# أداء المتعلمين العراقيين الجامعيين دارسي اللغة الانكليزية -لغة أجنبية- في استخدام حروف الجر الانكليزية الشائعة

رسالة مقدمة
إلى مجلس كلية التربية – جامعة ديالى
وهي جزء من متطلبات نيل درجة ماجستير
في التربية / طرائق تدريس اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية

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٢٠٠٨م      ١٤٢٩هـ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الرحمن ۝ علم القرآن ۝ خلق الإنسان ۝ علمه البيان ۝ ٤

صدق الله العظيم

سورة الرحمن : الآيات ١-٤

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الرَّحْمَنُ ﴿١﴾ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنسَانَ ﴿٣﴾ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ﴿٤﴾

صدق الله العظيم

*I certify that this thesis was prepared under my supervision at the University of Diyala as a partial requirement for the degree of Master of Education in Methods of Teaching English as Foreign Language.*

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We certify that we have read the thesis entitled " Iraqi EFL Undergraduate Learners ' Performance in the Use of the Commonest English Prepositions" by Tamara Adil Makki and as Examining Committee examined the student in its content, and in our opinion, it is adequate as a thesis for the degree of Master in Methods of Teaching English.


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# الخــلاصة

إن حروف الجر من الكلمات الأكثر دقةً وفائدةً في اللغة ، لغرض اختزال المعنى على شكل كلمات قليلة. يمكن جعل اللغة أكثر غزارةً ومرونةً، وذلك من خلال إضفاء عدة معانٍ لحروف الجر، وكذلك من خلال وجود عدد من حروف الجر تشترك في المعنى. وعلى أي حـال، أن الاسـتخدام الصـحيح لحروف الجر يشكل عائقاً ذات منحى لغوي لـدى العراقيـين المتعلمين اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية، وحتى في المستويات المتقدمة منهم.

الدراسة الحالية تتطوي على هدفين هما:

١- تقييم قدرة طلبة الجامعة –دارسي اللغة الانكليزية– لغة أجنبية في تمييز وإنتاج حروف الجر .

٢- تشخيص مواضـع الصـعوبة المحتملـة واقتراح فعاليـات تربويـة معينـة للتغلب علـى هذه الصعوبات.

لتحقيق هذه الأهداف وضعت الفرضيات الثلاث الآتية:

١- أن أداء المتعلمين الجامعيين العراقيين– دارسي اللغة الانكليزيـة– لغة أجنبية في حروف الجر الانكليزية الأكثر شيوعاً غير جيد بشكل عام.

٢- يواجه طلبة الجامعة العراقيين– دارسي اللغـة الانكليزيـة– لغـة أجنبية صـعوبة في تمييز واستخدام حروف الجر الأكثر شيوعاً.

٣- على مستوى الإنتاج يواجه طلبة الجامعة– دارسي اللغة الانكليزية– لغة أجنبية صعوبات أكثر من تلك في مستوى التمييز.

تقتصر الدراسـة علـى طلبـة المرحلـة الثالثـة في قسـم اللغـة الانكليزية ، كلية التربية (أبن رشد) ، جامعة بغداد للعام الدراسي ٢٠٠٦– ٢٠٠٧ .

شملت عينة الدراسة (٢٠٠) طالب وطالبة من المرحلة الثالثة في قسم اللغة الانكليزية، كلية التربية (ابن رشد)، جامعة بغداد. بينما مثل (١٠٠) من الطلبة الدراسة الاستطلاعية وبقية العينة مثلت عينة الاختبار الرئيسة.

لغرض التحقق من صحة هذه الفرضيات بُنيَ اختبار كفاءة لأغراض تشخيصية يقوم على نتائج المسح النظري لحروف الجر الانكليزية الشائعة الذي عُمِل لهذا الغرض. يتكون الاختبار من (١٠٠) فقرة على مستوى التمييز والإنتاج معاً.

ولتحقيق الصدق الظاهري للاختبار تم عرضه على لجنة من الخبراء في مجال تدريس اللغة الانكليزية وعلم اللغة، بينما تم حساب معامل الثبات بطريقة التجزئة النصفية. وحساب مستوى الصعوبة وقوة التمييز لفقرات الاختبار . بعد ذلك طُبق الاختبار على العينة الرئيسة.

استخدم عدداً من الوسائل الإحصائية في هذه الدراسة مثل : النسبة المئوية، معامل صعوبة الفقرة وقوة تمييز الفقرة ، معادلة ارتباط بيرسون، معادلة سبيرمان – براون ، والاختبار التائي بنوعين: الاختبار التائي  لعينة واحده والاختبار التائي لعينتين مترابطتين.

بعد تحليل البيانات إحصائيا ظهرت النتائج الآتية:

١. أن عينة الدراسة غير قادرة على تمييز أو استعمال حروف الجر الانكليزية الشائعة بشكل جيد. وهذا يكشف خطورة المشكلة لأنهم يفترض أن يدرسوا هذه التراكيب حالاً بعد التخرج.

٢. أن أداء العينة غير جيد على مستوى التمييز و الإنتاج كليهما.

٣. أظهر الأداء العام لطلبة العينة أنهم أفضل في استعمال حروف الجر على مستوى التمييز مما عليه في مستوى الإنتاج. أن ذلك يعني بان المعرفة التمييزية للطلبة هي أفضل من معرفتهم الإنتاجية.

٤. كشف تحليل بيانات الدراسة أن الاسباب الآتية وراء صعوبات طلبة الكلية– دارسي اللغة الانكليزية– لغة أجنبية في استعمال حروف الجر الشائعة هي:

أ–   الارتباك في استخدامات حروف الجر بين اللغة الأم واللغة الثانية.

ب–  التداخل بين اللغتين (الانتقال) عندما ينقل الطلبة بعض القوانين من العربية إلى الانكليزية.

ج– الصعوبات في فهم معنى بعض حروف الجر مثل:

'over', 'above', 'beneath', 'of', 'off', 'upon', 'across' and 'along'.

لان هذه الكلمات تبدو غامضة وصعبة.

د . الصعوبات في إتقان الاستعمالات المتشابهة لحروف الجر مختلفة.

في ضوء نتائج الدراسة قدمت عدة توصيات لمدرسي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية مثل:

١. تعريف مدرسي اللغة الانكليزية طلبتهم لاستخدامات مختلفة لحروف الجر عند شرحها في الصف وتضمين بعض هذه الاستخدامات في الاختبار الصفي.

٢. تقديم توضيح كافٍ لمعنى كل حرف جر عن طريق استخدام فعاليات مختلفة ورسم الخطوط والأسهم والمربعات ووسائل الإيضاح الأخرى.

٣. توجيه الاهتمام لحروف الجر التي ليس لها مناظرات في اللغة العربية كونها تشكل صعوبات تعلم للطلبة.

وأخيراً قدمت اقتراحات مناسبة لدراسات مستقبلية لإثراء حقل البحث الحالي.

# List of Abbreviations

| No | Abbreviations | Full meaning |
|----|---------------|--------------|
| 1 | AmE | American English |
| 2 | df. | degree of freedom |
| 3 | DL | Difficulty Level |
| 4 | DP | Discrimination Power |
| 5 | EFL | English as a Foreign Language |
| 6 | ESL | English as a Second Language |
| 7 | Int. | Internet |
| 8 | L1 | First language |
| 9 | L2 | Second language |
| 10 | N | Number |
| 11 | NP | Noun  phrase |
| 12 | Prod. | Production |
| 13 | PT | Pilot Test |
| 14 | Prep. | Preposition |
| 15 | Rec. | Recognition |
| 16 | Std. Dev. | Standard Deviation |

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# CHAPTER ONE
## Introduction

### 1.1  Statement of the Problem and its Significance

Prepositions are very common words in English sentences. Using prepositions is one of the important means to make sentences more agreeable. Prepositions are function words that have several functions depending on the context in which they occur and they may change the meaning of the sentence.

A preposition is an important part of speech in English that links a noun, pronoun or phrase to another part of a sentence. They lead to an object, which is the part of the sentence that receives the action of the verb. Prepositions can help show not just where something tookplace but how and when ( Hoeppner, 2002:Int.) .

The correct use of prepositions is one of the most serious problems faced by learners of English especially those learning it as a foreign language as is the case with Iraqi students. Celce-Murcia and Freeman (1999:401) identify these problems in accordance with three dimensions of form, meaning and use and put forwards reasons for their existence. First, the work of prepositions in other languages, as German and Russian, is performed through inflections. ESL/EFL students have to learn new forms for familiar functions. Second, prepositions do not always match well from one language to another in their spatial meaning; for example, English 'at' equals German 'on'. Third, even the proficient English speakers seem to have variable levels of performance regarding which prepositions they use for a particular meaning. This variation in

the input data can cause much confusion on the part of the ESL/EFL students, especially when the use of prepositions by native speakers departs from what the prescriptive rules dictate.

Fitikides (2002:83-9) holds that one of the problems of misuse of prepositions is that foreign students confuse their meaning by using one preposition instead of another.

Swan (2005:483)  relates the difficulty in the correct use  of  prepositions  to the fact  that  **" most of them  have several   different functions; for instance, the dictionary lists eighteen main uses of 'at' . At   the same time, different  prepositions can have very similar uses ( in  the morning, on Monday morning, at night), so it is easy to make mistakes."**

Schindler (2006:7)points out that another confusion in understanding English prepositions is that they can be used as particles (i.e., words of two-word verbs) which should not be understood as prepositions such as *catch on*, *keep on*, *take off*, etc.

Hence, the correct use of prepositions constitutes a problematic linguistic area for Iraqi EFL learners as proved by researchers like Kassim (1978), Ali (1983), Abdul-Hameed (2001), Yousif (2007), and as supported by consulting several EFL college instructors and specialists in the field. This state of affairs has urged the researcher to investigate EFL college students' performance in the commonest English prepositions.

## 1.2 Aims of the Study

The study aims at :

1. assessing the ability of EFL undergraduate learners in recognizing and producing prepositions, and

2. identifying areas of potential difficulty and suggesting certain pedagogical activities to surmount these difficulties.


## 1.3 Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that:

1. in general, EFL university learners' performance in the commonest English prepositions is inadequate.

2. Iraqi EFL university learners find difficulty both in recognizing and using the common English prepositions.

3. EFL learners face more difficulties at the production level than at the recognition level.


## 1.4 Limits of the Study

The present study is limited to the 3$^{rd}$ year EFL students of the College of Education/ Ibn- Rushd, University of Baghdad for the academic year 2006 – 2007. It is also limited to the commonest English prepositions: '*about, above, across, after, against, along, among, at, because of, before, behind, below, beneath, beside or besides, between, but, by, despite, down, during, except for, for, from, in, in addition to, inside, in spite of, like, near, of, off, on top of, out, outside, over, past, through, throughout, till, to, toward, under, underneath, until, unto, up, upon, with, without'*.

## 1.5  Procedures

The steps followed in carrying out the research include:

1. identifying the concept of preposition and other related aspects through surveying literature.

2. constructing and administering a proficiency test for diagnostic purposes to assess undergraduate students ability in recognizing and using common prepositions.

3. identifying and describing the errors made by the students and suggesting proper remedies for them.

4. adopting appropriate statistical means to arrive at the results of the study.

5. Drawing conclusions, putting forward some recommendations and suggestions in the light of the results.

## 1.6  Value of the Study

Being a pedagogical study, it is hoped that the study can be beneficial at all levels of EFL teaching English. On the practical side, the study may familiarize teachers and learners with the proper usage of English prepositions. Thus, syllabus designers as well as practicing teachers may make use of this kind of study for various pedagogical implications for attaining a better mastery of these prepositions.

## 1.7 Definition of Basic Terms

### 1.7.1 Performance

Page et al.(1979:261-2) define performance as " actions of a person or group when given a learning task", whereas Ehrlich (2002:Int.)

explains it as "the accomplishment of a task in accordance with a set standard of completeness and accuracy."

In this study, performance refers to the achievement of EFL learners in the recognition and production test of commonest English prepositions.

## 1.7.2 Prepositions

Quirk (1988 : 813) defines a preposition as a word used with a noun, pronoun or -ing form to show its connection with another word. Similarly, Devlin (2007:210) states that prepositions connect words, clauses, and sentences together and show the relation between them.

## 1.7.3  Recognition

In psychology, recognition is a form of remembering characterized by a feeling of familiarity when something previously experienced is again encountered; in such situations a correct response can be identified when presented but may not be reproduced in the absence of a stimulus. Recognition seems to indicate selective retention and forgetting of certain elements of experience (Encyclopedia Britannica,2004).

In this study recognition means the ability of the EFL learner to recognize the preposition and understand their meaning.

## 1.7.4  Production

This term refers to the process of planning and executing the act of speech (Crystal, 2003: 374) . As far as this study is concerned, the term production refers to the subjects' ability of producing prepositions properly.

# CHAPTER TWO
# Theoretical Background and Previous Studies

## 2.1 Introductory Notes

This chapter is divided into two main parts. The first is devoted to a survey of the theoretical background of the commonest English prepositions. The second one deals with previous studies that the researcher has largely made use of in conducting this research.

## 2.2 Theoretical Background

The name 'preposition' suggests that it is usually placed before the word whose connection or relation with other words it points out (Devlin, 2007:210).

Sewell (1996:Int.) points out that a preposition connects its object with the rest of the sentence. Doing so, a preposition refers to the relation between the idea expressed in the prepositional phrase and the ideas in the rest of the sentence; for instance:

- *He owns the house **on** the corner.*

The preposition *on* expresses that the word *corner* refers to the location of the house indicated in the rest of the sentence.

Concerning their position, Stageberg (1983:173) explains that the name of 'prepositions' implies that this structure word occupies a pre – position; that is, one before its object such is usually the case. Yet, one can find it at the end of a few structures like:

1. Relative clause as in : *The job (that) he worked **at*** .

2. Infinitive as in: *Clay is fun to play **with.***

3. Exclamation as in: *What a hedge we stumped **into**!*

4. Passive as in: *The lock had been tempered **with**.*

5. Wh. questions as in: *Which room did you find it **in**?*

So, it is not true to say that prepositions cannot occur at the end of sentences. On the contrary, it would be non- native if a preposition does not come at the end in some expressions like "*Where are you from*?" In other cases, it is a matter of style to put a preposition at the end or not, for instance, "*The doctor with whom I was conferring*" is formal whereas "*The doctor I was conferring with*" is informal. Both are acceptable standard English.

## 2.2.1  Definitions of Prepositions

Prepositions have been defined by many English language grammarians, who give many details about this important part of speech which represents significance in structuring and understanding phrases or sentences .

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:134), and Hult and Huckin (1999:507) maintain that a preposition expresses a relation between two entities, one being represented by the prepositional phrase, whereas Thomson and Martinet (1986:91) consider prepositions as words normally placed before nouns or pronouns. Stageberg (1983:169) defines prepositions as words like *of, in, to*, etc. which are usually followed by a noun, noun phrase, personal pronoun or noun-substitute called the object of preposition. The unit of preposition-plus- object is called a prepositional phrase; for example :

*- George sat **between** the two deans.*

Allen (1973:292) adds that prepositions usually come before the words they control . They indicate various relationships between words and phrases .The most usual used prepositions are those of time, space, position, direction, etc. Moreover, Oliphant (1962: 50) maintains that they serve to mark the relation of the noun or pronoun they govern to some other words in the sentence, for instance :

*- The cloth is **on** the table.*

Here, the preposition "on "shows the relation of the noun "cloth " to the noun "table".

Prepositions form a closed word class of uninflected words and they are grammatical words that show relationships between two things. These relationships often relate to time or space, for instance:

*- The banana is **in** the box.*

(Learning Media Limited, 1996:Int.)

Baskervill (2004:Int.) states that the most important clue for recognizing prepositions is that they usually have direct objects .This makes them rather like transitive verbs.

Waner (2005:Int.) clarifies that a preposition describes a relationship between other words in a sentence. In itself, a word like '*in*' or '*after*' is rather meaningless and hard to define as a mere word. For instance, when one tries to define a preposition like '*in*' , '*between*' or '*on*' he invariably uses his hands to show how something is situated in relationship to something else.

House and Harman (1950:174) and Tyler and Evans (2006:25) state that prepositions have clear characteristics, because they are

uninflected elements suggesting position (*at, on, in, above*), direction (*to, towards*), time (*at, during*), limit of motion (*to, into*) , and source (*from, of*), etc .

Moreover, Spankie (1987:157) points out that prepositions appear with nouns of any kind , pronouns in their objective form and gerunds . They all follow prepositions and they form with the preposition, what is called the prepositional phrase.

### 2.2.2  Prepositional Phrase

The combination of a preposition and its object is called a prepositional phrase; for example:

- *The pupils go **to their school***.

The prepositional phrase "*to their school*" is composed of a preposition "*to*", determiner " *their*" , and a noun "*school*"l . Wekker and Haegeman (1985: 51) define prepositional phrases as those phrases which consist of a preposition ( *in, about, under*, etc.) followed by a noun or a noun phrase, whereas Trask (1993:215) defines it as a phrase consisting of a preposition and a noun phrase serving as its object : *in the garden , with Lisa , in front of the post office* .

Leech and Svartvik (1994:351) state that the complement or object of a preposition is usually a noun phrase (e.g. *He put the book on the table*)  but can be another element as in :

1-  Preposition + pronoun as in:

- *Please, do it **for** <u>me</u> !*

Here it should be noticed that the form of the pronoun must be objective like *me, him*, etc.

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2- Preposition + an –ing clause as in :

- *Jim tried to shake off his fears **by** looking at the sky* .

3- Preposition + an adverb as in:

- *You can see the station **from** here* .

4- Preposition + a *wh-clause* as in:

- *She came **from** what she called 'a small farm ' of two hundred acres* .

There are two types of nominal clause which cannot be the complement of a preposition : that clause and to − infinitive clauses . With these clauses , the preposition is omitted as in :

- *I was surprised **at** the news* .

- *I was surprised that things changed so quickly*. ('**at**' is omitted )

- *I was surprised to hear you say it*.   ('**at**' is omitted )

Sometimes , the addition *of the fact ( that )* can serve to convert the *that - clause* construction into a form suitable for a prepositional complement .

- *I  think everybody is aware of these problems* .

- *I think everybody is aware that there are problems* .

- *I think everybody is aware of the fact that there are problems* .

Miller (1946:211) finds that a prepositional phrase may function as:

a. Nominal: *I'm referring **to** before the world war*. (Here ' before the world war' is the object of the 'to')

b. Adjectival:  *The box **on the table** is made of mahogany* . (Here' on the table ' qualifies the noun 'box').

c. Adverbial: *I put the box **on the table***. (Here' on the table' modifies the verb' put').

An adverbial prepositional phrase may refer to :

1- Time: *I will arrive **on** Tuesday.*

2- Place : *They live **in** London .*

3- Manner: *He wrote the letter **with** care.*

4- Degree:  *He is **by** far older than her.*

5- Result or Effect: *He cannot work **without** making a noise.*

   (so that he does not make a noise).

6- Condition : *You could not do it **without** my help .*

7-Concession: *I'll do it **in spite of** your trying to stop me .*

8- Purpose : *She took a charwoman **for** cleaning out the rooms .*

9- Agency : *The book was written **by** my friend .*

10- Instrumentality : *He wrote the letter **with** a fountain-pen.*

11- Means : *He got rich **by** dishonesty .*

12- Association : *I can go **with** you .*

13- Cause : *He died **of** cancer .* ( because of cancer ).

<div align="right">(Miller, ibid.:211-12)</div>

Veit (1986:37) and Pullum and Huddleston (2002:597-661) agree that a prepositional phrase consists of a preposition followed by a noun phrase .

Veit (ibid.:38) points out this in a phrase - structure rule :

PP ⟶ Prep NP

(where pp is prepositional phrase, Prep is preposition, and NP is a noun phrase )

- *Carl scrambled **over** the barricade .*

According to the above example, Veit comments that prepositional phrases occur at the end of sentences, and he raised some questions like : "Is the prepositional phrase a part of the verb phrase or is it a separate major constituent of the sentence?" These two options for writing phrase- structure rules involving prepositional phrases are shown in the following forms, with the different trees they can generate.Veit suggests them to see which option is preferable:

**Carl scrambled over the barricade .**

**1- a. S ⟶ NP VP**

**b. VP ⟶ V (NP) (PP)**
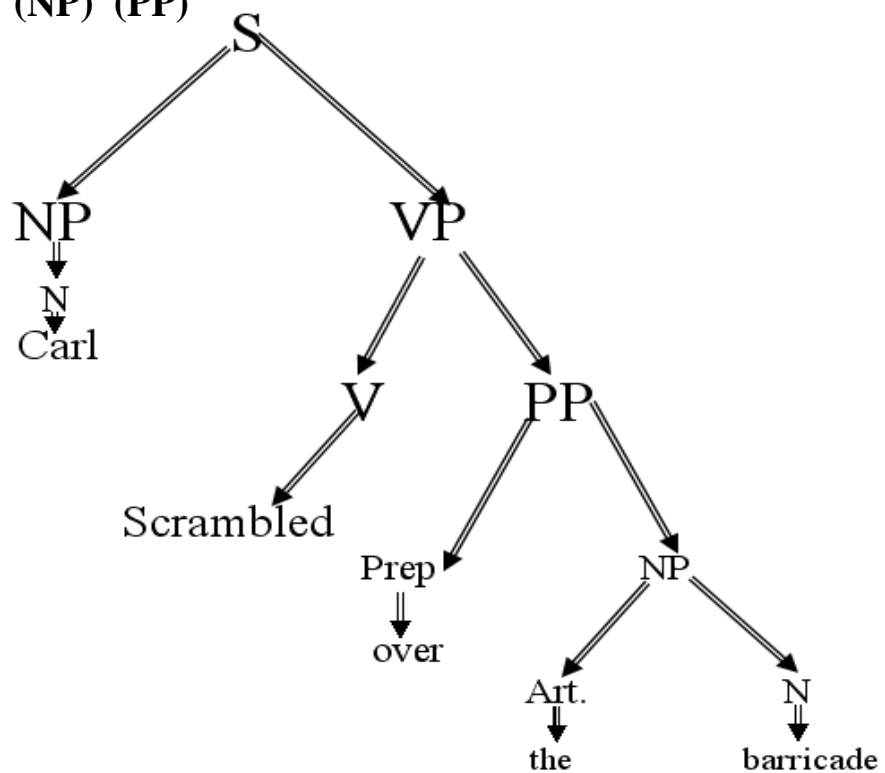


Figure 2.1 Prepositional
phrase, structure rule 1       (Veit, 1986:38)

**Or**

**2- a.** **S** ⟶ **NP VP**

  **b.** **VP** ⟶ **V (NP)**



```
                    S
          ╱         ↓         ╲
        NP         VP          PP
         ↓          ↓         ╱   ╲
         N          V      Prep    NP
       Carl     Scrambled    ↓    ╱  ╲
                            over Art.  N
                                 the barricade
```
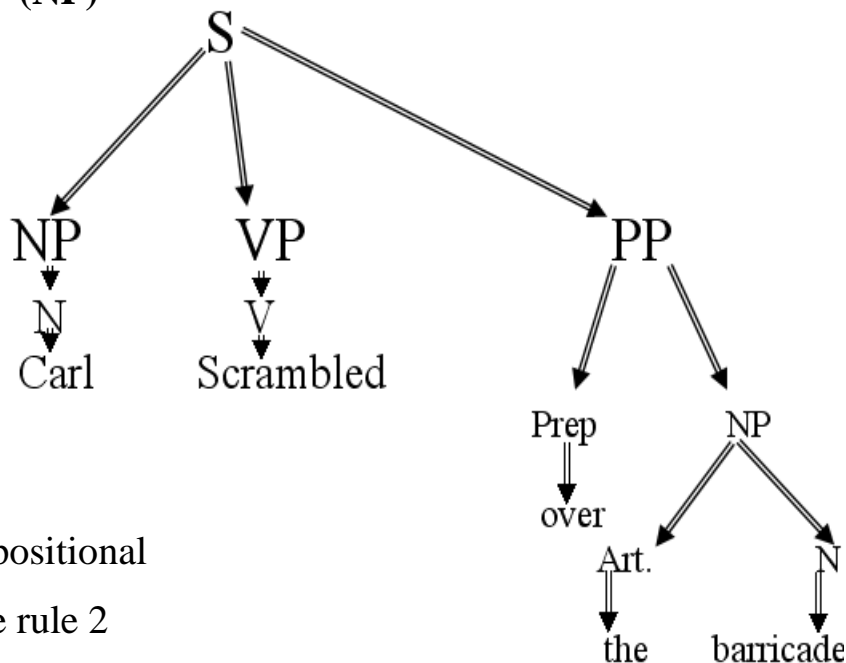
Figure 2.2 Prepositional phrase, structure rule 2

(ibid.:39)

Both options ' work ' in the sense that both can generate the desired sentence . Most linguists prefer option **1** with the prepositional phrase as a constituent of the verb phrase , part of their reasoning lies on meaning : *'over the barricade'* is considered as a part of the verb phrase or predicate , because it completes the verb *'scrambled'*, i.e. it describes where the scrambling happens .

