Arab EFL University Students' Errors in the Use of Prepositions

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ABSTRACT

This empirical study is an analysis of compositions written by Jordanian first-, second-and third-year university EFL students. The aim of the current work is to find out the kinds of errors they make in the use of prepositions. Data was derived from free compositions written by a stratified random sample of 162 students with similar linguistic, sociocultural, and educational backgrounds. Findings revealed that MTI is the major source of EFL learners' errors (58%=1323). However, transfer strategies of the TL itself are also detected and constituted a major part of the errors too (42%=967). Arab Jordanian EFL students use the proper prepositions providing equivalents are used in their MT; select the improper prepositions if equivalents are not used in their MT; omit prepositions if equivalents are not required in their MT and add prepositions if equivalents are required in their MT. Although freshmen, sophomores and juniors do not appear to overgeneralise or use transfer strategies in characteristically different ways, they do appear to use these two learning strategies to different degrees. While overgeneralization and transfer errors may not be qualitatively different for the three class levels, they were found to be quantitatively different. The improper use of prepositions is prominent among EFL Arab learners even at advanced stages of their learning. Finding of the study and its pedagogical implications are discussed.

Keywords: linguistics analysis**,** errors, written composition, EFL Arab learners, prepositions.

Introduction

Interest in the teaching of English as a global language has been growing throughout the Arab world, and most Arab governments began to introduce the teaching of English as compulsory subject into the school curriculum. At present, in most Arab countries, all students who finish the public secondary school education must have had at least eight years of instruction in English as a school subject. So, because of the widespread use of English as a second language, the subject of language teaching in general and teaching English as a foreign or second language in particular, has

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become the focus of attention of most Arab researchers (Al-Khatib, 2000). As far as English at tertiary level in the Arab world is concerned, (Zughoul, 2003; Sultana, (2001) point out that teaching through the medium of English is obvious in the field of higher education with the exception of Syria which maintained a strong teaching tradition through the medium of Arabic. Zughoul, in confirming this issue has said, 'no laws have been enacted or language plans drawn to be implemented regarding the use of Arabic in Arab universities in any Arab country' (ibid, (2003).

As far as Arab students are concerned, recently, Rababah has rightly stated that 'attitudinal studies conducted on Arab students, consistently showed that Arab students are instrumentally motivated to learn English and that they are well aware of the utility of knowing English. The main stimulus for learning English is instrumental, i.e. to achieve a goal, e.g. a career (ibid, 2003).To shed more about the present status of English in the Arab world, Zughoul rightly states: 'despite the hegemonic and imperialistic nature of English, it is still badly needed in the Arab world for the purposes of communicating with the world, education, acquisition of technology and development at large. Teaching still needs more efforts to be exerted to raise the quality and standard of English of the Arab learners at all levels, (ibid 2003).

General perspective on the Importance of Writing Skill

Bjork and Raisanen (1997: 8) argue: 'We highlight the importance of writing in all university curricula not only because of its immediate practical application, i.e. as an isolated skill or ability, but because we believe that, seen from a broader perspective, writing is a thinking tool. It is a tool for language development, for critical thinking and, extension, for learning in all disciplines'. This is a line of thought that we shall develop. Ulijn and Strother (1995:153) state that speaking and writing are generally considered to be the active or productive skills of language usage. While there is no room in this research to deal with other studies (e.g. Leki, 1991; Purves, 1988), it is enough to say that these studies enhance the point of interrelatedness or association between the errors of L1 (language one) and L2 (language two) with no restriction to Arabic, English or any other languages.

Writing skill in EFL Arab Context

The faulty usage of the syntactic elements, e.g. verbs, prepositions, articles, relative clauses, etc., affects negatively the whole theme and schema of the writing process. Therefore, developing learners' writing skills in L2 has been of concern for some time in Arab tertiary education. Students studying in institutions of higher learning in the medium of English, which is not their native language, have been found to face serious problems mainly in writing, making them unable to cope

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with the institution's literacy expectations (Kharma and Hajjaj, 1997; Khalil, 2000; Bacha, 2002; Rababah, 2003). In Arab universities, English writing is significant in students' academic course of study as research work depends on it. It is needed for taking notes, describing objects or devices and writing essays, answering written questions, writing their compositions, writing experimental reports, etc. Further, the process of writing, specifically writing through a practical research task, also helps to develop the students' cognitive skills in acquiring the necessary strategies, such as analysing results of a research task, inferring from the significant differences observed in comparing means, frequencies, etc., synthesizing different ideas or styles when writing, and so forth, instrumental in the learning process (Bacha2002:164). For these reasons, writing has always been an essential aspect of the curriculum of English as a major, and for academic purposes. The English writing is also a fundamental aim of teaching English in Arab institutions of higher education because English language is the medium of instruction in these institutions, (Al-Khuwaileh and Shoumali, 2000).

The Study Matrix

Research Objectives	Research Questions	Data	Source	Instruments
Determine whether the possible source of the errors can be attributed to interlingual interference;	To What extent does the interlingual interference account for the errors?	Responses	162 Students of 3 class levels	Written compositions
Determine whether the possible source of the errors can be attributed to Intralingaul interference;	To what extent does the Intralingaul interference account for the errors?	Responses	162 Students of 3 class levels	Written compositions
Determine the difference of students' errors, which can be attributed to the class level;	To what extent can the difference of students' errors be attributed to their class level ?	Frequency of errors computed then compared	162 Students of 3 class levels	Written compositions
Determine the difference of students' errors which can be attributed to the average length of compositions;	To what extent can the difference of students'errors be attributed to the average length of compositions?	Frequency of errors computed then compared	162 Students of 3 class levels	Written compositions

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The Significance of this Study

This empirical study derives its significance from the significance of the topic, the objectives it addresses and the fact that it attempts to explore a new area in performance analysis, namely, the relationship between the average length of compositions and the number of errors in them, which is hoped to add another perspective to the current literature on the English prepositional system, and the pedagogical implications it obtains. Empirical research regarding students' performance of using English prepositions in their writing is not only scarce, but urgently needed due to the continuous faulty usage of prepositions yielding malformed sentences of their written production as referred to by researchers (e.g. Mourtaga, 2004; Zahid, 2006; Mahmoud, 2006). The few previous Jordanian studies have been conducted on syntactic errors and merely describing them holistically. None of these studies, to the knowledge of the researcher, has been conducted to investigate difficulties of using prepositions in writing per se, i.e. independent from other syntactic-grammatical errors. Therefore, the primary significance of this study lies in taking a further step toward investigating and gaining a comprehensive understanding of this prepositional problem. Systematically analyzing errors makes it possible to (1) identify strategies which learners use in language teaching, (2) identify the causes of learner errors, and (3) obtain information on common difficulties in language learning as an aid to teaching or in development of teaching materials. Thus, it can be inferred that language teaching cannot stand away from the findings of error analysis. Students' errors have always been of interest and significance to teachers, syllabus designers and test developers. This may lead educators to devise appropriate materials and effective teaching techniques, and constructing tests suitable for different levels (cf., e.g.Corder, 1986; Richards, 1974; Brown, 2000).

