THE ACQUISITION OF L2 PREPOSITIONS AND THE IMPACT OF CROSS-LINGUISTIC AND META-LINGUISTIC FEEDBACK: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF ALES AT THE HIGHER COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT
The acquisition of preposition can be one of the main problems face Second Language Learners. The researchers believe that to learn English Language as a second or a foreign language, one should realize that language is not an abstract construction of the learned, or of dictionary-makers, but is something arising out of the students' work. The authors believe that to predict or to analyze the learners’ errors may provide the teachers, researchers and the learners with valuable information in the areas of difficulties that learners may encounter. An empirical study was conducted on 60 Arab Learners of English (ALEs) which lasted about three months. A detailed analysis was made of the errors/mistakes of using the prepositions in 120 written texts produced by ALEs. Written texts were collected from each subject at two stages in the experiment (after the first week, and after the final exam). Quantitative analyses show the impact of error analysis in forms of meta-linguistic feedback and cross linguistic influence on the acquisition of L2 prepositions in the context of ALEs at the Higher College of Technology.

KEYWORDS: Prepositions, SLA, Cross-linguistic influence, meta-linguistic feedback, face-to-face interaction, and overgeneralization

INTRODUCTION
Mourssi (2013d) believes that we can realize the areas of grammar complexity by identifying errors, and by analyzing these errors. The aim behind analyzing the L2 learners’ errors/mistakes is to improve second/foreign language learners’ writing as well as speaking. It could be
considered that when we want to improve speaking while teaching writing, instructors should follow the same stages in process writing. They can ask students to think, plan, form, think aloud individually, in pairs, or in groups, reform their speaking, and then produce their speaking about the task given. When learners fail to produce target-like form of the target preposition or forget about the usage of the L2 prepositions and used L1 preposition, here is the role of the teacher to interact and analyze the mistakes/errors and give feedback on the production of the learners. In this case, the instructor should know about how to use the preposition in L1. Since he/she has no idea about the usage of L1, this might create a gap between what the teachers teach and what the learners want to learn. Mourssi (2012b) thinks that the process of error analysis might determine how learners process and categorise the input data which they are exposed to. The current study focuses only on the acquisition of the prepositions and how to improve L2 learners’ written accuracy, and try to find suitable teaching techniques to be followed with ALEs in the acquisition of L2 prepositions.

This paper is divided into six main sections: section one is the introduction, the literature review is presented in section two, section three describes the methods used in the current study, the analysis and the discussion are presented in section four, the conclusion is presented in section five, and finally, the references are in section six followed by the appendices. The following section presents the literature review.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

First of all, it is worth mentioning that a preposition in English Language grammar is often defined as a word which describes the location of one object in relation to another one. Based on our personal experience in teaching English Language for ALEs, we can assume that learning English Language prepositions is confusing for most of them.

This section which deals with literature review is divided into four subsections: in section 2.1, what is generally meant by Error Analysis is presented; this is followed by The Role of Transfer in Interlanguage in section 2.2. Then in 2.3 we will present the Cross-linguistic Influence of Prepositions and Meta-linguistic feedback. Finally, in 2.4 Types of Prepositions in L2 will be presented.

The reader should be reminded that the term of meta-linguistic feedback refers to both Errors/contrastive analysis presented for the L2 learners after their spoken and first written draft based on the target task provided, without providing them with the target-like form, (Mourssi and Al Doori, 2014a). In other word, it refers to explain the nature of the L2 learners’ mistakes. Gass and Selinker (2008) believe that although some linguists consider Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis are out of date, they are still current in the field of SLA.

**Definition of Error Analysis**

Mourssi (2013d) cited that Brown (1987, p. 17) gave a practical and clear definition of error analysis in which error analysis was defined as a process through which researchers observe, analyze, and classify learner errors in order to elicit some information about the system operating...
within the learner. Unlike the contrastive analysis hypothesis which only examines errors attributed to negative transfer from the first language, error analysis investigates all possible sources of error and thus, outperforms contrastive analysis, Mourssi (2013c and 2012b).

