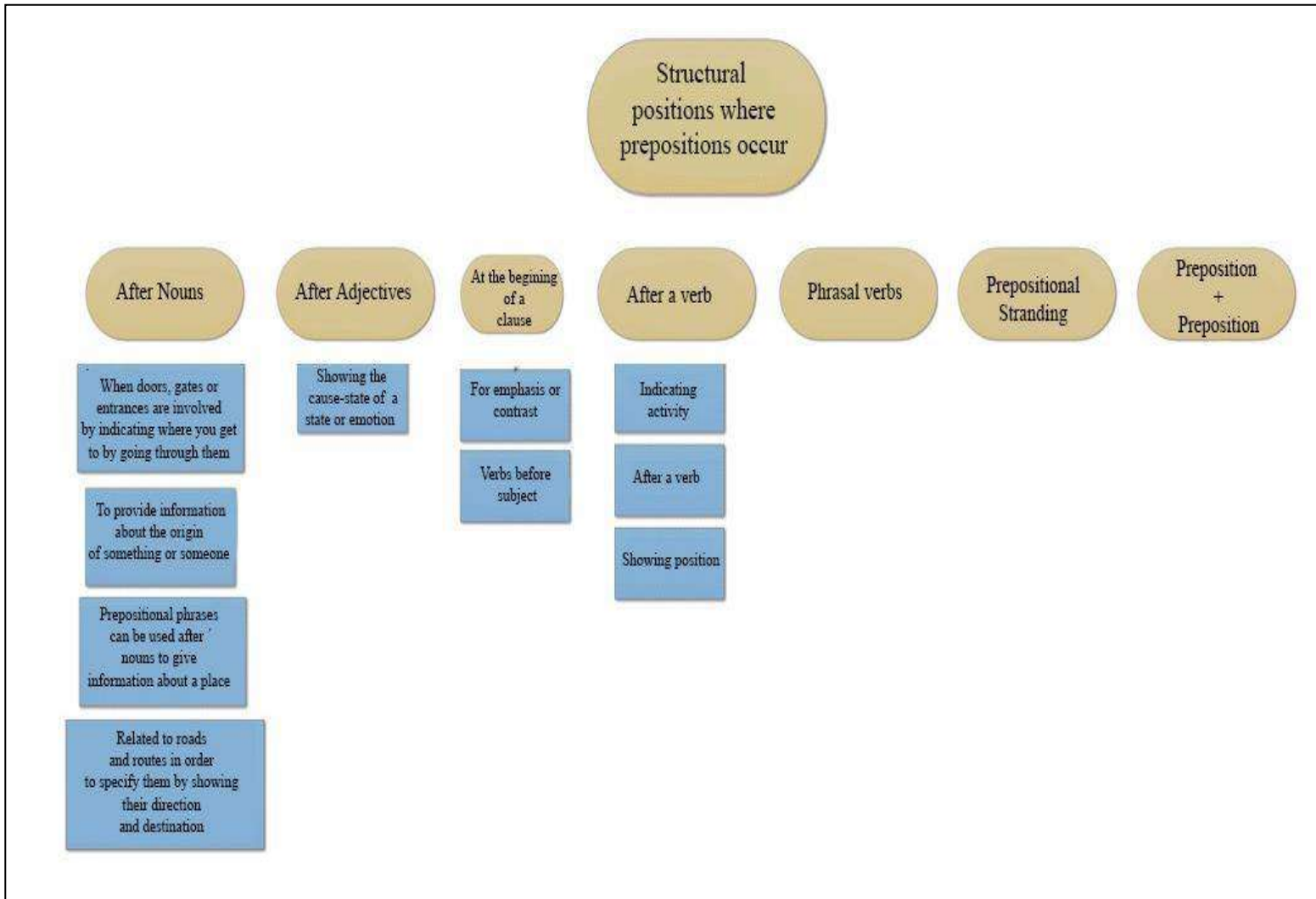


Figure5: Structural positions where prepositions occur.

Adapted from Sinclair, J. (2011, p. 576).

Quirk et al (1985) classified seven usages of English prepositions:

A- Temporal usage : it explains the time of the occurrence of an action and some of them

are : *in , on ,at, during, for, till ,etc* .For example: **on** Monday, **till** next week

B- Spatial usage : it is of two types :

1- Prepositions of location : it indicates where something is located such as : *above , across, around , between , in , beneath , under , below, after, etc .*

For example: **around** the garden, the bank is **behind** the school.

2- Prepositions of direction: it indicates the change of position such as: *near, toward, across, down, in, on, at, etc .*For example: **Toward** the shop, **near** to the hospital.

C- Prepositions indicating cause, purpose, target, motive, and goal relationships :

Such as: because of, since, for, to, and at.

For example : the plane was late **because of** the bad weather , they have been here **since** Saturday, wait me **for** five minutes ,it is ten **to** twenty , we will meet **at** the station .

D- Prepositions expressing the notion of means ,manner, instruments :

Such as: by, with, without, etc

For example: the bus stop is by the garage, cut with a knife, without water we cannot live.

E- Prepositions expressing the notion of accompaniment:

For example: he went with his friends.

F- Prepositions expressing the notion of concession and respect: such as: for, at, despite, in spite of, notwithstanding.

For example: for a French man, he speaks Arabic well. We went out in spite of the rain.

4-2 Arabic prepositions:

HamdAllah and Tushey (1993) called the Arabic prepositions /huruf al-jarr/ (particles of attraction) .They can be defined as prefixes or words used with other words (nouns) to be meaningful. Furthermore, Ibn Maliik mentioned them in his one thousand verses poem, and he describes all their grammatical features.

﴿ حُرُوفُ الْجُرِّ ﴾

هَآكَ حُرُوفَ الْجُرِّ وَهِيَ مِنْ إِلَى حَتَّى خِلَا حَاشَا عَدَا فِي عَن عَلَى
 مِذْ صُنْدُ رَبِّ اللَّامِ كِي وَآوُ وَتَا وَالْكَافُ وَالْبَا وَأَعَلَّ وَمَتَّى

Figure 6: Arabic prepositions in Ibn Maliik in his one thousand verses poem.

Arabic prepositions are around twenty ,they are words that show a relationship of one word with another either two nouns e.g.: (اشترت البنت دمية بخمسة دنانير) (the girl buys a doll with 5 Dinars) or a verb to a noun e.g.: (يضع الولد الكأس فوق الطاولة) (The boy puts the glass on the table), they always precede a noun , the noun following a preposition is changed from nominative case to a genitive case i.e., the last letter of a word will be changed from a (ضمّة) to (كسرة) , there is no effect by the side of articles when adding prepositions the rule remains the same , and they are meaningless if they stand by themselves .

There are two types of Arabic prepositions, and they are classified into two morphological classes which are:

1- Inseparable (dependent) prepositions: they take place as prefixes to the

compliment. For example: /بِ/ → in.

/لِ/ → to.

/وِ/ → by.

/كَ/ → as.

2- Separable (independent) prepositions: they can be bilateral (includes two particles) or trilateral (contains three particles). For example:

/مِنْ/ → from (bilateral)

/عَلَى/ → on (trilateral)

5. Types of errors in prepositions:

Scott and Tucker (1974) classified three categories of prepositional errors, and they are summarised in the following table:

Types of error explanation	Substitution	Redundant (addition /insertion)	Omission
Definition	The most frequent type. It is the selection of inappropriate preposition.	The use of unnecessary preposition.	It is the opposite of redundant type; it is deleting the required preposition where it is obligatory.
Example	<u>In</u> Tuesday. (instead of <i>on</i>)	He enters <u>into</u> the room.(unnecessary <i>into</i>)	I was born 26 th January ,1998 (I was born <u>on</u> ...)

Table 1: Types of errors in prepositions

6. The difficulties in learning prepositions:

Prepositions in English are difficult to be used due to many reasons .Obviously; the first reason is the number, i.e. the majority of Arabic prepositions do not have their equivalents in the TL and vice versa ; one preposition may perform many functions ,it may express space, time , location , reason...and may followed by noun , adjective , verb ... Secondly , most English prepositions have multiple meanings (polysemous) depending on the context ,

(Koffi, 2010) said that polysemy is:

A semantic feature of words that have several meanings.

Therefore, it is hard to set fixed rules to be followed to handle the use of prepositions.

Thirdly, Lam (2009) shed light on the use of preposition in oral speech since the majority of them are monosyllabic so learners ignore to use them.

7. Approaches to overcome prepositions difficulties:

Some scholars have proposed some approaches to be used by teachers and learners to overcome their difficulties:

A- The traditional approach :

It is to teach prepositions through context. But it was criticised because it does not guarantee that the learners will memorize and use them successfully.

B-The collocation approach:

It is to teach prepositions through chunks and frequent collocations, and it would be more useful if it is accompanied with authentic use of data.

C-The prototype approach:

It is to teach prepositions according to their dominant meaning, it is meaning-based method since prepositions have several meanings but there is a prototypical one.

Conclusion:

This chapter is devoted to two sections, the first section reviewed approaches to second language acquisition through history. Learning-teaching a second language (English) became a topic of interest by teachers and learners , but they still face some problems . Thus, learners tend to transfer from their L1 to cover the gaps that they may encounter when learning a SL and this what leads to errors. As a result scholars and linguists inspired some approaches which are: Contrastive analysis and Error Analysis; they highlight major issues in SLA. The second section investigate the use of prepositions .Since one of the most crucial challenges in English language is mastering the use of Prepositions by EFL learners, especially high levels. For that reason, learners always tend to transfer their usage from their MT because of the insufficient knowledge of the TL .Whereas; both languages are distinct in prepositional systems in terms of number, meaning and usage.

Chapter Two:

Data collection and

data analysis

Introduction:

The aim of this study is to confirm or infirm our hypotheses: EFL learners of first year and third year license at Kasdi Merbah University misuse the English prepositions because of interference with Mother Tongue or if those learners do not master the usage of English prepositions , they will transfer from Mother Tongue (Arabic) (positively / negatively). This research mainly designed to obtain information and draw conclusion through the data gained from the test.

This chapter is devoted to the practical part which is a descriptive study (qualitative) to investigate the influence of Mother Tongue on written production when using some prepositions.

8. The sample:

The target groups of this study consist of first year and third year license at Kasdi Merbah University –Ouargla, thirty students were chosen randomly. The purpose from which we chose these levels was that we assume that first year students are more influenced by Mother Tongue (Arabic) and third year students to see whether three years of training are sufficient to enrich their prepositional background.

9. The description of the test:

The test given to the students contains two exercises, the first exercise is of twenty sentences to fill the gaps with the appropriate preposition; the second exercise is a translation activity of six sentences (three sentences from Arabic into English, and three sentences from English into Arabic) to translate only the underlined phrase (a preposition and the word that comes after) from the context of the sentence.

The following tables and graphs show the results that were obtained from the data analysis of the influence of first year and third year students at Kasdi Merbah university-Ouargla mother tongue on their propositional knowledge to arrive at a conclusion. The results are analysed according to each item of the test.

9-1 The analysis of the test (First year Licence):

The test was taken by thirty (30) students that are randomly chosen to fill the gaps of twenty (20) sentences with the appropriate prepositions and to translate underlined expressions of six (6) different sentences.

9-1-1 Filling the gaps activity:

Sentence 1: I'll be in the office until 5p.m.

Prepositions	until	on	since	For	Ø	Total
Number	17	7	1	2	3	30
percentage	56.67%	23.33%	3.33%	6.66%	10%	100%

Table2: The usage of prepositions in the first sentence

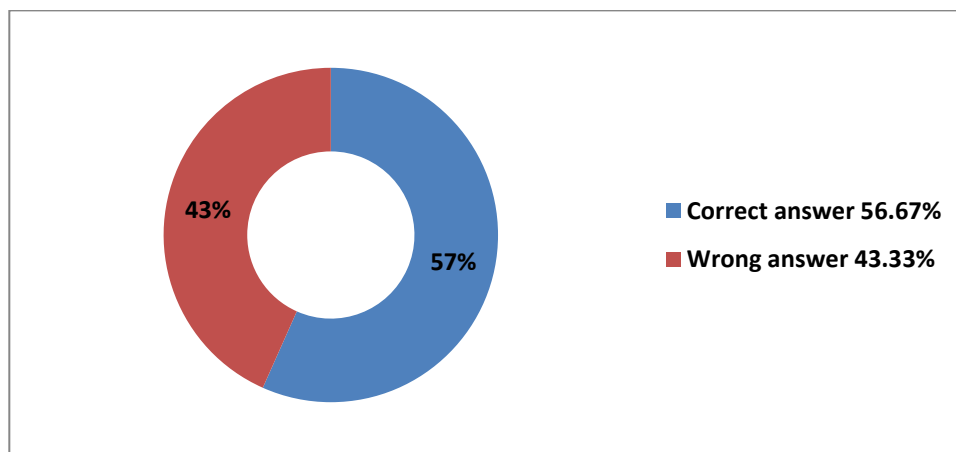


Figure7: Correct and wrong answer of 'Until'

56.67% of the participants used the correct preposition “**until**”; however, the others used the wrong prepositions, they made a substitution error due to negative transfer.

Sentence 2: You must have this report finished **by** Monday.

Prepositions	At	With	By	while	Ø	Other preposition	Total
Number	11	0	10	3	5	1(on)	30
Percentage	36.67 %	0%	33.33%	10%	16.67%	3.33%	100%

Table3: The usage of prepositions in the second sentence

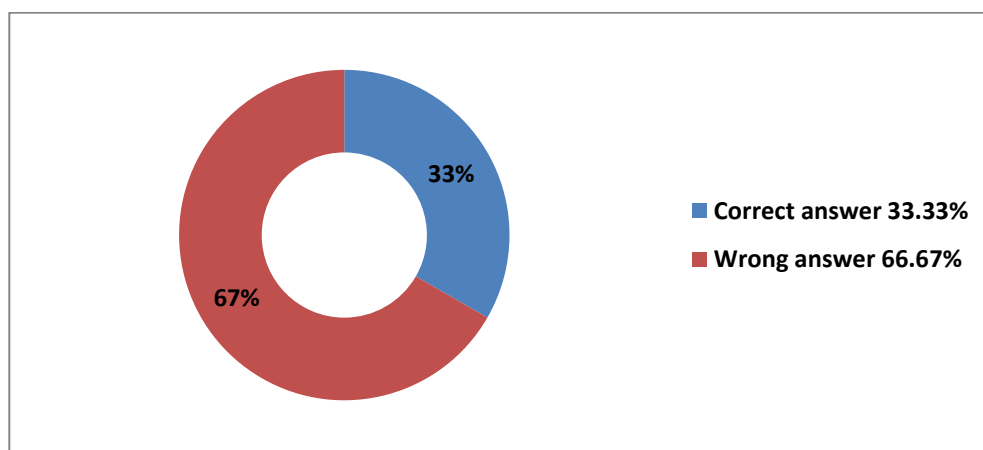


Figure8: Correct and wrong answer of 'by'

33.33% of the testees chose the right preposition “**by**”, while the others substituted it with “**at**” and the others omitted it.

Sentence 3: I have enjoyed the film.