## 2.2.3 Classification of English Prepositions

As far as morphology is concerned, grammarians classify English prepositions in various ways. But most of them agree that there are simple, compound, or complex prepositions (Oliphant, 1962:51):

1. Simple : *to, up, on*, etc.

2. Compound : *into, throughout*, etc.

3. Participial (complex) : *regarding, considering, notwithstanding*, etc.

Eckersley and Eckersley (1980:277) refer to prepositions as either single words such as *'at', 'after',' down'* or two or more words ( "group prepositions") like *'in front of ', 'at the back of ',' with regard to'*, etc. Another classification is offered by Spanki (1987:157) according to the number of morphemes, saying that prepositions fall into two groups**:** simple prepositions which consist of one word only like *'in', 'on'*, and compound prepositions which consist of more than one word like' *because of ', 'according to ', 'in front of '*, etc.

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:144-5) agree with Spanki (1987:157) and add that there are many more prepositions consisting of more than one word but they call these prepositions 'complex prepositions'. Chalker (1989:216) classifies prepositions in a similar way.

Huddleston (1985:341) agrees with Quirk et al (1985:301-2) that most complex prepositions may come into one of the following three categories:

A. Adverb or prep + prep : *along with, as to, aside from , away from, out of, up to*, etc.

B. Verb/ adjective/ conjunction/ etc + prep : *owning to, except for, due to, because of*, etc.

C. Prep + Noun + prep: *by means of, in comparison with, in front of*, etc.

The last category is the most numerous one; the noun in some complex prepositions is preceded by definite or indefinite article such as ' *in the light of* ', *'as a result of '* . Huddleston(ibid:339) adds that some complex prepositions do not differ from others in meaning like "with regard to" and "with respect to ". The two prepositions clearly serve to vary our expression. This idea is agreed on by Crume (1974:29) .

Another classification for prepositions presented by House and Harman (1950:175-9) clarifies that prepositions fall into three types:

**1. Simple Prepositions**:

They are the simplest in form because they are the oldest and the most frequently used in English and many of them are monosyllabic such as' *at, 'by', 'but', 'for',' in'*, 'over', 'under' etc. All of these are once adverbs which can be prefixed to verbs so they are called prepositions; i.e. before position. Prepositions govern nouns or pronouns like 'by', 'in', etc. but they are considered adverbs when they only modify verbs and do not show the relationship between words . For example:

- *He came **down** the Hill.* (The word 'down' is a preposition).
- *He came down after supper.*(The word 'down' here is an adverb)

The words *'after, but, for, since, and till'* are prepositions when they govern nouns or noun-equivalents. For instance:

- *They came **after** sunset.*

- *There was no one **but** the monitor to assist us.*

They can also be considered as pure conjunctions or relative adverbs when they introduce and join clauses as in :

- *They came **after** ( = relative adverb ) the sun had set.*

- *There were no volunteers to help **but** (= pre- coordinating conjunction) the monitor assisted us.*

Prepositions may also function as adjectives in the appositive position if they introduce an adjective phrase that loses its object or its object is omitted to avoid verbal repetition. For example:

-  *The day after* (the day mentioned) *was my birthday.*

(ibid.:175-6)

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## 2. Compound Prepositions:

Compound prepositions may be defined as these prepositions which are formed by combining words to show relations which primary or simple preposition cannot express. Compound prepositions refer to the middle stage in the development of prepositions and many of them have an old and middle English origin.

A preposition may relate itself to another preposition or adverb to show a relation that cannot be expressed by either when used alone or separately. For example, *'into'* is a compound preposition formed by the combination of *'in'* and *'to*, 'within' is formed by *'with'* and *'in'*. To compare the two forms that these prepositions may occur one may say, for example:

- *He came **in to** see us*.    (Here there are two prepositions ***'in'*** and ***'to'*** both are simple). And they differ from the following preposition in the following example:

- *He came **into** the station*.   (Here, the preposition ***'into'*** is a compound one*)

Compounding has started in old English. Simple prepositions are sometimes compounded with nouns, adjectives, and adverbs to transmit relations between words that are once expressed by inflectional forms of nouns or pronouns.

Recently, a number of prepositions are derived from verbs, usually the present of participial forms of verbs, and are retained with their original verbal meaning such as *'considering', 'during', ' pending', 'except', ' past', and ' save*' . But some of these prepositions may also function as conjunctions which have subordinating or transitional force. For example, *'notwithstanding'*, (*'not'* is the compound of the adverb and

*withstanding* is the verbal) . It is a preposition when it means *in spite of*; it is a subordinating conjunction when it means *although* ; and it is a transitional conjunction when it means *nevertheless*, *yet*, or *however* . Also, other parts of speech function as prepositions and they are sometimes called secondary prepositions; their main function in the language is not that of showing relation between grammatical units.

<div align="right">(ibid.:175-6)</div>

## 3.  Phrasal Prepositions:

Phrasal prepositions are composed of two or more words written separately but used as a single unit to show the relation between a noun or a noun - equivalent and some other element in the sentence.

A phrasal preposition may be formed by combining prepositions with other parts of speech (adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, verbs, etc.); these phrasal prepositions are for example, ' *according to' , 'along with ', ' as to' , as for', because of ', in stead of ' , ' out of ' ,* etc. The most commonest of them are of the fossilized phrases of abstract meaning followed by prepositions such as *' by virtue of ', ' in accordance with' , 'in addition to' , with reference to' , ' by means of' , ' in spite of ' , 'in front of ', ' in regard to '*, etc .

<div align="right">(ibid.:179-80)</div>

## 2.2.4 Semantics of Prepositions

One of the greatest challenges that faces the learners in learning prepositions, according to Taylor (1993:151-4), is their meaning,

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although languages carve up semantic territory in different ways . Also, within a particular language it is sometimes difficult to impose meaning to a preposition that will explain its purpose of use. Prepositions are indeed polysemous; for instance, notice the possible meaning that 'in' can have in all of the following possible instances **:**

  - *Stephanie is **in** the room.*

  - *The room is **in** a mess.*

  - *Seth is **in** trouble.*

  - ***In** running out of the room, he knocked the vase.*

  - *He'll be back **in** an hour.*


In fact, linguists have the ability in most cases to abstract from a particular purpose of use of prepositions from its general meaning few principal meanings; for example, for all instances of 'in' meaning above one may say that 'in' conveys a general notion of a boundedness with an enclosure . The closure is more literal in the first examples but more abstract, metaphorical or extended in other examples.

It has to be clear that a problem with giving such abstract definitions to ESL/ EFL students is that the definition is more difficult to comprehend and apply than the form itself and sometimes more helpful alternative is to use concrete examples rather than abstract definitions . The above examples may be the best examples to show the characteristics that most prepositions have in common. Thus, experience has shown that the first step to help students learn is to deal with areas where the meaning is more abstract. An association of spatial schemata with prepositions also helps teachers avoid a common pitfall which is to define a preposition using other prepositions (Taylor, 1993:155).

Dirven (1993:405-6) analyses the basic and most general place prepositions which are *'at'*, *'on'*, and *'in'* as follows:

 - *'At'*  may refer to a place or a point of orientation; for instance:

- *'Meet me **at** the corner'*.

 - *'On'* refers to physical contact between trajector and landmarks viewing the landmark as one dimensional space (line) or two-dimensional space( a surface); for instance:

- *'Don' t sit **on** the desk'*.

 - *'In'* refers to the enclosure of the trajector in the landmark and, hence, sees the landmark as two- or three- dimensional space (a surface or volume); for instance:

- *'Stephanie is **in** the room'*.

Dirven draws a figure representing some prepositions of place as follows:
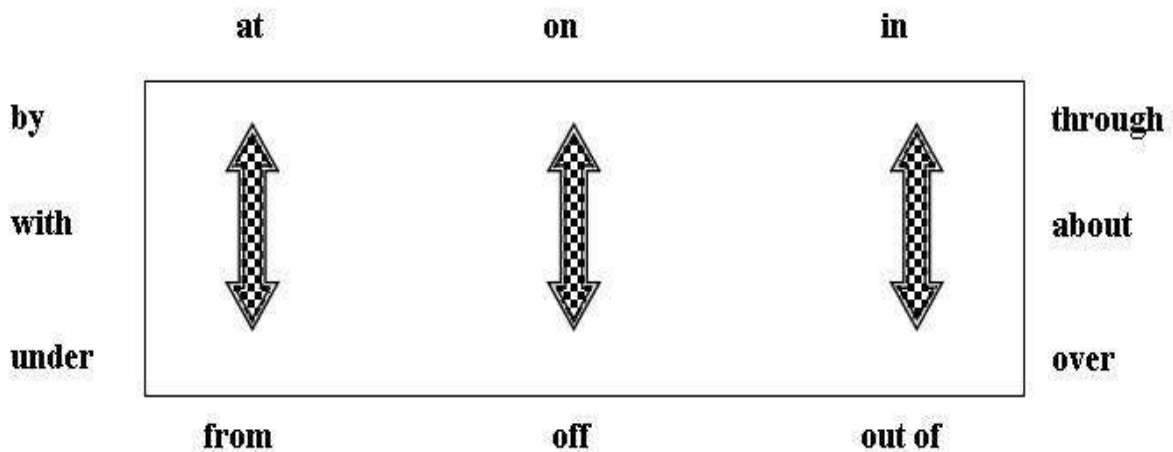


**Figure 2.3 Prepositions of Place**

The above three source prepositions: ' *from '*, *'off'*, and *'out of '* involve the notion of separation from place and, hence, are connected by two- pointed arrows with the basic prepositions in the diagram. For instance:

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1. **'From'** refers to separation from a point of orientation, for example:

 - *He took it **from** me.*

2. **'Off'** refers to separation from contact with a line or surface, for example:

 - *The vase fell **off** the table.*

3. **'Out of'** refers to separation from inside of a landmark, for example:

 - *The water spilled **out of** the vase.*

'*By*' and '*with*' are the proximity prepositions, which are adjacent to ' at ' on the diagram because they locate the trajector in relation to a point of orientation, just like '*at*' does.

4. **'By'** refers to the idea of ' connection', for example:

- *Doug lives **by** me.*

5. **'With'** refers to both a point of orientation and the idea of connection but may be so in a more abstract way to mean association and/or accompaniment. In its spatial sense, 'with' can come only with persons as a landmark, for example:

 - *He walked **with** me to school.*

 '*Through*' and' *about*' demand the landmark to be seen as a surface or a volume and are, therefore, pointed on the diagram next to; '*in*' .

6. **Through** structures space as a tunnel on channel, for instance:

 - *Take the first path **through** the woods.*

7. **'About'** refers to spatial movement on any direction, for example:

- *He walked **about** the room searching for where he had left his keys .*

'*Under*' and '*over*' are vertical prepositions.

8. **'Under'** refers to a trajector that is at a lower point than landmark, for instance:

- *Don' t sit **under** the apple tree with anyone else but me.*

9. **'Over'** refers to a trajector that is at a higher point than a landmark, for instance:

- *We peered **over** the fence.*


'*Under*' and '*over*' do not fit as elegantly as the other prepositions in the picture that Dirven draws. Dirven (ibid.:406)  justifies their inclusion and their placement on the bottom of  the vertical axes by observing that ' *over* ' can overlap in some domains with '*through* ' and ' *about* ' ; that ' *under*' is similar  to ' *from'* , '*off* ' , *'out of* ' in that all four refer to a negative polarity and that ' *under* ' negates the positive polarity preposition '*over*'. It is important to observe that many prepositions can be used to describe not only stative relationships but also dynamic ones .

Taylor (1993:155) proposes that three categories of relations are expressed by prepositions: **place**, **path**, and **goal**. Some prepositions can serve more than one category, for instance:

 -*The picture is **over** the sofa*. (Place)

 - *The crop duster flew **over** the cornfield*. (Path)

 - *Hang the picture **over** the sofa*. (Goal – end point of path)


Taylor allows for a fourth category, which is **source** based on Dirven's analysis; for instance:

 - *The ketchup flowed **out of** the battle*. (Source)

But not all prepositions can serve all of these relationships. For instance, ' *toward* ' is exclusively path preposition. In spite of this, these four categories may provide additional semantic hooks for ESL/ EFL students to hold onto when dealing with an amorphous nature of space. As shown in Figure 3, a preposition describes a relationship between

words of a sentence. In itself , a word like ' *in'* or *'after* ' is rather meaningless and hard to define in near words; for instance, when one tries to define a preposition like '*in'* ,' *between'* ,or '*on'* ,he invariably uses his hands to show how something is situated in relationship to something else .

House and Harman (1950:179-80) consider modern English as an analytic language. So, the inflectional markings are usually reduced to minimum, meaning; and relations of words to each other depend largely on relational words like prepositions, relative adverbs, and conjunctions to indicate not only most of meanings conveyed by cause forms but also all the different new relations that develop as English has grown out of a dialect to be very rich and flexible language more than it is now . It is said that prepositions may contribute more to this richness and flexibility than any other single part of speech. In spite of  the complex thoughts and simplest communications that are conveyed with the means of prepositions, the human needs just to try to write a short letter, theme or a telegram without using a preposition to discover its importance in the communication of ideas . The validity of the expression of thought may depend on the choice of prepositions and on the positions they are given in sentence .No one speaks or writes accurately and effectively without attention to the meanings of prepositions and the various relations they express . Prepositions must not be said or written carelessly .

House and Harman (ibid.:180-1) hold that some prepositions may convey several different meanings as in the following list:

1. Accompaniment : *May I go **with** you* ?

2. Agency : *The books were sold **by** John* .

3. Association : *Self- denial is a kind of holy association **with** God-Pope.*

4. Addition : *Put the lettuce **with** the tomatoes, and make a salad.*

5. Affirmation : ***By** all means, seize this opportunity .*

6. Apposition : *The state **of** New York is called the Empire state .*

7. Cause or reason :***Because of** the accident, we were late .*

8. Comparison : *Truth, **like** gold, shines brighter by collision.*

9. Concession : *Even **with** money and friends, he is not popular .*

10. Condition : *Only **on** my terms will I accept your offer .*

11. Degree *: I am older than you **by** ten years .*

12. Description *: The girl **with** blue eyes won the prize .*

13. Direction *: Go **toward** the gate .*

14. Design *: Youth is the proper time **for** love .*

15. Instrument : *Spread your butter **with** this knife .*

16. Manner : *He walks **with** a limp .*

17. Material : *My house is made **of** brick .*

18. Means : *He travels **by** plane .*

19. Measure: *We must sell the material **by** the yard .*

20. Objective genitive : *The loss **of** honor is the loss **of** life .*

21. Partition : *Half **of** the world may be wrong .*

22. Place: *I'm staying **at** the Statler Hotel .*

23. Possession : *Swords **of** Caesars, they are less than rust .*

24. Purpose : *I'm giving this lecture **for** your benefit .*

25. Quality : *Hamlet called Claudius a kind **of** shreds patches.*

26. Respect : *These apples are good **for** pies .*

27. Separation : *They deprived her **of** the baby .*

28. Source : *The poet gathers fruit **from** every tree, yea, grapes from thorns , and figs **from** thistles, he* -( Sir William Watson).

29. Subjective Genitive : *For this the cry **of** a thousand souls that down to the pit have trod* . (Leonard H. Robbins) .

30. Time : *Shakespeare was born **in** 1564 and died **in** 1616* .

Prepositions have not been studied in traditional lexical semantics compared to the large amount of work devoted to verbs and to nouns. They nevertheless play a very important role in semantics and have many connections with most of the other syntactic categories.

## 2.2.5  Syntactics of Prepositions

It is known that prepositions make nouns adverbial (*He gets **off** work at night*) and that prepositional phrases follow verbs as in (*He is **in** school*) and adjective as in (*She is good **at** math*) . Several observations about the form of prepositions according to phrase structure rule for prepositional phrase may be presented

Prep $\longrightarrow$ Prep   Np

(Celce-Murica and Freeman,1999:102)

**First** of these observations is that English prepositions are free morphemes, not bound inflectional affixes as they are in other languages. The reason that prepositions have this name is that they precede nouns; they are pre- positions. This contrasts with other languages such as Japanese, which also has prepositions but they follow nouns. This is not to mean that English prepositions must always come before nouns. It is possible for prepositions to be shifted to the end when a wh- question word is fronted, for instance:

- *Whom are you speaking **to**?*

**Second**, the rule tells us that prepositions are followed by noun phrases because the noun phrase is the object of the preposition and if it is a pronoun, it is an object pronoun as in *'for us' / 'to me'*.

**Third**, the symbol ' Prep ' in the rule does not necessarily refer to a single word.

Although many prepositions are single words, some complex prepositions consist of two or more words that function as single preposition such as *' because of ' , ' out of ', 'on top of ' , ' in front of '* .

As a matter of fact, some prepositions that once existed as two words have coalesced, such as *' into '* and *'onto '*. The other phrase structure rules that relate to the form of prepositions are the ones that demonstrate that prepositional phrases follow copular verbs, certain intransitive verbs and transitive adjective, where they are required to complete verb phrase or adjective phrase respectively:

Cop + prep : *The car is **in** the garage* .

Verb + prep : *She lay **on** his side* .

Adj + prep : *I am averse **to** the idea* .

(Celce-Murcia and Freeman,1999:102)

## 2.2.5.1 Co-occurrence with Verbs, Adjectives, and Nouns

Celce-Murcia and Freeman (ibid.:103-4) state that a number of verbs and adjectives co-occur with particular prepositions. So they have to be thought along with verbs and adjectives as in the following examples:

| <u>Adj + prep</u> | <u>Verb + prep</u> |
|---|---|
| to be dependent on | to rely on |
| to be free from / of | to detract from |

Sometimes the same verb occurs with two different prepositions and it will give significantly different meanings; for example:

'Provide for ' as in : *You should provide for your old age now*.

'provide Np with' as in : *The red cross provided us with blankets* .

And sometimes two different prepositions can be used with the same verb with little or no change of meaning, for example:

- *Joe competes {**with/against**} his older brother too much.*

Moreover, it is possible for some verbs to be optionally followed by a preposition as in:

- *I believe that it wasn't at all what she had planned.*

- *I believe **in** that it wasn't at all what she had planned on.*

O'Dowd (1994:140) argues that there is a difference in meaning . Further, the preposition has the effect of lessening the transitivity of the verb creating a distance between the verb and its argument.

What is more, Frodesen and Eyring (1997:105) say that if noun phrases are preceded or followed by a preposition there may be only one possible option; examples are ***in*** *my opinion*, ***to*** *my mind,* ***from*** *my point of view, objection **to**, awareness **of**, belief **in*** . Sometimes noun phrases are both preceded and followed by prepositions to form multiword clusters, such as 'with respect to' and 'in return for ' . Some of these multiword preposition clusters contain the following combinations:

| **in+noun+of** | **on+noun+of** | **in the+ noun+ of** | **on the + noun + of** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| in case of | on account of | in the course of | on the advice of |
| in charge of | on behalf of | in the habit of | on the basis of |
| in favor of | on rounds of | in the name of | on the strength of |

### 2.2.5.2  Deletion of Prepositions

The preposition is possible to be deleted; sometimes the deletion is optional and at other times it is obligatory.

### 2.2.5.2.1  Optional Deletion

The preposition is optional in the following cases:

1. When the preposition *'for'* expresses a span of time; for example :

   - *We have lived here (**for**) 28 years .*

   - *(**For**) how long have you owned this house ?*

<div align="right">(Celce-Murcia and Freeman,1999:107)</div>

2. In responses to questions that would cue temporal use of *'in', 'at', 'on', or ' for*' ;for instance :

   - *How long have you lived here? (**for**) two years .*

   - *When do you wake up ? (**At** )6 a.m.*

<div align="right">(ibid.:107)</div>

3. In an informal style, ***'to'*** can be in some expressions with the word *place,* for example:

   - *let's go (**to**) some place where it's quiet.*

<div align="right">(Swan, 2005:433)</div>

4. When the preposition ' ***on***' is used before days of the week (when the day is used alone or when it modifies another temporal noun such as ' *morning, afternoon, night*); for instance :

   - *Brent went cross- country skiing (**on**) Saturday .*

   - *He bought a new pair of skis (**on**) Friday night .*

However, this is not an acceptable option in formal British English.