Ellis et al. (2008, p. 52) provided a detailed account of, and exemplified a model for, error analysis offered by Corder (1977). Ellis (1997, p. 15-20) and Hubbard et al. (1996, p. 135-141) on the other hand, gave practical advice and provide clear examples of how to identify and analyze learners’ errors. Gass and Selinker (2008) defined errors as “red flags” that provide evidence about the knowledge of second language learners. According to Richards (1974), researchers are interested in discovering errors as they are believed to contain valuable information that could be used to develop strategies towards better language acquisition techniques.

It is worth mentioning that Corder (1985, p. 25) distinguished between errors of performance and errors of competence by referring to the former as mistakes and the latter as errors. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 59), James (1998, p. 78) and Ellis (2000, p. 17) described the term ‘mistake’ as a random slip of a tongue and provided a criterion that might clarify the distinction between errors and mistakes. According to these authors, a mistake is a performance fault that the learner is able to correct when his attention is drawn to it, whereas, an error is believed to be not self-corrigeable since a learner cannot correct it when his attention is drawn to it. Errors represent a lack of learner competence, are systematic, and might occur many times unrecognized by the learner, Mourssi (2013c and 2012b). In the current paper, errors and mistakes will be used alternatively.

**The Role of Transfer in Interlanguage**

Transfer is one of the most important elements which affect interlanguage forms. Investigating it can lead to a better understanding of the source/origin and the development of interlanguage. Researchers were doubtful about the issue of transfer, but some of them have said that it is related to language acquisition and should be discussed. Lado (1957) believed that people rely on their first language when they learn the target language. On the other hand, other researchers such as Dulay and Burt (1974:24) said that transfer has nothing to do with interlanguage. This view was rejected by Mourssi (2013c and 2012b) replying with evidence that most of the interlanguage stages the L2 learners pass through are influenced by cross-linguistic influence of L1 which was termed as Transfer in the 20th century.

In particular, Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008:4) argue that cross-linguistic influence refers to the influence of one language on another in an individual mind. They illuminated several areas of meaning and cross-linguistic influence which had not been carefully looked at before. They presented interesting findings and an analysis of the relationship between language transfer and SLA. Based on Odlin’s (1989) claims, and Jarvis and Pavlenko’s (2008) findings, the study will investigate the role of L1 in the acquisition of the L2 prepositions in the context of ALEs.
The Cross-linguistic Influence of Prepositions

A preposition is defined as an item which expresses a relationship between entities, it identifies a relationship in space (between one object and another), and/or a relationship in time (between events). It is a matter of fact that in English grammar generally prepositions are considered as very important linguistic items which should be learned efficiently. Pittman (1966) pointed out that learning prepositions earned a reputation for difficulty if not downright unpredictability. Similarly, Takahaski (1969) identified that the target-like form of prepositions can be seen as one of the greatest problem face English language learners.

Grubic (2004) classified prepositions according to their form, function and meaning. Regarding form, prepositions can be either simple (one-word preposition), or complex (also called two-word, three-word, or compound prepositions). Simple prepositions are known as closed class from which we cannot invent new single word prepositions. The second form is complex prepositions which are known as open class due to the new combinations which could be invented. Generally, there are about seventy simple prepositions in English grammar. Among these seventy, we can refer to the most frequently used ones which are: at, by for, from, in, of, on, to and with.

Quirk et al. (1993) viewed a prepositional phrase is made of a preposition followed by a prepositional complement which is a noun phrase (e.g. at the bus stop) or a WH-clause (e.g. from what he said) or V-ing clause (e.g. by signing a peace treaty). However, several studies (e.g. Mourssi, 2013c) conducted a study in which explored cross-linguistic influence of L1 in acquiring L2 linguistic items in general. However, some studies investigated the transfer of English prepositions across different languages. Regarding Arabic language, Hamdallah and Tushyeh (1993) and also Hasan and Abdullah (2009) examined the cross-linguistic influence of prepositions across English and Arabic languages. Similarly, Asma (2010) investigated the reality of the phenomenon of simple prepositions transfer from Standard Arabic into English by Algerian EFL learners.