Prepositions	With	at	Because of	through	Ø	Total
Number	11	5	4	3	7	30
Percentage	36.67%	16.67%	13.33%	10%	23.33%	100%

Table 4: The usage of prepositions in the third sentence

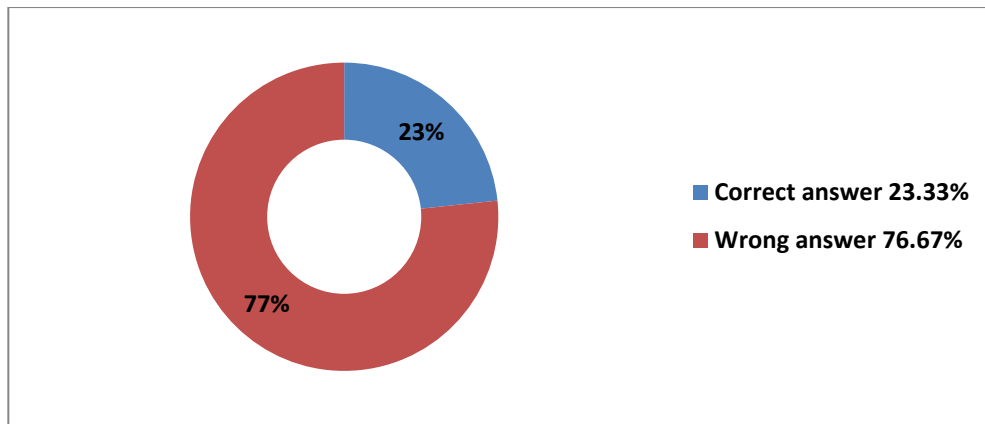


Figure9: Correct and wrong answer of ‘Ø’

The majority of the informants used the wrong prepositions “**with**”, “**at**”, “**because of**”, or “**through**”, and this is called redundant error due to negative transfer; a few of them used the correct form which is normally “Ø” (zero prepositions).

Sentence4: She went to the wrong house **by** mistake.

Prepositions	with	Out of	By	Under	Total
Number	5	4	21	0	30
Percentage	16.67%	13.33%	70%	0%	100%

Table 5: The usage of prepositions in the fourth sentence

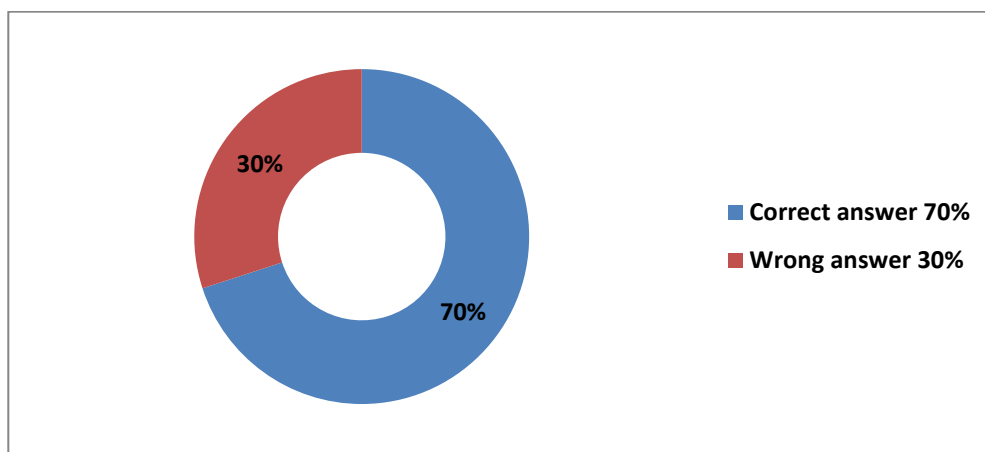


Figure10: Correct and wrong answer of ‘by’

70% of the students inserted the correct preposition “**by**”; the rest got it wrong and made a substitution error.

Sentence5: I went to Germany **for** a change.

Prepositions	to	Owing to	For	Total
Number	6	0	24	30
Percentage	20%	0%	80%	100%

Table6: The usage of prepositions in the fifth sentence

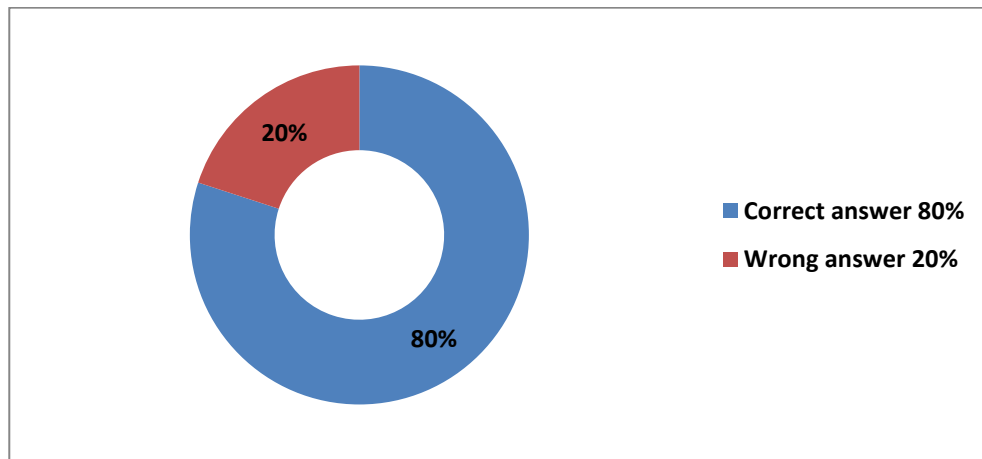


Figure11: Correct and wrong answer of ‘For’

The majority of the participants used the correct preposition “**for**”, while a few of them used the wrong prepositions and made a substitution error, this may be due to lack of English grammar rules.

Sentence6: She drinks a litre of water every day **without** fail.

Prepositions	Because of	behind	In regard to	Without	Ø	Total
Number	10	1	4	14	1	30
Percentage	33.33%	3.33%	13.33%	46.67%	3.33%	100%

Table7: The usage of prepositions in the sixth sentence

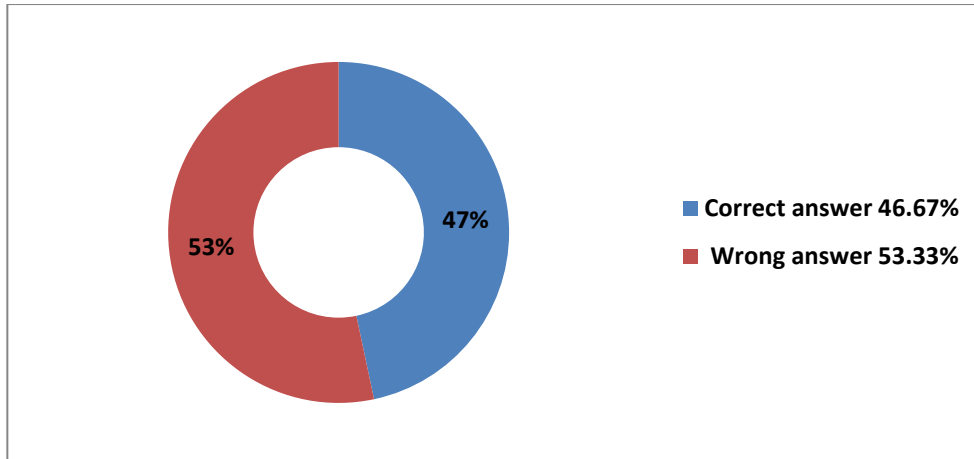


Figure12: Correct and wrong answer of ‘without’

46.67% of the test-takers chose the correct preposition “**without**”, while 33.33% got it wrong and substituted it with “**because of**”. A few of them have chosen “**in regard to**” due to literal translation.

Sentence7: They need to concentrate **on** their studies

Prepositions	In	On	At	About	Total
Number	7	13	4	6	30
Percentage	23.33%	43.33%	13.33%	20%	100%

Table8: The usage of prepositions in the Seventh sentence

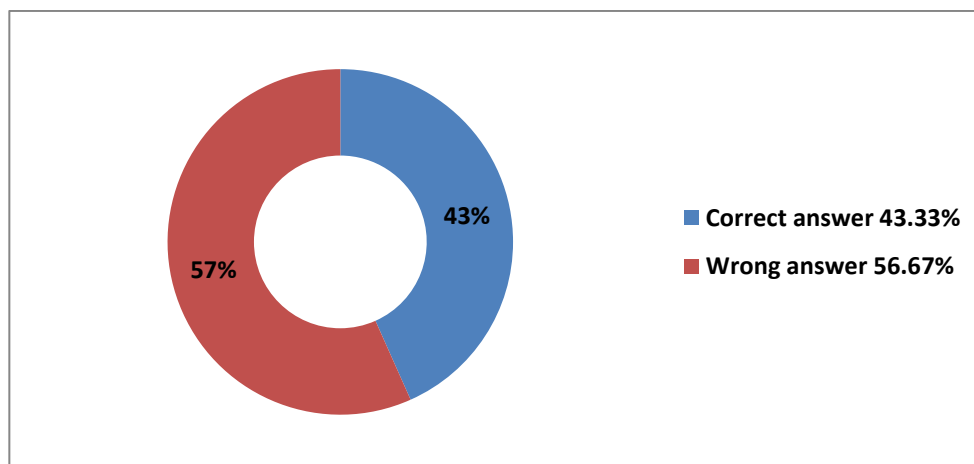


Figure13: Correct and wrong answer of ‘On’

43.33% of the testees used the correct preposition “**on**”, 13.33% used the preposition “**at**” which is a substitution error because of the usage of “**on**” for surfaces; this error occurs due to the lack of English grammar rules.

Sentence 8: I am responsible **for** training the new recruits.

Prepositions	At	About	With	For	Total
Number	2	8	2	18	30
Percentage	6.66%	26.67%	6.66%	60%	100%

Table9: The usage of prepositions in the eighth sentence

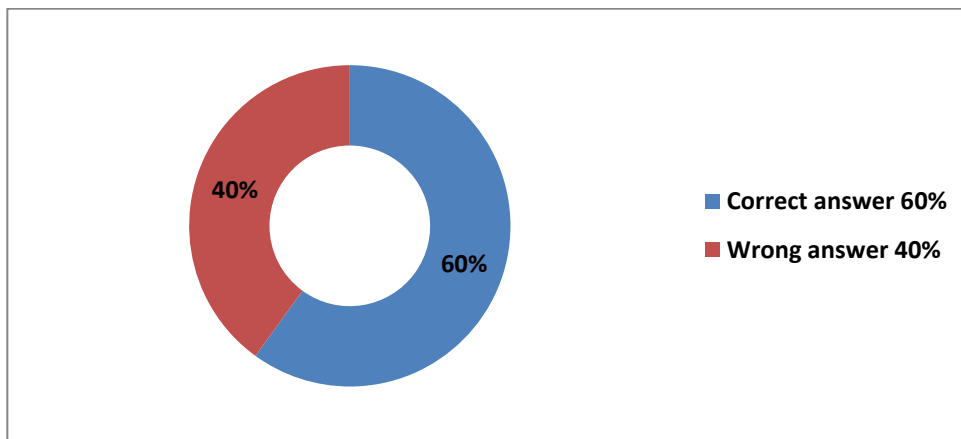


Figure14: Correct and wrong answer of ‘for’

More than the half of the students inserted the correct preposition “for”, while the rest got it wrong and they have used other prepositions; that is a substitution error.

Sentence9: Many people took advantage **of** the new recruits.

Prepositions	of	for	With	To	Total
Number	16	6	3	5	30
Percentage	53.33%	20%	10%	16.67%	100%

Table10: The usage of prepositions in the ninth sentence

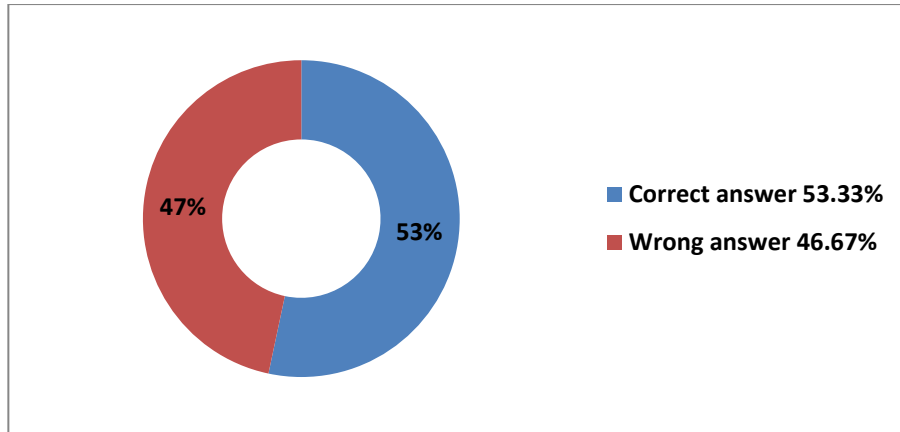


Figure15: Correct and wrong answer of ‘Of’

53.33% of the informants used the right preposition “**of**”, the others substituted it with “**for**”, “**to**”, or “**with**” depending on their mother tongue language.

Sentence10: I was not quite satisfied **with** the exam results.

Prepositions	at	for	with	about	Ø	total
Number	5	2	11	11	1	30
Percentage	16.67%	6.66%	36.67%	36.67%	3.33%	100%

Table11: The usage of prepositions in the tenth sentence

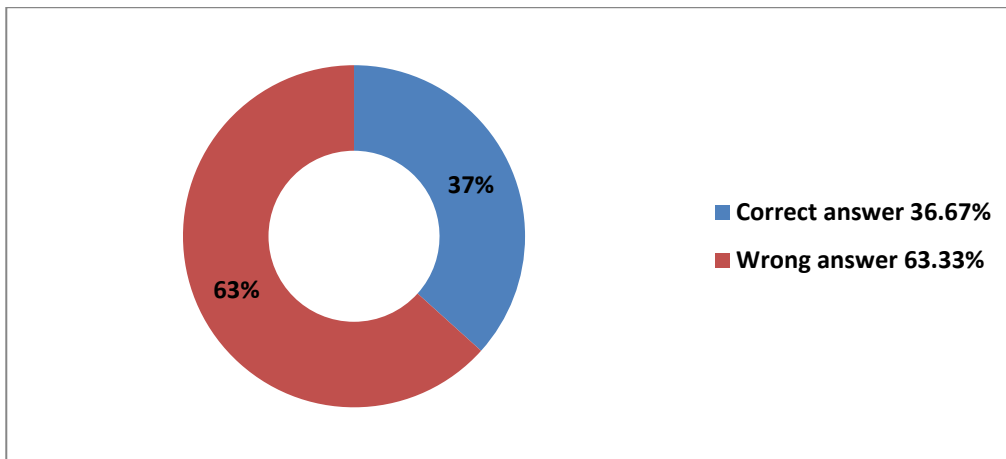


Figure16: Correct and wrong answer of ‘With’

36.67% of the test-takers used the appropriate preposition “**with**”, the same percentage used the preposition “**about**” that could be a reason of thinking in Arabic language; the rest used “**at**” and “**for**” which a substitution error.

Sentence 11: My cousin is married **to** a famous American.