<div align="right">(ibid.:451)</div>

### 2.2.5.2.2  Obligatory Deletion

The preposition should be deleted in the following cases:

1. When the temporal noun phrase contains a determiner used dialectally such as '*next*' , '*last* ' or when the head noun of the noun phrase contains ' *before' or 'after* ' as a part of  its meaning; for instance, '*yesterday','  tomorrow', 'today', 'tonight* '.

   for example :

   - *I was busy (**on*) *last Friday* .

   (Celce-Murcia and Freeman,1999:107) and (Swan:2005:433)

2. When the temporal noun phrase contains a universal quantifier like '*every' ,' all'* ;  for instance :

   - *We stayed in Paris (**for*) *all the week.*

    (ibid.:107)and(ibid.:433)

3. When the  allocated noun , such as '*home' , 'downtown'* or the pro-adverbs '*here' and 'there* ' are used with a verb of motion or direction; for example :

   - *We went (**to*) *home* .

   - *Phyllis walk (**to*) *here everyday* .

   (ibid.:107) and (ibid.:433)

4. When verbs like (*discuss, enter, marry, lack, resemble, approach*, etc) are normally followed by direct objects; for example:

    - *We must discuss your plan*. (*not discuss about your plan).

    - *She married a friend of her sisters'* .(*not married with)

      (Swan,2005:432)

5. In expressions like 'three times a week',' eighty pence a kilo' ; for instance:

      - *Private lessons cost $20 an hour*. (*not ' in an hour' ). (ibid.:432)

## 2.2.6  Uses of Prepositions

### 2.2.6.1 Prepositions of Place:

It is said that the dimensional relations occur when a preposition is used to refer to place. These dimensional relations are either subjective or objective, and they show the location concerned, for example:

- *My car is **at** the cottage.*

- *There is a new roof **on** the cottage.*

- *There are two beds **in** the cottage.*

Using the preposition *'at'* makes *cottage* dimensionless location, a mere point in relation to which the car's position can be referred to. With the preposition *'on'*, *the cottage* becomes a two- dimensional area, covered by a roof, though *'on'* is also able to be used with one dimensional object as in:

- *Put your signature **on** this line.*

(Quirk and Greenbaum,1973:146-7)

With the preposition *'in'*, *the cottage* becomes the three dimensional object which is the case in reality, though **'in'** can be used with an object which is basically two dimensional as in:

- *The car is **in** the field* . (where "field" is shown as an enclosed space)

(Quirk et al, 1985: 675)

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:147-8) state that the contrast between *'on'* (surface) and *'in'* (area) has different implications according to context as in the following examples:

***On***: *The frost made patterns on the window*. ('Window' in this example is a framed area). The contrast between *'at'* which is dimensional (one-dimension) and *'in'* (which is either two or three -dimensional) can also

cause difficulty. *'In'* can be used for continents, countries, provinces, and sizeable territories of any kind; while towns, villages, etc. may come either with *'at'* or *'in'*. They are also used to express point of view. A very large city like *New York, London, Tokyo*, is generally treated as an area; for example :

- *He works **in** London, but he lives **in** the country* .

But one can treat it as a point on the map if global distances are in the mind , for example:

- *Our plane refueled **at** London **on** its way **from** London **to** New York **to** Moscow.*

Murphy (2004:250) agrees with Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:148) and points out that *'in'* and *'at'* can be used for buildings. But Quirk and Greenbaum (ibid.) clarify the difference between them saying that *'at'* refers to a building in its institutional or functional aspect, whereas *'in'* refers to it as a three-dimensional structure. For example:

- *He is **at** school* .

- *He is **in** school* .

The first example means that he attends school (he studies), whereas the second means he is actually inside the building and not, for example, on the playing field.

- *You can buy something **in** a supermarket or **at** the supermarket.*

To sum up, one may say that *'at'* is one- dimensional and can be used in the following cases:

1. To refer to a place where an event happens; for example:

   - *We went to a concert **at** the Festival Hall.*

   - *The meeting took place **at** the company's office.*

2. To refer to points of time, chiefly clock time; for example:

   - *I'll meet you **at** six o'clock.*

*- We arrived **at** 11.45 p.m.*

3. To talk about the whole of the public holidays or festivals as periods seen as points on calendar; for example:

*- Will you be here **at** the weekend?*

*- Are you going away **at** Easter?*

4- To refer to points of time in the day; for example:

*- I'll meet you **at** dinner.*

*- We arrived **at** noon.*

5. To refer to a station or an airport:

*- Don't meet me **at** the station.*

6. To refer to somebody's house :

*- I was **at** Tom's house last night .*

7. To refer to a certain point, for example , at work, at university , at college :

*- I'll be **at** work until 5:30 but I'll be **at** home all evening.*

*- Julia is studying chemistry **at** university.*

8. To refer to the sea on a voyage, for example:

*- It was a long voyage. We were **at** sea for thirty days.*

But 'in' can be used with the word 'sea' without referring to a voyage; for example:

*- I like swimming **in** the sea .*

9. In phrasal or group prepositions 'at the top of', 'at the bottom of', 'at the end of', 'at the front of', 'at the back of'; examples:

*- Write your name **at** the top of the page!*

*- Jane's house is **at** the other end of the street*

(Swan, 1980:86), (Chalker, 1989:220), (Eastwood, 2000:13), and (Murphy, 2004:242)

On the other hand, **_'in'_** can be used in the following cases :

1. _'In'_ is three- dimensional. It is used to refer to somebody or something that is in a line, in a row, in a queue, in bed, in the sky, in the world, in the country, in a photograph, in a picture, in a book, in a (news) paper, in a magazine, in a letter, in a town / a village; for examples:

    - _When I go to the cinema, I like to sit **in** the front row ._

    - _James isn't up yet. He's still **in** bed ._

    - _Who is the woman **in** that photograph ?_

2. To talk about weeks, months, seasons, years and centuries; for examples:

    - _It happened in Christmas week._

    - _What month were you born in?_

3. It is used in the expression ' in the corner of' as in :

    - _The TV is **in** the corner of the room ._

4. ' In' can be used with the following expressions ' in a car, in a taxi', for example:

    - _Mary arrived **in** a taxi._

(Heaten, 1970:4), (Swan, 1980:87), (Chalker, 1989:221) and (Murphy, 2004:248).


Thomson and Martinet (1986:98-9) show the contrast between _'in'_ and _'into'_: _'in'_ as shown above normally refers to position ,whereas _'into'_ refers to movement or entrance as in:

- _They climbed **into** the lorry._

- _I poured the beer **into** a tankard._

One can use either _**'in'**_ or _**'into'**_ with the verb (put); for example:

- _He put his hands **in/into** his pockets._

The preposition *'on'* can be used in the following cases:

1. Eastwood (2000:291) points out that ' *on* ' is two- dimensional. It is used for a surface. For example:

    - *There were lots of pictures **on** the walls.*

    - *There are dirty marks **on** your shirt.*

2. It can be used to say that something is resting on top of a surface of an object, we say *on a chair , on the table / , on an island , on earth, on the lake, on a farm, on the ground*; for instances:

- *The hotel is **on** a small island in the middle of the lake.*

- *Tom Continued **on** page five.*

- *Come on, supper is **on** the table.*

- *We spent the afternoon in a boat **on** the lake.*

(Quirk and Greenbaum,1972:310), (Swan,1980:88,) and (Murphy,2004:146).

3. It can be used with the word 'floor' (to say what part of the house somebody lives in); we say that somebody or something is: on the ground floor, on the first floor , etc. For example:

    - *I live on the third floor.*

    - *Our flat is on the second floor of the building.*

(Swan, 1980:88) and (Murphy, 2004:246).

4. It can be used to say that something is touching or close to a line: on a line, on a river, on a road, on a coast; for instance:

    - *London is **on** the (river) Thames.*

    - *Portsmouth is **on** the south coast of Englan*

     (Swan, ibid.:88)

5. It can be used to indicate a means of support from beneath, supported by or fastened to; for instance:

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*- The roof of the building is supported **on** pillars.*

(Eastwood, 2000:18).

6. It can be used to represent a place, an object or part of the body as the recipient of an activity:

*- She knocked **on** the door.*

*- The stone hit him **on** the head.*

 (ibid.:19).

7- It can be used with the following expressions such as on a map, on a menu, on a list, on the right, on the left hand side, on the envelop, on the right hand side, on ceiling, on the door, on the page, on the nose; for example:

*- You'll find details of TV programmes on page seven (of the newspaper).*

*- Stick the stamp on the corner of the envelope.*

*- There's a dirty mark on the ceiling / on your nose.*

 (Murphy, 2004:246)

8. It can be used for public transport; we usually say: on a bus, on a train, on a plane, on a ship; for instance:

*- The bus was very full. There were too many people **on** it.*

*- I had lunch **on** the train.*

*- Mary passed me **on** her bicycle.*

Note that we can say: *by bicycle , by bus, by train, by car*, etc. But also we can say : *on bicycle, on a horse (back).* Note also the common expression (with no article) *by car, by train, by plane*, etc. (not with car, in car, etc.) and *on foot* not by foot. (ibid.:250)

It is noted that 'upon' is sometimes used as a formal form of 'on'. But in most contexts 'on' is the commonest; for example:

*- They sat **upon** the ground.*

(Quirk and Greenbaum, 1972:307) and (Quirk, 1988:1160)

Thomson and Martinet (1986:99) show the contrast between '*on*' and *'onto'* :

*'On'* can be used for both position and movement; for example:

*- He was sitting **on** his case.*

*- Snow fell **on** the hills.*

'Onto' can be used (mainly of people and animals) when there is movement involving a change of level; for example:

*- People climbed **onto** their roofs.*

*- The cat jumped **onto** the mantelpiece.*

Eastwood (2000:292-3) adds a general rule, *'in'* and *'on'* express position, and *'into'* and *'onto'* express movement, for instance:

*- We were sitting **in** the café.*

*- She stood **on** the balcony.* ⎱ refer to position

*- We went **into** the café.*

- She walked **onto** the balcony. ⎱ refers to movement

According to Quirk et al (1985:311) and Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 149), there are other place prepositions like (*by, over, above, under, behind, on top of, with, underneath, below, in front of, before, after, beside, to, near (to), between*). These prepositions can be divided into three groups:

1- The first group which  includes ('*by, over, under, with*, *to'* ) *e*xpresses relative position, relative destination, and passage  when there are two objects or groups of objects ; for example:

*- He was standing **by** his brother*. (= at the side of)

*- I left the keys **with** my wallet*. (= 'in the same place as').

*- I went **to** London yesterday.*

Eastwood (2000:296) agrees with Quirk et al (1985: 310) that 'to' is used for destination, for example:

*- We're going to Don caster. My aunt lives there.*

Miller (1946:222) mentions *that 'to'* can be used to movement towards and in direction of; for instance*:*

*- Please turn **to** the right.*

2- The second group includes (*'above, over, on top of, under, underneath, beneath , below'* ) and expresses  relative position in vertical direction.

3- The third group includes (*before, in front of, behind, after*) and refers to relative position in the horizontal direction. The groups are shown in figure 2.4

|  |  |
|---|---|
| | (A) above |
| | over |
| | on top of |
| (C) in front of | (D) behind |
| before | after |
| | (B) Below |
| | Under |
| | Beneath |
| | underneath |
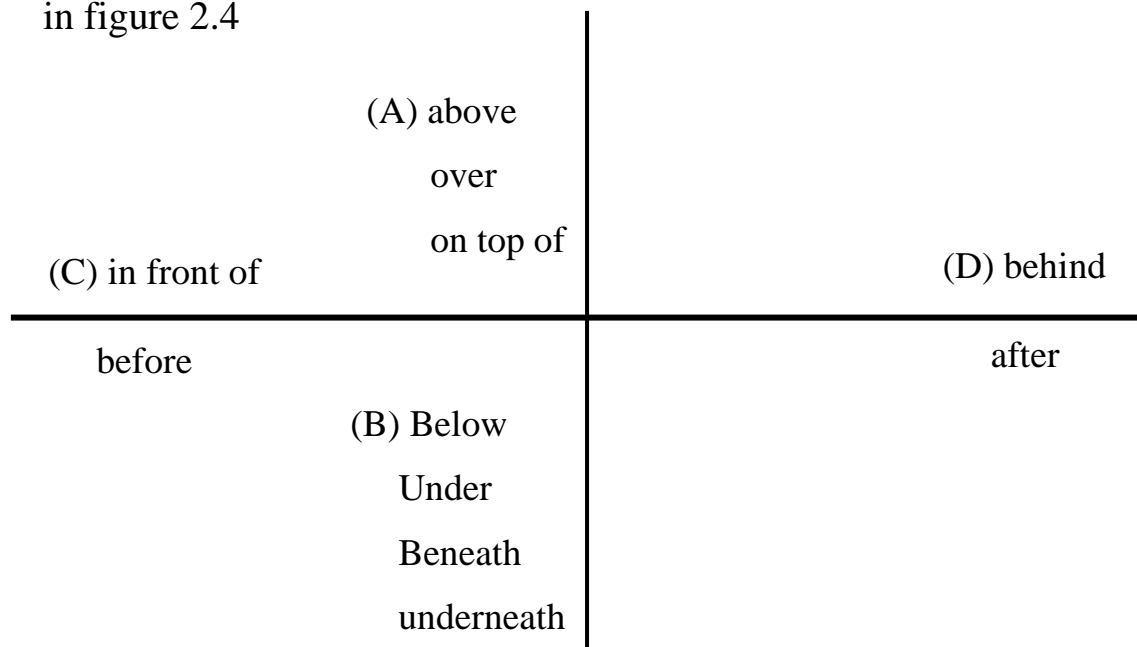
Figure 2.4

Vertical and Horizontal Directions

The relations are expressed by: (A) refers to 'above', over', 'on top of '. (B) refers to ' below', 'under', 'underneath', beneath'. (C) refers to ' in front of' and 'before'. (D) refers to ' behind' and ' after'.

Examples:

- *The picture is **above** the mantal piece.*

- *The metal piece is **below** the picture.*

- *The bus is **in front of** the car.*

- *The car is **behind** the bus.*

<div align="right">(Quirk and Greenbaum, 1972:310-3)</div>

'*Below'* is the opposite of '*above'* while '*under'* is the opposite of '*over*', for instance:

- *We met at the entrance, below/under the clock.*

'*Above'* and *'over'* are prepositions. 'Above' is used with measurement that one thinks of as vertical such as temperature, for example:

- *Temperature will rise **above** freezing.*

While *'over'* is used for movement to the other side or position on the other side of a line, for example:

- *The horse jumped **over** the wall.*

And *'over'* has special meanings as this example:

- *The two leaders discussed world affairs **over** lunch.* (= while having lunch)

<div align="right">(Eastwood, 2000:295-6)</div>

Thomson and Martinet (1986:100) show that *'**below**'* and '***under***' mean "lower than". The difference between them is that '*below'*

is used as both preposition and adverb, while '*under'* is only a preposition. Whereas 'Under' can refer to contact, for example:

- *She put the letter **under** her pillow.*

'*below*' can refer to a space between the two surfaces, for instance:

- *They live **below** us.* (we live on the fourth floor and they live on the third), similarly*: We live above them.*

'Beneath' can sometimes be used instead of 'under' but it is safer to keep it for abstract meanings, for example:

- *She married **beneath** her.* (into a lower social class)


Quirk (1988:84) points out that **'beneath'** and **'underneath'** are prepositions. They refer to a lower position . But' *beneath'* is used for something lower, directly under especially in order to be covered or sheltered by, for instance:

- *The ship sank **beneath** the waves.*

'*Beneath'* also means not suitable to or not worthy of, for example:

- *Such behavior is **beneath** you.*

Quirk (ibid.:1151) state that 'underneath' is used as both preposition and adverb, for example:

- *The letter was pushed **underneath** the door.* (here 'underneath' is a preposition)

- *She wore a fur coat with nothing underneath.*(here 'underneath' is an adverb)

**'Before'** and **'after'** can be used to talk about order things, for instance:

- *J comes **before** k.*

- *K comes **after** J.*

*'After'* is also used to tell about someone following or chasing, for example:

- *The thief ran across the road with a policeman **after** him.*

(Eastwood, 2000:297)

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:150) and Quirk et al.(1985 :681) hold that the same prepositions may express the idea of the passage (i.e. movement towards and then away from a place). They come with verbs of motion, for example :

 - *He jumped **over** a ditch .*

 - *Someone runs **behind** the goal- posts .*
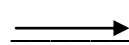
In the case of sentences like the last, or like '*the ball rolled underneath the table*', there is an ambiguity: Here, one can take either the meaning of ' passage ' (= ' the ball passed under the table on the way to some other destination') or the meaning of 'destination' (=' the ball rolled under the table and stayed there' ) .
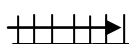
*'Across, through, past'* also refer to the sense of passage. It is the primary locative meaning related to *'across'* (dimensional- type1or2 which refers to line or surface) , '***through***' (dimension- type 2or 3 which refers to area or volume) , and **' past '** (the ' passage', equivalent of ' ***by'*** which perhaps also substitute for past in a 'passage' sense); for example:

 - *We sat **across** the grass.*

 - *We sat **through** the grass.*

And these examples clarify as in the figures 2.5 and 2.6

Dimension: Type 1 or 2 ____●____ *on the grass* ⟶ *across the grass*.

Dimension: Type 2 or 3 ⊦⊦⊦●⊦⊦⊦ *in the grass* ⊦⊦⊦⊦⊦► *through the grass*.

**Figures 2.5 and 2.6**

**Passage prepositions: 'on' and 'across', 'in' and 'through'**

The upper sentence treats the grass as a surface, and therefore, suggests short grass; the lower sentence treats the grass as volume, suggests that it has height as well as length and breadth; that is, the grass is long .The meaning of *' over'* corresponds to '*across'* in this sense :

 - *The ball rolled **over / across** the lawn.*

(Quirk and Greenbaum 1973:150) and (Quirk et al. 1985 :681)

Spankie (1987:62) points out that *'past'* is location preposition, for example:

- *It's about a kilometer from here, **past** the bridge.*

**2.2.6.1.1 Positive position and direction**

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:146-7) distinguish between the notions of simple position (or static location) and direction (movement with respect to a direction). A cause -and -effect relationship obtains with positive prepositions like *'to , at , in , on , into , onto'* as in the following examples:

|                       **Direction**        |                  **Position**                  |
|:--------------------------------------------|:-----------------------------------------------|

*Tom went **to** the door.*                as a result: *Tom was **at** the door.*

*Tom fell on (**to**) the floor.*          as a result: *Tom was **on** the floor.*

*Tom dived in (**to**) the water.*         as a result : *Tom was **in** the water.*


## 2.2.6.1.2  Negative Position and Direction

Quirk and Greenbaum (ibid.: 151) indicate that there is a parallel cause and effect with negative prepositions like *'away from', 'off',' 'out of'* . The negative character of these prepositions is as in the following example

- *Jim went **out of** the room.* (direction)

- *Jim was **out of** the room.* (position)

The negative position here is ' *Jim was not in the room* '.

- *The books were **off** the shelves.* (=the books were not on the shelves)

Quirk (1988:717) states that 'off' is a place preposition . It does not mean 'on' but away from (a surface that is touched or rested on), for example:

- *He keeps **off** the grass.*

- *She jumped **off** the bus.*


Leech and Svartivk (1994:98) state that *'up',' down' ,'along', and 'across'/'over'* come with verbs of motion and make up a group of prepositions expressing movement with reference to an axis or directional path as in the following figures 2.7 and 2.8:
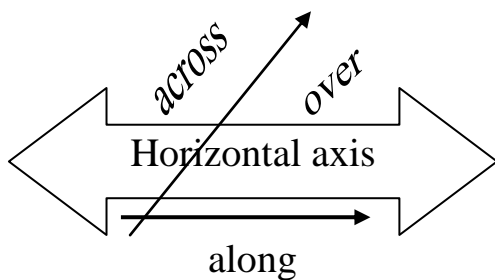
**Figure 2.7**
**Horizontal axis, 'along',**
**'across' and 'over'**
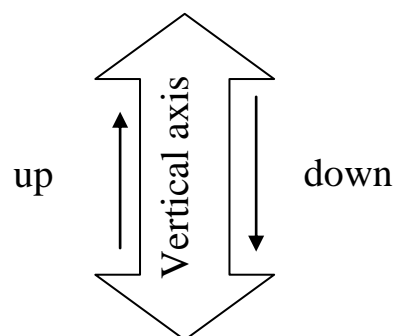
**Figure 2.8**
**Vertical axis, 'up' and 'down'**

Examples :

- *I went silently **along** the passage .*

- *He ran **across** the lawn to the gate .*

- *They were rolling **down** the hill without treks.*

- *She flung open the French windows and ran **over** the sodden grass .*

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 151) add that *'up'* and *'down'* contrast in terms of vertical direction while *'along'* contrast with *'across'* in terms of horizontal direction . However, *'up'* and *'down'* can also be used idiomatically with reference to horizontal direction .

 - *I walked **up** and **down** the platform .*

- *We walk **up** the hill to the house.*

- *Be careful, don't fall **down** the stairs.*

**'Up'** and **'down'** here do not have any vertical implications. Moreover, Leech and Svartivk (1994:80) agree  that *'up'* and *'down'* can be used with the meaning of 'along' but without any vertical implication such as when you say; for example:

 - *She walked very quickly **up /down** the street.* (Here the street is not meant to be on a hill)

 Informally they are used practically with the same meaning as 'along'.