Previous Studies on EFL Arab Learners'Writing errors

Notwithstanding, the exerted attempts to tackle the difficulties and problems of English language learning/teaching at all levels of education in the Arab world; Arab students still encounter serious problems in their English-writing. Depicting the situation of English in Jordan, Abd Al-Haq (1982:1) cited in Rababah,(2003, rightly states: 'there are general outcries about the continuous deterioration of the standards of English proficiency of students among school teachers, university instructors and all who are concerned with English language teaching'. Strongly supporting Abd Al-Haq, Rababah, (2003) goes on to say that Arab Jordanian learners of English encounter several serious problems in speaking and writing. This fact has been clearly stated by many researchers, (e.g.Zughoul, 1991, 2003; Rababah, 2001, 2003; AlKhuwaileh and Shoumali, 2000). Sharing the

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same view, Bacha, (2002:161) states:'L2 writers are known to face problems in developing their writing skills at the university level. These problems are even more accentuated with L1 Arabic non-native speakers of English in required English composition courses'. She has added that Arab learners of ESL /EFL do have serious problems in writing and may not be motivated to develop their writing skills (ibid, 2002:161). Several Arab researchers reported and confirmed that Arab EFL learners in general and Jordanian EFL learners in particular, face serious problem in using English prepositions (e.g. Rababah, 2001, 2003; Zughoul, 1991, 2003; Al-Khataybeh, 1992).The findings of the empirical data of these studies have shown that EFL Jordanian learners at all levels encounter several problems in all language skills. The great number of errors that Jordanian learners of English produce is in writing. Committing a lot of errors (mainly syntactic and grammatical) in their writing as referred to by these Arab and Jordanian researchers, is the prominent feature of Arab adult learners of English and prepositions is a core case in a point, which appears to be an ever-lasting problem, thereby indicates the seriousness of the problem. In supporting this prominent fact about this serious problem encountered EFL Arab Jordanian students, Hashim (1996), has reviewed most of the studies on syntactic errors made by Arabic-speaking students in learning English, his results show that a lot of errors have been found and presented in seven syntactic categories: verbal, preposition, relative clause, conjunction, adverbial clauses, sentence structure, and articles. The results reveal that the influence of native language (mother tongue) has been found the most common source of these deviations. L2 interference i.e. Intralingaul errors are also there due to employing some strategies as over-generalization (analogy), false application of rules, simplification, induced errors. Sharing the same view with Hashim, Kharma, and Hajjaj, (1997) have reported in their study on Arab EFL learners' errors, that the majority of their errors are in English syntax, and in particular, prepositions are the most troublesome aspect of syntax. Besides, most recent studies in the Arab world (e.g. Zahid, 2006**;** Mohammed, A.M. 2005**;** Muortaga, K. 2004) investigated EFL Arab learners' syntactic errors, the results of their empirical studies revealed that Arab learners were incompetent and weak mainly in verbs and prepositions. Investigations of errors made by Arab EFL learners reveal a similarity of problematic areas in English syntax.

Hence, the major problems are found to be in the use of verbs / prepositions (interchangeable in rank), then relative clause and articles respectively. The interference of mother tongue was statistically significant which amounted to (67%) of the total errors. Intralingual errors were also detected as a main source of errors caused by overgeralisation, simplification, faulty analogy and other common learning

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processes. Some researchers (e.g.Kharma & Hajjaj, 1997) have described prepositions' errors as an ever-lasting problem for EFL Arab learner. Kharma's statement based on his own empirical and theoretical studies conducted in several Arab countries (eg. Arab Gulf countries, Jordan), and because he observed that almost all research on syntactic errors in the Arab world, prepositions were found to be the most troublesome grammatical words and constantly constitute a significant proportion of errors occupied the first or second position among other syntactic and semantic errors. Besides, Several studies (e.g.Dulay & Burt 1972; Tucker & Scott 1974; Mahdi, 1982; Hamdallah, 1988,) show that it takes a long time for the learner of English as a second / foreign language to acquire prepositions. Therefore, it would benefit learners, teachers and researchers to undertake a systematic in-depth study to probe into one slide of these problematic areas of syntax that is very seldom to find in the Arab World, which is investigating errors made by Arab Jordanian EFL students, at the tertiary level, in the use of prepositions per se. Therefore, this study aims at identifying the types of errors they make in the use of prepositions (interlingual or intralingual), and to determine whether the possible source of the errors can be attributed to the class level and /or to the average length of compositions. It is with this purpose in mind that the investigator has selected this problem for the present study, to investigate it and find, if possible, the remedial procedures that can elevate the students' level and lessen the number of repeaters every semester.

Method and procedure

The 162 subjects of the study represent the three class levels of 1st- ,2nd- and 3rd-year university students majoring in English at Al-Balqa Applied University in Jordan. The sampling method used in this study was stratified random sampling of equal-sized strata. Each stratum consists of 54 students represent their class level. (i.e.54 students from freshmen, 54 sophomores and 54 from Juniors). The subjects of the study, the time of conducting this research, were all students of English at AAU in the beginning of the second semester of the academic year 2008/2009. The three groups started the degree in 2006/2007, 2007/2008, 2008/2009 respectively, which makes them juniors, sophomores, freshmen at the time of the research. Like all the Jordanian Students, the ones who participate in this study started learning English as a foreign language at public schools in the fifth grade. All subjects are homogeneous in terms of their linguistic and socio-economic background (i.e. the subjects are homogeneous in terms of their parents' occupation, level of

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education, income and area of residence), education system and field of study. The subjects live in an exclusively Arabic–speaking community and had learned English as a foreign language prior to taking it up as their major field of study at the university. It is important here to mention two things, first: the fourth year students were not included, because they were attending a practical training course of 12 credited-hours outside the university campus at the time of conducting this study. Second, those learners who are Jordanians, but their MT is not Arabic are excluded from this study, such as Circasians, Chechens and Greeks who constitute the main non-Arab linguistic minorities in Jordan. The subjects were given the topics and wrote their compositions within 50-minute class session. The selected topics were: *1-Write about yourself: What would you like to be? 2-What are the benefits of learning English? 3- Write a composition on how we might develop the tourism industry in Jordan .4-Population control is a necessity for the world. Discuss*. The adopted criteria for correctness in the current study is grammaticality which refers to the term 'error' as a deviation or breach of the rule of the code or of a selected norm, after James, 1998; Corder, 1986.

To achieve the objectives of the study, each composition was read twice, once by the researcher and another by one of two independent coders. A word count was made and errors in the use of prepositions were counted, classified and later analyzed. The types and frequency of these errors were compared to observe similarities and/or differences in the type and number of errors made across the three levels. Data from each reading were organized using the following error categories (a) Omission: is considered as the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance e.g. 'the post man goes Ǿ villa to villa'. (b) Substitution: is the use of the wrong preposition where another preposition should be used, e.g. 'He has been teaching for 1990.' (c) Addition is denominated as the presence of an item that must not appear in a well-formed utterance, e.g. 'a lot of protesters stand outside of the garden. Due to the fact that only prepositions errors are investigated, the present study is limited in its scope and generalisability of results to populations similar to the present one. Furthermore, the fact that different students are targeted at each class level may add another limitation posed by these students' potentially different personalities, motivation, and writing abilities, a limitation which would have been avoided if the same students were studied over a three-year period of time. Finally, examining the students' speech would have added further validity to the claims made in this research.

Validity and Reliability of the composition Test

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Validity

According to Assamawi (2002:69) research instrument can be validated via three ways: (**1**) Self-validation, this involves asking oneself whether each topic given in the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. In this study, the subjects write their essays on carefully selected compatible topics, which can be very useful testing tool (Heaton, 1990:137) for providing the learners with an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to organize language material, to use their own words and ideas and to reveal which language components the students could use to communicate. Hence, for achieving self-validation, the topics employed in this study are taken from previous Jordanian investigators (e.g. Hamdallah, 1988; Obeidat, 1986) who employed these topics in their studies to test EFL Jordanian university students' performance in writing by analyzing the learners' syntactic errors (prepositions were a case in a point). Those studies yielded important results, which subsequently contributed to the learning teaching process in the Arab world in general, and in Jordan in particular. The topics were highly comparable (Hughes (1989:75) with the kind of compositions the subjects had already written during their previous learning. (**2**) Experts-Validation, three experts approved that the given topics were taken from materials appropriate to students' standard and suit their age, and that the rubric set was very clear. (**3**) Pilot-Validation: The pilot study: the composition test was subjected to a pilot study to check whether the given topics would yield the samples which represent the students' ability in free writing and that the resulted samples could and would be scored reliably. The results of the pilot study revealed that the composition topics were understood by the participants as they intended to be, and able to elicit the participants' responses on the problem studied.