Prepositions	With	for	To	From	Other preposition	Total
Number	16	0	8	5	1(of)	30
Percentage	53.33%	0%	26.67%	16.67%	3.33%	100%

Table 12: The usage of prepositions in the eleventh sentence

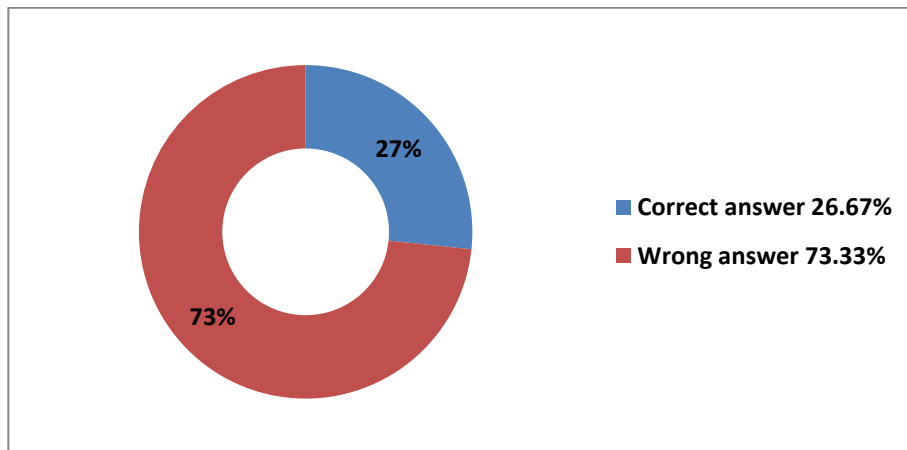


Figure 17: Correct and wrong answer of ‘To’

Out of 30 students, only 8 who inserted the appropriate preposition “**to**”, while the others mistook its use with other prepositions which is a substitution error.

Sentence 12: For two full days, the man was fighting **for** his life.

Prepositions	Up	With	For	Other preposition	∅	Total
Number	8	6	13	2(at)	1	30
Percentage	26.67%	20%	43.33%	6.67%	3.33%	100%

Table 13: The usage of prepositions in the twelfth sentence

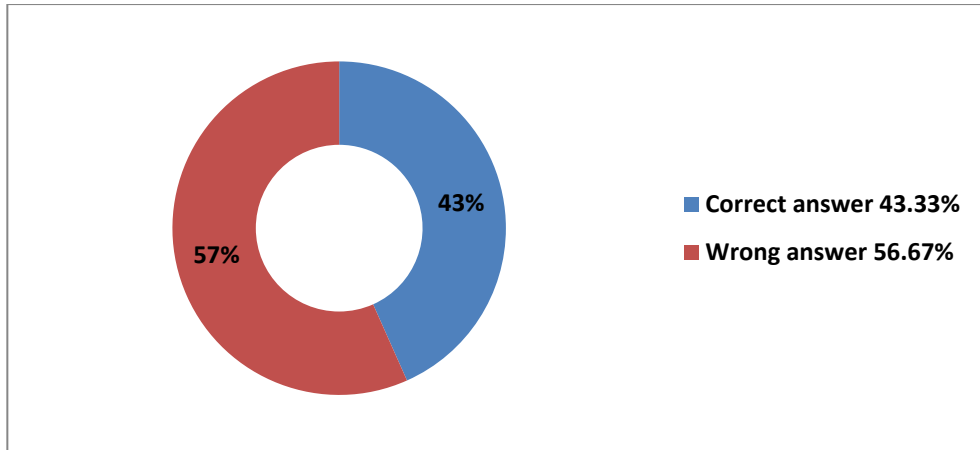


Figure18: Correct and wrong answer of ‘for’

Around 43% of the participants chose the correct preposition “**for**”, the remaining, 56.67%, used other prepositions which is a substitution error which indicates the lack of mastering English language rules.

Sentence13: My dad shouted **at** me because I didn’t do what he said.

Prepositions	At	On	About	Behind	∅	total
Number	11	13	0	3	3	30
Percentage	36.67%	43.33%	0%	10%	10%	100%

Table 14: The usage of prepositions in the thirteenth sentence

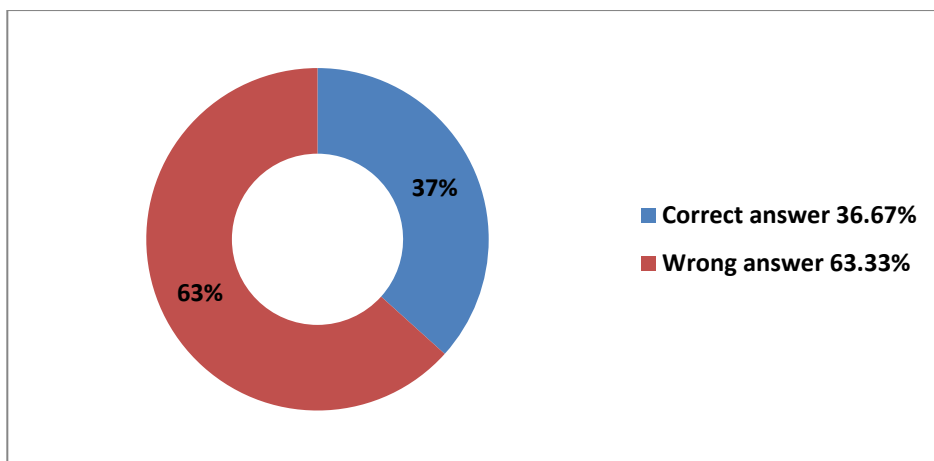


Figure19: Correct and wrong answer of ‘At’

Only 36.67% of the testees used the correct preposition “**at**”, 43.33% used the wrong preposition “**on**” due to mother tongue interference and 10% used the preposition “**behind**” because of the influence of Algerian dialect (substitution error).The remaining ,10%, omitted it.

Sentence14: I walked quickly **into** the room.

Prepositions	to	toward	into	Ø	Total
Number	9	8	12	1	30
Percentage	30%	26.67%	40%	3.33%	100%

Table 15: The usage of prepositions in the fourteenth sentence

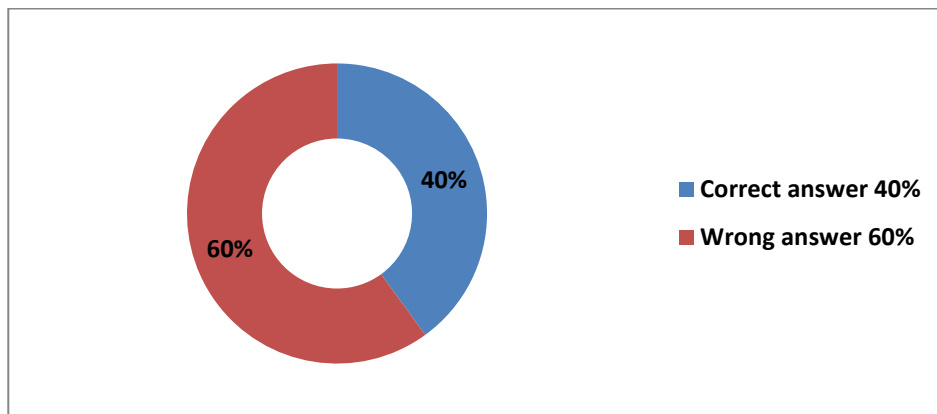


Figure20: Correct and wrong answer of ‘Into’

40% of the informants chose the appropriate preposition “**into**”, the rest 56.67% substituted it with other preposition “**toward**” or “**to**” due to negative transfer, while 3.33% omitted it because of confusion.

Sentence 15: The cat climbed **onto** the chair.

Prepositions	towards	into	to	onto	Ø	Total
Number	6	8	2	12	2	30
Percentage	20%	26.67%	6.67%	40%	6.67%	100%

Table 16: The usage of prepositions in the fifteenth sentence

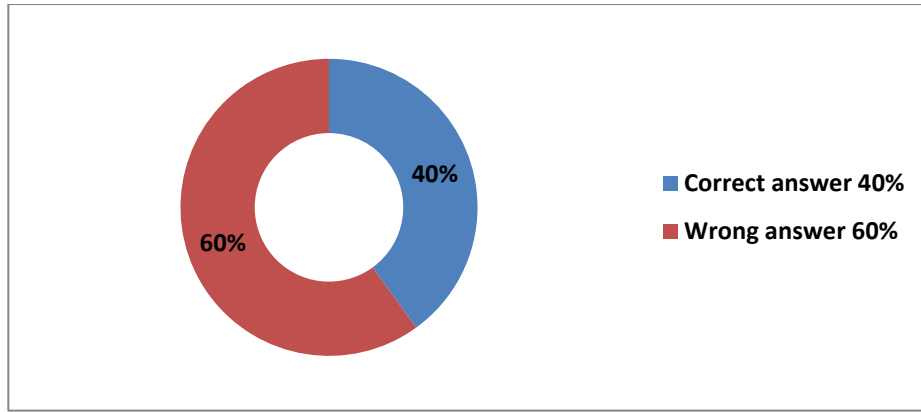


Figure21: Correct and wrong answer of ‘Onto’

40% of the test-takers transferred the preposition “**onto**” positively; the remaining committed a substitution error by using other preposition “**towards**”, “**into**”, “**to**” because they do not have enough knowledge about English language.

Sentence16: He struggled **through** the crowd till he reached the front.

Prepositions	in	through	On	Ø	Total
Number	8	13	6	3	30
Percentage	26.67%	43.33%	20%	10%	100%

Table 17: The usage of prepositions in the sixteenth sentence

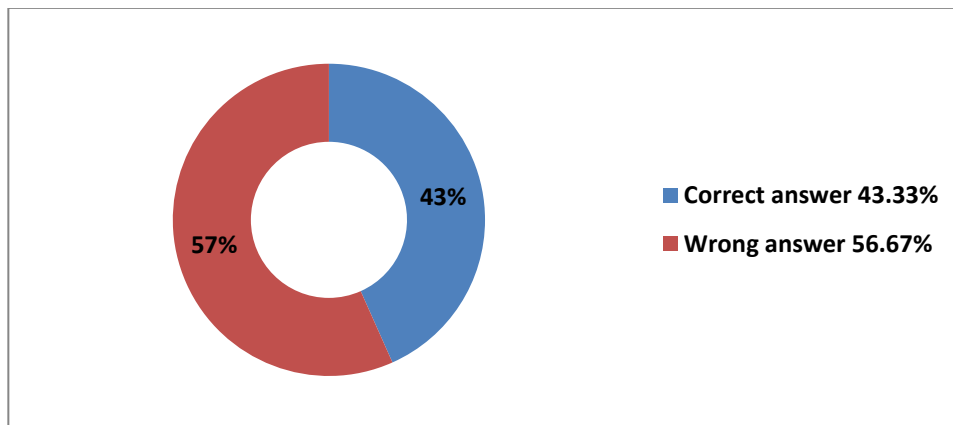


Figure22: Correct and wrong answer of ‘Through’

43.33% of the participants inserted the appropriate preposition “**through**”, 46.67% mistook its use with “**in**” or “**on**” because of Algerian dialect, 10% omitted it due to confusion.

Sentence17: We're thinking of taking a vacation **towards** the end of the month.

Prepositions	to	towards	For	Ø	Other preposition	Total
Number	10	4	11	4	1(in)	30
Percentage	33.33%	13.33%	36.67%	13.33%	3.33%	100%

Table 18: The usage of prepositions in the seventeenth sentence

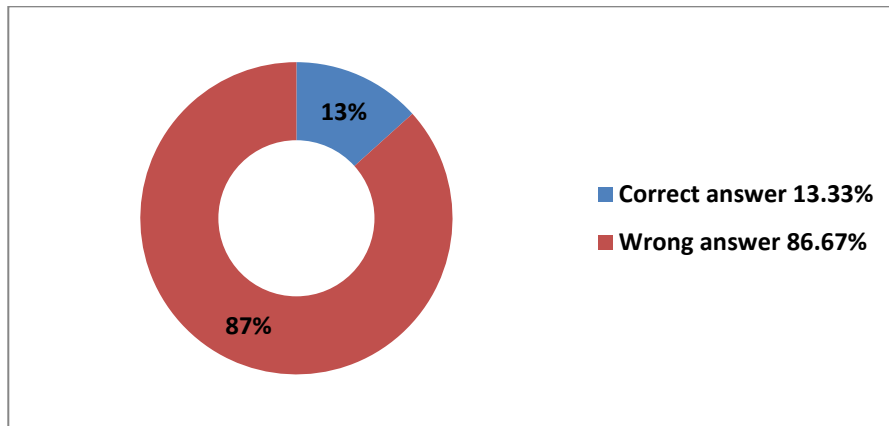


Figure23: Correct and wrong of 'Towards'

Out of 30 students, only 4 students who used the correct preposition “**towards**”, 22 students substituted its use with the prepositions “**to**”, “**for**”, “**in**”; 4 students omitted it.

Sentence18: Our vacation was a lot of fun **despite** the cold weather.

Prepositions	Because of	Under	With	Despite	Ø	Total
Number	19	0	1	9	1	30
Percentage	63.33%	0%	3.33%	30%	3.33%	100%

Table 19: The usage of prepositions in the eighteenth sentence

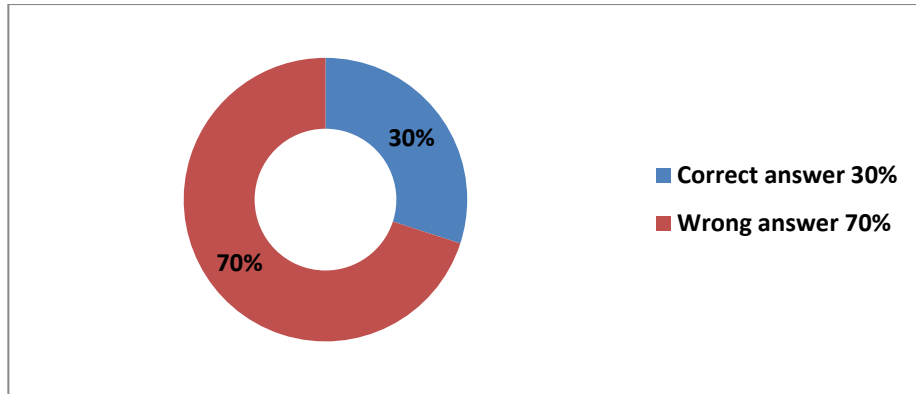


Figure24: Correct and wrong answer of ‘Despite’

30% of the participants inserted the appropriate preposition “**despite**”, whereas the majority chose the preposition “**because of**” as a result of negative transfer of standard Arabic.

Sentence 19: I walked **around** the side of the building.

Prepositions	around	beneath	through	Ø	Total
Number	19	8	2	1	30
Percentage	63.33%	26.67%	6.67%	3.33%	100%

Table20: The usage of prepositions in the nineteenth sentence

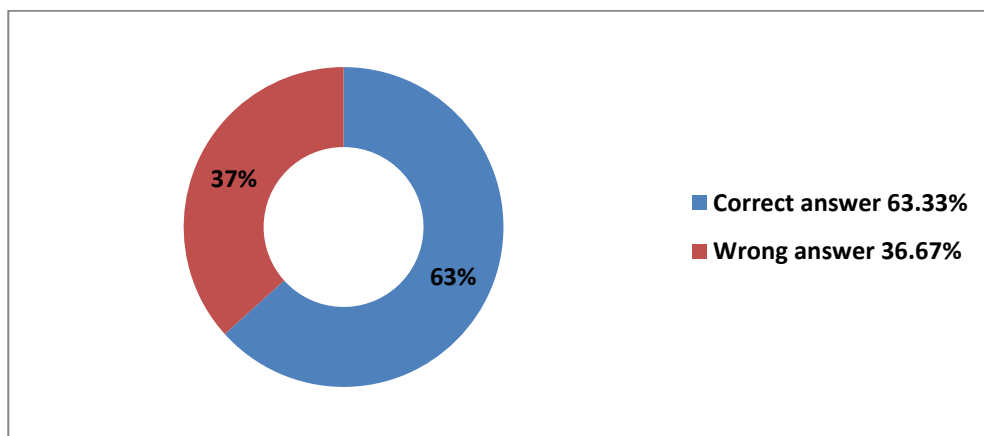


Figure25: Correct and wrong preposition of ‘Around’

63.33% of the informants transferred the preposition “**around**” positively, the remaining, 33.34%, substituted it with other prepositions “**beneath**” and “**through**” because of their inability to understand English language well.