Eastwood (2000:296) indicates that 'along' is used when following a line. One can refer to a path, a round, a passage, etc., for example:

- *We cruised **along** the canal for a few miles.*

*'**Toward (s)'*** is a category of its own, having the meaning of ' in the direction of ' as in :

-*We walked **toward** the center of town.*

- *We're going **toward** Doncaster now. We have taken a wrong turning.* (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973: 151) and (Eastwood, 2000:296)


### 2.2.6.1.3  Orientation

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:151) state that the prepositions (*over, past, by, under, down, and along*) can be used in static sense of 'orientation'; for instance:

- *They live **across** the moors.* (i.e. 'from here')


### 2.2.6.1.4  Space

Quirk et al. (1985: 669-70) maintain that ( *by, beside, with, near (to), between, among, about*) can be used to denote space as in:

- *He was standing **by / beside**  the door.* ( ' at the side of')

- ***Beside** Mary there stood a young man.* ( ' at the side of')

- *I left the keys **with** my wallet.* ('in the same place as')

Spankie (1978:62) states that '***by'*** and '***near***' are not quite the same in meaning. '*By*' means beside or a little way beyond, whereas '*near*' means not far from the complement, close to the complement; for example:

- *The teacher's house is **by** the village school.*

- *The village is **near** my mother's old house.*

Eastwood (2000:294) states that *'near'* and *'near (to)'* can be used to mean ' not far from' as in the following example:

- *We live **near (to)** the hospital.*

Quirk et al (1985:680) hold that *' between'* connects the position of an object to a definite or exclusive set of discrete objects, whereas *'among'* relates non discrete objects as in:

 - *The house stands **between** two farms.*

 -*The house stands **among** farms.*

Moreover, Thomson and Martinet (1986:101) state that '*between'* naturally relates a person or a thing, to two other people or things but it can be used with more when there is a definite number in mind; for example:

- *Luxembourg lies **between** Belgium, Germany, and France.*

In contrast, '*among'* connects a person or a thing to more than two others; naturally with no definite number in mind; for example:

 - *He was happy to be **among** friends again.*

 - *I saw a village **among** the hills.*

Eastwood (2000:294) expresses that there is a difference between *'between'* and *'among'*. 'Between' is used with a small number of items that one can see as separate and individual, whereas 'among' suggests a larger number, for instance:

- *The ball went **between** the player's legs.*

- *I was hoping to spot Marcia **among** the crowd.*

**'With'** can be used instead of 'among' in this sense as in:

- *He was **with** friends.*

It also can be used in description as in:

- *The boy **with** his hands in his pockets...*

- *The man **with** his feet on desk...*

Other uses of '*with*' :

- *The mountains were covered **with** snow*.   (By)

- *He cut it **with** a knife.*                              (By means of)

- *I have no money **with** me / **on** me.*           (Having)

The negative of *'with'* is *'without'*, for examples:

- *She is a woman **with** a large family.*

- *She is a woman **without** children*. ('childless woman')

(Quirk et al. 1985:327)


## 2.2.6.2  Prepositions of Time:

### 2.6.2.2.1  Time- *when*

Quirk et al. (ibid.: 309) and Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 154) point out that ' ***at , on , in*** ' refer to 'time when' . They are parallel to the same items as positive  prepositions of position. But in the time field there are only two dimensions: point of time and period of time . *'**At**',* for example, is used for a point of time , while *'**on**'* and *'**in**'*  for a period of time. Generally speaking, '*on*' is used for days and *'in'* for periods longer or shorter than days, whereas duration is referred to by '*for , during*', etc.

More information is introduced here on the uses and the syntactic features of the following prepositions of time:

### 1- 'At' Preposition:

*'At'*  is used in the following cases :

1) To refer to points of time; chiefly clock time, as in :

*- They arrived **at** five o'clock*

*- I'll meet you **at** 6:30 p.m.*

(O' Driscoll ,1988:92-3 and Lindstromberg ,1997: 57).

2) To speak about the whole of the public holidays or festivals as periods watched as points in the calendar as in :

*- Will you be here **at** the weekend ?*

*- Do you give each child a present **at** Christmas ?*

It is said that British people say ' at the weekend ' , while the Americans say ' on the weekend'.

3) To refer to vaguely identified periods like , at breakfast time , at night, etc. as in :

*- I do not like going out **at** night*

*- He is always in bed **at** breakfast time.*

<div align="right">(Leech and Svartvik, 1994: 83)</div>

4) In the  expressions such as  ' at the moment' , 'at that time' , 'at that moment' , 'at any moment', 'at the same time', 'at a time' , 'at an age', 'at once', 'at first sight' as in:

*- Mr. Ben is busy **at the moment***

*- Shakespeare died **at the age** of fifty –two.*

*- Do what I tell you **at once**!*

*- He fell in love **at first sight.***

<div align="right">(ibid.: 82)</div>

**2- 'On' Preposition:**

According to Murphy and Smalzer (2003:242-3) '*on'* can be used in the following cases:

1) With phrases referring to days of week as a period of time and dates such as *'on Friday/Fridays'* , *'on 16 May 1999', 'on May the first'*; for example :

- *I have been invited to a wedding **on**14 February.*

2) To refer to one day of a public holiday like (*on Christmas day, on my birthday*); for instance:

- *Children get presents **on** their birthday*

- *We met **on** the Christmas day.*

3) Before morning , afternoon, evening, night (of a certain day); for example:

- *I'll see you **on** Friday morning*

Other examples from Thomson and Martinet (1986: 94) are:

- *They arrived **on** the evening of Friday the 1$^{st.}$.*

- *He arrived **on** the morning of the sixth of April.*

It should be noted that 'on' is used to indicate part of a day than a whole day, to mean which morning, evening, etc. It describes the (*morning, evening*, etc.); otherwise, *'in'* is used instead of '*on'* to refer to any part of a day, except (at night); for instance:

4) With the following expressions (on arrival , on arriving , on reaching , on getting to) to mean (as soon as, immediately after) as in:

- ***On** reaching home, I changed my clothes and had a bath.*

Moreover, 'on' can be used similarly with gerunds of certain verbs (mainly verbs of information) as in:

- ***On** checking, she found that some party did not Know the way.*

- ***On** hearing that the plane had diverted , they left the airport.* ('on' can be deleted here)

(ibid.: 94)

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**3- 'In' Preposition:**

      Murphy and Smlazer (2003: 232) indicate that *'in'* can be used in the following cases:

1) For longer periods (months, seasons, years and centuries) such as (in October , in 1988 , in the 18th century, in (the) winter, in the past, in the 1990's, in the middle ages, in the future),for example:

- *I began work here **in** January **in** 1990.*

- *The price of electricity is going up **in** October.*

2) Before parts of the day: in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening, ( but at night ) as in.

 - *I'll see you **in** the morning.*

 - *If the sky is clear, you can see the stars **at** night.*

                                (Murphy, 2004: 242)

3) To tell how long it takes to do something or complete an action such as (*in few minutes, in six months, in a week, in a moment*, etc.) as in :

 - *Andy has gone away. He'll be back **in** a week.*

- *I learnt to drive **in** four weeks.* (= it took me four weeks to learn)

                                  (ibid.:244)

4) Thomson and Martinet (1986: 101) differentiate between these expressions: *'on time' ,'in time', and 'in good time' . 'On time'* means [at the time arranged, not before, not after]; for examples:

 - *The 8.15 train started **on time** .* (= it started at 8.15)

 - *The conference was well- organized. Everything began and finished **on time** .*

      The opposite of *'on time'* is late :

- *Be **on time** . Don't be **late** .*

*'In time'* (for something / to do something) means [in good time, soon enough (i.e. in time / in time for + noun = not late]; in good time ( for) means [ with a comfortable margin] as in :

- *Passengers should be **in time** for their train.*

- *I arrived at the concert hall **in good time** (for the concert).* (Perhaps the concert began at 7:30 and I arrived at 7:15)

The opposite of *' in time '* is too late :

- *I got home **too late** to see the football match .*

One can say ' *just in time* ' means almost too late as in the following examples :

- *We got to the station **just in time** for our train .*

- *A child ran into the road in front of the car – I managed to stop **just in time** .*

One can also say ' in six months' time', or ' a week's time ' etc.

- *They 're getting married **in six months' time**.*

- *They 're getting  married **in six months** .*

<div align="right">(Murphy and Smalzer, 2003:234)</div>

5) Murphy (2004:244) states that one can say' at the beginning / end',' in the beginning /end', at first /at last '. At the end (of something) = at the time when something ends:

- *I'm going away **at the end of** January .*

- ***At the end** there may be an index .*

The opposite of *'at the end'* is *'at the beginning* '; for example:

- ***At the beginning of** a book is often a table of contents .*

- *Are you going away **at the beginning of** August ?*

While 'in the beginning' = at first = in the early stages ; it means that later on there was a change; for example"

- *In the beginning / at first we used hand tools .Later we had machines.*

The opposite of ' in the beginning / at first' is ' in the end' = at last = finally or eventually / after sometime.  'In the end / at last ' are used to say what the final result of a situation was:

- ***At first*** *he opposed the marriage, but in the end he gave his consent .*

- *We had a lot of problems with our car. We sold it **in the end**. (= finally we sold it)*

- ***In the beginning*** *we didn't like each other very much, but **at last** we became good friends .*

### 2..2.6.2.2  Duration:

### 1. For

1) Quirk and Greenbaum ( 1973: 154-5) state that duration is expressed by ' for' . Compare:

- *We camped there **for** the summer* (i.e. all through).

- *We camped there **in** the summer* (i.e. at some time during the summer).

2) It is used in idiomatic phrases like ' for ever', and ' for good' (for ever). (ibid.:155)

3)  One can use 'for' + period of time to say how long something goes on for two hours, for a week, for ages, for six years, for two months as in:

- *We watched television **for two hours** last night.*

- *Where have you been ? I've been waiting **for ages**.*

- *Diane is going away **for a week** in September.*

(Murphy, 2004 : 238)

Thomson and Martinet (1986: 95) state that 'for' + period of time can be used either with a perfect present tense or past perfect tense for an action which extends up to the time of speaking :

- *He has worked here **for** a year*.(He began working here a year ago and still works here)  .

*' **For** '* used in this way is replaceable by *since* with the point in time when the action began:

- *He has worked here **since** this time last year.*


## 2. During

1) Eckersley and Eckersley (1980:290) point out that ' *during'* is used for time, never place, and means; 'throughout the duration or continuance of '; for example:

   - *The sun gives light **during** the day, the moon **during** the night .*

2) Thomson and Martinet (1986:95) state that '*during'*  is used when  the action can either last the whole period or occur at some time within the period as in  :

   - *He was ill for a week, and **during** that week he ate nothing.*

3) Only 'during' can be used to mean ' in the course of ' before nouns like *stay, visit, meal, conversation,* etc., indicating an event lasting some time:

    - *We went to the zoo **during** our stay in Washington.*

    - ***During** the peace talks, there was a complete news blackout.*

4) There is a contrast between *'during'* and '*for*'. 'During' is used with known periods of time (i.e. periods known by name, such as *Christmas, Easter or periods* which have been already defined: *during the middle ages, during 1941, during the summer* (of that

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year), *during his childhood, during my holidays, during the film, during the night*; as in :

- *I fell asleep **during** the film.*

- *We met some really nice people **during** our holiday.*

While 'for' (indicating purpose) may be used before known periods as in:

- *I went there/ I hired a car / I rented a house for my holidays/ for summer.*

<div align="right">(Thomson and Martinet ,1986:95).</div>

5) Leech and Svartvik (1994: 83) clarify that ' during' and 'in' are more or less equivalent, but ' during' can be used where the verb phrase refers to a state or habit and also means duration :

- *He had been an airman **in / during** the Second World War.*

- *You can come back tomorrow **in /during** visiting hours.*


## 3. Over, Through and Throughout

Quirk et al. (1985: 689) state that *'over (all), through,* and *throughout'* have a durational meaning in addition to their pervasive meaning in reference to place . *'Over'* can be used instead of *'for'* to refer to a shorter period of time than *through (out)*:

- *We camped there **over** the holiday/ **over** Christmas/ **over** the weekend/ **over** night.*

- *We camped there **through** **(out)** the summer .*

It should be noted that phrases of duration answer the question :

'How long' ?

compare :

- *When did you stay there? **in** the summer .* (Time- when)

- *How long did you stay there? **for** the summer .* (Duration)

<div align="center">52</div>

## 4. Till and Until

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 690), *'till'* and *'until'* can only co-occur with durative verbs , i.e. verbs that refer to period of time ) (such as camp and work) .

Compare :

- *My girl friend worked there **till** Christmas.*

- *My girl friend *arrived there **till** Christmas.*

The situation for until/till is thus the opposite of that for *' by'* referring to an end point, which co-occurs only with momentary verbs; as in :

- *She *worked **by** Christmas.*

- *She arrived **by** Christmas.*

In negative contexts, *'until'* and *'till'* are acceptable with both durational and momentary verbs :

- *She didn't arrive there **till** Christmas.*

The two meanings of *'till'* and *'until'* are different with positive and negative predications. With positive meaning *'till'* and *'until'* specify a terminal point 'up to' ; for example:

- *We slept **until** midnight.* (' we stopped sleeping then')

Whereas, with negative predications, they specify a starting point 'before' :

- *We didn't sleep **until** midnight.* ('we started sleeping then')

Thomson and Martinet (1986: 96) say that *'until'* and *'till'* can be used with negative verbs to emphasize lateness; for instance :

- *We didn't get home **till** 2 a.m.*

- *He usually pays me on Friday but last week he didn't pay me **till** the following Monday .*

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*'Till'* and *'until'* are very much used as conjunctions of time :

- He'll stay here **till** it stops raining.


## 5. Pairs of Prepositions

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 155) point out that ***'from …. to'*** as a pair of prepositions whose locative meaning is transferred to duration, whereas Leech and Svartivk (1994:87) state that the pair identify a period by its beginning and end as in:

- *Hayes worked for the CIA* ***from*** *1949* ***to*** *1970* .

Quirk and Greenbaum (ibid.:155) state that the American alternative expression ***'from… through'*** is used to avoid the ambiguity that the whole period includes the second period named :

- *We camped there* ***from*** *June* ***through*** *September*. (AmE) [= ' up to and including September']

Quirk and Greenbaum (1972:690) clarify  another pair of prepositions whose locative meaning is transferred to duration.*' from…. to'* or ' *from….. till/ until*'; for example:

- *We camped there* ***from*** *June* ***to*** *September.*

- *We camped there* ***from*** *June* ***till*** *September*. (= up to and including September).

But with *'from'* absent, only *'until', 'till'*, and *'through'* (AME) can be used as in :

- *We camped there* **until / till** *September.*

- *We camped there* ***till*** *September.*

- *We camped there* ***through*** *September.* (AmE)

- *We camped there (**\*to**) Septemb*er.

**'To'** can be used as alongside '*till*' :

- *You can stay **to/ till** the end of September .*

- *I have only a few years **to /till** retirement .*

Miller (1946:223) points out that '*to'* can be used to the final point of duration in time; for instance:

- *He was brave **to** the last.*

Thomson and Martinet (1986:96) mention that '*to'* can be used for time and place, while *'till'/'until'* for time only.

**'Between …. and'** is used for periods identified by their starting and ending points, but in contrast to *'from .... to'*, does not refer to the whole time span :

- *We'll probably arrive sometime **between** 5 **and** 6 o'clock.*

- *I'll phone you **between** lunch **and** dinner.*

Quirk and Greenbaum (1972:692) refer to Between x and y can include  x and y:

- *I'll ring **between** Thursday **and** Saturday.*

This expression does not mean that the call will be on Friday, but can also be on Thursday or Saturday. Thus *'between ..... and'* here means about  (i.e. 'some time on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday'. **'Between'** is further required to refer to intervals between similar objects or events which occur repeatedly: between/ meals/ dances/ acts/classes.


Eastwood (2000: 298) states that '*between'* is used for a period after one time and before another as in:

- *Not many people work **between** Christmas and New Year's Day.*

## 6. Before and After

Leech and Svartvik (1994: 318) state that these words' *before, after, till, until'* are conjunctions as well as prepositions. As prepositions, they occur almost exclusively as prepositions of time, and followed by either

 (a) a temporal noun phrase (after next week).

 (b) a noun phrase with adverbial noun or some other noun phrase interpreted as equivalent to clause:

- **Till/ until** *the fall of Rome*  [' until Rome fell']

- **Before** *the war*  ['before the war started or took place']

Leech and Svartvik (Ibid.: 88) mention that in the negative *'until'* can occur with event verbs, and is similar in meaning to *'before'; as in*:

- *He didn't start to read* **until** *he was ten* (= he didn't start to read before he was ten).

They (ibid:84) state that '*before*' and    '*after'* as prepositions, conjunctions, and adverbs refer to relations between two times or events.

 - *The service was so much better* **before** *the war*. (before = preposition)

 - *The secretary had left immediately* **after** *the meeting*. (after = preposition)

Quirk et al. (1985: 690) point out that '*before'* and *'after'* have an opposite meaning; for instance:

 - *The meeting will take place after the ceremony* (= the ceremony will take place before the meeting).

## 7. 'By'

Eastwood (2000: 298)  clarifies that '*by'* means ' not later than**;** For example:

 - *I'm always up* **by** *eight o'clock* (= at eight or earlier)

Leech and Svartivk (1994: 84) state that *'by'* refers to the time at which the result of an event is existent (not later than):

- *Your papers are to be handed in **by** next week.* (not later than)

- *Please send me the tickets **by** next week!* (i.e. I want to have tickets not later than next week).

One can say' by the time 'something happened (for the past) as in:

- *I had a lot of work to do yesterday evening. I was very tired **by the time** I finished.* (= it took me a long time to do the work, and I became more tired during this time).

Murphy and Smalzer (2003: 240) states that one can say 'by then' or' by that time':

- *Karen finally arrived at the party at midnight; but **by then** (or by that time), most of the guests had left.*

'By' specifies a commencement point.:

- ***By** that time he was exhausted.* (= he was then exhausted)

Quirk et al. (1985: 692) point out that ' by' refers to an end point. *(Already, till, yet, and anymore)* are related in meaning:

- ***By** the time we'd walked five miles, he was already exhausted.*

Thomson and Martinet (1986:94) state that 'by + time' expression is used with perfect tense, especially the future perfect:

- ***By** the end of July I'll have read all those books.*

## 2.2.6.3  Other English Prepositions

## 1. Prepositions of Exception (But and Except)

Thomson and Martinet (ibid.:101) point out that 'but' and 'except' are prepositions having the same meaning and are interchangeable . *'But'*

is more usual when the preposition + object is placed immediately after *nobody , none , nothing , nowhere* etc. as in :

- *Nothing **but** the best is sold in our shops .*

whereas '*except*' is more usual when the preposition phrase comes later in the sentence, for example :

- *Nobody knew the way **except** Tom .*

'Except' is also used after all, everybody, everyone, everything, everywhere etc. 'But' is more emphatic than 'except' after anybody, anything, anywhere

 etc.; for example :

- *You can park anywhere **but** / **except** here .*

  'But' and 'except' take only the bare infinitive as in :

- *I could do nothing **except** agree .*

- *He did nothing **but** complain .*

However, if *'but'* is used as a conjunction, it can be followed directly by either full infinitive or gerund :

- *Being idle sometimes is agreeable, but being idle all the time might become monotonous .*


Quirk et al. (1985:707) mention that other meanings of preposition are exception and addition: The most common prepositions referring to exception are *' except for', ' with the exception of', ' apart from '*, ' aside from '(especially. AME),' *excluding', ' but', and 'save'*(formal). When used in adverbials, prepositions referring to exception function primarily as a disjunct; for example:

- *We had a pleasant time, **except for** the weather.*

'But' cannot occur initially as preposition as in :

- *But me, everyone was tired.

- **Except for** me, everyone was tired.

The prepositional phrase is often separated from its noun head and postponed to the end of the clause as in:

- *Everyone but me was tired ~ everyone was tired **but me**.*

**Addition** : It is said that addition can be expressed by the prepositions' beside' and 'in addition to'; for example:

**- There were three people present besides the committee.**


## 2. In spite of and despite

Quirk et al. (1985:706) point out prepositional phrase meanings which are included in ' *in spite of* ', and ' *despite*' . *'In spite of* ' is a general purpose preposition of concession; '*despite*' is rather more formal as in:

- *I admire him **in spite of** his faults.*

- ***Despite** strong pressure from the government, the unions have refused to order a return to work .*

Murphy (2004: 226) states that after ' *in spite of* ' and ' *despite* ' one can use a noun, pronoun ( *this* , *that* , *what* etc.) or  -ing as in the following examples :

- ***In spite of** the rain, we enjoyed our holiday.*

- *I didn't get the job **in spite of** having the necessary qualifications.*

- *She wasn't well, but **in spite of** this she went to work.*

'Despite' is the same as ' in spite of ' . We say ' in spite of', but ' despite' (without of) as in:

- *She wasn't well, but **despite** this she went to work. (not despite of this)*

One can say ' in spite of the fact (that)'…. and 'despite the fact (that)' …. as in :

- *I didn't get the job **in spite of the fact (that)** I had the necessary qualifications.*
- *I didn't get the job **despite the fact (that)** I had the necessary qualifications.*

## 3. Like

Murphy (2004: 234) states that ' like ' is a preposition which means 'similar to ', 'the same as'. It is followed by a noun, pronoun or-ing as in:

- *What a beautiful house! It's **like** a palace.*
- *Be careful! The floor has been polished. It's **like** walking on ice.*

And sometimes ' like' means 'for example', as in:

- *Some sport, **like** motor-racing, can be dangerous .*

## 4. Because of

Quirk et al. (1985:695) indicate that *'because of '* is used to express either material or psychological cause for happening. Phrases of cause, reasons and motives answer the question of 'why'; for example:

- *We had to drive slowly **because of** the heavy rain.*
- ***Because of** his wide experience, he was made a chairman.*

## 5. Against

Quirk (1988:18) states that 'against' is used in the following cases: To convey the meaning of ' in opposition to ' as in :

- *Theft is **against** the law .*

Touching; or supported by as in :

- *I leaned my bicycle **against** the wall.*


### 6. Unto

Quirk (ibid.: 1158) shows that it is the old and biblical use of *'to'* ; for example :

- *He spoke **unto** him.*


### 7. Out

Quirk (ibid.:731) shows that *'out'* is informally used to show an outward movement;  for example :

- *He went **out** the door .*


### 8. Of

Miller(1946:220) expresses that 'of ' refers to many meanings such as origin, source, deprivation, possession, concerning, cause, materials and contents, distance, position in space ,for example:

- *We live 40 miles south **of** London*. (distance)

- *He deprived me **of** my living*. (deprivation)

- *The roof **of** the house must be mended*. (possession)

- *He spoke **of** me.* (concerning)

## 2.2.7  Idiomatic Usage of English Prepositions

Aron (2001:275) defines an idiom as a combination of words that seems perfectly natural to the native speaker of a language but seems odd or peculiar to other people (usually because it has a meaning different from the literal meaning of the words). Idiomatic expressions generally consist of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and phrases which are associated with specific prepositions. If any other preposition is used, then the expression is unidiomatic and, therefore, incorrect.

Moreover, Eastman (2007: Encarta Encyclopedia) clarifies that some words may only be used with certain prepositions. For example, *you cannot be struck on an idea* or *struck to it*—your only choice is to *be struck by it*.

Other words may be used with several prepositions. In some cases, however, a word's meaning depends on which preposition is used. Prepositional idioms, Like other idiomatic expressions, are dictated by convention, not by rules; therefore, the more one commits to memory, the fewer mistakes he will make in using them. Appendix **1** contains a list of the most confusing or troublesome prepositional idioms.