Reliability

According to Hughes, (1989: 36)' reliability can be achieved by scorer reliability coefficients of over 0.9 for the scoring of compositions. Scorer reliability is the consistency of scoring by two or more scorers (raters or coders). Thereby, to ensure inter-coder reliability, Cohen's Kappa (Cohen, 1960) was used. In the present study, the scoring process was performed by two instructors of English, who volunteered to score the students'answer papers. Both have long experience in this domain; they are familiar with English prepositions and their usage very well. The answer scripts were read three times once by the researcher to circle every preposition used in the compositions, and once by each of the two coders. The researcher counted and classified errors according to each coder. Number of errors for each preposition from each coder were recorded and listed. The two results of the two coders were compared. The comparison revealed that the two coders reached an

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agreement that 38 prepositions were used erroneously in students'compositions. After Kappa was

being calculated according to the given formula:

Kappa =

$$\frac{(\text{proportion corresponding} - \text{expected proportion corresponding})}{(\text{1-expected proportion corresponding})}$$

Kappa = the inter-coder reliability is 0.98. Result showed that reliability was achieved at 98%

which is considered according to Landis & Koch (1977:165) benchmarks from 0.81-1.00, almost

perfect. (see appendices B& C).

Findings and discussion

In this section, the findings of this study are presented and discussed in light of its questions.

Q. # 1: To what extent does the Interlingual interference account for the errors?

Table #1: total means, and SD for interlingual and intralingual errors for the three class levels

Category	Inter			Intra				
	Mean	SD	Sum	Mean	SD	Sum	t-valu	Sig.
total	29.40	45.82	1323	21.49	29.61	967	1.09	0.28

The purpose of the first question is to determine whether the possible source of the errors

committed in composition can be attributed to interlingual interference. T-test was used and results

showed that there is no statistical significant difference between interlingual and intralingual errors

(sig. (0.28) > 0.05, see table #1) and the total means of interlingual errors is 29.40 with total

standard deviation 45.82, it showed that for the majority of errors (1323 out of 2290) in the use of

prepositions in composition test, interference from the native language was the main source. (See

more illustrative examples below for interlingual errors).

Q. # 2: To what extent does the intralingual interference account for the errors?

The purpose of the second question is to determine whether the possible sources of the errors can be

attributed to intralingaul interference. The total means of intralingual errors are 21.49 with total SD

29.61, and the total errors are 967out of 2290 (see (table # 1) which indicates that the dispersion of

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the Jordanian EFL students'intralingual errors are relatively closer around the central tendency (means) than those of interlingual errors, i.e. they are less heterogeneous. The possible main cause of intralingual errors is the transfer of previously available strategies in new situations. In other words, the subjects of this study create a deviant structure on the basis experience of other structures in the target language. Findings indicate that interference of mother tongue and of target language itself are both considered major sources of students'errors despite the fact that the total number of interlingual errors is (1323) and the intralingual (967). (see more illustrative examples below for intralingual (TLI) errors).

Q. # 3: To what extent can the difference of students' errors be attributed to their class level?

Table # 2 : Means and SD for Total Errors among the three class levels

	Freshmen			Sophomores			Juniors				
	Mean	SD	Sum	Mean	SD.	Sum	Mean	SD	Sum	F-value	Sig.
total	43.10	57.41	1293	20.53	23.54	616	12.70	14.08	381	6.14	0.003

The purpose of the third question is to determine the difference of students' errors, which can be attributed to the class level. One way ANOVA Test was used to measure the means and standard deviation of the total number of errors held per each preposition and all prepositions for the cross-section of three class levels. The data in table # 2 obviously shows that there is a statistical significant difference (sig.0.003 <0.005) concerning the total number of errors among freshmen, sophomores and juniors. Details as follow: the subjects made a total of errors in the use of prepositions distributed on the three studying years as the following: Juniors'total errors is (381), total means is 12.70 with SD 14.08, which indicates that juniors made the least number of errors with less heterogeneity, MTI (205) and 176 TLI errors, which means transfer from MT and TL itself are the main source of their errors. Sophomores' total errors is (616), the total means is 20.53 with SD 23.54, MTI (355) whereas TLI (261) and freshmen's total errors is (1293), total means is 43.10 with SD 57.41, MTI (763) and TLI (530); with statistical significant difference (sig.0.003 <0.005). This means that the subjects' class level has significant impact and yields high statistical significant differences among the three university students' class levels concerning the total number of errors held per each year .i.e. a noticeable difference between each level and the other quantitatively, but not qualitatively.

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Q. # 4: To what extent can the difference of students' errors be attributed to the average length of compositions?

The purpose of this research question is to determine the difference of students' errors which can be attributed to the average length of compositions. The length of the compositions was different across individual respondents as well as across class levels. A word count was performed excluding the instructions and questions which some of the subjects copied onto the answer sheet. An average word count for each class level was used to calculate the percentage of errors in prepositions usage.The average length of the compositions for each of the three class levels is shown in Table # 3.

Table # 3: The Average Length of Composition across Class Level

Class level	Average composition Length
Freshmen: class of 2008/2009	193
Sophomores class of 2007/2008	275
Juniors class of 2006/2007	433

Composition length was not found to have a consistent relationship with the number of errors. While freshmen, who wrote compositions of an average count of (193) words, made a total of (1793) errors = (12.40%), sophomores, who wrote compositions of an average count of (275) words, made a total of 616 errors = (4.14%), juniors, who wrote compositions of an average count of (433) words, made a total of 381 errors = (1.62%), See table # 4.

Table # 4: Total Number of Errors in Composition Based on the Total Number of Written Words.

Studying Year/ class level	Total errors per class level	The total written words for each level	Percentage of errors for total number of written words. (%)
Freshmen	1293	10422	12.40
Sophomores	616	14850	4.14
Juniors	381	23382	1.62

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These results are inconsistent with traditional teachers' warnings that the more one writes, the more errors he/she is bound to make. Although juniors wrote compositions with almost double the length of those written by their freshmen and sophomore counterparts, their errors were dramatically cut to less than 29% of those made by freshmen and 61% of those made by sophomores whose errors are cut to less than 47% of those made by freshmen counterparts, while freshmen did more than 57 % of the total errors made in the written compositions. In fact, the figures in tables 3 & 4 may readily support previous research studies (e.g. Zahid, 2006; Mohammed, 2005; Mahmoud, 2002, among others) who have asserted that the majority of errors made by the EFL learners are because of the impact of native language transfer which was found to play a major role. Also results go in line with several studies (e.g. Zahid, 2006; Dulay & Burt 1972; Tucker & Scott, 1974; Obeidat, 1986; Hamdalla, 1988) who confirmed that it takes a long time for the learner of English as a second / foreign language to acquire prepositions.

Before we move to the illustrative examples, it necessary to mention that there is also some evidence supporting those researchers who state that avoidance is employed by EFL learners. This is possibly manifested in the very low of errors frequency, particularly, in using phrasal verbs of idiomatic meaning in their compositions. This might be due to the fact that the category of idiomatic prepositions consists of the least predictable prepositional usages. Another possibility is that many English verbs change their meaning when used with other words especially prepositions. Such a phenomenon is not found in Arabic Mahmoud (2002), and it might also be the reason of why Arab leaners try to avoid using them. Baker (1992) attributes the non-use of idioms by Arabic speakers to one more reason which is the influence of written formal Arabic where idioms are avoided.

Discussion of Errors

The subjects of this study made 2290 errors (see appendix-I). The three sub-categories of errors (omission, substitution and addition) will be presented along with their source whether it is interlingual or intralingual. As the number of the errors is very large as mentioned above, only a few examples for the sake of illustration to the three categories will be given and discussed. (For MSA consonants transliteration and vowel please see appendices D&E). In the discussion of errors in this study 'overgeneralization' means all intralingual errors, as for example, Zahid, 2006; Mahmoud, 2002 and Hamdallah, 1988; Brown, 2000) consider overgeneralization errors as 'any

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error which can be attributed to the application of a rule of English in an inappropriate situation'. It is the negative counterpart of intralingual errors viewed as the excessive application of the overgeneralization strategies i.e. ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete applications of rules, false concepts hypothesized and transfer of training, because they are overlapped and interrelated causes within L2. While interlingual errors due to mother tongue interference (MTI) are occurred because the Arabic version is equivalent to English ones used in the form of a literal translation. It is realized that prepositions seldom have a one-to-one correspondence between English and Arabic. One preposition in Arabic might stand for the meaning of two English prepositions or more and vice versa.