Hashim (1996) conducted a similar study in the Jordanian context in which it was found out that a lot of errors have been found and presented in seven syntactic categories. The first category was verbal preposition. In the same vien, Kharma, and Hajjaj, (1997) reported that on Arab EFL learners’ errors, that the majority of their errors are in English syntax, and in particular, prepositions which can be considered as the most troublesome aspect of syntax. Similar studies reached the same findings in the context of ALEs, such as: Zahid (2006), Mohammed (2005), and Muortaga (2004).

However, we can notice that very few studies investigate the cross-linguistic of L1 in acquiring L2 preposition in other languages e.g. Delshad (1980) conducted a contrastive study of English and Persian prepositions. It was found out that Iranian EFL/ESL learners face difficulty in the use of English prepositions.
Types of prepositions in L2

Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2007) categorized any language under five main different categories. The first category is phonetics which refers to the study of individual speech sounds, the second category is phonology which refers to the knowledge of how sounds fit together to make words, while the third category is morphology which refers to the study of the structure of words, then syntax which refers to the study of how words fit together to form phrases, and the last category is semantics which refers to the study of the meaning of individual words and how they relate to each other. They added that there are two subcategories for syntax which are: content words and function words. The content words are those words which have meaning or semantic value. The content words include: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The function words are those which are used to explain or create grammatical or structural relationships into which the content words may fit. It is worth mentioning that the function words might have little meaning of their own and they are much fewer in number than content words. Function words include pronouns, articles, and conjunctions. They also added that prepositions are categorized as function words.

Jie (2008) pointed out that the mistakes that students make in relation to prepositions can be varied according to their language backgrounds. Mourssi (2013d) mentioned that realizing the mistakes is useful for learners and teachers as well. The former will know that he/she produced non-target-like form and the later will know the gaps in his/her learner’s internalized grammatical system.

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) and Cook (2009) mentioned that in SLA, when L1 and L2 are similar, it will be easy for language learner to learn the L2. They added that when L1 and L2 are different, it will be difficult for language learner to learn L2. Mourssi (2012d, and 2013d) pointed out that Arabic Language is different from English Language which resulted in committing many mistake by ALEs whether young or adult learners.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current study seeks to answer the following questions:
To what extent do ALEs commit the prepositional mistakes in writing?
What is the evidence of L1 (Arabic) influence in the acquisition of L2 (English) linguistic items?
What the suitable teaching techniques should be used to help ALEs acquiring L2 prepositions?

This is to provide empirical evidence in relation to test hypotheses emerging from language transfer and thus contribute to the advancement of theory on Second Language Acquisition. In addition, to find a suitable teaching technique, this can be used successfully in the acquisition of L2 prepositions.

METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the subjects of the study, the research questions, the procedures and the methods used in the analysis of the written texts.
The subjects of the study
Two groups represent the subjects of the study. These groups were taught by one of the researchers (Ms. Al Hilali). The target location was at Higher College of Technology HCT in the Sultanate of Oman. Each group consisted of 30 Arab Learners of English (ALEs), with ages ranging between 20 and 24, Intermediate to Upper-intermediate level in English. The subjects were all Arabic speakers and had been learning English as a foreign language for 12 years attending four to five sessions per week on average. They were all enrolled in a full year as foundation course in English language. The samples were taken from their writing classes during their second academic year. In other words, after they finished the foundation course for one year. The number of the samples is 120 written scripts.

The procedures
The procedure started by getting permission from the HoD. He kindly forwarded our request to the dean of the college. As soon as the HoD got the approval from the dean, he gave us the written permission to take off in the journey of completing the research. We started to assign the methods for the research questions.

Methods assigned to the research question
For the research question presented above, quantitative analyses were followed for all target-like forms and the non-target-like forms of prepositions produced by the samples in 120 written texts. Mourssi (2013c) pointed out that writing is one way to get evidence of the state of a student's internalised grammar system, and suggested that different written texts should be collected from the samples of the study in different timing. We decided that in order to explore interlanguage phenomena and the influence of L1 in acquiring L2 prepositions, a full two writing texts were collected from each sample in the two groups. In addition, worksheets were prepared for the experimental group to get a real chance for meta-linguistic feedback and the face-to-face interaction with ALEs inside the classroom, see Appendix (1).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The analysis of the written texts produced by the ALEs in two groups of writing classes appears to indicate that Arabic Language (L1) has influence in the acquisition of L2 preposition. The analyses indicate that meta-linguistic feedback has its own impact on the acquisition of L2 prepositions. In the following are the details.