### 2.2.7.1  Prepositions in Phrasal Verbs

Close (1967:55-7)  shows that there is another class of idiomatic use that is what is called phrasal verbs, which fall into two types: separable and inseparable and they are either transitive or intransitive.

Many verbs in English are followed by an adverb or a preposition (also called a particle), and these two-part verbs, called phrasal verbs, are different from verbs with helpers. The particle that follows the verb

changes the meaning of the phrasal verb in idiomatic ways. Take the verb '**drop**' as an example:

| drop off (1) | decline gradually | e.g. The hill dropped off near the river. |
| drop off | fall asleep | e.g. While doing his homework, he dropped off. |
| drop off | stop and give something to someone | e.g. Would you drop this off at the post office? |
| drop out (2) | cease to participate | e.g. After two laps, the runner dropped out. |

Some particles can be separated from the verb so that a noun and pronoun can be inserted, whereas some particles cannot be separated from the verb. In addition, some phrases are intransitive, meaning they cannot take a direct object.

Unfortunately, there is usually no indicator whether an idiomatic phrase is separable, inseparable, or intransitive. In most cases the phrases must simply be memorized. Table **2.1** below is a partial list of each kind of phrase.

**Table 2.1**

**Illustration of separable , inseparable and intransitive verb phrases**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Separable | Add up (meaning: to add ) | **Correct**: She *added* it **up** on her calculator |
| Inseparable | Get around (meaning: to evade ) | Correct : She always ***gets around*** the rules<br>**Incorrect:** She always **gets** the rules **around**<br>(this construction makes no sense in English ) |
| Intransitive | Catch on (meaning : to understand ) | **Correct:** After I explained the match problem, she began to ***catch on.***<br>**Incorrect :** She began to **catch on** the match problem .( *catch on* cannot take a direct object in this meaning )<br>**Correct :** She began to ***catch on to*** the match Problem . ( the word (to) makes the *match problem* an indirect object , which is acceptable in this meaning ) |

Schindler (2006:7) points out that another confusion in understanding English prepositions is that they can be used as particles in the following sentences:

- *The gasoline tank **blew up**.*

- *He didn't **catch on** to the joke.*

- *The teacher **kept on** talking.*

- *The airplane **took off**.*

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The underlined words are particles of two-word verbs and should not be understood as prepositions. Particles of two-word verbs cannot usually be separated from the main verb. Look at the following sentences:

1. *He fell **off** the cliff.*
2. *He fell **<u>off</u>** .*
3. *She came **in** the house.*
4. *She **came <u>in</u>**.*

In the first sentence, the word ***off*** functions as a preposition, while in the second, the word ***<u>off</u>*** functions as an adverb. In the third sentence, ***in*** is a preposition, whereas in the fourth sentence, ***<u>in</u>*** is an adverb.

Williams (2002: 65) clarifies that there should be a kind of differentiation between the prepositions that collocate with verbs and the particles that come after the phrasal verbs. Baker (1992: 183), Hill & Lewis (1997:15), and Mahmoud (2005:5) explain the meaning of collocation of words as those words which co-occur with each other; for example, it is correct and natural when we say ' *increase in* ' but is incorrect to say 'increase on' .

Moreover , Hartmann and Stork (1972: 208) consider phrasal verbs as those verbs that form one meaningful unit with their particles that differ from the meaning of the verb if it is uttered or used alone . While in case of collocation , verbs and the prepositions they collocate with , do not form a meaningful unit different from the original meaning of the verb. A list of phrasal verbs including separable, inseparable and intransitive verbs is introduced in Appendix 2.

## 2.2.8  Teaching English Prepositions

Since grammar, according to Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1989:69), is the internal organization of language, the language cannot be learned without learning its grammar because it is considered the element that makes meaning in language use. The same opinion is shared by the (National Capital Language Center, 2004:Int.) that emphasized the centrality of grammar to the teaching and learning of languages, and considered it  one of the most difficult aspects of language to teach well.

Being an important aspect of grammar, It is known that prepositions are a problem to teach and it is difficult for ESL students to remember their appropriate usage. Teachers are advised to use straightforward activities for prepositions that keep students active and interested. In such activities  three rules are suggested: (1) keep it simple (use as little English as possible), (2) use landmarks and visual aids such as traffic lights, distinctive signs, and (3) use gestures, point if all else fails (Andrew, 2003:Int.).

Sadker and Sadker  (2003:91-2) suggest that pedagogical circle, as shown in Figure 2.9 is made up of four steps:

a- Structure : the teacher provides information, direction and introduces topic.

b- Question : the teacher asks a question.

c- Respond : the student answers the question or tries to.

d- React : the teacher reacts to the students and provides feedback.
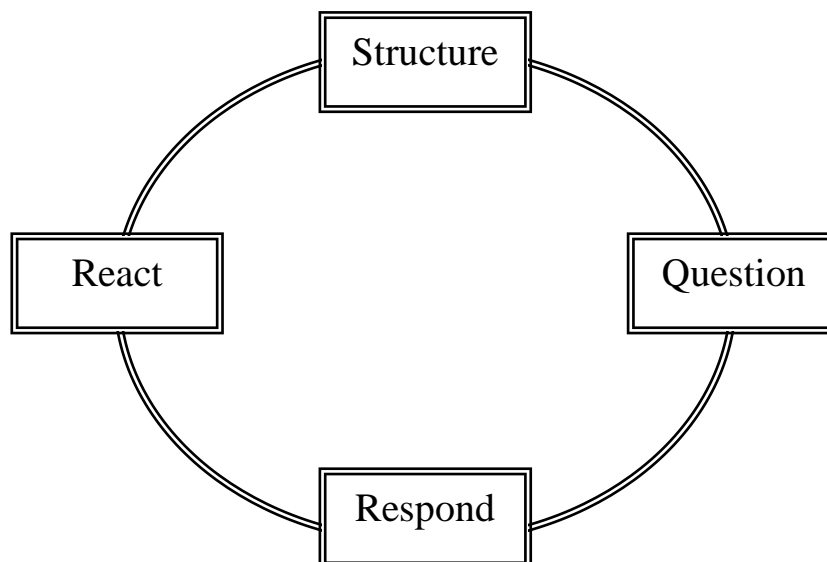
Figure 2.9
Pedagogical Cycle

Bahns and Eldaw (1993:101-4) advise teachers to draw their students' attention to combinations (e.g. verb + preposition, adjective + preposition, noun + preposition, and preposition + noun) because it is said that prepositions cannot be learnt alone.

Moreover, Bahns (1993: 44) points out that teachers should shed highlight on the collocation of propositions; for example we say : *We lie in bed but on the couch* ; *We watch a film at the theatre but on television*.

## 2.2.9 Difficulties Faced When Teaching Prepositions

Although there are no more than one hundred English prepositions and they are not inflected, and the structure of most prepositional phrases is simple, the use of English prepositions is very complex. This is so because of the following :

**Firstly**, most prepositions have more than one meaning .

**Secondly**, many prepositions can also be used as adverbs .

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**Thirdly**, prepositions are used in hundreds of idioms, adjectives, nouns.

**Fourthly**, some verbs may be followed by certain prepositions, and there are hundreds of phrasal verbs formed by combinations of verbs, adverbs, and prepositions. (Sewell, 1996: Int.)

Expressed in a different way, Swan (2005: 448) believes that it is difficult to learn prepositions correctly in a foreign language for the following reasons :

**1**. Most English prepositions have several different functions for instance, one well known dictionary lists eighteen main uses of ' at' , and these may correspond to several different prepositions in another language .

**2**. At the same time, different prepositions can have very similar uses( in the morning, on Monday morning, at night).

**3**. Many nouns, verbs, and adjectives are normally used with particular prepositions; one may say ' *the reason **for**', 'arrive **at**', 'angry **with** somebody*', *'**on a bus**'*. Often the correct preposition cannot be guessed, and one has to learn the expression as a whole.

**4**. In some expressions English has no preposition where one may be used in another language; In other expressions the opposite is true. For example in Arabic we may say (أريد الذهاب إلى البيت). إلى is a preposition while in English," I want to go home' . This expression is without a preposition .

Thomson and Martinet (1986: 91) mention that the student has two main problems with prepositions:

(**a**) He has to know whether in any construction a preposition is required or not.

(**b**) And he has to know which preposition to use when one is required.

The first problem can be especially troublesome to a European student, who may find that a certain construction in his own language requires a preposition, whereas a similar one in English does not, and vice versa; for instance, in most European languages purpose is expressed by a preposition + infinitive ; in English it is expressed by the infinitive only as in :

 - *I came here to study.*

Also it should be noted that many words used mainly as prepositions can also be used as conjunctions and adverbs. This is confirmed by Miller (1946:210-1) that all prepositions come in the accusative case while '*to*' and '*for*' and rarely *'on'* are sometimes employed to form dative phrase, and '*of'* to form an agentive phrase, as in:

  - *He gave a book **to** me*. (dative)

  - *He bought some flowers **for** her*. (dative)

  -  *She's going to the Bahamas?* (Whom) **with**? (agentive )

Such words like "after" can be differentiated using simple notice whether the word has an object, i.e. object of preposition or not .If it does, it will be considered as a preposition; if not, it will be something else but not a preposition as in :

- *You go first and I'll come after*. (Adverb, modifying the verb "come")

- *I am his nearest relative **after** you*.( preposition having "you" as an object)

- *He left after I had spoken* . (conjunction : joining two clauses )

Eckersley and Eckersley (1980:277) affirm that prepositions play a great part in the English language, and they are the reason behind many difficulties to EFL learners. The most problematic ones are idioms in which prepositions are peculiarities of language, whose "rightness" or "wrongness" is dependent on usage, neither on logic nor etymology.

## 2.3  Previous Studies

Previous studies are important in that they inform the researcher where the investigation of a specific area has reached and what the gaps left that need to be filled are. They also provide guidelines on the aims, hypotheses, procedures and statistical tools that can be useful for the researcher.

### 2.3.1 Kassim (1978)

Kassim presents a contrastive study of the use of prepositions of place relation in standard English and modern standard Arabic.

In this study, the researcher discusses English prepositions in general; and the spatial senses of the prepositions *'at', 'on', 'in', 'to'* and *'from'* in particular. Beside this, the researcher describes Arabic prepositions in terms of their number, meaning and category . The study concentrates on the spatial senses of "fii" (in), "alaa" (on), "ilaa" (to) and "min" (from), discussing these prepositions phonetically, syntactically and lexically.

Contrastive linguistics contribution in the area of improving foreign language teaching and the different attitudes pertaining to contrastive linguistics are discussed.

An empirical test is designed to check the validity of the predicted problems by comparison between standard English and modern standard Arabic of the use of the prepositions of place . The test was administered to fourth grade secondary school pupils in four schools located in Baghdad; it is applied on four sections selected at random (i.e., 50 students from each school ). The pupils participating in the test

(about 200) were regarded of equal level because they all belong to fourth year classes.

The study concluded that errors resulted from many factors such as L1 interference , lack of practice and the way English prepositions are taught.


## 2.3.2  Ali (1983)

This study is an attempt at analyzing the errors made by Kurdish -speaking pupils of secondary sixth grade when using English prepositions of place and time in the city of Sulaimaniya. having the following objectives in mind :

1.  What errors do Kurdish pupils make in the use of English prepositions?
2.  In what categories do these errors occur frequently?
3.  Do sex and other extra linguistic factors have any influence on the correct acquisition of prepositions?


A review is made of both English and Kurdish prepositions concerning their function, use, classification and meaning. Then, an empirical test is administered to Kurdish pupils in the city of Sulaimaniya to check the validity of the predicated problem by identifying and analyzing errors made by pupils.


The study concluded that errors are attributed to many factors such as L1 interference, lack of knowledge of the use of correct prepositions and over- generalization.

### 2.3.3  Abdul-Hameed (2001)

This study deals with the analysis of Iraqi Arabic speaking college students errors in te use of English prepositions of place and time.

The main objective of the study is to account for the reasons that make the student commit the different types of errors in order to specify efficient classroom procedures for teaching English prepositions of place and time and offer suggestions for conducting effective remedial work in this area .

This study was set to investigate the following three hypotheses:

1. Even at such a late stage of learning EFL, students generally fail to acquire the appropriate use of prepositions of place and time.
2. The higher the stage of study, the more efficient the learners are in handling of prepositions of place and time.
3. Prepositions of place and time that are different from those in the learners' native language are more problematic than those that are not.

In order to verify these hypotheses, a diagnostic test, following a pilot test, is designed on the basis of the outcome of the theoretical survey of English prepositions conducted for this purpose. The test is administered to a sample of 120 college students taken randomly from the four stages at the Department of English, College of Education (Ibn-Rushd), University of Baghdad (i.e. 30 students from each stage).

The elicitation techniques used are: a) the recognition technique, b) the production technique. In these two techniques, research is carried out cross-sectionally.

For the analysis of data the researcher used four different statistical techniques ; namely : percentage , Pearson's correlation coefficient, Spearman's rank order correlation , and t- test .

The analysis of the test data shows the following results :

1. The students of the four stages face difficulties in the recognition and production of English prepositions of place and time . None of them has reached the acquisition point even though the point has been lowered to 66% .

2. The subjects' receptive knowledge is higher than their productive knowledge . This is so since they perform better in the recognition task than they do in the production task .

3. The students perform better in prepositions of time than they do in those of place in both tasks in all stages with the exception of the first stage where the students perform better in prepositions of place than time .

4. The students' errors are found to be attributable to the following main factors :

   a- Transfer is the strategy most widely employed by the subjects of the study . Errors are due to the different usages between the two languages.

   b- Overgeneralization is reflected in the misuse of prepositions.

   c– The effects of the context of learning are evident in the use of English prepositions of place and time.

Finally, conclusions, pedagogical implications and recommendations are drawn, and suggestions for further research are put forward.

### 2.3.4 Yousif (2007)

This study deals contrastively with spatial and temporal prepositions in English and Arabic. It aims at :

1. grammatically describing prepositions in both languages to show the similarities as well as the differences between them concerning this area.

2. finding out which of the two types of relations, i.e., of place or of time is more problematic than the other.

3. identifying the most problematic prepositions of place and time in English which the majority of advanced Iraqi learners (AILs) of English suffer from in translation.

4. diagnosing the sources of these difficulties in order to build up some remedial solutions.

The study' sample is limited to 70 third- year students, Department of English, College of Basic Education in Iraq, for the academic year 2005-2006 .

For the difficulties and problems which AILs of English may face when translating prepositions, within sentences, into English stem, three hypotheses were set for this study:

1. For different structures which each language has, each preposition may have different meanings associated with it and perform different functions.

2. Some problems may be due to mother- tongue interference with the foreign language system or structure.

3. There is no statistical difference between spatial and temporal monosyllabic prepositions in creating difficulties and problems for AILs of English.

A translation test is conducted to a sample of 70 students test the two types of relation (i.e., place and time relations). It also concentrates on the use of prepositions in translation and the problems and difficulties AILs of English face when translating an Arabic item into English.

A number of statistical tools and formulas are used such as difficulty level, discrimination power, Alpha- Cronbach coefficient, Pearson correlation coefficient, and Chi- square formula.

The analysis of test data shows the following:

1. Prepositions in general form a great trouble spot for the majority of learners in translation or any other field.

2. Misuse of a certain preposition is the most frequent of all the errors obtained.

3. Errors in the use of prepositions are not entirely the result of the different structures which each language has. There are some other reasons such as misunderstanding the various meanings which these problematic words may have and the habit of literal translation from the mother tongue into the target language.

4. Mother tongue interference into the target language forms the most important phenomenon that makes AILs of English err in prepositions and ignore the general rules of using English prepositions.

5. In certain cases, English prepositions which have Arabic counterparts are not easy for some AILs to use .

6. Superficial thinking and usage and reliance on the form are what many AILs of English depend on when choosing a preposition rather than on logical reasoning and understanding.

In the light of these findings, a number of conclusions are drawn, several recommendations are introduced, and some suggestions for further studies are put forward.

## 2.3.5  Discussion of the Previous Studies

After surveying the relevant previous studies above, a discussion in terms of their aims, samples, instruments and statistical tools will be made in order to highlight the points that they have in common with, or differ from, the present study.

### 2.3.5.1  Aims

Although all the previous studies share the treatment of English prepositions, two of them (Kassim, 1978 and Yousif, 2007) have a theoretical orientation towards contrastive analysis with the Arabic prepositions, whereas the other two (Ali, 1983 and Abdul- Hameed, 2001) have a practical orientation by examining EFL learners' performance and analyzing their errors in this area. The present study is in line with the second trend. However, all the studies, including the present one, agree in their attempts to diagnose the sources of these errors and difficulties.

Concerning the type of prepositions involved , Kassim (1978) dealt with place prepositions , Ali(1983) , Abdul- Hameed (2001) and Yousif (2007) tackled prepositions of place and time , whereas the present study is concerned with the commonest English prepositions .

The last two studies , as well as the present one , have the further aim of suggesting remedial solutions and pedagogical activities to surmount the difficulties faced .

## 2.3.5.2  Samples

The samples used in the previous studies range from secondary school pupils ( as in Kassim's,1978 and Ali's, 1983) to college  students (as in Abdul- Hameed's, 2001 and Yousif's,2007). The number of subjects ranges from 30 in Ali's study1983 to 200 in Kassim's study1978. . Only Ali's study (1983) entirely involves Kurdish subjects while the rest of studies involves Arabic speaking subjects.

The sample of the present study is 200 third – year Arabic-speaking college students.

## 2.3.5.3  Instruments

All the previous studies surveyed here utilized a test to achieve, or help them achieve, their objectives. A diagnostic test of the recognition and production techniques was used in Abdul- Hameed's study (2001), and a translation test in Yousif 's (2007) and empirical test in Kassim's (1978) and Ali's (1983). In addition to the tests, the contrastive analysis technique was utilized in Kassim's (1978). Error analysis technique was seemingly used in all the studies in one way or another, especially in Ali's (1983) and Abdul- Hameed's(2001).

The instrument of the present study is diagnostic test consisting of 100 items at recognition and production levels.

## 2.3.5.4 Statistical Tools

The type of statistical tools used in any study is determined by its aims and hypotheses. Pearson correlation coefficient was used in Abdul- Hameed's and Yousif's. In the former study, percentages, Spearman rank correlation coefficient and t- test were also used, whereas Alpha- Cronbach coefficient and chi- square formula were used in the latter. The type of statistical tools was not mentioned in Kassim's and Ali's.

In the present study, the statistical means used are difficulty level formula, discrimination power formula, percentages, Pearson correlation coefficient formula, Spearman -Brown correlation coefficient formula and t- test for one sample and two dependent samples.

# CHAPTER THREE

# Data Collection Procedures

# CHAPTER THREE
# Data Collection Procedures

## 3.1 Introductory Notes

In order to elicit the data necessary for achieving the aims of the study and verifying its hypotheses, a test has been constructed as the main instrument of the study. This chapter deals with the test design and the procedures followed in carrying out the practical part of the study. It introduces the following steps:

1) Population and  sample of the study
2)  The test
3) Validity  of the test
4) Pilot Test
5)  Reliability of the test
6) Main administration of the test
7) Scoring scheme
8) Statistical Tools

## 3.2 Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study consists of the Iraqi undergraduate students in the Department of English, College of Education / Ibn-Rushd at the University of Baghdad for the academic year 2006-2007. This population involves 215 third year male and female students. The sample of the study includes 200 students: 100 as a pilot sample and 100 as the main one chosen randomly excluding those whose L1 is not

Arabic, non Iraqi students whose English background may differ from that of Iraqi students, and repeaters.

## 3.3 The Test

### 3.3.1 Material Selection

The first stage in test construction is to determine what material should make up the test to meet the objectives of the research. The test was designed to show whether or not third-year students are able to recognize and produce prepositions in suitable contexts. Such material has to be selected carefully in order to elicit as much data as possible through ensuring that the test items have been set gradually from the easiest to the most difficult ones . All the prepositions under study have been taken into consideration in selecting the material of the test. The material used in this investigation included all the prepositions stated in 1.4.

### 3.3.2 Test Format

The test included four questions. The first is of the multiple choice type. It consisted of 25 items at the recognition level. The second is filling in the blanks from a list. It consists of 25 items. It also exemplifies the recognition level. In these two questions the students were limited to choose from the given choices. The third question includes 25 blanks to be filled with suitable prepositions at the production level. The fourth included a composition of 25 blanks to be filled with suitable prepositions. It also represented the production level. The students were left free to write the suitable prepositions in the last two questions (see Appendix 3) .

### 3.3.3 Validity of the Test

According to Ebel (1972.143), "a test is valid if it is accurate in measuring what it is supposed to measure". Validity is the most important notion in test evaluation. Richard et al. (1992:396) define validity as "the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure, or can be used successfully for the purpose for which it is intended". In addition, Gipps (1994: 58) considers validity as the extent to which an assessment tool measures what it is supposed to measure.

There are several types of validity, the most important of which in educational settings are face and content validities. Page et al. (1979:131) state face validity is the acceptance of the apparent ability of a test to measuring what it appears to measure. While Davies et al. (1999:221) describe face validity as "the quality which most affects the value of a test, and it acts as an indicator of an abstract concept which it claims to measure"

To achieve face validity of English test items they should be given to a jury of specialists in the English language. For this purpose the face validity of the present study is made by exposing the test (Appendix 3 ) to a jury of 12 experienced EFL  university instructors.  It is noticed that the test items as a whole are judged valid by all the jury members and this means 100% agreement, with some modifications and elaborations.

Concerning content validity, this is "essentially the systematic examination of the test content to determine whether it covers a representative sample of the behavior domain to be measured".

(Anastasi,1982:46)

*The jury members are, arranged according to their academic titles and then alphabetically, are:*

1-    Prof. Al-Kinany, Abraham, Ph.D., Dept. of Psychology, College of Arts, University of Al-Mustansiriya.

2-    Prof. Nuri, Bushra, M.A., Dept. of English, College of Arts, University of Al-Mustansiriya.

3-    Asst. Prof. Al-Bakri, Shaima', Ph.D., Dept. of English, College of Education (Ibn – Rushd), University of Baghdad.

4-    Asst. Prof. Garma, Safa' Tariq, Ph.D., Dept. of Educational and Psychology, College of Education (Ibn-Rushd), University of Baghdad.

5-    Asst. Prof. Mahood, Umran, Ph.D., Dept. of English, College of Education (Ibn – Rushd), University of Baghdad.

6-    Asst. Prof. Nasir, Abdul Hameed, Ph.D., Dept. of English, College of Languages, University of Baghdad.

7-    Asst. Prof. Al-Ani, Lamia', M.A., Dept. of English, College of Education (Ibn-Rushd), University of Baghdad.