Errors of Substitution

Analysis of the data revealed instances of the substitution of prepositions which seemed to be caused by both, the students' mother tongue interference and the influence of the target language itself. The great majority of the errors made in the use of prepositions in the composition whether the source was interlingual or intralingual, were errors of substitution, (78% = 1783 out of 2290 (please see appendix-G). For Arabic prepositions and their transliteration please see appendix H, and for MSA consonants transliteration and vowel please see appendices D&E).

At instead of *in***:**

The following are illustrative examples:

*(1)- '… *at* the winter the weather is very cold.

*(2)- *at* the summer term all students like to take late classes.

*(3)- *at* the last two years different students nationalities join AAU colleges.

*(4) I have a bad dream and woke up *at* the night.

MSA interference is excluded in the above four sentences, because if MSA interfered the preposition *fii* 'in' will be used, and all sentences will be correct, but the case is different .In the above sentences (1) to (4) , the learners used 'at' instead of 'in'. Again these errors are attributed to overgeneralization that arises from the uncertainty in the learners' mind, particularly when they face the task of using one preposition to express different relationships and meanings, this is the case , it is not surprising that the learners will overgeneralise one item over the other as in (1) to (4) they overgeneralised the preposition 'at' to be used instead of 'in'.

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By instead of ***for****:*

The following are some illustrative examples from compositions:

*5- Jenin province is famous *by* its melons and fruits.

*6- Amman is famous *by* its ruins.

*7- '…and I paid JD 4,000 *by* the car . …

*8- we must teach them severe lesson and the eye *by* the eye….

*9 - '…and his name is Abdul Ghani, but we call him Ghani *by* short.

*10- Efforts of participation *by* reaching equalization were marvelous.

*11- I had difficult time *by* forming new friends.

*12- He work anything by money

In all the above examples *by*= 'bi' was used instead of *for.* In sentences (5) to (8) the error is attributed to learners' native language. MSA *bi* or *fii* = 'by' or 'in' which can be used interchangeably to indicate *ta9liil* in (5 and 6) = 'to this reason' or 'for this reason'; and to indicate '**?**il9iwaḍ' = 'in return for', in (7) . In MSA, the adjective 'mašhuur'= 'famous' , in such context takes 'bi' = 'by'. In (8) the MSA used the common prepositional phrase: ?al9aynu bi **?**al9ayni= 'the eye by the eye'= an eye for an eye. Some learners in the study transferred erroneously the above meaning of 'bi' 'by' into English in form of literal translation causing the malformed sentences. Thus, sentences (5) to (8) above will have the following MSA counterparts: (5) Manṭiqatu Jenin mašhuurah bi baṭṭiixihaa wa faakihatihaa = * Province Jenin is famous by melons and fruits its. = Jenin province is famous for its melons…(6) 9ammaan mašhuurah bi ?aaθaarihaa =*Amman famous by ruins its =Amman is famous by its ruins. (7) wa dafa9tu arba9u ?aalaaf dinar ?urdunii bi al siyaarah = * '…and paid I 4000 dinar Jordanian by that the car' = '… and I paid JD 4,000 *by* the car. (8) yajibu ?alaynaa ?an nu9alimahum darssan qaasiyan wa ?al9aynu bi **?**al9ayni = * 'Must we teach they lesson severe and the eye by the eye' = we must teach them severe lesson and an eye for an eye.

In sentences (9) to (12), if the learners' MT interfered, *li-= for,* would be used in MSA which means either   *ta9liil*= 'to this reason', or   *intihaa? al-ġaaya* = destination, place and time; or *tabyiin* = 'illustration', and there would be no errors in these sentences. But the case is different; the errors are attributed to the imperfect command of the TL prepositions, in none of the above four sentences the preposition *bi* = 'by' means 'li'= 'for' or 'to' which is supposed to be used in MSA in such context. The learners of these sentences could not appreciate the use of 'for' and were

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confused between two or more prepositions. This imperfect command led them to overgenerlise

'by' over 'for', resulting in the above four malformed sentences

From instead of ***of***

The following are illustrative examples:

*(13)- In third world countries we find that millions *from* people suffer from death.

*(14)- it is deprived *from* several sources apart from diseases and death.

*(15)- one can see how many humans die especially in Africa because *from* the lack of food.

Errors in the above sentences are attributed to mother tongue interference. The MSA preposition *min* 'from', is used in the above exact senses, hence, sentences (13)and (14) above ,for example will have the following MSA counterparts: (13)- fii buldaan ?al?aalam alθaaliθ najid ?anna malaayiin min ?alnaas yu9aanuun min ?almawt= *In countries world third find we that millions from the people suffer they the death. = In third world countries we find that millions *of* people suffer from death. (14) Takuunu   alḥayaat maḥruuma min 9iddat maṣaadir iḍaafatan li?alamraaḍ wa ?almawt.= * is it deprived *from* several sources apart from diseases and death = It is deprived of several sources apart from diseases and death. The learners of the above sentences transferred two meanings of the Arabic preposition *min* 'from', into English ; in (13) and (14) they transferred the meaning of *bayaan al-naw9 ?aw   al-jins* 'elucidation of kind or spieces' while in (15) the meaning of *?al -ta9liil* = 'reason' or 'cause' was transferred.

On instead of ***in :***

The following are illustrative examples:

*(16)- an area found *on* it dead people that were famous in that age.

*(17)- there is no work for everyone *on* the world.

*(18)- there will be no safety *on* the world .

*(19)- life *on* Zarka ......

*(20)- The people who live *on* this city are suffering too much.

*(21)- Thousands of families came and live *on* Karamah to enjoy the sun.

*(22)- to complete their studies *on* foreign countries.

*(23)- '.... and defend it *on* the international institutions.

*(24)- the officials *on* this city offer every possible help.

*(25)- the people *on* Jenin are very hospitable… .

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In all the above examples, (16) to (25) 'on' was used instead of 'in'. The above errors can not be attributed to mother tongue interference; in none of the above sentences can *9alaa* 'on', the MSA preposition corresponding to 'on' in English be grammatically correct. It is obvious that some of the learners in this study were unable to appreciate that in the above examples, the relation is that of interiority and not of contact. This being the case that the learners overgeneralised the preposition 'on' to be used instead of 'in', a case which indicates clearly that the subjects are ignorant of the rules of English grammar and also it is very likely that several learners of this study, who made these errors, over generalized the preposition 'on' over 'in' due to faulty analogy and which sounds to be a major factor in the substitution process (misuse of prepositions).

By instead of *of*

The following are illustrative examples:

*26- My friend takes care *by* herself.

*27- I dream *by* graduation from this university .

In the above examples *by* was used instead of *of.* The impact of the learners' MT is very obvious. MSA *bi* or *fii* ='by' or 'in' which can be used interchangeably in the above exact senses, Some learners in the study transferred erroneously the above meaning of 'bi' 'by' into English in form of literal translation causing the malformed sentences hence, the sentences above, for example will have the following MSA counterparts: (26) ṣadiiqati ta9tani *bi* nafsihaa = friend-my takes care by self-her = My friend takes care *of* herself. (27) ?aḥlamu bi?altaxarruji min haaðihi ?aljaami9a=dream I by graduation from this university= I dream of graduation of this university.

By instead of *with*

The following are illustrative examples

*(28)- '…for preparing the salad, she cuts the carrots *by* a sharp knife…

 *(29)-   '...during the journey we opened the bottles of cold drinks *by* an odd opener.