Sentence20: The water spilled **onto** the floor.

Prepositions	Over	In	Onto	Ø	Total
Number	12	9	8	1	30
Percentage	40%	30%	26.67%	3.33%	100%

Table 21: The usage of prepositions in the twentieth sentence

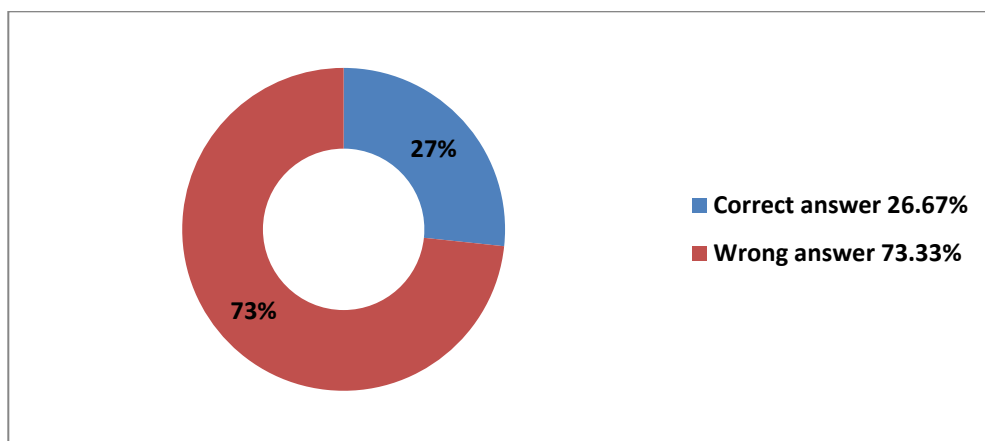


Figure26: Correct and wrong answer of ‘Onto’

Only 8 participants used the right preposition “onto”, while the others substituted it with “over”, or “in”; they may think in their mother tongue language.

9-1-2 The second activity results: (translation activity):

الجملة 1: قاد السيارة بحذر .

Modal answer: He drove the car carefully.

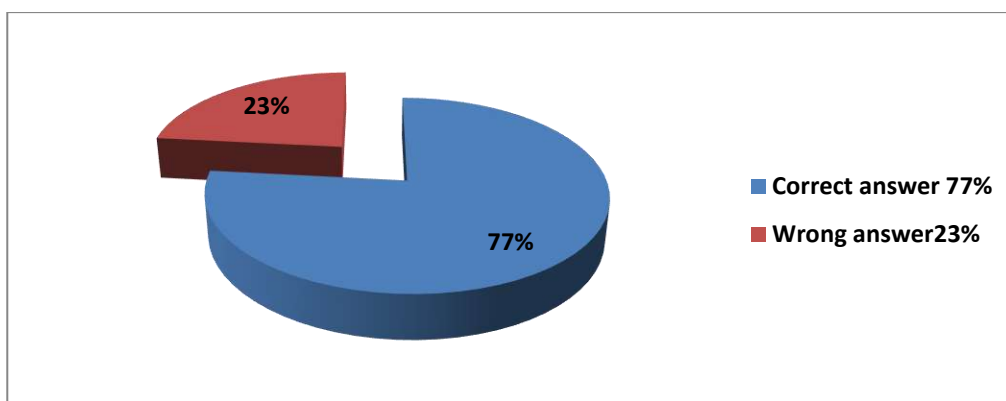


Figure27: Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word.

الجملة 2: يؤثر التدخين سلباً على الصحة.

Modal answer: Smoking affects **health** negatively.

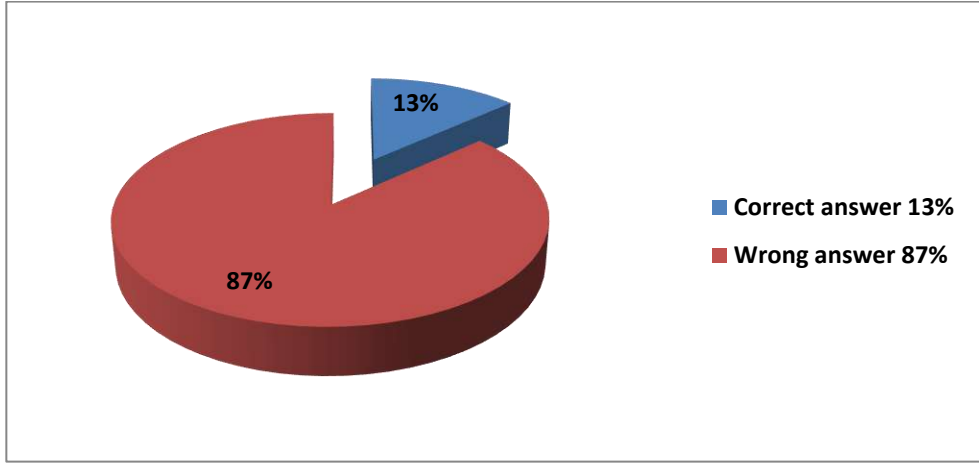


Figure 28: Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word.

الجملة 3: أصرت على مساعدتي في المطبخ.

Modal answer: She insisted **on helping me** in the kitchen.

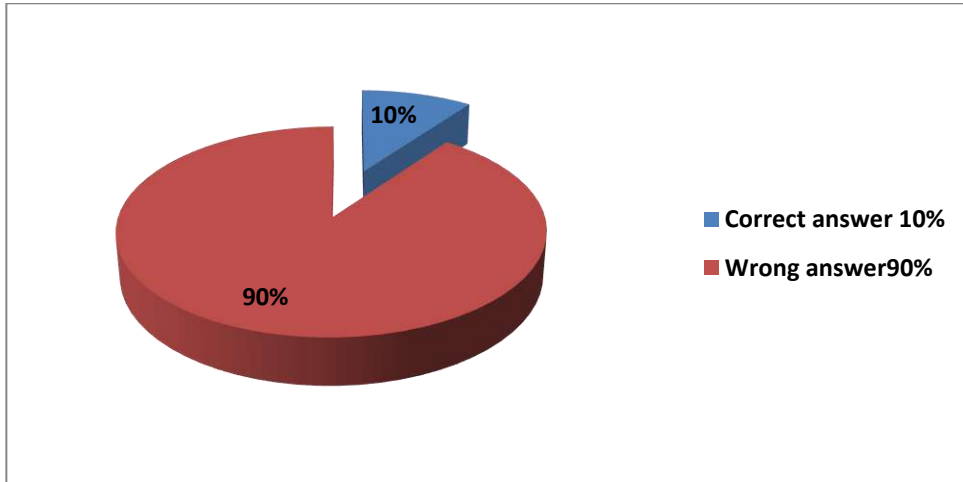


Figure 29: Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word.

Sentence 4: Ten people were killed when a bus collided **with a car**.

الإجابة النموذجية: لقي عشرة أشخاص حتفهم إثر اصطدام حافلة بسيارة.

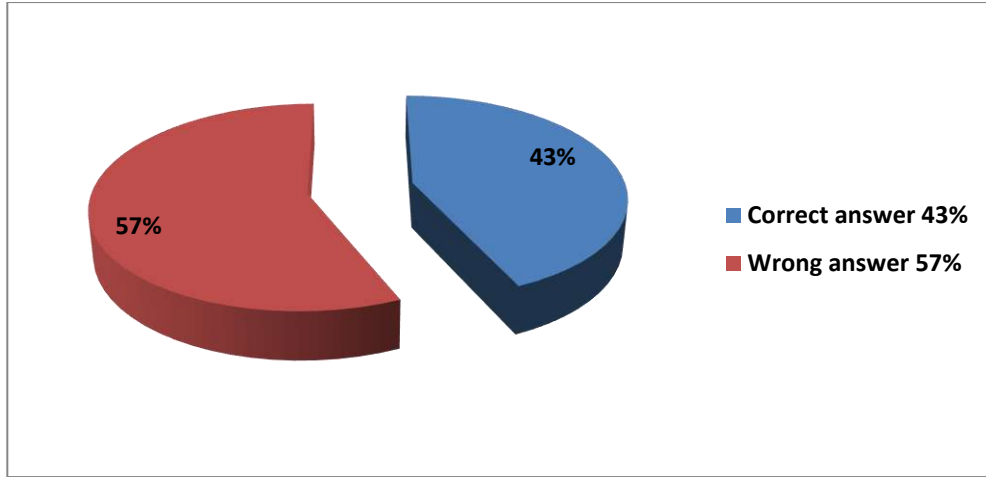


Figure 30: Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word.

Sentence 5: I am fond **of drinking green tea.**

الإجابة النموذجية: أنا مولع بشرب الشاي الأخضر.

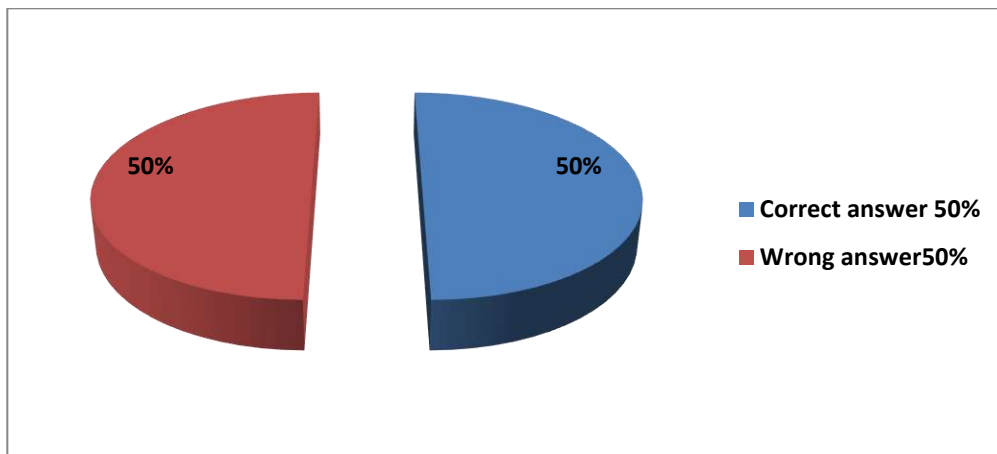


Figure31: Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word.

Sentence6: He is knocking **on the door.**

الإجابة النموذجية: إنه يطرق الباب.

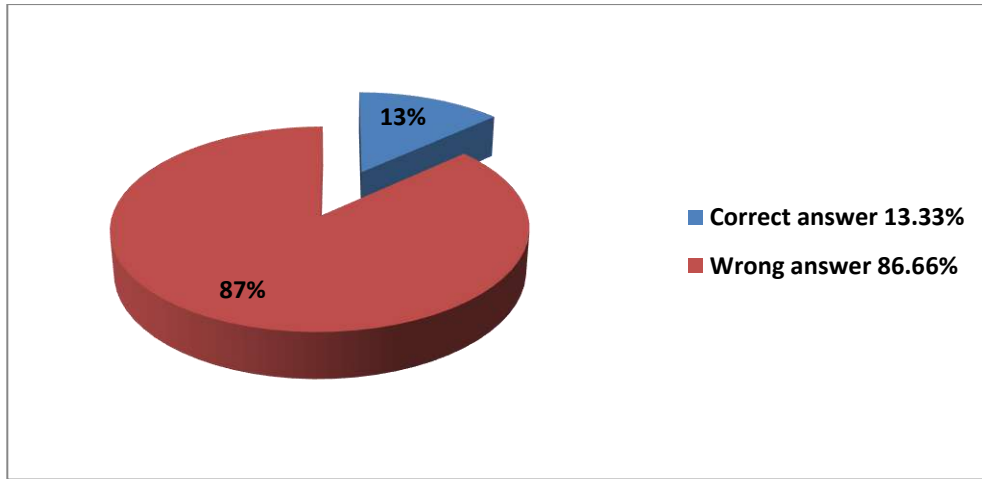


Figure 32: Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word.

The data gathered through the translation activity has shown that the majority of the participants are more influenced by mother tongue .i.e. they think of prepositions firstly in Arabic, therefore; it is obvious that students' prepositional errors are due to mother tongue interference.

9-2 The analysis of the test (third year Licence):

The test was taken by thirty (30) students that are randomly chosen to fill the gaps of twenty (20) sentences with the appropriate prepositions and to translate underlined expressions of six (6) different sentences.

9-2-1 Filling the gaps activity:

Sentence 1: I'll be in the office until 5p.m.

Prepositions	until	on	since	For	Ø	Total
Number	20	8	0	0	2	30
Percentage	66.66%	26.7%	0%	0%	6.7%	100%

Table 22: The usage of prepositions in the first sentence

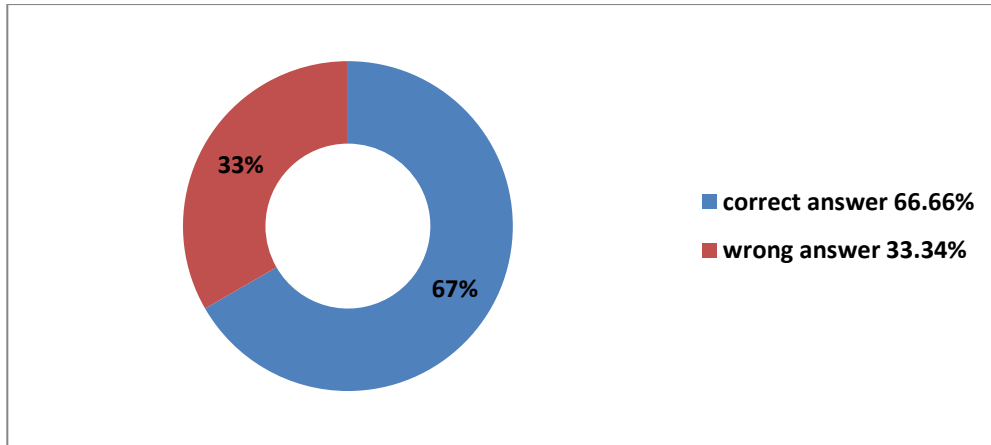


Figure33: correct and wrong answers of ‘until’

Around 66% of the testees made a correct use of the preposition ‘**until**’, whereas 33% used a wrong preposition that is a substitution error made by 26.7% of the students due to negative transfer from mother tongue.

Sentence 2: You must have this report finished **by** Monday.