 8-    Asst. Prof. Al- Jobouri , Najat, Ph.D., Dept. of English, College of Education for Women,  University of Baghdad.

9-    Asst. Prof. Al-Sa'adi, Shatha, M.A., Dept. of English, College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad.

10-    Instr.   Al-Khafaji, Radhya Muttar, Ph.D., Dept. of English College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad.

11-    Instr.   Al-Tamimi, Salam, Ph.D., Dept. of English, College of Education (Ibn – Rushd), University of Baghdad.

12-     Instr.  Lutfi, Abbas, Ph.D., Dept. of English, College of Education (Ibn-Rushd), University of Baghdad.

### 3.3.4  Pilot Test

A test cannot take its final form before it is tried out (Abbot and Wingard, 1981:183). For Power (2004:5), the pilot test (henceforth PT) serves to establish the potential range of performance on the test and highlight any problem of administration and scoring. Tuckman (1972:197) considers the aim of the PT as an attempt to determine whether or not items of the test pass the desired qualities of measurement and discrimination. Harris (1969:103-4) also states the aims of conducting the pilot study as follows:

1. To find whether the items are suitable.

2. To check the test instructions.

3. To know the testees' reaction towards it and their opinion on its contents.

4. To know the time required for the examinees to answer the test.

5. To analyze the test items, the difficulty level and the discrimination level of the items.

A PT was administered to a sample of 100 students selected randomly from the third year students in the Department of English, College of Education/ Ibn-Rushd at University of Baghdad. It was held on May 16$^{th}$ , 2007. The findings of the PT reveal that the suitable time for the students to answer the whole items was 45 minutes. It was also found out that the testees have answered smoothly and there is no problem in administration and scoring. In addition, the testees have enjoyed the test showing positive reaction toward it.

### 3.3.5 Item Analysis

This process is followed to check single test items depending on certain criteria. It is devoted to determine the difficulty level DL and the discrimination power DP of the items in the test (Mehrens and Lehman, 1973:696 and Scannel, 1975:215).

### 3.3.5.1 Difficulty level of the Test Items:

One of the aims of the PT is to determine the DL of the test items. If the test items are too difficult or too easy they will lack the necessary power of discrimination (Madsen, 1983:180).

Theoretically speaking, The cutting point for calculating the DL of test items is 27 per cent by separating the higher scoring and lower scoring groups applied on the correct responses of the testees to each item. Any item whose DL ranges from 20 to 80 per cent is acceptable (Bloom, 1971: 95). The DL of the tests items of this test ranges from 24% to 79% which means acceptable difficulty as shown in Table 3.1.

### 3.3.5.2 Discrimination Power of the Test Items:

The DP is a "measure of the extent to which an item distinguishes the good performer from the poor" (Al-Zawbaie & Al-Hamdani, 1982:14). Theoretically speaking, calculating the DP of a test items means separating the high-scoring and low-scoring groups who answer the items correctly and which each constitutes about 27 per cent of the whole group (Lindquist, 1974:289).

Ebel (1972:399) believes that when the DP of an item is 0.30 and above, the item is acceptable; on the other hand, if the item DP is less than 0.30, the item is weak and needs to be modified or changed. The result of applying the above formula on the test items

indicates that the DL of t he items ranges from 33% to 67% (see Table 3.1). Accordingly, all the tests items were acceptable in their discrimination.

**Table 3.1**

**The difficulty level and the discrimination power of the test items**

| Item No. | DL | DP |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.69 | 0.48 |
| 2 | 0.31 | 0.33 |
| 3 | 0.33 | 0.37 |
| 4 | 0.72 | 0.48 |
| 5 | 0.52 | 0.67 |
| 6 | 0.57 | 0.41 |
| 7 | 0.26 | 0.37 |
| 8 | 0.26 | 0.37 |
| 9 | 0.59 | 0.33 |
| 10 | 0.72 | 0.37 |
| 11 | 0.41 | 0.37 |
| 12 | 0.33 | 0.56 |
| 13 | 0.24 | 0.48 |
| 14 | 0.44 | 0.41 |
| 15 | 0.37 | 0.63 |
| 16 | 0.66 | 0.41 |
| 17 | 0.48 | 0.44 |
| 18 | 0.30 | 0.59 |
| 19 | 0.39 | 0.41 |
| 20 | 0.69 | 0.37 |
| 21 | 0.57 | 0.41 |
| 22 | 0.24 | 0.41 |
| 23 | 0,61 | 0.44 |
| 24 | 0.28 | 0.48 |
| 25 | 0.31 | 0.48 |
| 26 | 0.36 | 0.41 |
| 27 | 0.30 | 0.48 |
| 28 | 0.79 | 0.52 |
| 29 | 0.48 | 0.52 |
| 30 | 0.66 | 0.56 |

| Item No. | DL | DP |
|----------|------|------|
| 31 | 0.44 | 0.37 |
| 32 | 0.70 | 0.52 |
| 33 | 0.59 | 0.44 |
| 34 | 0.65 | 0.44 |
| 35 | 0.61 | 0.63 |
| 36 | 0.74 | 0.41 |
| 37 | 0.72 | 0.41 |
| 38 | 0.59 | 0.52 |
| 39 | 0.66 | 0.38 |
| 40 | 0.79 | 0.41 |
| 41 | 0.50 | 0.52 |
| 42 | 0.79 | 0.37 |
| 43 | 0.54 | 0.48 |
| 44 | 0.74 | 0.37 |
| 45 | 0.56 | 0.37 |
| 46 | 0.57 | 0.41 |
| 47 | 0.79 | 0.41 |
| 48 | 0.26 | 0.52 |
| 49 | 0,61 | 0.37 |
| 50 | 0.63 | 0.44 |
| 51 | 0.70 | 0.44 |
| 52 | 0.72 | 0.40 |
| 53 | 0.76 | 0.44 |
| 54 | 0.68 | 0.44 |
| 55 | 0.48 | 0.37 |
| 56 | 0.76 | 0.41 |
| 57 | 0.46 | 0.44 |
| 58 | 0.35 | 0.48 |
| 59 | 0.76 | 0.44 |
| 60 | 0.72 | 0.37 |
| 61 | 0.65 | 0.37 |
| 62 | 0.74 | 0.52 |
| 63 | 0.74 | 0.37 |
| 64 | 0.56 | 0.52 |
| 65 | 0.70 | 0.41 |
| 66 | 0.63 | 0.37 |
| 67 | 0.78 | 0.41 |

| Item No. | DL | DP |
|---|---|---|
| 68 | 0.61 | 0.41 |
| 69 | 0.72 | 0.37 |
| 70 | 0.48 | 0.41 |
| 71 | 0.41 | 0.44 |
| 72 | 0.57 | 0.44 |
| 73 | 0.43 | 0.67 |
| 74 | 0.59 | 0.37 |
| 75 | 0.33 | 0.37 |
| 76 | 0.54 | 0.33 |
| 77 | 0.70 | 0.37 |
| 78 | 0.46 | 0.41 |
| 79 | 0.61 | 0.33 |
| 80 | 0.54 | 0.33 |
| 81 | 0.72 | 0.37 |
| 82 | 0.50 | 0.37 |
| 83 | 0.67 | 0.33 |
| 84 | 0.78 | 0.37 |
| 85 | 0.38 | 0.56 |
| 86 | 0.70 | 0.41 |
| 87 | 0.44 | 0.48 |
| 88 | 0.26 | 0.33 |
| 89 | 0.41 | 0.59 |
| 90 | 0.59 | 0.33 |
| 91 | 0.46 | 0.56 |
| 92 | 0.33 | 0.33 |
| 93 | 0.76 | 0.33 |
| 94 | 0.65 | 0.41 |
| 95 | 0.78 | 0.33 |
| 96 | 0.78 | 0.37 |
| 97 | 0.61 | 0.37 |
| 98 | 0.78 | 0.41 |
| 99 | 0.70 | 0.44 |
| 100 | 0.72 | 0.37 |

### 3.3.6 Reliability of the Test

One of the most significant criteria of a good test is the reliability of its scores. Page et al. (1979: 289) define reliability as the extent to which a test is dependable, stable and consistent, when given to different people and /or administered on different occasions. In other words, the reliability of the test is the consistency of scores obtained by the same persons when reexamined with the same test on different occasions (Al-Hamash and Younis, 1982:201)

In practice," reliability is enhanced by making the test instruction absolutely clear, restricting the scope for variety in the answers, and making sure that the test conditions remain constant". (Harmer, 2001:322). It is well known that even the same test when carried out again at a latter time to the same group of testees, under the same conditions; it is unlikely to yield exactly the same scores however, the more comparable the test scores are the more reliable they are (Wells and Wollack, 2003:13).

Coombe and Hubley (1998: 16) hold that three important factors affect test reliability. Test factors such as the formats and content of the questions and the length of the exam must be consistent. For example, testing research shows that longer exams produce more reliable results than very brief quizzes. Administrative factors are also important for reliability. These include the classroom setting (lighting, seating arrangements, acoustics, lack of intrusive noise, etc.) and how the teacher manages the exam administration. Affective factors in the response of individual students can also affect reliability.

In order to achieve reliability, the split- half method (which is one of the methods for calculating reliability beside test – retest, Kuder-Richardson 20, 21 and alpha-Cronbach) is used. This is achieved by dividing the test into two parts ; the first one represents the odd items in

the test  while the second  represents the even ones . In order to find reliability, Pearson correlation formula between the answers of the two halves is used showing a correlation coefficient is 0.604. Since it represents the correlation coefficient of half of the test, Spearman-Brown formula is used to find out the reliability of the whole test which is 0.75, and which is considered acceptable.

## 3.3.7 Main Test Administration

The test in its final version was applied in a big hall gathering the students of the third year at the Department of English, College of Education/ Ibn Rushd, University of Baghdad. The time was 45 minutes and it was enough to answer all the items of the test. The test was administered on the 30th of May, 2007 to a sample of 100 male and female students. Some explanations in Arabic were given to ensure full understanding of the test requirements on the part of the sample. All the students answered all the items of the test.

## 3.3.8 Scoring Scheme

For the purpose of objectivity and reliability, an accurate and objective scoring scheme must be used (Harrack and Schonnover, 1969:76). The testee's answer to any item of each question would be either correct or incorrect. The correct use is given one mark, while the wrong one is given zero .The full mark of each question is 25 and the full mark of the whole test is 100. Such a way of measuring is objective and definite since it leaves no room for the scorer's personal, judgments, and  spelling mistakes are ignored. For the sake of making the scoring scheme more valid, the testees' answers are scored twice, first by the researcher herself and second by one of her colleagues. The comparison of the two scores of each answer sheet reveals no

difference; i.e., they are identical. Appendix 4 provides the answer key of the test items .

## 3.4 Statistical Tools

The statistical means used to achieve the objectives of the study are the following:

**1-** Percentage is used to show the differences between the sample's performances in the recognition and the production levels.

**2-** Pearson correlation coefficient formula is used to estimate the reliability of the test.

$$r = \frac{N \, \Sigma xy - \Sigma x \, . \, \Sigma \, y}{\sqrt{[N\Sigma x^2 - (\Sigma x)^2][N\Sigma y^2 - (\Sigma y)^2]}}$$

Where:

X = the first set of scores.

Y = the second set of the scores.

N = the number of the sample.

$\Sigma xy$ = the sum of the product of x and y scores for each student.

(Van Dalen1966:356) and (Glass and Stanley, 1970: 114)

**3-** Spearman – Brown Formula is used to correct the correlation coefficient, in order to represent the reliability of the test as a whole.

$$r_{11} = \frac{2 \times r}{1 + r}$$

Where:

r = the Pearson correlation coefficient for the two parts of the test.

( Rosco, 1969:105)

**4-** The difficulty level formula is used for determining the DL of each item:

$$DL = \frac{R_u + R_L}{N}$$

Where :

DL = Difficulty level

$R_U$ = the number of correct answers in the upper group

$R_L$ = the number of correct answers in the lower group

N = Total number of testees

<div align="right">( Ebel 1972:65 )</div>

**5-** The discriminatory power is used for calculating the DP of each item:

$$DP = \frac{Ru - R_L}{1\backslash 2\ N}$$

**Where:**

DP= Discriminating power

$R_u$= the number of the testees in the upper group who got the item right

$R_L$ = the number of the testees in the lower group who got the item right

1/2 N = half of the total number of the testees included in the item analysis

<div align="right">(Gronlund,1981:268)</div>

**6.** t-test was administered to show the comparison between the students' performance in the various questions of the test, as well as between the questions of the recognition technique on hand , and those of the production technique, on the other .

a) t-test for one sample whose formula reads as follows:

$$t = \frac{\overline{X} - M}{S/\sqrt{n}}$$

X = Mean of the population

M = Mean of the sample

S = Standard deviation of the sample

n = number of students sample

(Guilford, 1965: 183) and (Glass and Stanley, 1970:242)

b) t-test for two dependent samples whose formula reads as follows:

$$t = \frac{\overline{d}}{S_d/\sqrt{n}}$$

Where :

$\overline{d}$ = mean score of differences of the scores of the two samples

$S_d$ = standard deviation of difference of the scores of the two samples

n = number of the two samples

( Guilford ,ibid.: 186) and (Glass and Stanley ,ibid.:244)

# CHAPTER FOUR

# Results, Conclusions, Recommendations, and Suggestions for Further Study

# CHAPTER FOUR
# Results, Conclusions,
# Recommendations, and Suggestions

## 4.1 Introductory Notes

This chapter is devoted to the presentation of the results obtained and their discussion. The analysis of the collected data is computed using suitable statistical tools in order to achieve the aims of the current study.

In the light of the results, conclusions are drawn, recommendations are presented and finally suggestions for further studies are proposed.

## 4.2   Presentation of Results

Having finished with test administration, the responses of the sample students (see Appendix 5) have been statistically analyzed. All the results introduced in this section are related to the fulfillment of the first aim. The second aim is achieved later in the recommendations section.

## 4.2.1 Verification of the First Hypothesis

In order to verify the first hypothesis of the study which states that "in general, EFL university learners' performance in the commonest English prepositions is inadequate" the one sample t-test has been used. Hence, the total students' performance at both recognition and production levels is statically manipulated. The mean score of the

sample students' performance **37.89** is compared to the theoretical mean (**50**) (see Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1**
**The one-sample t-test statistics for the total performance of the students in recognition and production**

| Rec. and Prod. | N | Mean | | Std. Dev. | df | t-value | | Level of significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Computed | Theoretical | | | Computed | Table | |
| **Total** | **100** | **37.89** | **50** | **11.26** | **99** | **10.757** | **1.980** | **0.05** |

The above table shows that the computed t-value which is 10.757 is bigger than the table t-value which is **1.980** at the significance level of **0.05** and with **99** freedom degrees. Since the mean score of the sample students' performance is lower than the theoretical mean, this indicates that the total performance of students in the commonest English prepositions at recognition and production levels is low and inadequate. Hence, the first hypothesis is proved.

Taken from another angle and using percentages, it is clear that the total of the students who passed the whole test is **21** students with a percentage of 21**%**. Unfortunately those who did not pass the exam are **79** and their percentage is **79%**.This is shown in the Table 4.2

**Table 4.2**
**Frequencies and percentages of the students' performance in the four questions of the test**

| | Success | | Failure | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Questions** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| **Q No. : 1** | 69 | **69** | 31 | **31** |
| **Q No. : 2** | 17 | **17** | 83 | **83** |
| **Total Rec.** | 33 | **33** | 67 | **67** |
| **Q No. : 3** | 4 | **4** | 96 | **96** |
| **Q No. : 4** | 5 | **5** | 95 | **95** |
| **Total Prod.** | 4 | **4** | 96 | **96** |
| **Total Rec. & Prod.** | 21 | **21** | 79 | **79** |

## 4.2.2 Verification of the Second Hypothesis

In order to ascertain the second hypothesis of the study which states "Iraqi EFL university learners find difficulty both in recognizing and using the common prepositions", the one- sample t-test has also been used. Each of the four questions of the test is handled separately first, followed by the combination of the two questions that represent each level.

### 4.2.2.1  Recognition level

To know the level of the students' performance in the recognition Question One, the mean score of their performance (**14.24**) is compared to the theoretical mean (**12.5**). Using the one sample t-test shows that the computed t-value (**5.373**) is greater than the table t-value (**1.980**) at the significance level of 0.05 and with 99 degrees of freedom. Table 4.3 below displays this.

**Table 4.3**

**The one-sample t-test statistics for the students' performance in recognition question one**

| Rec. | N. | Mean | | Std. Dev. | df | t-value | | Level of significance |
|------|----|----------|-------------|-----------|----|----------|-------|-----------------------|
|      |    | Computed | Theoretical |           |    | Computed | Table |                       |
| Q1   | 100 | 14.24 | 12.5 | 3.24 | 99 | 5.373 | 1.980 | 0.05 |

This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the sample mean and the theoretical mean this level of performance in favour of the sample mean. This means that the sample performance in this question is good.

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Concerning Question Two of the recognition level, the mean score of the sample performance (**8.36**) is compared to the theoretical mean (**12.5**) using the one-sample t-test. The computed t-value (**12.105**) is bigger than the table t-value (**1.980**) as shown in Table 4.4

**Table 4.4**

**The one-sample t-test statistics for the students' performance in recognition question two**

| Rec. | N. | Mean | | Std. Dev. | df | t-value | | Level of significance |
|------|-----|----------|-------------|-----------|----|----------|-------|-----------------------|
| | | Computed | Theoretical | | | Computed | Table | |
| **Q2** | **100** | **8.360** | **12.50** | **3.42** | **99** | **12.105** | **1.980** | **0.05** |

This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the sample mean and the theoretical mean of the tool, in favour of the latter. This means that the performance of the sample students in this question is weak.

As for the performance of the students in the recognition level in general in Questions One and Two, the mean score of the students' performance (**22.60**) is compared to the theoretical mean of the recognition items (**25**). Using the one-sample t-test, the computed t-value (**4.073**) is found to be bigger than the table t-value (**1.980**) at the significance level of **0.05** and **99** degrees of freedom as indicated in Table 4.5

**Table 4.5**
**The one-sample t-test statistics for the students' performance**
**in the recognition level**

| Rec. | N | Mean | | Std. Dev. | df | t-value | | Level of significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Computed | Theoretical | | | Computed | Table | |
| **Total** | **100** | **22.60** | **25** | **5.893** | **99** | **4.073** | **1.980** | **0.05** |

The above table shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the sample mean and the theoretical mean of the toolin favour of the latter, which means that the students face difficulty and suffer from their low recognition performance of the commonest English prepositions. This verifies the first part of the second hypothesis.

This result is supported by using percentages. The number of students who passed Question One in the recognition level is **69** and their percentage is **69%** while those who failed in this question are **31** and their percentage is **31%**. As for Question Two, those who succeeded are **17** and their percentage is **17%** while those who failed are **83** and their percentage is **83%**. The total of those who succeeded in the recognition level are **33** and their percentage is **33%** , whereas the total of those who failed are **67** and their percentage is **67%** (see Table 4.2).

### 4.2.2.2 Production Level

To examine the performance level of the students in the third question (the production level), the mean score (**7.81**) is compared to the theoretical mean (**12.5**). Using the one-sample t-test (as shown in Table 4.6) reveals that the t-value (**14.298**) is larger than the table t-value (**1.980**) at the significance level of **0.05** and with **99** degrees of freedom. Since the students' mean is lower than the theoretical mean, this means that the performance level of the students in this question is low.

**Table 4.6**

**The one-sample t-test statistics for the students' performance in**

**production question three**

| Prod. | N | Mean | | Std. Dev. | df | t-value | | Level of significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Computed | Theoretical | | | computed | Table | |
| **Q3** | **100** | **7.81** | **12.5** | **3.28** | **99** | **14.298** | **1.980** | **0.05** |

Regarding the students' performance in Question Four of the production level, the mean score (**7.48**) is compared to the theoretical mean (**12.5**). Using the one-sample t-test shows that the computed t-value (**14.98**) is bigger than the table t-value (**1.980**) at the significance level of **0.05** (see Table 4.7). Since the mean score of the sample is lower than the theoretical mean, this indicates that the students' performance in this question is low, too.

**Table 4.7**
**The one-sample t-test statistics for the students' performance in**
**production question four**

| Prod. | N | Mean | | Std. Dev. | df | t-value | | Level of significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Computed | Theoretical | | | computed | Table | |
| **Q4** | **100** | **7.48** | **12.5** | **3.59** | **99** | **14.98** | **1.980** | **0.05** |

As for the students' performance in the production level in general in both Questions Three and Four, the mean score (**15.29**) is compared to the theoretical mean which is **25.00** . Using the one-sample t-test (as shown in Table 4.8) reveals that the computed t-value (**15.636**) is greater than the table t-value (**1.980**)  at the significance  level of **0.05.**  This indicates that the mean of the students' performance in the production

level is low; in other words, they face difficulty in producing the commonest English prepositions. This proves the second part of the second hypothesis.

**Table 4.8**
**The one-sample t-test statistics for the students' performance in the production level**

| Prod. | N | Mean | | Std. Dev. | df | t-value | | Level of significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Computed | Theoretical | | | computed | Table | |
| Total | **100** | **15.29** | **25** | **6.21** | **99** | **15.636** | **1.980** | **0.05** |

This result is supported by using percentages . Four students passed Question three and their percentage is **4%**, while those who failed are **96** students with a percentage of **96%**. Those who passed Question four are **5** students with a percentage of **5%**, whereas those who failed in this question are **95**; that is, **95%** of the sample. The total number of those who succeeded in both questions three and four of the production levels are **4** and their percentage is **4%**, whereas those who failed are **96** with a percentage of **96%** (see Table 4.2).

## 4.2.3   Verification of the third Hypothesis

In order to verify the third hypothesis of the study which states "EFL learners face more difficulties at the production level than at the recognition level", the paired sample t-test has been used and the results come as in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9**

**The paired sample t-test statistics for the difference in the students'**

**performance between the recognition and production levels**

| Level | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | df | t-value | | Level of significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rec. | **100** | **22.60** | **5.89** | **99** | computed | Table | **0.05** |
| Prod. | **100** | **15.29** | **6.21** | | **8.5** | **1.980** | |

The above table shows that the computed t-value which is **8.5** is bigger than the table t-value which is **1.980** at the significance level of **0.05** and with **99** degrees of freedom. Since the mean score of the students' performance in recognition (**22.60**) is greater than that in production (**15.29**), this means their performance in the recognition level is better than that in the production level. This proves the third hypothesis and the students face more difficulties at the production level than at the recognition level.

### 4.2.4  Discussion of the Results

The results of the statistical manipulation of the test data have shown that the sample students have difficulties and are unaware of the commonest English prepositions. They even have many problems in using prepositions whether at the recognition or the production level.