In the above two sentences *by* is used instead of *with.* The impact of the learners' mother tongue is there. MSA preposition bi 'by' can be used to indicate *?isti9aanah* ='make use of' which fits the exact senses used in these two examples in Arabic. The learners of these two sentences transferred erroneously the above meaning of 'bi' 'by' into English in form of literal translation causing the

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malformed sentences hence, the sentences above, for example will have the following MSA counterparts: (28) li i9dad ?alsalatah qaṭṭa9at ?aljazar bi sikkiin ḥadd= * for preparing salad, cut she carrots bi knife sharp.= for preparing salad, she cut the carrots with a sharp knife. (29) xilaal ?alrriḥlah fataḥnaa zujaajaat ?almashruubaat albaaridah bi muftaaḥin xaaṣ = *during the journey, opened we bottles the drinks cold by key special = during the journey , we opened the bottles of cold drinks with special key.

Between instead of *among*

The following are illustrative examples:

*(30)- There are many customs *between* the population of Amman.

*31)- '….since language is a mean of communication *between* the people….'

*(32)- 'before his death, the father distributed his wealth *beween* his sons evenly.

*(33)- 'improving the language means that communication *between* people will improve'

*(34)- '…he was hidden *between* the trees'

*(35)- I am glad to be *between* my close friends

In the above sentences, some learners used 'between' instead of 'among'. The meaning of *between* and *among* is very similar, *between* usually involves two persons or things, some times it involves more than two, when we have definite number in mind. then *between* is used, e.g. 'Jordan lies *between* Palestine, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Iraq'. Whereas, 'among' always involves more than two persons or things. Since 'between is the more frequently used one, it is overgeneralized by the learners in the study to convey the meaning of 'among' as well. Also it is possible that MT interference in some of the above cases as in sentences (34) and (35), was the cause of the errors, because MSA and NSA use two different forms interchangeably, where English uses two forms with selectional restrictions, which leads to the errors as in sentences (34) and (35). For example, in Arabic, the two forms of the preposition 'between': 'bayna' as (1) 'bayna ?alašjaar' (= between the trees) and 'wasaṭ' as (2) Wasaṭ ?alašjaar (= among the trees) can be used interchangeably in such contexts to mean 'in the middle of'. Whereas English uses the two forms with selectional restrictions so the learners transferred the use of MSA/NSA preposition *bayna / wasat* into the use of English preposition *among* , this transfer took place in the form of literal translation. For example (34) will translate into the following MSA/NSA counterpart: *(34) he was hidden *between* the trees = * kaana muxtabi? bayna/wasaṭ ?alašjaar = * was hidden he *between / among* the trees = he was hidden *among* the trees. The same is true regarding the error in sentence (35), and will translate

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into the following MSA/NSA counterpart: *(35) I am glad to be *between* my close friends.= akuunu ?anaa sa9iid *bayna/wasaṭ* ?aṣddiqaa?ii /?ṣḥaabii almuqarrabiin = * I glad between / among my friends close = I am glad to be among my close friends.

***Under* instead of at**

The following are illustrative examples:

*(36)- '… I am *under* his request.

*(37)- he told him that he was *under* his service

* (38)- '…and said , I am...*under* your disposal.

In the above sentences the learners' native language impact is very obvious. The MSA preposition *taḥta* 'under' is used instead of 'at' causing these errors, this transfer took place in form of literal translation since the Arabic version *taḥta* is equivalent to 'under'. Therefore sentence (36) above translate into MSA, for example, and will have the following counterpart: (36) …?anaa Akuuno *taḥta* ṭalabak (?amrak) = I am under request your = I am under your request.   The data analysis shows that the main reason stands behind the substitution errors is that the subjects of this study in most cases select the improper prepositions if equivalents are not used in their mother tongue.

Errors of Addition

The addition of prepositions indicated that unnecessary prepositions are used where they are not needed. The analysis of the data showed that 15% = 354 prepositions were added where they were not needed. Analysis of the data revealed instances of the addition of prepositions which seemed to be caused by both, the students' MTI and the influence of the target language itself. Here some illustrative examples:

Addition of **'*of*'**

*(39) '… I have done very well, considering *of* the difficult circumstances I passed.

The error in the above example attributed to the TL interference. Similarly, MSA does not need a preposition in such context. Therefore, the learners of this sentence overgenaralised the use of the preposition 'of' in positions where it is not required. (analogy or rote learning of rules).

Addition of *from***:**

 The following are illustrative examples:

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*40- When you finish *from* learning….

*41- Aqaba is near from Ma'an in the south of Jordan.

The errors in the above examples (40) and (41) are attributed to L1 interference. The preposition 'from' in the above sentences is a literal translation of the of MSA preposition *min* 'from' which has the meaning of '?altaqriib' denoting to the idea of 'proximity'. Thereby, sentences (40 and 41) will have the following MSA counterparts: (

40)- 9indamaa tantahi anta min ?alta9allum = When finish you from the learning = when you finish the learning…'

(41)- Al-Aqaba qariiba min ?im9aan fii januub ?laurdon   = *Aqaba near from Ma9aan in south of Jordan = Aqaba is near Ma'an in the south of Jordan.

Addition of *on*

The following are illustrative examples

*(42)- '…hence it is useful for everyone to <u>get</u> *on* a new profession'.

*(43)- '…, but this case cannot <u>affect</u> only *on* the lack in bread…'

*(44)- '… which will <u>assist</u> the population *on* to find the enough food'.

*(45)- '…and defend *on* it at the international level'.

*(46)- '… to live *on* a happy life, one should work hard'.

*(47)- ' …and we go *on* shopping'.

         The addition of the preposition 'on' in the above examples (42) to (44) is attributed to mother tongue .The learners translated the above underlined verbs 'get', 'affect', and 'assist' into the following MSA counterparts respectively 'yaḥṣal', 'yu?aθθir' and 'yusaa9id' these verbs in MSA ,in the above contexts require the preposition *9alaa* 'on'. Thus, the (42),(43) and (44) will translate into MSA as the following : (42) lihaaða ?alsabab ?innahu mufiid likulli waaḥid ?an yaḥṣal 9alaa mihnah jadiidah =   *…for this reason, it is useful to everyone to get *on* profession new. = '…hence it is useful for everyone to get a new profession. (43) '…laakin haaðihi ?alḥaalah laa tasṭii9 ?an tu?aθθir' faqat *9alaa* ?alnaqṣ fii ?alxubzi = * But this the case not can to affect just *on* the lack in the bread = 'but this case cannot affect just the lack in bread…' (44) ?alṣinaa?ah ?allatii sawfa tusaa9id alnaas *9alaa* ?an yajiduu ?alṭa9aam = * The manufacturing which will assist population *on* to find they the food. = the manufacturing which will <u>assist</u> the population to find food.   The case in (45), (46) and (47) is rather different; the learners overgenaralised (due to analogy or rote learning of rules resulted from their ignorance of rules restrictions) the use of the

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preposition 'on' in positions where it is not required. The analysis of the errors of addition shows that the subjects of this study in most cases add prepositions if equivalents are required in their mother tongue.

Errors of Omission

Analysis of the data revealed that there are 7% = 153 prepositions were omitted from places where they were needed. Also, analysis of the data revealed instances of the omission of prepositions which seemed to be caused by both, the students' MT and the influence of the target language itself. Here are some illustrative examples:

Omission of *of*

The following are illustrative examples:

*(48)- To deal with a foreigner requires knowledge ^ his Mother tongue.