Prepositions	At	With	By	while	Total
Number	10	0	19	1	30
Percentage	33.33%	0%	63.33%	3.33%	100%

Table 23: The usage of prepositions in the second sentence

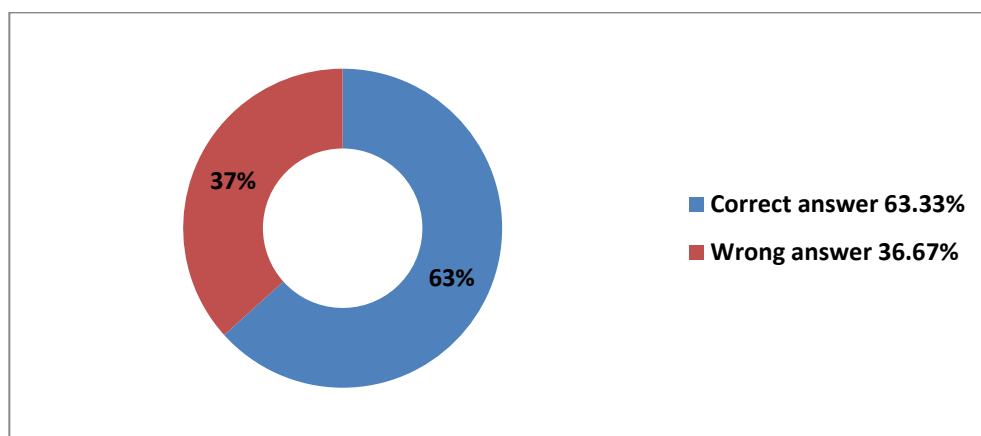


Figure34: Correct and wrong answer of ‘by’

More than 60% of the participants used the correct preposition 'by' while 37% made a wrong answer either by substituting 'by' with 'at' or 'while'. Again, negative transfer took place.

Sentence 3: I have enjoyed the film.

Prepositions	With	at	Because of	through	∅	Total
Number	6	4	7	1	12	30
Percentage	20%	13.33%	23.33%	3.33%	40%	100%

Table 24: The usage of prepositions in the third sentence

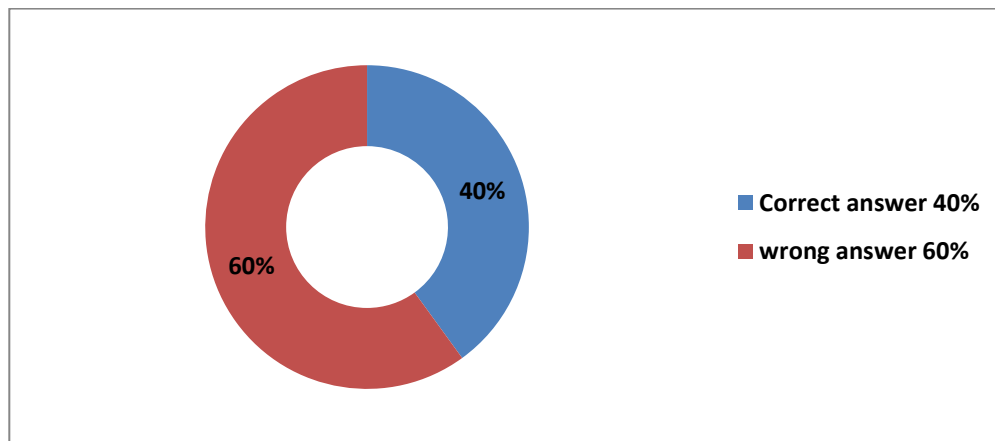


Figure35: Correct and wrong answer of '∅'.

40% of the test-takers chose '∅ (zero prepositions)'. Whereas 60% of them made a redundant error by the transfer from Arabic that is interference is the cause again.

Sentence4: She went to the wrong house by mistake.

Prepositions	with	Out of	By	Under	Total
Number	2	3	25	0	30
Percentage	6.66%	10%	83.33%	0%	100%

Table 25: The usage of prepositions in the fourth sentence

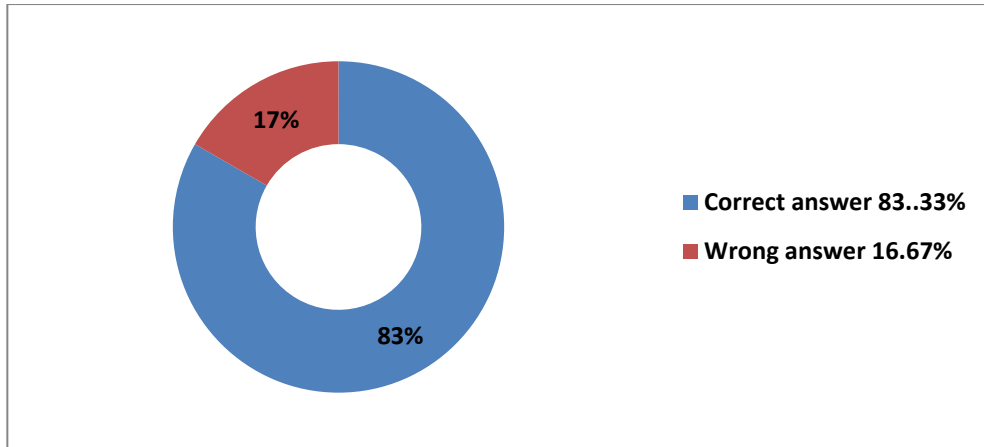


Figure36: Correct and wrong answer of 'by'.

More than 80% of the participants could identify the missing preposition 'by'. The remaining around 17% chose 'out of' or 'with' due to the probable explanation that the students knew the grammar rules regarding 'by'.

Sentence5: I went to Germany for a change.

Prepositions	to	Owing to	For	Ø	Total
Number	2	0	26	2	30
Percentage	6.67%	0%	86.67%	6.67%	100%

Table26: The usage of prepositions in the fifth sentence

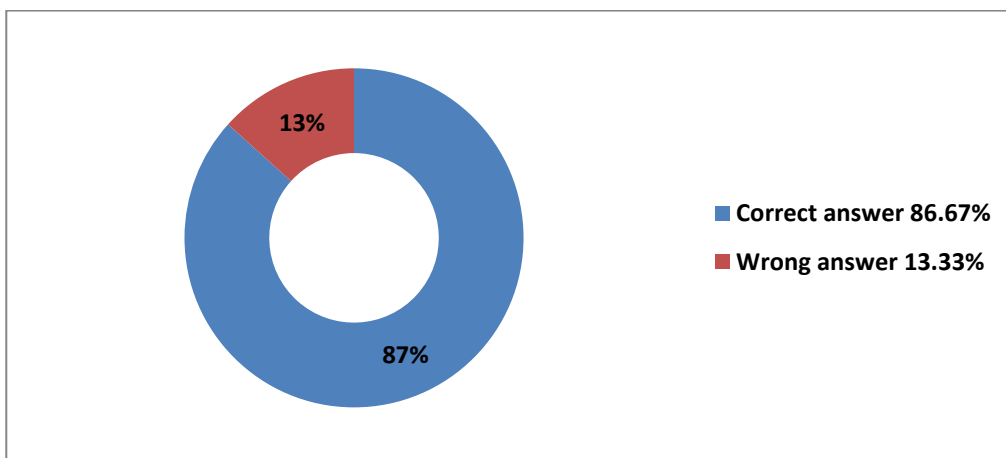


Figure37: Correct and wrong answer of 'for'.

The graph displays that the majority of the students, 86.67%, succeeded to choose the correct preposition “**for**”, while 13.33% of them made a substitution error by using “**to**” or they made an omission error by using ‘**Ø**’. In this case the students showed an acceptable knowledge of the preposition “**for**”.

Sentence6: She drinks a litre of water every day **without** fail.

Prepositions	Because of	behind	In regard to	Without	Ø	Total
Number	3	1	3	20	3	30
Percentage	10%	3.33%	10%	66.67%	10%	100%

Table27: The usage of prepositions in the sixth sentence

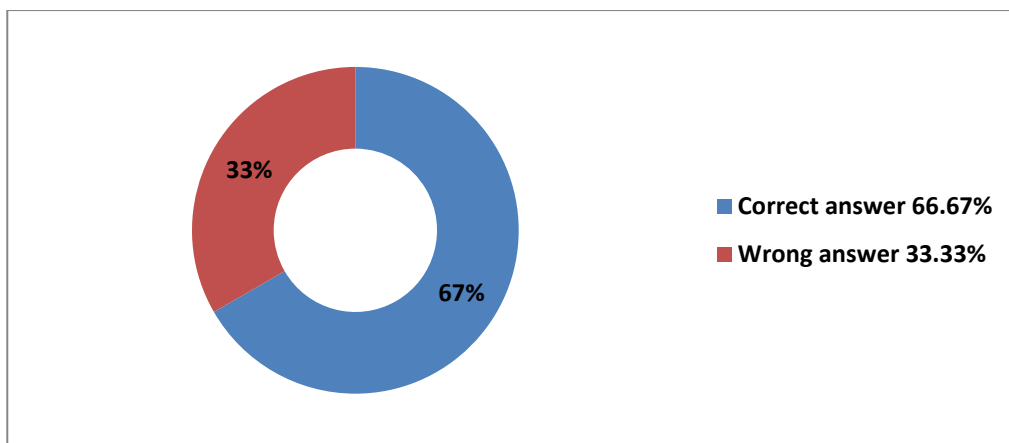


Figure38: Correct and wrong answer of ‘without’

66.67% of the testees chose were able to identify the right preposition “**without**”, while 33.33% substituted “**without**” with “**because of**” or “**behind**” or “**in regard to**” or omitted it due to the transfer from their mother tongue. Again, interference is the cause.

Sentence7: They need to concentrate **on** their studies.

Prepositions	In	On	At	About	Ø	Total
Number	10	19	0	0	1	30
Percentage	33.33%	63.33%	0%	0%	3.33%	100%

Table 28: The usage of prepositions in the Seventh sentence

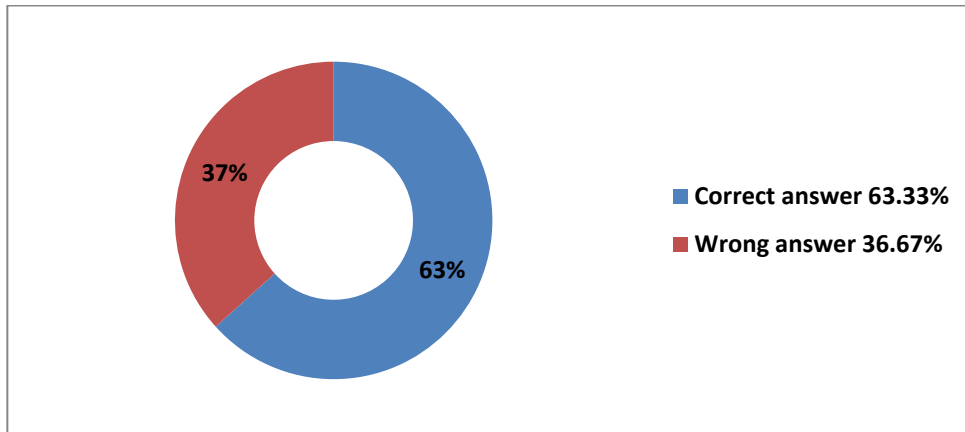


Figure39: Correct and wrong answer of 'On'

Around 663% of the students transferred positively from their mother language and used the correct preposition “**on**”. Whereas 36.67% substituted “**on**” with “**in**” or omitted it due to mother tongue interference.

Sentence 8: I am responsible **for** training the new recruits.

Prepositions	At	About	With	For	Ø	Total
Number	2	7	0	18	3	30
Percentage	6.66%	23.33%	0%	60%	10%	100%

Table 29: The usage of prepositions in the eighth sentence

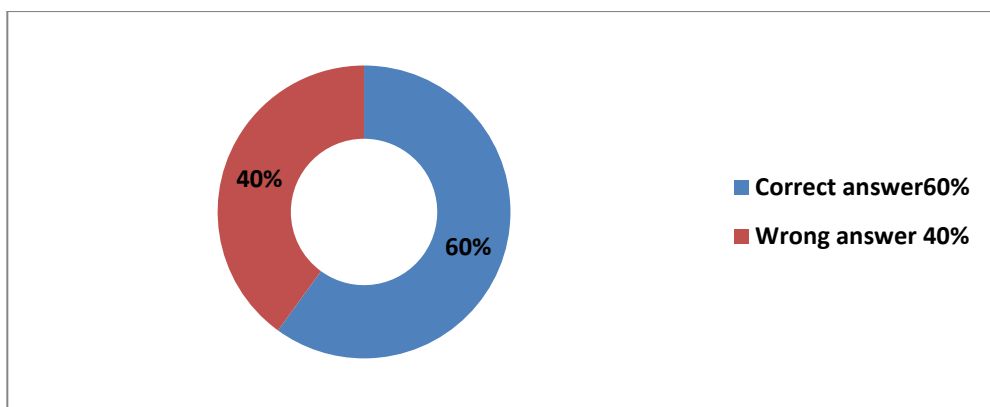


Figure40: Correct and wrong answer of 'For'

60% of the informants chose the right preposition “**for**”, whereas 40% of the students mistook its use with the prepositions (about, at) or omitted it .Again, mother tongue interference is clearly revealed.

Sentence9: Many people took advantage of the new recruits.

Prepositions	of	for	With	To	Ø	Total
Number	19	7	1	2	1	30
Percentage	63.33%	23.33%	3.33%	6.66%	3.33%	100%

Table 30: The usage of prepositions in the ninth sentence

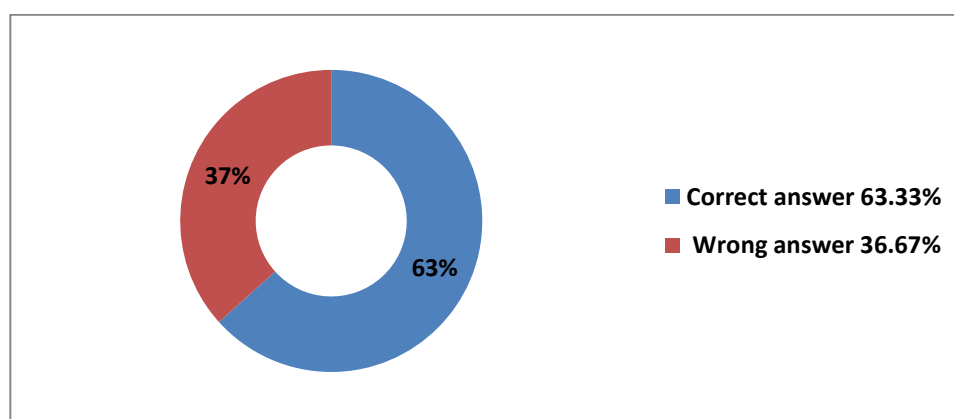


Figure41: Correct and wrong answer of 'Of'

63.33% of the students chose the correct preposition “**of**”, a wrong selection occurs for those who used the prepositions “**for**”, “**with**”, “**to**” or “**Ø**”. Again, negative transfer took place especially for those who used “**for**” as in Arabic meaning.

Sentence10: I was not quite satisfied **with** the exam results.