The following reasons and factors behind the EFL college learners' difficulties in the use of these prepositions can be identified in accordance with the second aim of the study:

1. Confusion between the usages of prepositions of L1 and L2 is responsible for a part of the difficulties. The choice of certain English

prepositions to be used in certain contexts is limited by usage rather than by logical reasoning.

2. Interlingual interference, which means that the students carry over rules from Arabic into English, is responsible for many of the errors committed by them.

3. EFL college students have difficulties in understanding the meaning of certain prepositions such as' *over, above, under, beneath, off, , across'* .These troublesome words seem vague and difficult.

4. EFL college students have difficulties in mastering similar uses of different prepositions; for example, *in the morning, on Monday morning, at night.*

5. At the production level, the EFL college students tend to rely on certain prepositions in their production; such as *'at', 'on',' in',' to', 'of',* and *'from'*; as if they were the only existing prepositions. This is because they are more familiar with these prepositions as they have received intensive practice in learning them from the early stages of their study. EFL college students fail to use to the prepositions: *'over',' above', 'across', 'under', 'below', 'through',' up',* and *'along',* which the students have not practiced the same as they did for the previous ones. The prepositions above have not been given emphasis and care on the part of the teacher.

## 4.3  Conclusions

On the basis of the results of the current study, the following conclusions have been drawn:

1.  The study provides further evidence that English prepositions constitute a thorny and problematic area for EFL learners.

2. Iraqi  EFL  college  students are not  able to  recognize and use the commonest English prepositions well. This reveals the seriousness of the problem as these students are supposed to start teaching these structures immediately after graduation.

3.  EFL college students are better in recognizing prepositions than producing them. This means that the students' receptive knowledge is better than their productive knowledge.

4.  EFL college students are not able enough to differentiate between prepositions and particles (prepositions that collocate with some verbs and the prepositions that are particles of phrasal verbs).

5.  Interlingual interference is the major factor behind the inadequate performance of EFL college learners in the use of prepositions.

6. EFL undergraduate students are more familiar with a limited number of the commonest English prepositions than the others.

## 4.4  Recommendations

In the light of the results and conclusions obtained in this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. EFL teachers are recommended to expose their students to different uses of prepositions when explaining in classroom and include these uses in the test.

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2. EFL teachers are recommended to present enough explanation of the meaning of each preposition. They can use various activities and draw lines, arrows, squares and other visual aids.

3. EFL teachers are recommended to give attention to prepositions which have no equivalents in Arabic since they constitute learning difficulties for the students.

4. More care, attention and time should be given to the grammatical and spelling mistakes in using prepositions to enable the students to develop their knowledge and writing of the commonest prepositions.

5. Syllabus designers and text book writers are advised to include ample explanations and diverse exercises of the various uses of commonest English prepositions in grammar text books.

6. In accordance with the second aim of the study, the following pedagogical activities are suggested to surmount the difficulties faced by EFL college students in recognizing and using the commonest English prepositions.

**Activity one**

This activity is to be used to teach and review prepositions of place. This is followed by prepositions of direction.

**Virtual walk**

A large empty space (without desks or obstacles) e.g. *a gym, hall or playground .*

▪ In pairs, one student has a blindfold (e.g. *a scarf*)

▪ The other leads his/her partner around the space as if they are on a guided tour of their town, starting at the school door.

- The partner should make it as realistic as possible and give a running commentary; e.g. *We're just passing the Post Office now. Be careful – there's a letter box.*

- The blindfolded student can ask questions and make requests to go to particular places. At the end students will probably want to swap roles and take a new walk .

An interesting discussion can come after it is all over: How did it feel to be taken around town in this way? Did the blindfolded persons feel they were really there?

<div align="right">(Bertrand.2002:Int.)</div>

Another variation of this activity is as follows. Have students move around as you elicit them. A funny student- to- student practice of giving directions is the blindfold game . One student is blindfold and led through a series of directions by another around the school premises. Keep the area safe, of course. Students will find it funny and challenging. Some even may go as far as trying to guess the location they were led to (ibid.).

**Activity two**

Watson (1992: 269-70) prepares a list of nouns that are associated with different prepositions. Between 20 and 30 would be a good number.

- *Step 1*

Dictate the list of nouns and at the same time elicit the correct prepositions for these nouns.

▪ *Step 2*

Put the students in pairs to read out nouns and test their partners' knowledge of prepositions. Or put the nouns on flash cards and get the students to walk round flashing their cards.

## Activity three

This is a good game to wrap up a lesson teaching prepositions of location.

*MATERIALS*

Copies of a local street map (1 per two students), preferably a map with a lot of features.

▪ *STEP 1*

Hand out the maps and select a place (without telling the students what it is). Write 2 pieces of information about this place on the board.

*It is on Rajdamri Rd. and behind the Regent Hotel.*

Tell the students to locate the place and tell you its name.

▪ *STEP 2*

Hand out slips of paper(about the size of the palm of your hand) and instruct the students to write the locations of 5 places on the paper like this:

1. Paradise Hotel

*It's on Rama IV and opposite Lumphini Park.*

2. World Trade Center

*It's on the corner of Sukhumvit Rd. and Rajadamri Rd.*

▪ *STEP 3*

After the groups have finished collect the slips of paper, select 2 students and seat them in front of the class as "game show hosts". Share the collected pieces of paper between the hosts and tell them to read out the locations to the class (as in STEP 1). The pairs of students now become teams and when any team shouts out the correct location score them a point on the board. It's essential to keep up a fast pace reading out directions. If the "game show hosts" are a bit slow fill in yourself with a few off the top of your head.

▪ *STEP 4*

After 10 or 15 minutes stop the game and tell the students with the most points they have won the prized job of taxi driver in their local area.

(Scrivener, 2003:Int.)

## Activity four

This is a fun activity which learners find very interesting. The teacher asks them to hide something like a piece of gum or some candy somewhere in the school. Then they write direction where they have hidden it and give it to their classmates. Their classmates follow the directions to find the 'treasure'.

(Andrew, 2003:Int.)

## Activity five

**Use:**

Many language learners have a problem learning the prepositions associated with references to year, month, date and hour. The following activity is based on the explanation of prepositions of place as represented by the Figure 4.1
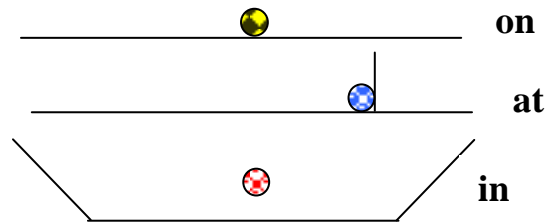
Figure 4.1 Basic English
Prepositions (Time and Place)

▪ Provide students with the figure and an explanation regarding the meaning of these prepositions when teaching prepositions of place and direction e. g.

 *- I'll meet them  **AT** the bus stop **ON** Main Street.*

*- The tickets will be **IN** and envelope **ON** my desk.*

▪ When working on references to time use the figure again, but this time bring a diary or calendar, which has slots for hourly appointments. Ask students to consider the following. A year is a SPACE, and so is a MONTH or a WEEK. Therefore they would require the preposition IN. e.g. *IN 2007, IN August, IN the third week of August*. Next, you would show that the actual date is a column or line *IN that Week / month* and thus requires *ON Monday.*

▪ The hour would be a point on the day line and thus require AT, as in *AT 6 a.m.*, *AT 16:30 IN the afternoon*.

**Practice:**

**1.** Tell students to walk around the class and find out exactly when people were born and see if they can find someone who was born **IN** the same year, or the same month, or perhaps **ON** the same day. ( **At** night is, of course, an exception).

**2.** Students report their findings, who they interviewed, and when that person was born.

**3.** Provide a fill- in exercise or cloze passage which makes references to dates ( year, month, day and time ). Use an incident such as what happened to the Titanic on. You can say *At that night it sank*, or a dialogue between two busy people trying to set up an appointment. Other activities aim to introduce prepositions of place ( *in, on, under, in front of, below*) with using physical actions to demonstrate language (ibid.).

**Activity six**

**Place the pen**

- The class is split into two or more teams. Each team has a chart.
- Shout out the name of an object they can easily find in the  use of preposition of place i.e.*" put a book on the chair"*.
- The designated team player must run and place the book '*beside', 'in front of', 'under', 'behind'*, etc. the chair depending on what you show (ibid.).

## 4.5  Suggestions for Further Studies

In the light of results of this study, the following suggestions are put for further studies.

1. A study may be conducted to investigate EFL college learners' ability to differentiate among the various meanings and uses of prepositions.

2. A study can be carried out to trace EFL learners' acquisition of English prepositions in various academic stages.

3. A study is required to investigate the difficulties faced by EFL students in the use of other prepositions in both time and place uses.

4. A similar study may be conducted to other college- level students like second or fourth stage, or in the departments of English I n other colleges to investigate whether they face the same difficulties or not.

# Abstract

Prepositions are the subtlest and most useful words in the language for compressing meaning into few words . Language is made richer and more flexible by their doing several meanings to each of many prepositions, as well as by some of them having the same meaning as others. However, the correct use of prepositions constitutes a problematic linguistic area for Iraqi EFL learners, even advanced ones.

Hence, the present study aims at:

1.  assessing the ability of EFL undergraduate learners in recognizing and producing prepositions, and

2.  identifying areas of potential difficulty and suggesting certain pedagogical activities to surmount these difficulties.

To achieve these aims, the following three hypotheses have been posited:

1.  In general, EFL university learners' performance in the commonest English prepositions is inadequate.

2.  Iraqi EFL university learners find difficulty both in recognizing and using the common English prepositions.

3.  EFL learners face more difficulties at the production level than at the recognition level.

The present study is limited to the third- year EFL students, Department of English, College of Education / Ibn- Rushd, University of Baghdad for the academic year 2006 -2007.

The sample of the study consisted of 200 third-year students the Department of English in the College of Education /Ibn- Rushd, University of Baghdad. One hundred of them represent the pilot study, while the rest of the sample represents the main test sample.

For the purpose of investigating these hypotheses, a proficiency test for diagnostic purposes has been constructed on the basis of the outcomes of the theoretical survey of the commonest English prepositions conducted for this purpose. The test consists of 100 items at recognition and production levels.

To achieve its face validity, the test has been exposed to a jury of experts in EFL and linguistics, whereas its reliability coefficient has been computed using the split- half method. The difficulty level and discriminatory power of the test items have been computed. The test has been, then administered to the main sample.

Several statistical tools have been used in this study such as: percentage, item difficulty level and discrimination power, Pearson correlation coefficient, Spearman-Brown formula and t-test for one sample and two paired (dependent) samples.

After analyzing the data statistically, the following findings have been revealed:

1.  The sample of the study was unable to recognize or use the commonest English prepositions well. This reveals the seriousness of the problem as these students are supposed to start teaching these structures immediately after graduation.

2.  The sample's performance was inadequate both at the recognition and production levels.

3.  The general performance of the sample showed that the students were better in recognition level than production level. This means that the students' receptive knowledge was better than their productive one.

4.  Data analysis of the study revealed the following reasons and factors behind the EFL learners' difficulties in the use of commonest English prepositions:

a.  Confusion of the usages of prepositions between  L1 and L2.

b.   Interlingual interference, which means that the students carry over rules from Arabic into English.

c.   Difficulties in understanding the meaning of certain prepositions such as**'**
**_over, above, beneath, of,  off, upon, across'_** _and_ **_'along',_** because these troublesome words seem vague and difficult.

d.   Difficulties in mastering similar uses of different prepositions

In the light of the study findings several recommendations were presented for EFL teachers such as:

1.   exposing their students to different uses of prepositions when explaining in classroom and including these uses in the classroom test.

2.   presenting enough explanation of the meaning of each preposition. They can use various activities and draw lines, arrows, squares and other visual aids.

3.   giving attention to prepositions which have no equivalents in Arabic since they constitute learning difficulties for the students.

Finally, suitable suggestions for further studies have been presented to enrich this field of investigation.

# Acknowledgements

# Appendix 3
## The Test
## A Letter to the Jury Members

University of Diyala
College of Education
Dept. of Educational and
Psychological Sciences
Higher studies

*Dear Mr. / Mrs.*

The researcher is conducting an M.A. study entitled "Iraqi EFL Undergraduate Learners' Performance in the Use of the Commonest English Prepositions".

The main aim of the current study is to evaluate college students' (students of thecollege of Education) on the recognition and production levels in recognizing and using commonest English prepositions.

The sample of the investigation is $3^{rd}$ year students of English in the college of Education / Ibn- Rushd at the University of Baghdad. The test consists of four questions: Questions one and two are devoted to the recognition level of testing techniques whereas Questions three and four are concerned with the production level. Both levels of testing techniques deal with the usage of English prepositions.

Please, examine the test and comment on its validity as a measure of students' performance in English composition.

Your comments are highly appreciated and thank you in advance for your cooperation.

*Tamara Adil Mekki*
*M.A. Candidate*

# The Test

**Q1***: Choose the most appropriate preposition :*
1. Angi was born in Salzburg ….. 1976 .
   **a. at      b. in      c. on      d. for**
2. I have to go …… the bank today to change some money .
   **a. in      b. at      c. to      d. for**
3. Nicola was wearing a silver ring …… her little finger .
   **a. at      b. on      c. to      d. into**
4. The rabbit burrowed …… the ground .
   **a. in      b. below      c. under      d. beneath**
5. I looked …….. the window and I saw you crying .
   **a. at      b. through      c. out      d. on**
6. He shook the rain …….. his umbrella .
   **a. of      b. from      c. about      d. off**
7. Be careful ! the floor has been polished . It's …....walking on ice .
   **a. for      b. with      c. like      d. by**
8. We hadn't arranged to meet . we met ……. chance .
   **a. out      b. by      c. in      d. on**
9. Fred is away at the moment . He'll be a way …… Monday .
   **a. with      b. on      c.until      d. in**
10. These photographs were taken …….. a very good camera .
    **a. of      b. in      c. by      d. with**
11. She accepted the job …….. ... the salary, which was rather low.
    **a. in      b. of      c. in spite of      d. inside**
12. I went silently ………the passage .
    **a. over      b. along      c. in      d. on**
13. We didn't' get out …….... the rain .
    **a. by      b. because of      c. of      d. with**
14. I feel a sleep …….... the film .
    **a. of      b. beside      c. inside      d. during**
15. I give all the guests breakfast; …….. I have my own.
    **a. like      b. after      c. with      d. during**
16. He accused me …….selling secret information to the enemy .
    **a. by      b. for      c. in      d. of**
17. We relaxed in the shade …….. the branches .
    **a. in      b. beneath      c. below      d. into**
18. The desk is ………the wall .
    **a. in      b. against      c. into      d. at**
19. The car is …….... London .
    **a. to      b. from      c. at      d. outside**
20. He threw the ball ……. the roof .
    **a. on      b. over      c. up      d. in**
21. The lost keys were found …….... the papers on my the floor board.
    **a. between      b. in      c. among      d. on**
22. The valley is …….. sea-level .
    **a. under      b. below      c. on      d. behind**
23. Who was responsible ……. all that noise last night?
    **a. at      b. from      c. for      d. on**
24. There has been an increase …….. the number of road accident recently.
    **a. on      b. to      c. of      d. in**
25. Please, don't shout ……. me ! Be nice to me!
    **a. to      b. at      c. for      d. on**

Recognition

**Q2:** *Fill in the blanks with a suitable preposition taken from the list below:*

(off – in –into – of – except for – in addition to – near – across –past –
against -about - but -without – up - from – before – at – to – by-
upon -on –with - -toward – over –below – out – unto )

1. She is good ……….. English .

2. He climbs ………. the social ladder.

3. I live ………… London .

4. He armed himself ………. possible danger .

5. …………. me, everyone was tired .

6. Why did you run away ………. me?

7. The larger house converted ……… three flats.

8. He was converted ……. his wife s religion .

9. Lisa is upset …….. not being invited to the party.

10. We preferred traveling …… night .

11. The ceremony will take place ………the meeting .

12. The vase fell ………. the table .

13. We have bought everything ………. milk .

14. I saw Ken walking ………… .the station .

15. I'm very impressed ……….. your stylish look .

16. Mr. Green is ……. of town this week .

17. A car drove ……. the door .

18. Water consists …….. hydrogen and oxygen .

19. There were three people present ………. the committee .

20. We can rely …….. what they said .

21. The mother watched ……….her child .

22. The toy fell …….. the ground .

23. Footnotes are provided ………. the text .

24. She lives ………the school .

25. Be careful when you walk …….. a street .

Production

## Q3: *Supply the following sentences with the suitable preposition*:

1. The flowers will bloom ……. spring.
2. There was rubbish all ……. the place
3. He told me …….. his adventures .
4. We apologize …….. the delay .
5.  My best friend is a student ……. the music department …… the University of Western Ontario .
6. The house stands …….. two farms.
7. Ann dived …… the water.
8. Someone had broken the window …….. a stone.
9. I think I'll wait …….. Thursday ……… making decision.
10. The window faces …….. the south.
11. Children get presents …….. Christmas and ……. their birth days.
12. The car skidded …….. the tree, the windscreen was smashed and the driver was cut in the face …….. splinters ……… glass.
13. I've lived …….. this street ……. ten years.
14. The adult worked ……. 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., …….. an hour ……. lunch.
15. It rained for three days …….. stopping.
16. Illness resulted …….. lack of food.
17. The bridge is ……… construction.

Production
## Q4 :  *Complete  the following passage by filling each blank space with the most suitable preposition :*

1……. April 25, 1999 our cousin Bob invited my brother and I to spend the spring holiday
2……. their farm.  3……. that period, it was a large farm 4…**…**. a huge house 5……… the middle . I had a little bedroom looking 6……… a garden 7……….. the house with the stables beyond.    ……. Breakfast, my brother and I would go out to play 9…….. the garden. Later my cousin Bob, would take us 10…….. the stables where we first helped 11.…….. cleaning the horses and the place . Then we took a ride  12….……. the horses . I usually chose a young horse and rode it a round . It was a lot 13……. fun indeed . Sometimes cousin Bob would take us 14……… a small stream the trees there are big and high ones and my brother was fond 15…………. climbing to  the top 16….……. them . He and my cousin made a small hiding-place there to stay in 17 …….. some time. I was too small to climb the tree 18 ……. them.  Instead,  I would feed the little ducklings 19 …….. the  stream or walk a round to pick whatever flowers I could find . One day I chased a rabbit 20……… the farm, but had to give 21 ……when it disappeared 22 ......... a hole in the ground.

23 ……… lunch uncle would take us fishing in a small lake not far 24….**..**… the farm. Once my uncle caught a large fish. I was proud 25 ……… carrying it all the way back home .

# Appendix 4

*The Key Answers of the Test Items*

## Q1

1. in
2. to
3. on
4. under
5. through
6. off
7. like
8. by
9. until
10. with
11. in spit of
12. along

13. because of
14. during
15. after
16. of
17. beneath
18. against
19. outside
20. over
21. among
22. below
23. for
24. in
25. at

## Q2

1. at
2. up
3. in
4. against
5. except for
6. from
7. into
8. to
9. about
10. by
11. before
12. off

13. but
14. toward
15. with
16. out
17. past
18. of
19. in addition to
20. on
21. over
22. upon
23. down
24. near
25. across

## Q3

1. in
2. over
3. about
4. for
5. in,    6. at
7. between
8. into
9. with
10. until or till,   11. before
12. toward
13. at,       14. on
15. into ,   16. in,    17. by

18. in,       19. for
20. from,    21. with,  22. for
23. without
24. from
25. under

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## Q4

1. On
2. on
3. during
4. with
5. in
6. over
7. in front of
8. After
9. in
10. to
11. in
12. on

13. of
14. to
15. of
16. of
17. for
18. with
19. near
20. into
21. up
22. in
23. After
24. from
25. of