*(49)- they knew the importance ^Jordan between foreign countries, so… '

*(50)- '…and they know the strategic position ^ Jordan…'

*(51)- In the beginning ^ the second week…'

*(52) The tools ^ the communication are the skills…'

In the above sentences (48) to (52) show that the preposition 'of' was omitted in positions where it is required. The only possible explanation for this type of error is the learners' native language interference. In all of the above examples MSA does not use the preposition 'of'. Hence, sentences (50) to (52), for example, will have the following MSA counterparts: (50) wa ya9rifuun mawqi? ?al?urdon ?al?istratiijii = * '…and know they position Jordan the strategic = They know the strategic position of Jordan. (51) fii bidaayat-i ?al-yawm-i al-thaanii = * in beginning the second day = in the beginning of the second day. (52) ?adawaat ?al?itiṣaal hiya ?almahaaraat = * The tools the communication are the skills…= The tools of the communication are the skills…

Omission of *to*

The following are illustrative examples:

*(53)- I got ^ Amman airport.

*(54)- when you get ^ Mecca you will notice the difference.

*(55)- I left it to get ^ Irbid

*(56)- I saw the girl who I sent ^   a message.

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The omission of the preposition 'to' in (54) to (55) is attributed to MT interference. The corresponding MSA verb of the verb' get' in the above examples is 'yaṣil'. The students probably omitted the prepositions because the verb 'yaṣil' = 'get', in (53) to (55) in the above contexts in MSA can be used with or without the preposition '?ilaa' or 'li'= 'to' .This is being the case, the subjects may have translated the verb 'get' as 'yaṣil' with no preposition. Thereby, the (53) and (54), for example, could be translated into MSA counterparts: (53) waṣalto maṭaar Amman= *got I airport Amman = I got to Amman airport. (54) ?indamaa taṣilu Mecca satulaaḥiẓ ?alfarq = *when got you Mecca will notice the difference.= When you get to Mecca you notice the difference. In sentence (56) the case is different. The preposition *to* was omitted due to TLI. This type of error represents the strategy of simplification implemented by some of the learners of this sentence. Actually, if the learners' MT interfered would the sentence be correct, and be written as r?aito ?albint allati ?arsalto ?ilayha risaalah = *saw I the girl who sent I *to her* a message = I saw the girl who I sent to her a message. Therefore, the probable explanation of this error is strategy of simplification which can also play an important role in the production of errors.

The data analysis of the errors in the omission examples shows that the subjects of this study in most cases omit prepositions if equivalents are not required in their mother tongue.

Pedagogical Implications

Pedagogically, learners' errors will enable teachers to infer the nature of the learner's knowledge of the prepositions at a given stage in his learning career and discover what he still has to learn, (Lightbown & Spada, 1999: 70). For the learner, a study of his/her errors could provide devices which could be used in order to further the learning process. Errors provide feedback (Corder, 1973:265) they inform the teacher about the effectiveness of his teaching material and his teaching techniques and show him what parts of syllabus he has been following inadequately learned or taught and need further attention. They enable the teacher to decide whether he must devote more time the item he has been working on. Errors provide information for designing a remedial syllabus or program of teaching. Another finding from this study is that, when learners are encountered with inherent complexities of TL, they will overgeneralise, analogise simplify etc., to reduce their learning burden. When they overgeneralise, for instance, they rely on a TL rule of great generic and which they already know; this results in avoiding learning the appropriate rule and inevitably results in errors. For example, the occurrence of the preposition 'in', in the phrases like 'in detail, in fact, in high spirit, in reality, in the room', etc., lead them to use 'in' in a phrase like 'in the other

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hand' which reflects their way of thinking , this may appear more logic led them to use 'in' in such positions. This way of thinking is more persistent in the use of prepositions associated with verbs, nouns and adjectives , the student may think that because the verb, for example, 'choose' does not take a preposition in a sentence like : 'I choose my friend Layla as the best girl' so; he/she omits the preposition in a sentence like: 'to arrange ^ him everything' or 'he depends on his parents to choose^ him the girl' , or, like 'he showed me new novel leads to 'he explained me his new novel'.

It is believed that the insights gained from the study of learners' errors in the use of prepositions can provide invaluable information for devising appropriate materials and effective teaching techniques. Finally, the identification of the prepositional problem, its uses and constructions in the study can help text book designers and curriculum specialists by providing them with the information that can help them in designing a remedial syllabus or a programme of teaching including pedagogical grammar. As Bhatia (1974) indicates, a course based on the frequency and types of errors will enable the teacher to teach those items of syntax, morphology and phonology with which learners have most difficulty.

By Way of Conclusion

This study is set out to investigate kinds of errors made by Jordanian 1st-, 2nd- and 3rd – year university EFL students in the use of prepositions in written composition. The research findings reveal that EFL Arab Jordanian students at the tertiary level experience serious difficulties in using the correct prepositions in their writing. The prepositions proved to be the most common in use and the most difficult ones for the learners in this study are *by, in, on, to, with, of, from, for* and *at* respectively (see appendix-F). Mother tongue interference (MTI) is a learning strategy that most foreign-language learners fall back on especially in acquisition-poor classroom situations where exposure to the language is confined to a few hours per week of formal instruction. The majority of errors made by the three groups are the result of the learners' mother tongue interference as the major source (1323 errors =58%) of the total errors 2290). These findings lend support to previous research studies (e.g. Khodabandeh, 2007; Velloo, 2000; Zahid, 2006; Mohammad, 2005; Mahmoud, 2002; Hamdallah, 1988, among others) who have confirmed that the majority of errors made by the EFL learners are because of the impact of MTI, which was found to play an outstanding role.

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The data shows that the subjects select the improper prepositions if equivalents are not used in their mother tongue; delete prepositions if equivalents are not required in their mother tongue , add prepositions if equivalents are required in their mother tongue and use the proper English prepositions providing equivalents are used in their mother tongue. However, transfer strategies of TL itself, (967errors =42%) as overgeneralisation (analogy) and ignorance of rule restrictions appeared the most possible twofold cause of intralingual errors. Learners' performance differs significantly from one item to another among the three proficiency levels. The subjects' class level has significant impact and yields high statistical significant differences among the students, with regard to the total number of errors held per each year. In other words, although there were some trends peculiar to the freshmen versus the sophomores and juniors, the large number of similarities in the error types, which were most common for the freshmen, sophomores and juniors, tends to indicate that increased proficiency in English does not qualitatively affect the kinds of errors which a learner makes. The other important conclusion was that although freshmen, sophomores and juniors do not appear to overgeneralise or use transfer strategies in characteristically different ways, they do appear to use these two learning strategies to different degrees. While overgeneralization and transfer errors may not be qualitatively different for the three class levels, they were found to be quantitatively different.

The present study is consistent with results of previous studies on Arabic-speaking learners of English. Learners' whose native language is Arabic face two particular difficulties, stemming from **(1)** An Arabic preposition is equivalent to more than one English preposition.**(2)** Interference from the native language which is related directly to the problem of literal translation from Arabic into English. The pedagogical implication here is that these adult learners could be made aware of this transfer strategy and its outcome. Cases of positive and negative transfer could be discussed with them so that they know when to transfer and when not to. Needless to say, more exposure to the language through reading and listening is necessary. Although the results achieved in this study are sound and significant, more research is needed. A longitudinal study using subjects from four class levels over the period of their study might prove invaluable for these purposes, not to mention incorporating oral as well as written data in the analysis. Finally, in respect of this problem, indeed, a serious collaborative effort needs to be made here by all concerned, including teachers, learners, researchers and material writers alike. It is also proper to state here that if measures are not taken to

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overcome this problem as difficulties in using prepositions or any other parts of the English

grammar beforehand, then such issues will build up to become a major issue which will be too

difficult or too late to undertake simultaneously.

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Appendices

Appendix –A: Main Abbreviations used in the study:

AAU	:	Al-Balqa' Applied University
ALALC	:	American Library Association –Library of Congress
EFL	:	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	:	English Language Teaching
add		Addition
subs		Substitution
om		Omission
PAUC	:	Princess Alia University College
MT	:	Mother Tongue
MTI	:	Mother Tongue Interference
MSA	:	Modern Standard Arabic
NSA	:	Non-Standard Arabic

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L1	:	Native Language (Mother Tongue)
L2	:	Target Language (Second Language i.e. English)
L1	:	Native Language (Mother Tongue)
L2	:	Target Language (Second Language i.e. English)
Intra		Intralingual
Inter		interlingual.
TLI		target language interference
ESL		English as a second language.
TL		Target language

Appendix – B : Kappa

To find Kappa, the following formula is followed:

$$Kappa = \frac{(\text{proportion corresponding} - \text{expected proportion corresponding})}{(1\text{-expected proportion corresponding})}$$

1- Proportion corresponding is calculated by dividing the sum of the number of codes on the diagonal 2284 by the total number (2290). This gives 99 per cent correspondence.