Prepositions	at	for	with	about	total
Number	3	1	13	13	30
Percentage	10%	3.33%	43.33%	43.33%	100%

Table31: The usage of prepositions in the tenth sentence

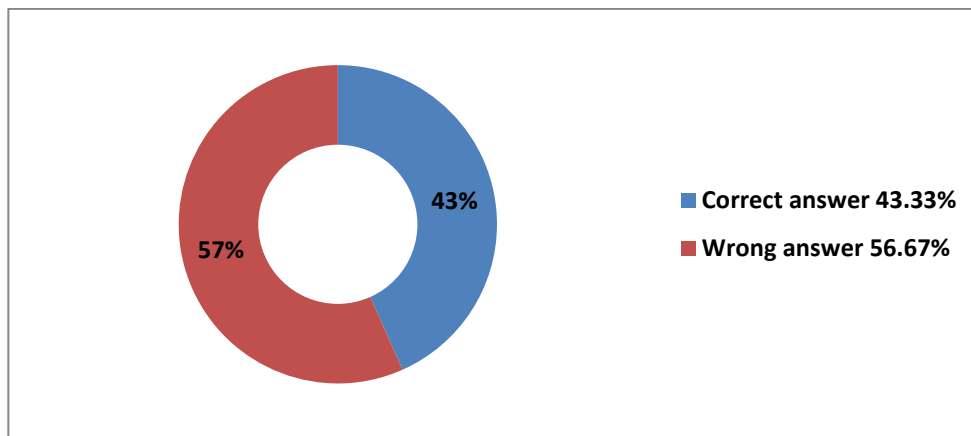


Figure42: Correct and wrong answer of ‘with’

Around 43% of the participants chose the correct preposition “**with**”, whereas 56.67% were unable to identify it. This reveals that students need reinforcement on the particular preposition i, e. Students’ mother tongue interference is clearly observed.

Sentence11: My cousin is married **to** a famous American.

Prepositions	With	for	To	From	Ø	Total
Number	17	0	10	2	1	30
Percentage	56.66%	0%	33.33%	6.67%	3.33%	100%

Table 32: The usage of prepositions in the eleventh sentence

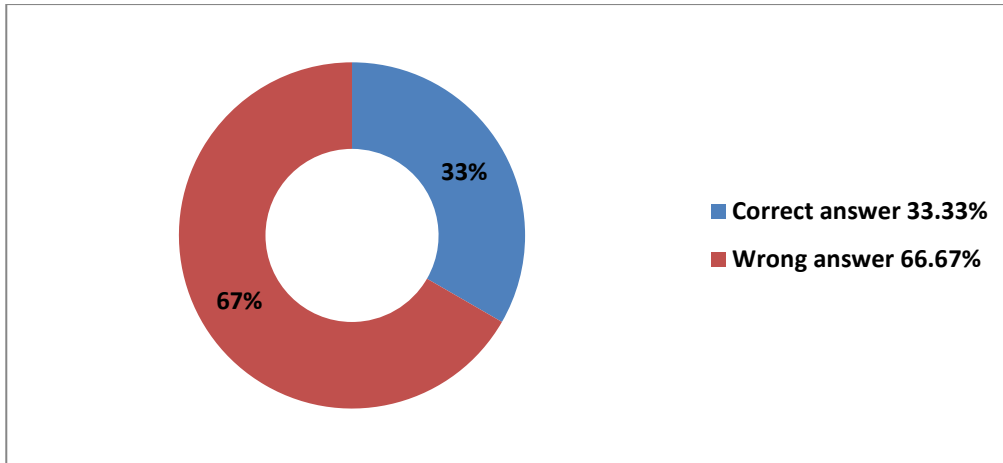


Figure43: Correct and wrong answer of ‘To’

As revealed by the data 33% of the students chose the correct answer “**to**”, while more than 65% substituted its use with “**with**” or “**from**” which literally translated from Arabic language, few of them chose “**Ø**” .i.e. Interference is the cause again.

Sentence 12: For two full days, the man was fighting **for** his life.

Prepositions	Up	With	For	Total
Number	7	7	16	30
Percentage	23.33%	23.33%	53.33%	100%

Table 33: The usage of prepositions in the twelfth sentence

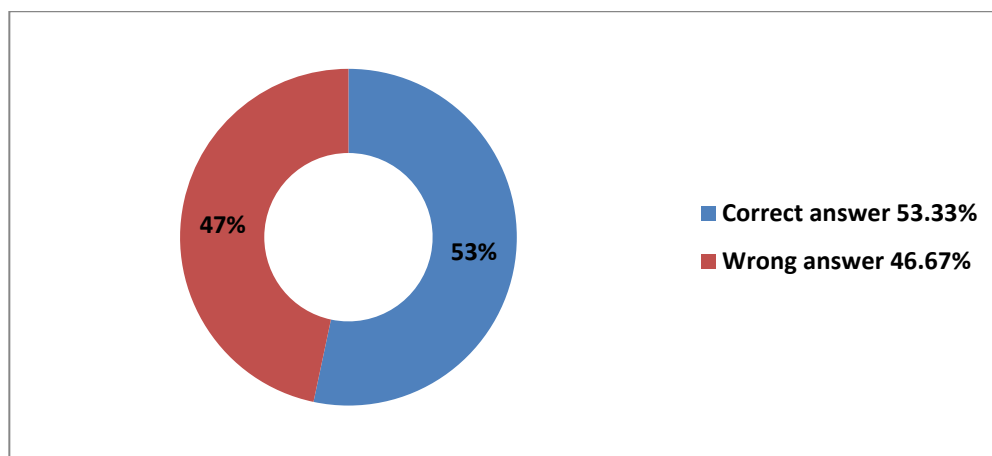


Figure44: Correct and wrong answer of ‘For’

53% of the test-takers chose the correct preposition “**for**”, whereas 47% made a substitution error by choosing “**up**” or “**with**” depending on their mother tongue meaning.

Sentence13: My dad shouted **at** me because I didn’t do what he said.

Prepositions	At	On	About	Behind	Ø	total
number	23	6	0	0	1	30
percentage	76.67%	20%	0%	0%	3.33%	100%

Table 34: The usage of prepositions in the thirteenth sentence

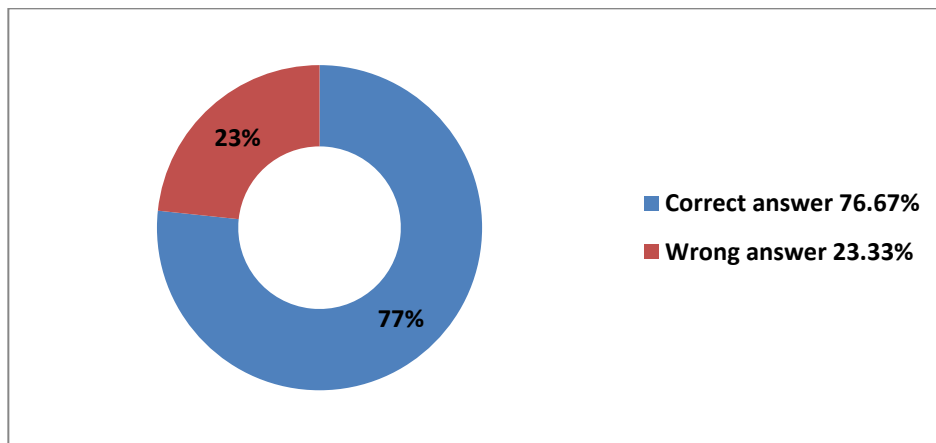


Figure45: Correct and wrong answer of ‘At’

The majority of the students, 77%, chose the right preposition “**at**”, whereas 23% of them mistook its use mainly with the preposition “**on**” (substitution error). That is interference of the standard Arabic by translating the statement literally.

Sentence14: I walked quickly **into** the room.

Prepositions	to	toward	into	Total
Number	6	7	17	30
Percentage	20%	23.33%	56.67%	100%

Table35: The usage of prepositions in the fourteenth sentence

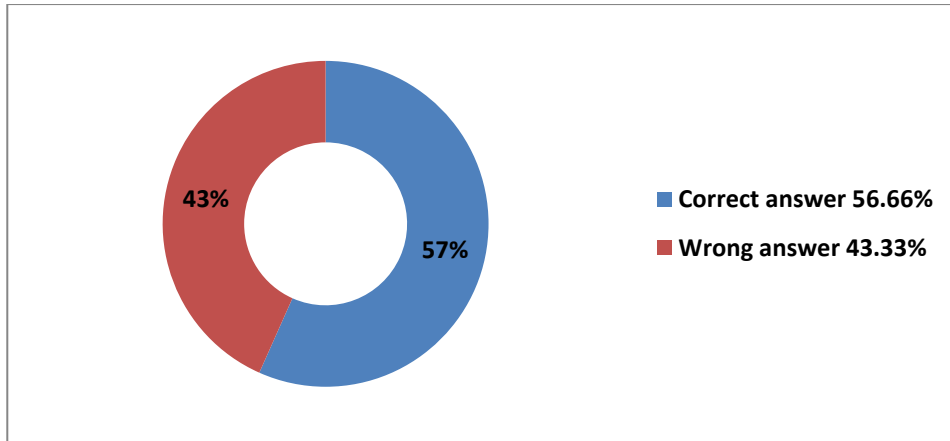


Figure46: Correct and wrong answer of ‘into’

56.67% of the informants inserted the correct preposition “**into**”, yet 43.33% of them used the inappropriate prepositions “**to**”, “**toward**”, as it is used in Arabic. Interference is the cause again.

Sentence 15: The cat climbed **onto** the chair.

Prepositions	towards	into	to	onto	Ø	Total
number	2	6	1	19	2	30
percentage	6.67%	20%	3.33%	63.33%	6.67%	100%

Table 36: The usage of prepositions in the fifteenth sentence

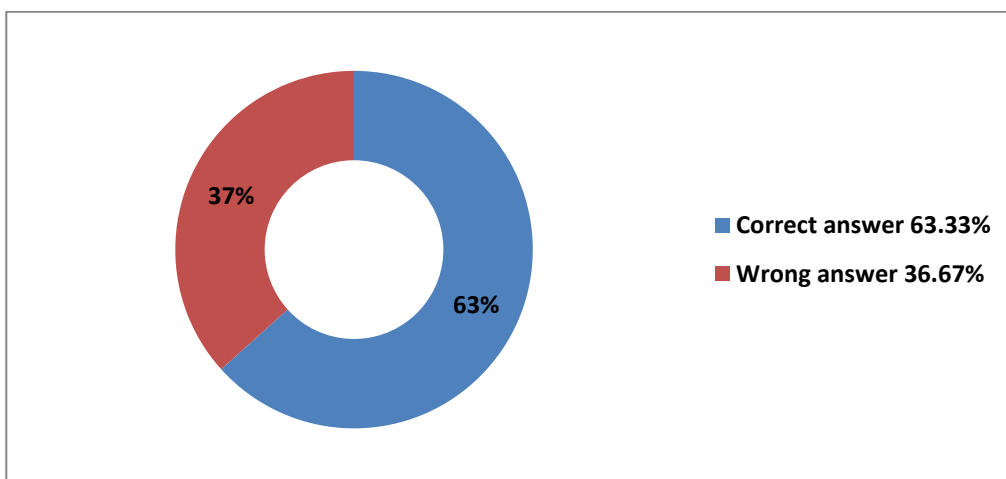


Figure47: Correct and wrong answer of ‘Onto’

More than 60% of the participants could identify the preposition “**onto**”, whereas around 37% were unable to choose the appropriate preposition, so the wrong answer for those students is the result of negative transfer from standard Arabic.

Sentence16: He struggled **through** the crowd till he reached the front.

Prepositions	in	through	On	∅	Total
Number	3	22	2	3	30
Percentage	10%	73.33%	6.67%	10%	100%

Table 37: The usage of prepositions in the sixteenth sentence

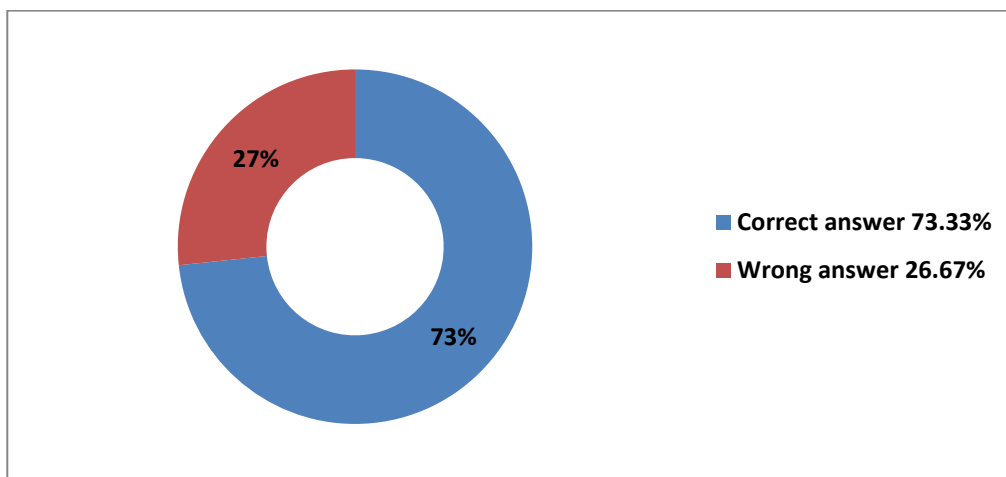


Figure48: Correct and wrong answer of ‘Through’

The graph shows that 73% of the students succeeded to choose the right preposition “**through**”, while the rest failed to discover it and mixed its use with “**in**” and “∅” mainly due to negative transfer from their mother tongue or creating a new meaning for the statement so interference happens again.

Sentence17: We’re thinking of taking a vacation **towards** the end of the month.

Prepositions	to	towards	For	Ø	Total
Number	8	4	13	5	30
Percentage	23.37%	13.33%	43.33%	16.67%	100%

Table 38: The usage of prepositions in the seventeenth sentence

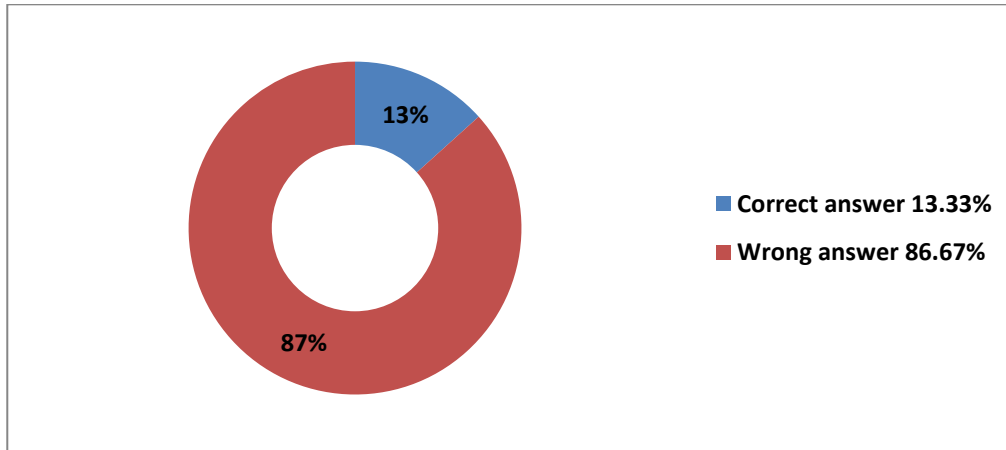


Figure49: Correct and wrong answer of ‘Towards’

Only 13.33% of the participants chose the right preposition “**towards**”, whereas more than 85% failed to identify it that is a result of negative transfer and at the same time confusion between the meaning of “**towards**” and “**to**”; “**for**”.

Sentence18: Our vacation was a lot of fun **despite** the cold weather.