Pre-test Analysis
In fact there were many types of mistakes in the writing texts but our aim was to sort out the errors related to the L2 prepositions. The authors think about adding a backup group to the main two groups namely the experimental group and the control group. Sometimes it happens that some groups are cancelled for fewer number of students enrolled in that group. That is why we also analyzed the errors in the backup group but when we reached to the post test, it was taken out because we had already analyzed the target groups.
able (1) below shows that when we calculated the errors related to the prepositions, we found out that experimental group made 47 errors. In the same range, the control group made 49 errors. That is why we continued our research because the two groups were equal or nearly equal in the level of proficiency related to the usage of L2 prepositions. In addition the backup group from which we collected writing texts as well but were not included in the analyses, made 51 errors in the area of using L2 prepositions.

Table 1: Pre-analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number of Non-target-like preposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backup Group</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Experimental Group

It was noticed that the ALEs in the experimental group used the prepositions on and in alternatively in a wrong way. We can see from the table below that they used the preposition in instead of the preposition on in 21 examples. They used (in first day) instead of (on first day) 14 times. They also repeated the same error and used (in a hanger) instead of (on a hanger) 7 times. On the contrary, they used the preposition in instead of on e.g. (on open air) instead of (on open air) for 4 times. Sometimes the ALEs omit the preposition because they do not have similar one in their L1 as it shown in example 8 in table 2 below. Also from table 2 below, it is noticed the amount of errors that ALEs in the experimental group made in their pre-test writing.

Table 2: Pre-test Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Non-target like form</th>
<th>Target like form</th>
<th>Number of non-target like forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The packaging should help bananas stay fresh to a long time.</td>
<td>The packaging should help bananas stay fresh for a long time.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The banana on a paper bag...</td>
<td>The banana in a paper bag...</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In first day</td>
<td>On first day</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>On open air</td>
<td>In open air</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>In a hanger</td>
<td>On a hanger</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I heated each pan in 350 °C</td>
<td>I heated each pan at 350 °C</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I fried the chips on 350 °C</td>
<td>I fried the chips at 350 °C</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I fried the chips 20 min</td>
<td>I fried the chips for 20 min</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I poured olive oil for the first pot.</td>
<td>I poured olive oil in the first pot.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The effect of the factor in the freshness of bananas.</td>
<td>The effect of the factor on the freshness of bananas.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I added chips for the third pan.</td>
<td>I added chips to the third pan.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>In the other hand</td>
<td>on the other hand</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 47

The Control Group

Similar to the experimental group, the control group made nearly the same amount of errors in using the prepositions. Table 3 below shows the amount of errors made by the control group. They used the preposition in instead of the preposition on in 19 examples. They used (in day1)
instead of (on day1) 12 times. They also repeated the same error and used (in a hanger) instead of (on a hanger) 5 times. Besides they repeated the same error 3 times in example 13 in table 3 below. On the contrary, they used the preposition in instead of on e.g. (on open air) instead of (in open air) for 4 times in example 4 in table 3 below. It can be seen from the table that most of the errors might be related to L1 or overgeneralization of one preposition on the others. They used the preposition at instead of the preposition for 5 times in examples 11 and 12 in the table below. Similarly to the experimental group, the AlEs sometimes omit the preposition as it does not have any equaling in their L1 as it is shown in examples 5 and10 in table 3 above.