  2- The expected proportion corresponding is calculated by multiplying and adding marginal frequencies; example for calculating result of the preposition 'by' = 324 (first coder reading) / 2290 x 322 (second coder reading) / 2290 (readings of the two coders) = 0.0198944.

 The same thing will be done to the total number of errors of each preposition, and the result will be the expected proportion = 0.0831946

$$\frac{0.99 - 0.083}{1 - 0.083}$$

  So Kappa is = 0.989 i.e. the inter-coder reliability is 0.98.

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Appendix-C Landis & Koch (1977) Benchmarks for Interpreting Kappa

Kappa statistic	Strength of Agreement
< 0.00	Poor
0.00-0.20	slight
0.21-0.40	Fair
0.41-0.60	Moderate
0.61-0.80	Substantial
0.81- 1.00	Almost Perfect

Appendix-D   Transliteration Systems of MSA Consonants.

S.N.	Arabic Consonants	English Equivalents	Description: place and manner of articulation & voiced or voiceless
1-	ء , أ إ	?	glottal stop
2-	ب	b	a voiced bilabial stop
3-	ت	t	a voiceless non-emphatic denti-alveolar fricative
4-	ث	θ	a voiceless non-emphatic denti-alveolar fricative
5-	ج	j	a voiced palato-alveolar fricative
6-	ح	ḥ	a voiceless pharyngeal fricative
7-	خ	x	a voiceless uvular fricative
8-	د	d	a voiced non-emphatic denti alveolar stop
9-	ذ	ð	A voiced interdental fricative
10-	ر	r	A voiced alveolar flap
11-	ز	z	A voiced palato-alveolar fricative

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12-	س	s	A voiceless non-emphatic denti-alveolar fricative
13-	ش	š	A voiceless palato-alveolar fricative
14-	ص	ṣ	A voiceless emphatic denti-alveolar fricative
15-	ض	ḍ	A voiced emphatic denti-alveolar plosive
16-	ط	ṭ	A voiceless emphatic denti-alveolar plosive
17-	ظ	ẓ	A voiced emphatic denti-alveolar fricative
18-	ع	9	A voiced pharyngeal fricative
19-	غ	ġ	A voiced uvular fricative
20	ف	f	A voiceless labiodental fricative
21-	ق	q	Voiceless uvular plosive
22-	ك	k	A voiceless velar plosive
23-	ل	L	a voiced alveolar lateral
24-	م	m	a voiced bilabial nasal
25-	ن	n	A voiced alveolar nasal
26-	ه	h	glottal fricative
27-	و	w	Labial-velar semi-vowel
28-	ي , ى	y	A palatal semi-vowel

Appendix-E Vowels and diphthongs in MSA

There are six vowels in MSA three of them are short and three are long as in the table below:

Transliteration Systems of MSA Vowels.

SR	MSA Vowel	Description of the Vowel and an Example From Arabic and its meaning in English
1-	i	Short high front unrounded eg. Sit = English : six
2-	ii	Long high front unrounded e.g. Haziin = English : Sad
3-	u	back high rounded short e.g. sum = English : deaf
4-	uu	High back rounded long e.g. kub=English : cup
5-	a	low central unrounded Short e.g.mal =English: got bored
6-	aa	Front low unrounded long e.g.maal=English : money

There are two diphthongs in MSA transliterated as follow:

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Transliteration Systems of MSA Diphthongs.

SR	MSA diphthong	Example from MSA	English Meaning
1-	ay	As in 'bayt'	'house'
2-	aw	As in ' yawm	'day'

Appendix-F The Nine Most Common Prepositions Used Erroneously in Composition

S.N.	Preposition	Total Frequencies	Total Errors	MT Errors	MT Percentage	TL Errors	TL Percentage	Total Percentage
1	By	787	324	286	36%	38	5%	41%
2	In	817	259	174	21%	85	10%	32%
3	On	752	221	143	19%	78	10%	29%
4	To	793	220	140	18%	80	10%	28%
5	With	757	206	124	16%	82	11%	27%
6	Of	815	203	86	11%	117	14%	25%
7	From	626	181	96	15%	85	14%	29%
8	For	513	163	106	21%	57	11%	32%
9	At	592	124	0	0%	124	21%	21%

Appendix –G Means and SD, of the Three Sub-categories of Errors in Composition for the Three Levels

Type of Error	Omission			Substitution			Addition			F-value and Sig.	
	Mean	SD	Sum	Mean	SD	Sum	Mean	SD	Sum	F-value	sig.
total	5.10	3.99	153	59.43	49.89	1783	11.80	15.60	354	26.90	0.000

Appendix- H Arabic Prepositions

Arabic prep.	Roman .alph.	Example on one usage	Meaning in English
الباء	(bi)	Amsaktu al-ḥarami biyadi	I caught the thief by hand

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التاء	taa	Tallaahi.	I swear by Allah
الكاف	kaaf	Ali qawiyon ka-alasadi = like ya9mal Waalidahu ka-mudiir = as	Ali is strong like a lion. His father works as a manager
اللام	Lam	Addarrajatu li Salma	The bicycle is for Salma
الواو	waw	Wallaahi	I swear by Allah
عن	gan	Sa'alto ganhu	I asked about him
في	fi	Ahmed fi alġurfati	Ahmed is in the room
كى	Kay	Kaymah?	why?what is the reason?
مع	mag	Qaama zaidun wa Amrun magan	They stood together
من	min	Min awal yawm	From the first day
إلى	ilaa	ðahabtu ilaa almadrasti	I went to school
رب	rubba	rubbama aatii ġadan	perhapsI come tomorrow
على	galaa	Alqalam gala al-taawila	The pen is on the table
منذ	Munðu	munðu yawm aljumugah almaḍii	since last Friday
خلا	xala	ðahaba alnasu xala Salem	They left except Salem
عدا	gada	ðahaba alnasu gada Salem	people left except Salem
متى	Mata	The same example in 18	The same example in 18
حتى	ḥattaa	mata al-ṣafḥa Al-uula ḥatta alguŝrun	from the first page to
لعل	Lagallaa	Lagallahu qadiman al -yawm	Hope he is coming today
حاشا	ḥaašaa	ðahabuu ḥašaa Salem	people left except Salem

Appendix -I The Prepositions Used Erroneously in Composition and their Frequenc   hierarchically

S.N.	Preposition	F-CL1	F-CL2	F-CL3	T.F.	E-CL1	E-CL2	E-CL3	T.E.
1	**By**	215	287	285	787	211	72	41	**324**
2	**In**	230	295	292	817	155	65	39	**259**
3	**On**	217	273	262	752	121	63	37	**221**
4	**To**	213	289	291	793	120	62	38	**220**
5	**With**	203	276	278	757	116	54	36	**206**
6	**Of**	218	295	302	815	108	56	39	**203**