Prepositions	Because of	Under	With	Despite	Total
Number	7	1	1	21	30
Percentage	23.33%	3.33%	3.33%	70%	100%

Table 39: The usage of prepositions in the eighteenth sentence

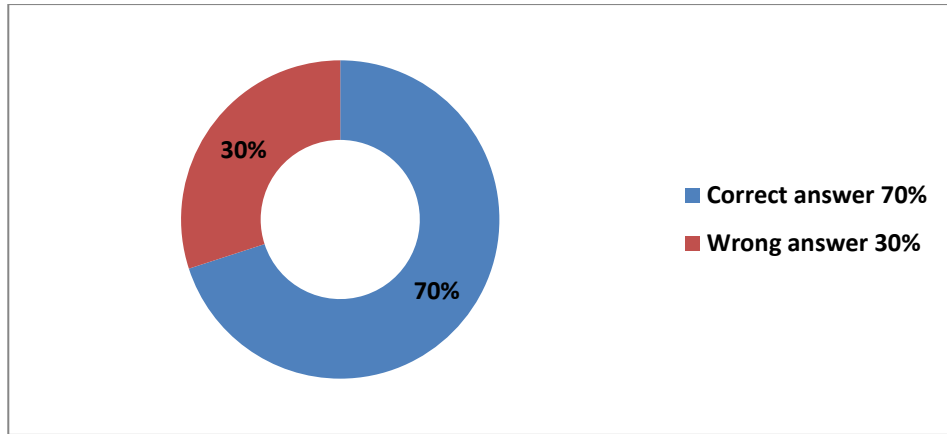


Figure50: Correct and wrong answer of ‘Despite’

70% of the testees transferred from Arabic positively the right preposition “**despite**”, whereas 30% of them mistook its use with “**because of**”, “**under**” and “**with**”. Again, negative transfer occurs.

Sentence 19: I walked **around** the side of the building.

Prepositions	around	beneath	through	Ø	Total
Number	17	11	1	1	30
Percentage	56.67%	36.67%	3.33%	3.33%	100%

Table40: The usage of prepositions in the nineteenth sentence

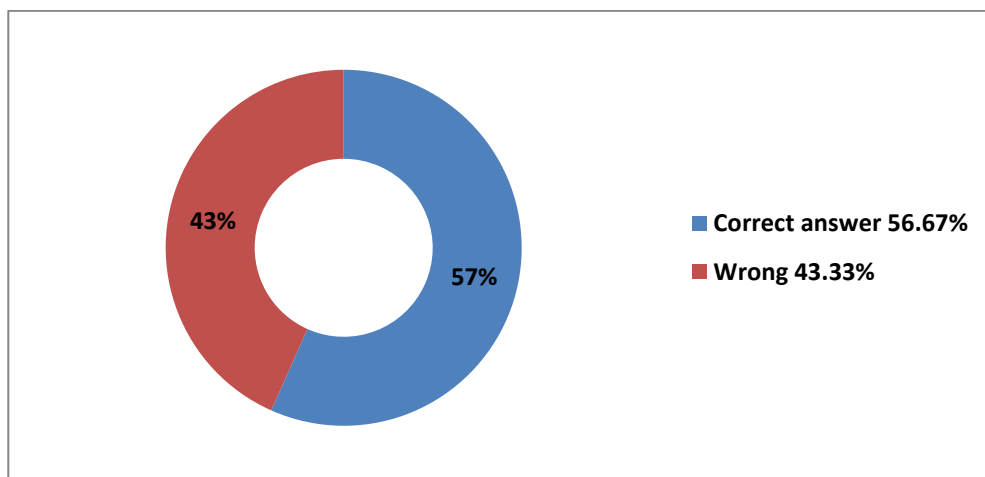


Figure51: Correct and wrong answer of ‘Around’

More than 55% of the students chose the correct preposition “**around**”, whereas around 43% filled the gap with the inappropriate prepositions due to mother tongue interference.

Sentence20: The water spilled **onto** the floor.

Prepositions	Over	In	Onto	Total
Number	22	4	4	30
Percentage	73.33%	13.33%	13.33%	100%

Table 41: The usage of prepositions in the twentieth sentence

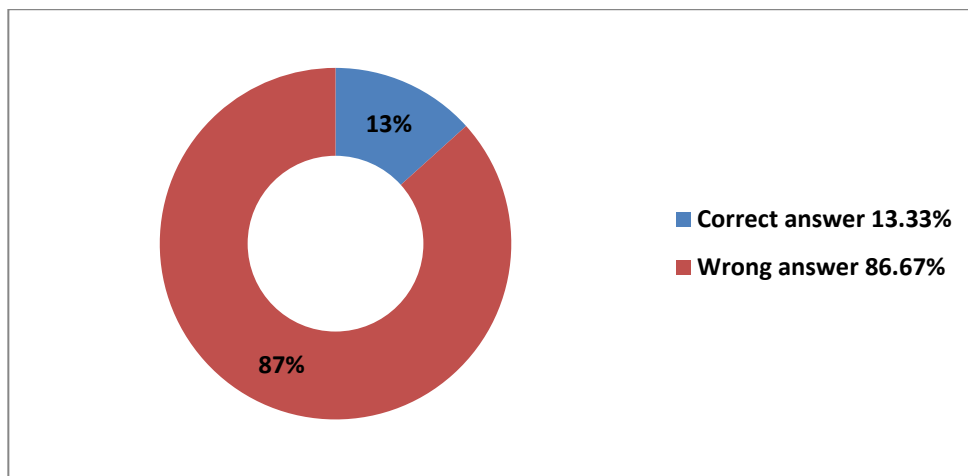


Figure52: Correct and wrong answer of “Onto”

Only 13% of the test-takers were able to identify the right preposition “**onto**”, while 87% of them were unable to identify it due to mother tongue interference or misunderstanding of the correct usage of the preposition “**onto**”.

9-2-2 The second activity results: (translation activity):

الجملة 1: قاد السيارة بحذر.

Modal answer: He drove the car **carefully.**

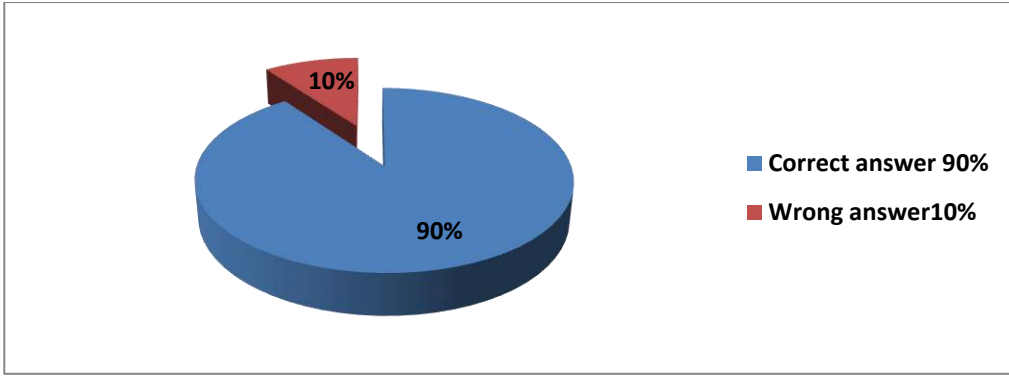


Figure53: Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word.

الجملة 2: يؤثر التدخين سلبا على الصحة.

Modal answer: Smoking affects **health** negatively.

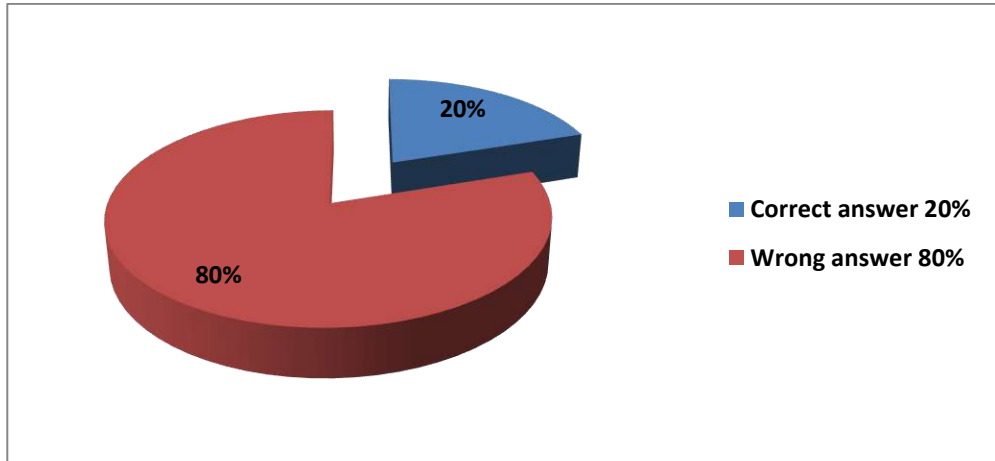


Figure54: Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word.

الجملة 3: أصرت على مساعدتي في المطبخ.

Modal answer: She insisted **on helping me** in the kitchen.

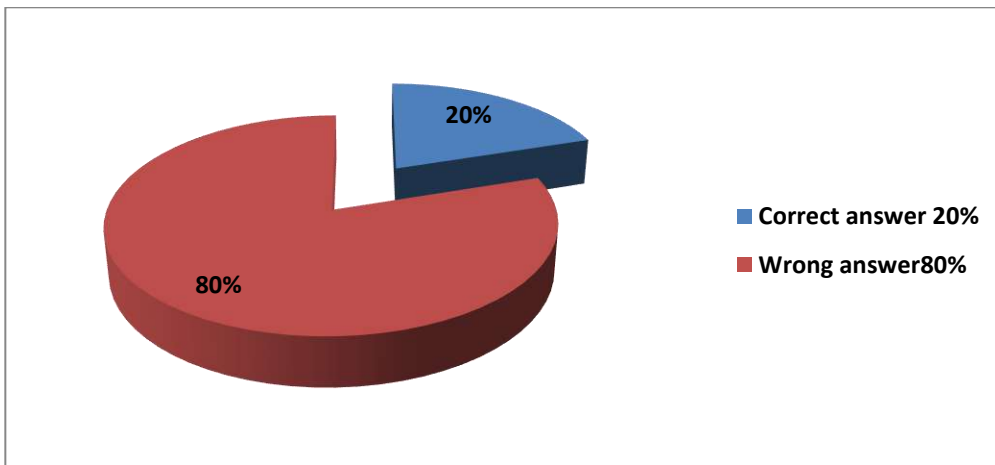


Figure55: Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word.

The majority of the students tended to translate the sentences from Arabic into English literally, they transferred the first sentences positively. While they failed to translate correctly the two other sentences, and this is explained the phenomenon of negative transfer, i.e. interference.

Sentence 4: Ten people were killed when a bus collided **with a car**.

الإجابة النموذجية: لقي عشرة أشخاص حتفهم إثر اصطدام حافلة بسيارة.

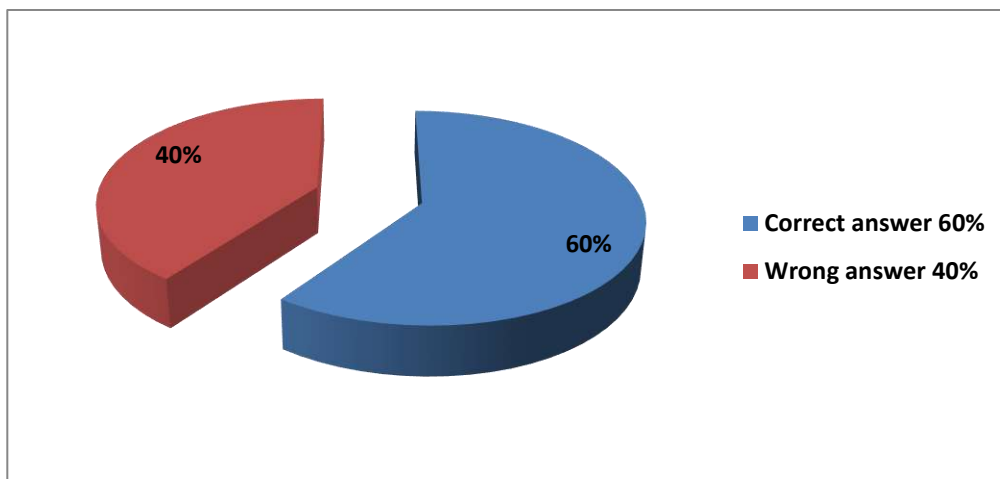


Figure56: Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word.

Sentence 5: I am fond **of drinking green tea**.

الإجابة النموذجية: أنا مولع بشرب الشاي الأخضر.

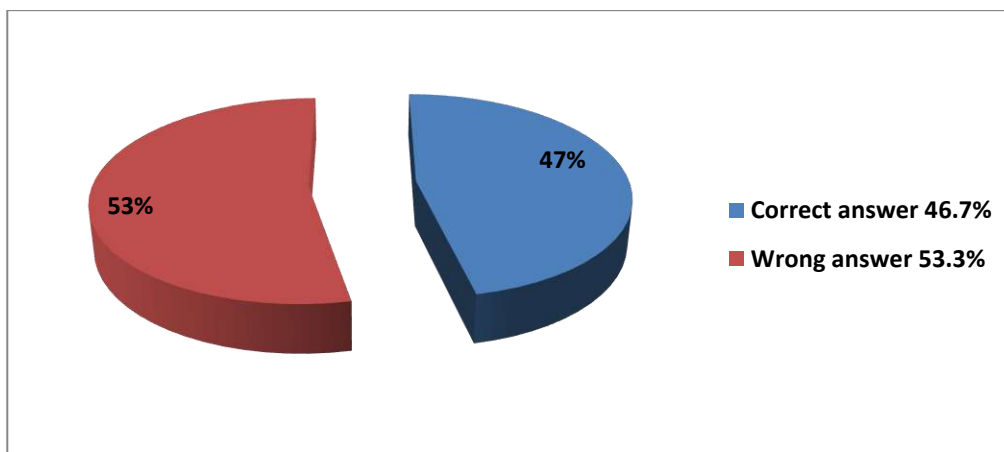


Figure57: Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word.

Sentence6: He is knocking on the door.

الإجابة النموذجية: إنه يطرق الباب.

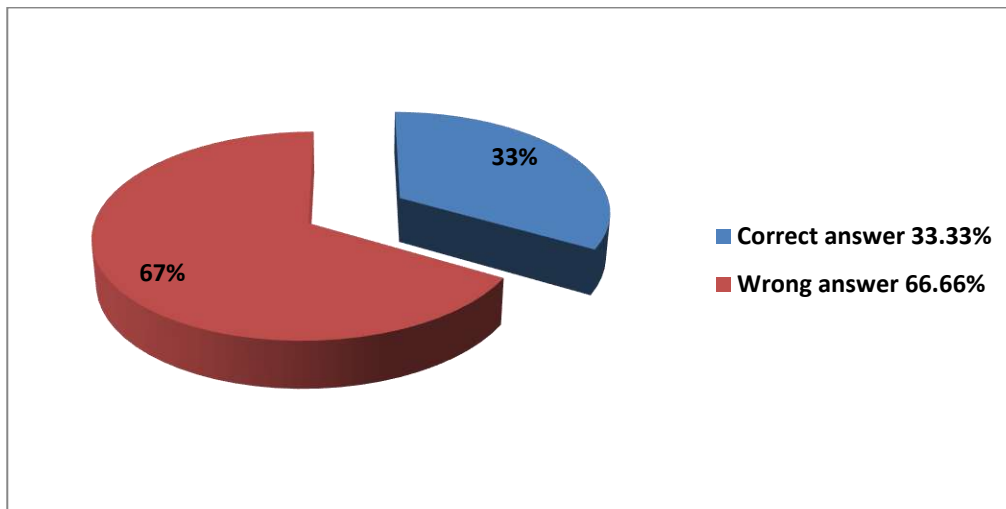


Figure 58: Correct and wrong translation of the underlined word.