# Appendix 5

**The Main sample students' scores arranged in a descending order**

| Subject No. | Test | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Recognition | | Production | | |
| | *Q1* | *Q2* | *Q3* | *Q4* | |
| 1 | ٢٢ | ١٥ | ١٢ | ١٢ | ٦١ |
| ٢ | ١٩ | ١٦ | ١٢ | ١٣ | ٦٠ |
| 3 | 19 | 11 | 16 | 11 | 57 |
| 4 | 17 | 13 | 11 | 13 | 56 |
| 5 | 19 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 55 |
| 6 | ١٨ | ١٣ | ١٠ | ١١ | ٤٥ |
| ٧ | ١٨ | ١٤ | ١٢ | ١٠ | ٤٥ |
| 8 | ٢١ | ١٥ | ١٠ | ٧ | ٥٣ |
| 9 | ١٩ | ١٣ | ١٢ | ٩ | ٥٣ |
| ١٠ | ١٢ | ١٢ | ١٦ | ١٣ | ٥٣ |
| 11 | 15 | ٩ | ١٣ | ١٥ | 52 |
| 12 | 15 | ١٤ | ١١ | 12 | 52 |
| ١٣ | 15 | 13 | ١٢ | ١١ | ٥١ |
| 14 | ٢١ | ١٠ | ٨ | ١٢ | ٥١ |
| 15 | 19 | ١٠ | ١٢ | ١٠ | ٥١ |
| 16 | ١٥ | ١٤ | ١٥ | ٧ | ٥١ |
| ١٧ | ١٨ | ١٤ | ١٠ | ٩ | ٥١ |
| ١٨ | 15 | ١٤ | 11 | 11 | 51 |
| 19 | 13 | ٤ | ٢ | ٦ | 50 |
| 20 | 18 | ١٥ | ٦ | ١١ | ٥٠ |
| ٢١ | 16 | 13 | 9 | 12 | ٥٠ |
| ٢٢ | 16 | 12 | 11 | 10 | ٤٩ |
| ٢٣ | 16 | 10 | 9 | 14 | ٤٩ |
| ٢٤ | ١٩ | 6 | 12 | 12 | 49 |
| ٢٥ | 19 | 11 | 8 | 11 | ٤٩ |
| ٢٦ | 18 | 9 | 13 | ٨ | ٤٨ |
| ٢٧ | 17 | 10 | 11 | ١٠ | 48 |
| ٢٨ | 21 | 8 | 8 | 11 | ٤٨ |
| ٢٩ | 11 | 13 | 11 | 12 | ٤٧ |
| ٣٠ | 16 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 47 |
| ٣١ | 15 | 8 | 12 | 11 | 46 |
| ٣٢ | 16 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 46 |
| ٣٣ | 13 | 13 | 11 | 8 | 45 |

| Subject No. | Test | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Recognition | | Production | | |
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | |
| ٣٤ | 14 | 9 | 9 | 13 | 45 |
| ٣٥ | 16 | 11 | 9 | 8 | 44 |
| ٣٦ | 14 | 10 | 9 | 11 | 44 |
| 37 | 13 | 9 | 10 | 10 | ٤٢ |
| 38 | ١٦ | ٩ | ٩ | ٨ | 42 |
| ٣٩ | 18 | 5 | 7 | 12 | 42 |
| ٤٠ | 15 | 9 | 10 | 7 | ٤١ |
| ٤١ | 14 | 10 | ١١ | 6 | 41 |
| ٤٢ | 14 | ١٠ | 7 | ١٠ | ٤١ |
| ٤٣ | ١٦ | 5 | 7 | 11 | ٣٩ |
| ٤٤ | ١٧ | 8 | ٨ | ٦ | 39 |
| ٤٥ | 14 | 9 | 11 | 5 | 39 |
| ٤٦ | 14 | 9 | 6 | 10 | 39 |
| ٤٧ | 13 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 39 |
| ٤٨ | 15 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 38 |
| ٤٩ | 16 | 6 | ٩ | 7 | 38 |
| ٥٠ | 13 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 38 |
| ٥١ | 17 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 37 |
| ٥٢ | 17 | 8 | 6 | 6 | ٣٧ |
| 53 | ١٣ | 10 | 5 | 9 | 37 |
| ٥٤ | 15 | 9 | 9 | ٤ | 37 |
| ٥٥ | 13 | 13 | 10 | 6 | ٣٦ |
| ٥٦ | 12 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 36 |
| ٥٧ | 14 | 8 | 8 | 5 | ٣٥ |
| ٥٨ | 12 | 8 | 7 | 8 | ٣٥ |
| ٥٩ | ١٤ | 9 | 9 | 3 | 35 |
| ٦٠ | 10 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 35 |
| ٦١ | 14 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 35 |
| ٦٢ | 17 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 35 |
| ٦٣ | 13 | 3 | 8 | 10 | 34 |
| ٦٤ | 12 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 34 |
| ٦٥ | 12 | ٦ | ٧ | ٩ | 34 |
| ٦٦ | 12 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 34 |
| ٦٧ | 12 | 8 | 7 | 7 | ٣٤ |
| ٦٨ | ١٣ | 6 | 8 | 6 | 33 |
| ٦٩ | 11 | 10 | 8 | 4 | 33 |
| ٧٠ | 16 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 32 |

| Subject No. | Test | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Recognition | | Production | | |
| | *Q1* | *Q2* | *Q3* | *Q4* | |
| ٧١ | 13 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 31 |
| ٧٢ | 13 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 31 |
| ٧٣ | 15 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 31 |
| ٧٤ | 12 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 30 |
| ٧٥ | 16 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 30 |
| ٧٦ | ١٦ | 5 | 6 | 2 | 29 |
| ٧٧ | 13 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 29 |
| ٧٨ | 10 | 8 | 2 | 8 | 28 |
| ٧٩ | 10 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 27 |
| ٨٠ | 11 | 6 | ٤ | ٥ | 26 |
| ٨١ | ١١ | 6 | 6 | ٣ | 26 |
| ٨٢ | 12 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 26 |
| ٨٣ | 12 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 26 |
| ٨٤ | ١٣ | 4 | 2 | 6 | 25 |
| ٨٥ | 9 | 6 | 5 | 5 | ٢٥ |
| ٨٦ | 12 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 24 |
| ٨٧ | 13 | 5 | 3 | ٣ | 24 |
| ٨٨ | 12 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 24 |
| ٨٩ | 7 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 24 |
| ٩٠ | 12 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 23 |
| ٩١ | 12 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 23 |
| ٩٢ | 13 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 22 |
| ٩٣ | 12 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 22 |
| ٩٤ | 12 | 7 | 2 | 0 | ٢١ |
| ٩٥ | 10 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 20 |
| ٩٦ | ١٠ | 4 | 5 | 0 | 19 |
| ٩٧ | 11 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 19 |
| ٩٨ | 8 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 18 |
| ٩٩ | 8 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 17 |
| ١٠٠ | 4 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 9 |

# Appendix 1

**A list of the most confusing or troublesome prepositional idiom**

- need for: All babies have a need for constant attention. (a need for, not a need of)
- abide by: I promise to abide by your decision.
- abstain from: If you do not know anything about the candidates, abstain from voting.
- accord with: The two rival companies finally reached accord with each other.
- according to: According to my grammar teacher, whom is never a subject.
- accuse of: Tim has been accused of stealing watermelons.
- accustomed to: I am not accustomed to this kind of weather.
- acquiesce in: I did not acquiesce in the unjustified suppression of evidence.
- acquitted of: The accused man was finally acquitted of the crime.
- adapted for: This program is especially adapted for television. (prepared for)
- adapted to: I have not adapted to this climate. (become accustomed to)
- adhere to: You must adhere to the contract you signed.
- admit of: This document admits of conflicting interpretations. (to give the possibility of something)
- admit to: He admitted to his part in the robbery. (to confess or tell the truth about)
- adverse to: The decision of the court is adverse to our interests.
- a afraid of: Are you afraid of me?

- agree on/upon: The committee members could not agree on a course of action. (to decide on; to have the same opinion about)

- agree to: We will agree to your proposal if you will postpone action. (to promise to follow something)

- agree with: In all matters of importance, I promise to agree with you. (to have the same opinion about)

- aim to prove: I aim to prove that your accusation is unjust.

- alarmed at: Beach residents are alarmed at the news of the hurricane's approach.

- amazed at or by: I am amazed at your audacity.

- amendment to: The first amendment to the Constitution guarantees the freedom of the press.

- annoyed at: The clerk was very annoyed at the customer's condescending tone. (not annoyed with )

- answerable to: You are answerable to your supervisor.

- apologize for: You should apologize for starting the erroneous rumor. (apologize for doing something)

- apologize to: He apologized to me for that rude remark. (apologize to a person)

- angry about: I was angry about the missing jewels. (angry about, not angry at, a fact or situation)

- angry with: I get the impression that you are angry with me. (angry with a person)

- aspire to: He is a quiet man who does not aspire to distinction.

- assent to: Please remember that I did not assent to your proposal.

- attend to: We must stop talking and attend to the business at hand.

- avail oneself of: One should avail oneself of every opportunity to learn something new.

- blames him for it: As witness to the accident, I cannot blame him for it.

- capable of: I wonder if Jim is capable of rational thinking.
- censorship of: Does he believe in the censorship of books?
- charge with: The police are going to charge him with assault and battery.
- coincide with: Mark Twain's death coincided with the appearance of Halley's Comet.
- collide with: Drive carefully or you might collide with another car.
- compare to: use compare to for similarities.
- compare with: use compare with to show differences or similarities.
- compatible with: His actions are not compatible with our standards of conduct.
- comply with: I shall make every effort to comply with your request.
- concern about: I am concerned about your poor eating habits. (to give attention or worry to)
- concern with: I am rather concerned with the publication of this book. (to busy oneself; to take interest or part in something)
- conclude from: He concluded from her expression that his mother was not happy.
- concur with: I concur with you in your estimate of the damage.
- confer with . . . about: The supervisor conferred with the committee about the proposal.
- confide in: Please feel free to confide in me when you have a problem.
- confide (something) to: He did not confide his problem to me.
- conform to: The new building must conform to the specifications of the building code.
- consist of: His diet consisted of potato chips, pretzels and soda.
- consistent with: My actions were consistent with your recommendations.
- convince (someone) of: It is often difficult to convince him of anything.
- critical of: She is very critical of my efforts.

- deficient in: The food is good, but it is deficient in vitamins.
- deprive of: Because of poor grades, Sue will be deprived of all privileges.
- derived from: Resin is derived from the pine tree.
- die of or from: Many people die from heart attacks, but many others die of old age.
- differ with: He differs with me on every issue.
- different from: Every person is different from every other person.
- disappointed in: I was disappointed in the performance of our glee club.
- disapprove of: I disapprove of your choice of words.
- dissent from: Frequently one court Justice will dissent from the majority opinion.
- dissuade from: I will certainly try to dissuade you from doing something foolish.
- divest of: The governor has decided to divest the sheriff of all responsibility.
- eager to: He was eager to start the trip
- emphasis on: Try to put the emphasis on the positive points.
- engrossed in: The little boy was engrossed in the monster movie.
- enter into: We entered into a lengthy political discussion.
- familiar to: Your face is not familiar to me. (familiar to someone)
- familiar with: I am familiar with the campaign issues. (familiar with something)
- find fault with: Lately you seem to find fault with everything I do.
- free from: They are never entirely free from doubt and fear.
- graduated from: Every one of the ten children graduated from college.
- identical with: Try to find a costume identical with mine.
- ignorant of: He was arrested because he was ignorant of the law.
- impervious to: He is impervious to subtle reminders.

- importance of: Don't you understand the importance of being on time?
- impressed with: She was not impressed with his efforts to get her attention.
- in accordance with: In accordance with your request, I have the book with me.
- in need of: He is in need of transportation.
- in proportion to: Price increases in proportion to demand.
- in search of: The immigrants who came to America in the nineteenth century were in search of a better way of life.
- inconsistent with: His latest business deal was inconsistent with his usual code of ethics.
- independent of: They decided to proceed, independent of outside help.
- indifferent to: Some people seem indifferent to heat, cold, and pain.
- infected with: Mr. Jones is infected with AIDS.
- infer from: I infer from your remark that you have never been here before.
- inferior to: This new car is inferior to last year's model.
- insist on: Newspaper editors should insist on accuracy in reporting.
- interfere in: You should not interfere in your neighbor's affairs.
- interfere with: Police promised not to interfere with the demonstration.
- jealous of: That man is jealous of every man who speaks to his wife.
- kind of: I have never liked that kind of jelly. (kind of = type of)
- long for: Every man longs for some type of recognition in life.
- married to: She is married to a millionaire.
- necessity for: The necessity for action is clearly understood.
- object to: I do not object to your going with us.
- obliged to (+ verb): He felt obliged to say something nice to her.
- oblivious of: She was oblivious of everything around her.
- overcome by: She was overcome by his statement. (overcome by a fact)

- overcome with: She was overcome with joy when her grandchild was born. (overcome with an emotion)
- part with: I cannot bear to part with any of my books.
- partial to: You seem to be partial to the color blue.
- participate in: Freshmen are not permitted to participate in some activities.
- persevere in: He was tired, but he continued to persevere in his effort to win.
- persist in: If you persist in bothering your sister, she may kick you.
- pertain to: Your comment does not pertain to the subject we are discussing.
- pleased with: I am pleased with your suggestion.
- preferable to: Even a simple game is preferable to inactivity.
- prevail on: Perhaps you can prevail on your father to take your friend to the race.
- prevent someone from: Try to prevent them from leaving today.
- prior to: Prior to leaving for the beach, Cindy gathered her towel and sunscreen. (prior to = before)
- provide for: Be sure to provide for all possible emergencies.
- provide someone with: He did not provide me with enough money for the trip.
- reason with . . . on: Try to reason with your mother on the issue. (reason with someone on an issue)
- refrain from: Everyone should refrain from repeating malicious gossip.
- regardless of: Regardless of your desire to have your test score immediately, your score will not be ready till tomorrow.
- rejoice at: The whole country rejoiced at the news of the prince's marriage.
- replace with: We will need to replace these curtains with blinds.

- required of: An oath of allegiance is required of all members.
- responsible to . . . for: I am responsible to your mother for your safety. (responsible to someone for something)
- result in: Tardiness may result in suspension. (a cause results in an effect)
- result from: Obesity may result from overeating and lack of exercise. (an effect results from a cause)
- rich in: This country is rich in many natural resources.
- short of: Just before payday, we are all a little short of cash.
- similar to: Your taste in clothes is similar to mine.
- speak to . . . about: I must speak to you about your grades. (speak to someone about something)
- substitute for: This class may substitute for your thesis.
- succeed in: The prisoner did not succeed in his attempt to escape. (not succeed at )
- superior to: A pipe organ is superior to an electronic organ.
- surprised at: I am surprised at your sudden interest in chemistry. (not surprised with )
- take charge of: You must take charge of your own affairs.
- threatened with: His actions have been so obnoxious that he has been threatened with legal action.
- transfer to/onto: Transfer your answers onto your answer sheet.
- unmindful of: The children raced down the beach, unmindful of my warning.
- wait for: Let's just sit quietly and wait for developments.
- wait on: We left the restaurant because we could not get anyone to wait on us.
- worthy of: This paper is worthy of a passing grade.

(UWF, Writing lab, 2006:Int.)

# Appendix 2

## A list of phrasal verbs including separable, inseparable and intransitive verbs

### 1. Separable Verbs

add up - add

back up - cause to move backwards; support; blow up; cause to explode; destroy by explosives

break down - analyze; list the parts of separately

break into - go into a house or room forcibly; suddenly; begin

bring about - cause to happen

bring off - accomplish

bring on - cause

bring out - publish; emphasize

bring over - bring

bring to - revive

bring up - raise; care for from childhood

brush out - brush the inside of

burn down - destroy by burning

burn up - consume by fire

buy out - by the other person's share of a business

buy up - buy the whole supply of

call off - cancel; order away

call up - telephone; summon for military service

calm down - become calm

carry on - continue

carry out - fulfill; complete; accomplish; perform

carry over - carry; continue at another time or place

cheer up - cause to become cheerful

chew up - chew thoroughly

chop up - chop into small pieces

clean off - clean the surface of

clean out - clean the inside of

clean up - clarify; tidy

clear out - clear the surface of

clear up - clear the inside of

close down - close permanently

close up - close temporarily

count in - include

count out - exclude

count up - calculate; count; add to a total

cross out – eliminate

cut down - reduce in quantity

cut off - interrupt; severe

cut out - eliminate; delete

draw up - write; compose (a document)

dress up - put clothes on; adorn

dust out - dust the inside of

eat up - eat completely

figure out - interpret; understand

figure up - compute

fill in - complete (a printed form)

fill up - fill completely (a container)

find out - discover

fix up - repair; arrange in a suitable manner

get across - cause to be understood

give back - return

give out - distribute; announce

give up - surrender something

hand down - deliver; pronounce formally; leave as an inheritance

hand over - yield control of

hang up - suspend

have on - be dressed in

have over - entertain someone informally at one's home

hold off - delay; restrain

hold up - delay; rob; threaten with a weapon

keep up - continue; keep the same pace

leave out - omit

let down - disappoint

let out - release from confinement; make larger (in sewing)

light up - light; illuminate thoroughly

live down - live in such a way as to cause something to be forgotten

make over - remake

move over - move to the side

pass on - transmit

pass out - distribute

pass up - not take advantage of (as an opportunity)

pass on - transmit

pay back - repay

pay off - discharge a debt completely; give someone his final pay

pick up - come to meet an escort; lift with hands or fingers; learn casually; initiate an association publicly

play down - minimize

play up - emphasize

point out - indicate

pull down - pull in a downward direction; raze

push across - cause to be understood or accepted

put off - postpone

put on - dress in; deceive or fool

put up - preserve (food); receive as an overnight guest

quiet down - be quiet

ring up - the telephone

rinse off - rinse the surface of

rinse out - rinse the inside of

rule out - eliminate

run down - trace; disparage; hit with a vehicle

run off - cause to depart; reproduce mechanically

save up – accumulate

see off - accompany someone to the beginning of a trip

see through - complete; in spite of difficulties

send back - send to a place where formerly located

send over - send to where someone is

set up - arrange

show off - exhibit ostentatiously

shut off - cause to cease functioning

slow up - cause to move more slowly

spell out - enumerate; state in detail

stand up - fail to keep an appointment with

sweep out - sweep the inside of

take back - return; retract a statement

take down - remove from a high position; write from dictation

take in - understood; fool; deceive; make smaller (in sewing)

take over - take; assume command of

tear down - destroy

tear up - tear into small pieces

tell off - scold; reprimand

think over - consider

think through - consider from beginning to end

think up - create; invent

throw away - discard

throw over - reject

tie up - tie securely or tight

tire out - cause to be exhausted

touch up - repair

try on - put on a garment to verify the fittry out - test

turn down - refuse; lower the volume

turn out - produce; force into exile, extinguish (a light)

wash off - wash the surface of

wash out - wash the inside of

wear out - use until no longer usable; tire greatly

wind up - finish, tighten the spring of a watch or machine

wipe off - wipe the surface of

wipe out - wipe the inside of; decimate

work out - solve

write down - record

write out - write down every detail; spell out

write up - compose; prepare (a document)

(English club:ESL learning Centure.2005) and ( Essberger ,2006: 36-41)

## 2. Inseparable

back out of - desert; fail to keep a promise

bear down on - lean on

bear on - have to do with

bear up under - endure

break in on - interrupt

break into - interrupt

call for - come to get; require

care for - like; guard; supervise; maintain

carry on with - continue

catch up with - cover the distance between oneself and

check up on - examine; verify

come across - find accidentally

come along with - accompany; make progress

come by - find accidentally

come down with - become ill with

come out with - utter; produce

come up with - utter; produce

count on - rely on

cut in on - interrupt

disagree with - cause illness or discomfort to

do away with - abolish

do without - deprive oneself of

drop in at/on - visit casually without planning

drop out of - leave; quit

face up to – acknowledge

fall back on - use for emergency purpose

fall behind in - lag; not progress at required pace

fall out with - quarrel with

fill in for - substitute for

get ahead of - surpass; beat

get around - evade; avoid

get away with - do without being caught or punished

get by with - manage with a minimum of effort

get down to - become serious about; consider

get in - enter (a vehicle)

get off - descend from; leave

get on - enter (a vehicle); mount

get on with - proceed with

get through with - terminate, finish

go back on - desert; fail to keep (a promise)

go for - like a great deal

go in for - be interested in; participate in

go on with - continue

go over - review

go with - harmonize with; look pleasing together

go without - abstain from

hang around - remain idly in the vicinity of

hear from - receive a communication from

hear of - learn about (sometimes accidentally)

hit on - discover accidentally

hold on to - grasp tightly

hold out against - resist

keep at - persevere at

keep to - persist in; continue

keep up with - maintain the pace of

lie down on - evade; fail to do

live on - support or sustain oneself by means of

live up to - maintain the standard demanded of

look after - take care of

look back on - remember nostalgically

look down on - feel superior to

look forward to - anticipate

look up to - respect; admire

make up for - compensate for

pass on - transmit

pick on - tease; bully

play up to - flatter for personal advantage

put up with - tolerate

read up on - search out information on

run against - compete against in an election

run away with - leave; escape from

run for - campaign for

see about - consider; arrange

see to - arrange; supervise

settle on - decide on; choose

stand for - represent; permit

stand up for - support; demand

stand up to - resist

stick to - persist

stick up for - support; defend

take after - resemble

talk back to - answer impolitely

talk over - discuss

tell on - report misbehavior to authority

touch on - mention briefly

turn into - become

wait on - serve

wait up for - not go to bed while waiting for

watch out for - be careful for

(English club: ESL learning Centure.2005) and (Wahlen ,1995: 31)

## 3. Intransitive

back down - retreat from a position in an argument

back out - desert; fail to keep a promise

back up - move backwards

bear up - endure

blow in - drop in to visit unexpectedly

blow over - pass without doing harm

blow up - explode; lose one's temper

call up - telephone

calm down - become calm

carry on - continue as before; misbehave

catch on - understand

catch up - cover the distance between oneself and a moving goal

check out - leave; pay one's bill

check up - investigate

cheer up - become cheerful

clear out - leave

clear up - become clear

close down - close permanently

close up - close temporarily

come about - happen

come along - accompany; make progress

come back - return

come by - visit someone in his home

come out - appear; make a social debut

come over - come to someone's house, to where someone is

come through - succeed

come to - regain consciousness

cut in - interrupt

die away - fade; diminish

die down - fade; diminish

die off/out - disappear; become extinct

drive back - return by car

drop in - visit someone casually without planning

drop out - abandon some organized activity; leave; quit

drop over - visit someone casually

fall behind - not progress at required pace

fall off - decrease; lose weight

fall through - fail; not be accomplished

fill in - substitute

find out - learn

fly back - return by air

fly over - fly to where someone is

get ahead - make progress

get along - have a friendly relationship

get around - circulate; move about

get away - escape

get by - manage; either just barely or with a minimum of effort

get in - enter

get off - descend from leave

get on - enter (a vehicle); mount (a horse, etc.)

get on/along - progress; be compatible

get up – rise

get through - finish

give out - become exhausted

give up - surrender; fail to finish

go back - return

go off - explode

go on - happen; continue

go out - stop burning; leave one's residence

go over - go; succeed

grow up - mature

hang around - remain idly; dawdle

hang up - replace a telephone receiver on its hook

hold on - grasp tightly; persevere; wait while telephoning

hold out - continue to resist; persevere; persist

keep on - continue

keep up - maintain the required pace or standard; continue

let up - diminish in intensity

lie down - recline

look on - be a spectator

make out - progress; succeed

make up - become reconciled

move over - move to the side

pan out - turn out well; be successful

pass on - die

pass out - become unconscious

pick up - grow; increase

pull in - arrive

pull out - depart

pull through - survive (barely)

ride over - ride to where someone is

run away - escape; leave; leave quickly without permission

run down - slowly lose power so as to stop functioning

run off - depart running; drain

sell out - sell the ownership or responsibility

settle up - pay one's bills or debts

show off - boast by words or actions

show up - arrive; appear unexpectedly

shut up - stop talking

slow up - reduce speed

stand by - wait; be prepared to assist

stand up - stand; rise from sitting; last; endure

stay over - remain at someone's house overnight or longer

step aside - move to one side

take off - leave the ground

take over - assume command

talk back - answer impolitely

throw up - vomit

turn around - turn so that one is facing another direction

turn in - go to bed

turn out - succeed; come; appear, as at a public meeting

turn up - arrive; be found unexpectedly

wait up - remain awake in anticipation

wake up - awaken

walk back - return on foot to where one was

walk over - walk to where someone is

wash out - fade or disappear from washing

watch out - be careful

wear off - fade; disappear through use or time

wear out - become unusable through use; become used up

work out - be successful

(English club: ESL learning Centure.2005)

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# Dedication

To life into me … The one who breathes

The spirit of my Father …

with love …

longing …

and prayers .

*Tamara*

**Ministry of Higher Education
And Scientific Research
Diyala University
College of Education
Dept. of Educational and
Psychological Sciences**

# IRAQI EFL UNDERGRADUATE LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE IN THE USE OF THE COMMONEST ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS

*A Thesis Submitted to
the Council of the College of Education University of
Diyala, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Education in
Methods of Teaching English as a Foreign Language*

By
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**2008 A.D**                                    **1429 A.H.**