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7	**From**	169	226	231	626	108	45	28	**181**
8	**For**	136	187	190	513	86	47	30	**163**
9	**At**	165	217	210	592	72	34	18	**124**
10	Under	34	48	64	146	32	11	8	51
11	As	19	22	29	70	17	15	11	43
12	Off	33	44	46	123	17	8	5	30
13	Between	32	40	39	111	12	5	3	20
14	Since	15	22	21	58	9	5	0	14
15	Concerning	13	17	14	44	5	2	1	8
16	After	13	17	11	41	4	2	1	7
17	About	19	25	29	73	16	8	6	30
18	Down to	16	26	29	71	9	6	4	19
19	up	7	7	7	21	6	5	5	16
20	Below	17	28	26	71	4	6	4	14
21	Onto	7	12	11	30	7	4	2	13
22	Into	18	25	28	71	7	3	3	13
23	Near	12	19	21	52	2	5	4	11
24	against	8	15	17	40	6	4	1	11
25	Among	8	15	19	42	5	3	1	9
26	Across	7	17	21	45	2	4	3	9
27	Because of	12	19	12	43	2	4	2	8
28	Before	9	10	17	36	4	2	1	7
29	considering	11	12	17	40	4	2	1	7
30	underneath	9	10	10	29	4	2	1	7
31	like	11	12	15	38	4	2	1	7
32	Alongside	7	10	11	28	3	2	1	6
33	Beneath	8	10	13	31	3	2	1	6
34	Beside	7	12	15	34	3	2	1	6
35	Concerned about	7	7	10	24	3	1	1	5
36	down	5	11	11	27	2	2	1	5
37	behind	9	14	15	38	2	1	1	4
38	Inside	7	10	18	35	2	0	1	3
Total		**2146**	**2881**	**2937**	**7964**	**1293**	**616**	**381**	**2290**

Note:
F=frequency,
E= error,
CL1= Class level 1,
CL2=Class level 2 ,
CL3=Class level 3,
T=Total

Appendix-J More Erroneous Utterances Taken from Students Compositions

(The right preposition is posed between brackets at the end of each sentence).

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-… I mean *in* this example. Instead of: I mean by this example.
-… Driving *in* a high speed. Instead of: Driving at a high speed.
-…He is ready *to* the exam.(for)
- …*under* your disposal. Instead of: ...at your disposal.
-…Do not show off intellectually, financially or anything *from* this sort.(of)-
-…I have trouble in school because ^ the lack of skills in sciences.(of)
-…that man over there ^ the black hair is my uncle. (Of)
-...we went home <u>in</u> the train yesterday.(by)
-…Get <u>in</u> inside the car. (in)(addition)
-…They laughed <u>on</u> me. (at)
-…She helped <u>to</u> me (to)
-…I was first member of my family to sail <u>from</u> the Red sea to Egypt. (across)
-…I sat <u>at</u> the edge of the rock. (on)
…I will not be dependent <u>at</u> my husband.(on)
-…psychology deals <u>of</u> human behaviour.(with)
…I intend ^ put into use all I've learned.(to)
-…His effort did not of course result <u>to</u> anything .(in)
 -…It is green <u>in</u> outside and yellow inside .(Ø)
-…I promise <u>to</u> my mother.(Ø)
-…our English exam was eventually cancelled <u>because of</u> the high failure rate. (due to).\
- ..usually I drink coffee and I put ^ sugar. (in)
-..every night he looks ^ new movie . (for)
-…my sister took my car and left me ^ home.(at)
-…therefore I quarreled ^ her ..(with).
-…I learned to help some ^ my classmates. (of)
-…they proceeded ^ their tour (excursion). (on)
-… the bus will move 6.30 a.m. (at).
….good students should take care <u>with</u> his lectures.(of)
-… <u>considering</u> the attendance, students have to be extremely cautious. (concerning)
…after four years ^ studying …..(of)
-… -…I called ^ our dog softly. (to)
-…then the girl call <u>off</u> for help.(out/Ø)
-…when I was ^ first year I was^ section 5.(in)
-…the bird was very beautiful to look ^ and…..(at)\
-…I was afraid not because ^ the dark… (of)
-…and of course different kinds of people to get acquainted <u>on</u> . (with)
-…<u>beside</u> doing the cleaning I help my husband . (besides)
-…he would think it <u>under</u> him to tell a lie.(beneath)
-…my friend Layla married <u>under</u> her class…..(beneath)
-…he went <u>onto</u> board ship.(on) [= embark]
-… the cat jumped <u>on</u> the shelf (onto)
-… <u>in</u> Saturday, I was riding <u>on</u> my bicycle.(on, Ø)
-… the whole members of my family climbed <u>on</u> the roof of our building to…(onto)
- …he is waiting in the bus-stop.(at)
-…Ahmed is sitting in the sun <u>in</u> the sea. (at)
-…Salma is <u>below</u> me. (under)
- …she puts the pictures <u>beneath</u> her pillow.(under)

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-… the snow crackled <u>beneath</u> my feet….(under)

-…it is very hot, wait me <u>underneath</u> that tree. (under)

-…he got out of the car and looked <u>under</u> it.(underneath)

-… Sana'a was wearing a smart jacket with a T-shirt <u>under</u>.(underneath)

- It is near where the railway goes <u>under</u> the road.(underneath)

-…he told him that he was <u>under</u> his service. (at)

- They live <u>under</u> us .(below)

- he has been here <u>since</u> two years.(for)

-…Dr. Salam has been teaching here <u>since</u> seven years.(for)

… My father traveled at sea <u>since</u> six months.(for)

-…I told him when you are in Jordan do like the Jordanians do….,(as)

-…He shouted <u>as</u> a madman.(like)

-…I worked <u>as</u> a slave .(as)= I was a slave .

-…..<u>because of</u> the unemployment, the government has a plan for the coming three years.
 (Concerning)

-…I pour hot tea straight <u>down to</u> my throat as Moroccan do in Spain. (down)

-…My grandfather uses his stick <u>for</u> a device to defend himself ..(as)

-…the plane took <u>up</u> .(off)

-…I was afraid <u>off</u> making him angry.(of)

- this is <u>as</u> a prison..(like)

- I am happy to be <u>between</u> friends..(among)

-…don't touch it <u>in</u> bare hands..(with)

-…the women <u>in</u> grey hair...(with)

-…the mountains are covered <u>of</u> snow.(with)

-…some Arab countries are <u>on</u> peace with Israel (at)

 …do you see that small car which parks <u>before</u> that green bus, it is mine…..(in front of)

-… both of us were walking <u>alongside</u> the narrow path beside the stream.(along)

-…I went Egypt and I saw the Nile which flows <u>to</u> the Mediterranean sea.(into)

-…Jordan river flows <u>of</u> Al-Sheikh mountain <u>into</u> the Dead sea. (from ,to)

-… I usually meet the tourists <u>along</u> the bus station. (alongside)

-… doctors say that it is unwise to bathe immediately <u>at</u> eating… (after)

-…she has gone <u>to</u> home …(Ø)

-…we don't speak <u>in</u> the meal.(during)

-…he caught me <u>at</u> my right hand and…..(by) 208-…also

-…he caught me <u>of</u> my right hand and…..(by)

-… what did you open the can <u>by</u>? (with)

-…are you talking with me ..?to

-…I came <u>for</u> study..(to)\

-…we arrive t<u>o</u> Jordan …(in)

-…the wood is <u>near</u> the university ..(near by /Adjective)

-…the thief climbed <u>on</u> the roof of our building and…(onto)

 I am sure that Dr.Ahmed lives somewhere <u>near by</u> here. (near)

-…the first group lives <u>near by</u> Amman whereas the 2nd group lives in the <u>near</u> town of Amman
    (near ,near by)

-..Today is a lot of transportation available, so that we can travel <u>in</u> cars, trains, planes,etc(by).

-… I filled <u>up</u> all the necessary documents at his office …(out)

-…I pass <u>across</u> her window and talk to her... (by) ,

-…I was wandering <u>between</u> the trees when I saw that horrible crime(Among)

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-…The dentist asked me to put my tongue at my teeth.(against)

-…Dr.Jamal will take ^ the management next week.(up)

 -….the relationship among the government and the students' unions is not okay.(between)

-…female students took at such procedures and measures last year. (against)

Declaration

I hereby declare that this article submitted for publication in The Modern Journal of Applied

Llinguistics is entirely my own work and that it has not been submitted for publication to any other

source, it is not already published and I don't have any plan to send for publication through other

source/s.

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