The same phenomenon (interference) happened again within those sentences (from English into Arabic). The majority of the students tended to translate the underlined expressions literally and mistook the use of the prepositions.

10. The analysis of the questionnaire:

The questionnaire is another instrument to collect more information about students attitudes towards English prepositions and to re-confirm the results that gained from the test.

10-1 Description of the questionnaire:

The questionnaire was administered to the same students who took the test (30 students of third year licence /30 students of first year licence) at the department of Letters and English language/Kasdi Merbah University-Ouargla. It aims at knowing the students' attitudes towards English prepositions and if they depend on their Mother tongue when using them.

The questionnaire consists of fourteen (14) questions all of them are written in English, some are direct questions, while the others need explanation. It is divided into two sections:

Section one: it is about general and personal information and students' level in English; it consists of four (4) different questions.

Section two: it is about prepositions and interference; it consists of ten (10) questions and they vary from Yes/No questions and WH questions. It aims at getting details about students' prepositional feedback and their views towards the difficulties in prepositions when learning or writing.

10-2 Analysis of the data:

The analysis include fourteen different questions consisting of students' information and their views towards English prepositions.

Section one: Personal information:

Question1: Gender:

Level Gender	First year Licence	Third year Licence	Total
Female	21	28	49
Male	9	2	11

Table42: Students' gender

Question 2: Age:

Level	Age
First year Licence	between 18 / 39years old
Third year Licence	Mainly between 20/27 years old

Table43: Students' age

Question 3: How would you evaluate your level in English?

Level \ Options	First year Licence		Third year Licence	
Very low	0	0%	0	0%
Low medium	10	33.33%	4	13%
Good	17	56.67%	21	70%
Very good	3	10%	5	17%

Table44: Students' level in English

This question aims at investigating the students' level in English .The results indicate that the majority of the students have a good level in English, a few of them have a very good level in English, while the rest have a low medium level.

Section two: Prepositions and interference:

Question 5: Do you think that English prepositions are difficult to be learnt?

Level \ Options	First year Licence		Third year Licence	
Yes	14	46.67%	19	63.33%
No	16	53.33%	11	36.67%

Table45: Students' views about the difficulty of learning English prepositions

The students who emphasised on the difficulty of learning prepositions, they saw that they do not have exact rules and they are complicated.

If no, why? Those who choose "**No**" for this question, they agreed that leaning prepositions could be easy by practicing, memorizing its rules, developing competence and the receptive skills, or by translating into Arabic.

Question 6: When using English prepositions, do you think of them in Arabic or directly in English?

Level options	First year Licence		Third year Licence	
In Arabic	14	46.67%	12	40%
Directly in English	16	53.33%	18	60%

Table46: Students' thinking when using English prepositions

This question points if students rely on translation when using prepositions or not, more than the half of the total number of students, for both levels, chose that they directly think in English when using them .While around 40%, for both levels, saw that they think in Arabic and then in English.

Question 7: What do you think of the different usages of English and Arabic prepositions?

The majority of the students approved on the differences between the two systems. The two prepositional systems do differ from the number, the usage, and their functions .i.e. we cannot take translation from one language into another as a solution because of many reasons: one of them is that English preposition mainly follow the context.

Question 8: Do you prefer Arabic language as a reference of instruction when learning English prepositions?

Level options	First year Licence		Third year Licence	
Yes	22	73.33%	15	50%
No	8	26.67%	15	50%

Table47: students' views about preferring Arabic as a mean of instruction when learning English prepositions

If no, why?

Those students who did not prefer Arabic as a reference when learning prepositions pointed that they will be confused and misleading when using them because each language has its own rules and translation into Arabic will cause interference.

Question 9: Do you think that the only source of prepositional errors is because of Mother Tongue (Arabic) interference?

Level options	First year Licence		Third year Licence	
Yes	16	46.67%	21	70%
No	12	53.33%	9	30%

Table48: Students' thinking about the source of prepositional errors

For first year licence students, 46.674% said “Yes” to this question, while 53.33% said “No”.

For third year Licence students, 70% said “Yes”, while 30% said “No” for question 9.

Question 10: Do you think that Arabic and English prepositions are governed by the same rules?

Level options	First year Licence		Third year Licence	
Yes	1	3.33%	0	00%
No	29	96.67%	30	100%

Table 49: students' opinions about English and Arabic prepositions' rules

The majority of the participants were aware of the different prepositional systems and chose the appropriate answer for this question.

Question 11: What type of prepositions is easy to be used?

Level Options	First year Licence		Third year Licence	
Time	9	30%	14	46.67%
Place	18	63.33%	7	23.33%
Other type	2	6.67%	8	26.67%
More than one option	1	3.33%	1	3.33%

Table50: students' opinions about the easiest type of English prepositions

Totally, 63.33% of first year informants chose prepositions of place as the easiest type to be used, and 30% of them chose prepositions of time. While 46.67% of third year participants chose prepositions of time as the easiest type to be used, whereas 26.67% of them answered by another type could be easy to use.

Question 12: Is your teacher allowed to use translation when teaching prepositions?

Level options		First year Licence		Third year Licence	
Yes	Always	2	6.66%	1	3.33%
	Sometimes	14	46.67%	5	16.67%
	Rarely	9	30%	3	10%
No		5	16.67%	20	66.67%

Table51: The frequency of using translation by the teacher when teaching prepositions

It is assumed from this question that teachers tend to translate more for first year Licence students when teaching preposition to facilitate the lesson.

Question 13: What is the source of English prepositional knowledge?

Level Options		First year Licence		Third year Licence	
From the teacher		14	46.67%	7	23.33%
Your own efforts		8	26.67%	15	50%
Translation		5	16.67%	2	6.67%
More than one option		3	10%	6	20%

Table52: Students' views about English prepositional knowledge

46.67% of first year test-takers claimed that their teachers do enrich their prepositional knowledge, 53.33% chose the other three options. 50% of third year students emphasised on their own efforts to develop their prepositional knowledge, whereas the other half chose the other three options.

Question 14: To what extent the difficulties in prepositions affect your writing?

In general, the testees agreed on the following ideas: confusion to choose the accurate/ appropriate preposition and this will affect conveying the exact meaning, it will mislead the reader or it will lead to an incoherent message. Also, students talked about the use of translation while thinking of their mother tongue directly to translate the meaning into English.

10-3An overview about questionnaire results:

Through the information gathered from the questionnaire results, a numerous of points were obtained: first of all, students do recognize that there are obvious differences between Arabic prepositional systems and the English one. Second, teachers tend to use translation for non-competent students yet to ease the ideas. Finally, students did agree on facing some difficulties when dealing with English prepositions so they tend to translate prepositions or the meaning of the message into Arabic (mother tongue) and this possibly leads to interference or confusion (committing errors).

Conclusion:

The use of prepositions constitutes a big issue for learners, although they are small words. Those small units form a significant part of English grammar because they show the relationships between words in a sentence. Also, they are difficult to learn and for their different usages, and students tend to translate whenever they face problems when using them. Additionally, the analysis of the test results and the questionnaire results, for both levels; the hypotheses set at the beginning have been confirmed that first year licence and third year licence students at Kasdi Merbah University-Department of Letters and English language misuse the use the English prepositions due to Mother Tongue transfer and if they

do not master their usages, they will transfer them negatively or positively from Arabic because they tend to find the equivalent according to the meaning drawn in their minds and this will lead to errors mainly substitution errors ; and it affects their written production .

Suggestions and recommendations:

In this study, the researcher used a test and a questionnaire as instruments for collecting data. In future research, it is possible to use other flexible tools for deeper information.

This study was limited to students of one L1 background and at one department. In future research, researchers could expand the scope of this study and to investigate the phenomenon of transfer.

In future research, it is recommended to include more usages of prepositions for deeper understanding of prepositions difficulties.

Conclusion:

English prepositions constitute a problem for EFL learners because of their unfixed number and their different functions. Also, English and Arabic prepositions are totally different. The aim of this research is to explore to what extent students rely on their L1 prepositional knowledge and the existence of the transfer phenomenon. The obtained results supported the hypotheses set at the beginning; they show that the students are familiar with the most frequent English prepositions that are used such as: in, on, at, for and about. Moreover, students tend to fill the gaps by transferring MT structures whenever they cannot guess the appropriate preposition, and third year license students still have problems in the use of English prepositions because most of the time they relate their responses to their MT.

Substitution errors are the highest type of errors that students made. There are other reasons for prepositional errors: there are no fixed rules for prepositions usage, there is no systematic pedagogy that teachers use to facilitate the prepositions use, confusion, lack of English rules and Algerian Arabic takes place. To conclude, it is observed that English prepositions are hard to be learned or taught due to the imprecise rules and the exact equivalent in Arabic and vice versa.

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Appendices

Appendix A:

Students' Test

Please answer the questions carefully:

Exercise1: Fill in the gaps with the appropriate prepositions (if there is no preposition put Ø):

- 1-I'll be in the office5p.m. (until, on, since, for)
- 2- You must have this report finishedMonday. (at, with, by, while)
- 3- I have enjoyed.....the film.(with, at, because of, through)
- 4- She went to the wrong housemistake.(with, out of , by, under)
- 5- I want to go to Germany.....a change .I've never been there.(to, owing to , for)
- 6- She drinks a litre of water everyday.....fail.(because of , behind, in regard to , without)
- 7- They need to concentrate.....their studies.(in , on , at, about)
- 8- I am responsibletraining the new recruits. (at, about , with , for)
- 9-Many people took advantagethe new prices offered by the new shop (of, for, with , to)
- 10-I was not quite satisfied.....the exam results (at , for , with , about)
- 11- My cousin is married.....a famous American (with , for , to , from)
- 12-For two full days, the man was fightinghis life. (up , with , for)
- 13- My dad shouted me because I didn't do what he said. (at, on , about, behind)
- 14- I walked quickly.....the room.(to , toward , into)
- 15- The cat climbed.....the chair. (towards, into, to, onto)
- 16-He struggled the crowd till he reached the front.(in , through , on)
- 17- We're thinking of taking a vacation..... the end of the month.(to , towards, for)
- 18- Our vacation was a lot of fun,.....the cold weather.(because of , under, with , despite)

19- I walked the side of the building.(around, beneath , through)

20- The water spilled..... the floor.(over , in , onto)

Exercise2: translate the underlying phrases:

- 1-قاد السيارة بحذر ←
- 2- يؤثر التدخين سلبا على الصحة ←
- 3- أصرت على مساعدتي في المطبخ ←

1-Ten people were killed when a bus collided with a car →

2-I am very fond of drinking green tea. →

3-He is knocking on the door →

Appendix B:

Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is addressed to students of English (Department of Letters and English Language). It aims at knowing the students' attitudes towards English prepositions and if they depend on their L1 knowledge to use them or not. Thank you in advance.

- Please read carefully the questions, put a tick (✓) in the right box and write full statements whenever necessary.

Section one: Personal information

1- Gender: Male Female

2- Age:

3-Level: First year Licence Third year Licence

3- How long have you been studying English?

4-How would you evaluate your current level in English?
Very low Low Medium good very good

Section two: Prepositions and interference:

5-Do you think that English prepositions are difficult to be learnt?

Yes No

If no, Why?

6- When using English prepositions, do you think of them in Arabic or directly in English?

In Arabic Directly in English

7- What do you think of the different usages of English and Arabic prepositions?

.....
.....

8- Do you prefer Arabic language as a reference of instruction when learning English prepositions? Yes No

If no, why?.....

9- Do you think that the only source of prepositional errors is because of the Mother Tongue (Arabic) interference?

Yes No

10-Do you think that Arabic and English prepositions are governed by the same rules? Yes No

11-What type of prepositions is easy to be used?

Time Place other type

12- Is your teacher allowed to use translation when teaching prepositions?

Yes No

If yes, is it? Always sometimes rarely

13- What is the source of your English prepositional knowledge?

From the teacher your own efforts Translation
(From Arabic)

14-To what extent the difficulties in prepositions affect your writing?

.....
.....

ملخص:

أصبح تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية ضرورة لا بد منها في وقتنا الحالي و لكن عادة ما يواجه الطلاب بعض الصعوبات بسبب تداخل اللغة الأم و التي تؤثر بشكل مباشر على الكفاءة اللغوية و من بينها :
الاستخدام الصحيح لحروف الجر و طريقة توظيفها . تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فحص مدى تأثير اللغة الأم على استخدام حروف الجر في اللغة الإنجليزية. تم اقتراح فرضية عدم تمكن الطلبة من استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية بسبب التداخل اللغوي يؤدي إلى إدخال قواعد اللغة الأم من أجل سد ثغرات النقص .

تم اختيار بعض الطلبة من السنة الأولى و السنة الثالثة ليسانس عشوائيا من اجل اجراء اختبار الذي يتضمن جزأين: الجزء الأول الذي يشمل تمرين ملاً الفراغات بحرف الجر المناسب و الجزء الثاني خاص بترجمة حرف الجر و الكلمة الموالية و من اجل الإجابة عن اربعة عشر سؤالاً حول رأي الطلبة و موقفهم من حروف الجر في اللغة الإنجليزية .

و بعد معاينة أجوبة الطلبة فقد تم اثبات صحة الفرضية السابقة بحيث معظم الطلبة فشلوا في

استخدام حروف الجر بسبب التداخل اللغوي مع اللغة الأم.

Abstract :

This study aims at showing the interference of mother tongue on the use of some English prepositions in written production. The selected sample is 30 students of first year and 30 students of third year License at the department of English – University of Ouargla. It is hypothesized that those students misuse the use of prepositions so they will transfer from their mother tongue negatively or positively. The researchers depend on a test of two activities and a questionnaire of fourteen questions. The results revealed the crucial role of mother tongue, and that mother tongue interference is the main reason behind committing errors due to confusion that resulted from the use of grammar rules and Standard and Algerian Arabic.

Abstrait :

Cette étude vise à montrer l'interférence de la langue maternelle sur l'utilisation de certaines prépositions anglaises dans la production écrite. L'échantillon sélectionné est de 30 étudiants de première année et 30 étudiants de licence de troisième année au département d'anglais - Université de Ouargla. On émet l'hypothèse que ces élèves abusent de l'utilisation des prépositions afin de passer de leur langue maternelle de manière négative ou positive. Les chercheurs dépendent d'un test de deux activités et d'un questionnaire de quatorze questions. Les résultats ont révélé le rôle crucial de la langue maternelle, et que l'interférence de la langue maternelle est la principale raison des erreurs dues à la confusion résultant de l'utilisation des règles de grammaire et de l'arabe standard et algérien.

ملخص الدراسة:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إظهار تدخل اللغة الأم في استخدام بعض حروف الجر الإنجليزية في الإنتاج الكتابي. العينة المختارة 30 طالبا من السنة الأولى و 30 طالبا في إجازة السنة الثالثة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية - جامعة ورقلة. من المفترض أن هؤلاء الطلاب يسيئون استخدام حروف الجر لذلك سينقلون من لغتهم الأم سلبيًا أو إيجابيًا. يعتمد الباحثون على اختبار نشاطين واستبيان من أربعة عشر سؤالاً. كشفت النتائج الدور الحاسم للغة الأم ، وأن تداخل اللغة الأم هو السبب الرئيسي وراء ارتكاب أخطاء بسبب الارتباك الناتج عن استخدام قواعد النحو واللغة العربية الفصحى والجزائرية.