Table 3: Pre-test Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Non-target like form</th>
<th>Target like form</th>
<th>Number of non-target like forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I observed the bananas in day 1.</td>
<td>I observed the bananas on day 1.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The effect of different types of oil in the freshness of potatoes.</td>
<td>The effect of different types of oil on the freshness of potatoes.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In a hanger.</td>
<td>On a hanger.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>On open air.</td>
<td>In open air.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Keeping bananas fresh a long time.</td>
<td>Keeping bananas fresh for a long time.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I cooked the chips On 350 °C</td>
<td>I cooked the chips at 350 °C</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>In the other hand</td>
<td>On the other hand</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Keeping bananas fresh of a long time.</td>
<td>Keeping bananas fresh for a long time.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I poured oil on the pan.</td>
<td>I poured oil into the pan.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I fried the potatoes 20 min.</td>
<td>I fried the potatoes for 20 min.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I fried the potatoes at 20 min.</td>
<td>I fried the potatoes for 20 min.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Olive oil kept the potatoes fresh at 1 hr.</td>
<td>Olive oil kept the potatoes fresh for 1 hr.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>At the first day, the bananas were fresh.</td>
<td>On the first day, the bananas were fresh.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 49

**Post-test Analysis**

Regarding research question number 3, the treatment started after analyzing the pre-test directly with the experimental group, while the control group followed the normal method of teaching followed in the college. The experimental group received meta-linguistic feedback and face-to-face interaction. The teacher followed Ex-implicit grammar teaching approach (Mourssi, 2013a). Nagata (1993); Carroll (2001), Rosa and Leow (2004), demonstrate that explicit feedback was more effective than implicit feedback. Similarly, Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam’s (2006) study of the effects of recasts and meta-linguistic feedback on the acquisition of English past tense –ed also found that explicit feedback is more effective than implicit feedback. On the contrary, Leeman (2003) found out that implicit feedback is more effective than explicit feedback. From the point of view of pre-intermediate and intermediate ALEs, Mourssi (2013a) thinks that it is better to employ both types in the classroom context (Ex-implicit feedback), where explicit feedback can be more effective with low level language learners, while implicit feedback can be more effective with higher level language learners. However, the findings of the current study reveal that meta-linguistic feedback explaining the nature of the learners’ errors without giving them the target-like forms seems to be the effective type of corrective feedback with both low and high level second language learners, Mourssi (2013a).
The Experimental Group

Table 4 below shows the errors made by the experimental group after the treatment. Analyzing the information in the table below reveals that the improvement that the ALEs achieved in the experimental group. The authors think that is due to the teaching techniques followed with the ALEs during the experiment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Non-target -like forms</th>
<th>Number of mistakes</th>
<th>Target -like forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I kept the glasses in 20 °C.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I kept the glasses at 20 °C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The material of glasses can affect on ice melting.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>The material of glasses can affect ice melting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The material of glasses can affect in ice melting.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The material of glasses can affect ice melting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Glass material has an effect in the ice melting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Glass material has an effect on the ice melting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I put 1 ice cube for each glass.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I put 1 ice cube in each glass.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total (11)

From table (4) above, it can be seen that the total amount of errors committed by ALEs in the experimental group is 11. We think that the amount should have been less than that percentage; however, it might be because of the short time of the experiment. It is to remind the reader that the experiment lasted for about three months only.

We think that errors mentioned in the table 4 above reveal that ALEs still think in L1 and write In L2. We mean the Crosslinguistic influence of L1 is very clear in the acquisition of L2 preposition. We think that the main problem is using the two prepositions (in and on). Mourssi (2012d, 2013c, and 2013d) and Mourssi and Al Doori (2014a) pointed out the issue of crosslinguistic and the importance role of meta-linguistic feedback. However, some ALEs show remarkable improvement by memorizing the usage of the most common preposition. This learning strategy of memorization might be effective and helpful in the process of meta-linguistic feedback and face-to-face interaction.

Using the preposition (for) instead of the preposition (in) in example 5 in table 4 above shows the literal translation. However, we can see the improvement in the experimental group compared with the control group. This will be presented in the following section.

The Control Group

Analyzing the data derived from table 5 below reveals that ALEs in the control group committed 23 errors compared with 11 errors in the experimental group. One reason might be the teaching techniques followed with the experimental group. Another reason might be the normal feedback that the control group received. It can be seen from the data provided in the table that ALEs used a mixture of (in, on, at, of, for, with, and to) compared with the non-target-like preposition used by ALEs in the experimental group. Similarly, the most common errors were committed by the
ALEs in the control group were the prepositions of (in and on). They used the preposition in five times in a wrong way, and the preposition of on four times in a wrong way. We think that if they had received meta-linguistic feedback and there were face-to-face interactions, they would not have committed that number of errors.

It is to remind the reader that the subjects in both groups committed many other types of errors but our main aim is to investigate the errors related to the usage of L2 prepositions in the writing context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Non-target-like forms</th>
<th>Number of mistakes</th>
<th>Target-like forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The material of the glass affects on the speed at which ice melts.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>The material of the glass affects the speed at which ice melts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The effect of glass material of ice melting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The effect of glass material on ice melting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I kept the glasses in room temperature.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I kept the glasses at room temperature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The ice should be kept solid a long time.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The ice should be kept solid for a long time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Effect of the material of glasses in the ice melting.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Effect of the material of glasses on the ice melting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The glasses were kept in 20 °C.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The glasses were kept at 20 °C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Leave the ice in the glass to 20 min.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Leave the ice in the glass for 20 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ice was added in each glass.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ice was added to each glass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I kept the glasses with room temperature.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I kept the glasses at room temperature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The customers were satisfied of the drinks. (2)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The customers were satisfied with the drinks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (23)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summarizing the information provided in tables 4 and 5 and table 6 below shows the post-test analysis for both the experimental group and the control group as well. It can be seen the amount of error in the control group is double the amount of errors committed by the ALEs in the experimental group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number of Non-target-like mistakes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION
In conclusion, it can be said that based on the different positions of English prepositions in the sentences as it happens in Arabic prepositions, where we can see the English prepositions can follow a nominal, a verbal or an adjectival as well. The ALEs committed this amount of errors. A common characteristic of English prepositions is that most of different prepositions can offer
many different meanings when they are used with the same word. Another issue is that the meaning of the verb itself can be changed totally when it is followed by different prepositions.

The main problem which resulted in negative transfer is that prepositions rarely have a one to one correspondence between English language and Arabic language. In other words, we can find out that an Arabic preposition might be translated into several English prepositions and vice versa we can find out that an English preposition might have several different Arabic translations.

To conclude, we think that there is a very clear impact of L1 on the acquisition of L2 prepositions. The technique of meta-linguistic feedback besides the face-to-face interaction and memorization of common prepositions usage might be the most efficient methods of teaching and learning L2 prepositions.

**Limitations of the study**

The ALES committed many types of mistakes/errors while writing the first and the second texts. We could not analyze all the types because our target was concentrating only on L2 prepositions. The second limitation was the amount of the samples which was 60 subjects only. We tried to cover all the groups in the study but it was difficult to achieve that due to organizing and administrative reasons.

**REFERENCES**


APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Different tasks given to the experimental group

Task One: Correct the following mistakes. (Group work) based on the non target-like forms
1. Smart phones affect for students badly.
2. Open the website for college.
3. Many students face problem in registration day.
4. They are aware about registration.
5. I poured some water on the glass.

Task Two: Correct the following mistakes.
6. In add and drop day.
7. You may think in creating a timetable.
8. Open the website for HCT.
9. The flowers should be fresh to a long time.
10. The flower on the first glass is fresh.

Task Three: Correct the following mistakes.
11. I added sugar for the first glass.
12. I heated the water for 50 °C.
13. In the other hand
14. In day 1, the flower was fresh.
15. Sugar has an effect for the freshness of flowers.

Task Four: Correct the following mistakes.
16. The effect of water temperature in the growth of plants.
17. How to keep flowers fresh at a long time.
18. The type of water in which flowers are kept affects in their freshness.
19. I poured oil for the first pan.
20. This spray should protect you of mosquitoes.

Task Five: Correct the following mistakes.
21. The growth of plants depend in water temperature.
22. She stopped the child of eating chocolate.
23. If you make so much noise I can’t concentrate in my work.
24. Both came in the same time.
25. Customers should be satisfied of the quality of the phones.