



BT spol. Vol. 17: 1984 v.

30

1985

425 82,1 IV

K

# GLOTTODIDACTICA

VOL. XVII





**GLOTTODIDACTICA**

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL  
OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

VOLUME XVII

Editor — Waldemar Pfeiffer, Poznań  
Assistant to the editor — Barbara Skowronek, Poznań

Editorial Advisory Board

Albert Bartoszewicz — Warszawa  
Stanisław Gniadek — Poznań  
Leon Kaczmarek — Lublin  
Aleksander Szulc — Kraków

Jacek Fisiak — Poznań  
Franciszek Grucza — Poznań  
Waldemar Marton — Poznań  
Władysław Woźniewicz — Poznań



POZNAŃ 1985

Okladkę projektowała

UNIWERSYTET IM. ADAMA MICKIEWICZA W POZNANIU  
MARIA DOLNA

GLOTTODIDACTICA  
AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL  
OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

VOLUME XVII

Editor - Waldemar Pfeiffer, Poznań  
Assistant to the editor - Barbara Skowrońska, Poznań

Editorial Advisory Board

Albert Barborkowicz - Warszawa  
Stanisław Górnicki - Poznań  
Leon Kaszmarek - Lublin  
Alexander Szulc - Kraków  
Eliakim - Poznań  
Mieczysław Górnicki - Poznań  
Mieczysław Maron - Poznań  
Wojciech Woźniak - Poznań



Redaktorzy: Anna Gierlińska, Andrzej Pietrzak

Redaktor techniczny: Jacek Grześkowiak

425 821 II | 1984

WYDAWNICTWO NAUKOWE UNIWERSYTETU IM. ADAMA MICKIEWICZA W POZNANIU

Nakład 820+80 egz. Ark. wyd. 15,25. Ark. druk. 10,50. Papier druk. sat. kl. III. 80g, 70×100 cm.

Oddano do składania w lipcu 1984 r. Podpisano do druku w czerwcu 1985 r. Druk ukończono w

lipcu 1985 r. Zam. nr 471/68. S-7/73. Cena zł 150,-

DRUKARNIA UNIWERSYTETU IM. ADAMA MICKIEWICZA W POZNANIU

Bibl. UAM

85 EO 1835

## CONTENTS

### I. ARTICLES

Waldemar PFEIFFER, Unterrichtsphasen bei der Beherrschung einer Lehrinheit . . . . .	5
Antoni DĘBSKI, Valenztheorie und Konfrontation . . . . .	13
Andrzej Z. BZDĘGA, Zusammenbildungen in der deutschen und polnischen Gegenwartssprache . . . . .	31
Barbara SKOWRONEK, Der sprachliche Fehler im gesteuerten Fremdsprachenunterricht im Gefüge der Interimsprache und der Sprachnorm . . . . .	39
Lewis MUKATTASH, Errors made by Arab university students in the use of English prepositions . . . . .	47
Janusz ARABSKI, The role of age in second/foreign language acquisition . . . . .	65
Józef SYPNICKI, Les traits prosodiques dans l'enseignement d'une langue étrangère, à l'exemples du français . . . . .	73

### II. NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

Björn EKMANN, Zum Problem Landeskunde. Bericht über einen Geschichtskurs mit Texten und Materialien aus Museumsausstellungen in West-Berlin und Berlin DDR . . . . .	79
Dorota ZARĘBSKA-PIOTROWSKA, Suggestology — suggestopedy, a general theoretical outline . . . . .	95

### III. REVIEWS

T. Bungarten (Hrsg.), Wissenschaftssprache. Beiträge zur Methodologie, theoretischen Fundierung und Deskription (Tadeusz ZGÓŁKA) . . . . .	105
K. Hyldgaard-Jensen, F. Schmöe (Hrsg.), Der Bedarf der Gesellschaft an Fremdsprachenkenntnissen (Janusz ZYDRON) . . . . .	107
M. Uesseler, Soziolinguistik (Marian SZCZODROWSKI) . . . . .	109
W. F. W. Lohnes, E. A. Hopkins (ed.), The Contrastive Grammar of English and German (Andrzej Z. BZDĘGA) . . . . .	114
Polnisch-deutscher Sprachvergleich I. Arbeitsbuch für Fortgeschrittene (Izabela PROKOP) . . . . .	117
Deutsch-polnischer Sprachvergleich. Linguistische Studien, Reihe A (Andrzej KAŃNY) . . . . .	119
H. Ramege, R. Rigol, A. Tarantowicz (Hrsg.), Deutsch als Fremdsprache: Probleme und Verfahren am Beispiel des Deutsch-Polnischen (Andrzej KAŃNY) . . . . .	121
H.-J. Krumm, Lehrweikforschung — Lehrwerkkritik. Deutsch als Fremdsprache (Jan KORZENIEWSKI) . . . . .	123

A. Raasch, W. Hüllen, H. J. Zapp (Hrsg.), Beiträge zur Landeskunde im Fremdsprachenunterricht (Barbara SKOWRONEK) . . . . .	127
U. Förster, Landeskunde und Entwicklung sprachlichen Könnens, (Czesław KAROLAK) . . . . .	132
N. Damerau, Langenscheidts praktisches Lehrbuch Polnisch (Wanda KUBICKA-PRZYWARSKA, Barbara SKOWRONEK) . . . . .	133
G. Neuner, P. Desmarests, H. Funk, M. Krüger, T. Scherling, Deutsch konkret. Ein Lehrwerk für Jugendliche (Barbara SKOWRONEK) . . . . .	137
Rahmenrichtlinien Sekundarstufe I. Neue Sprachen (Barbara SKOWRONEK) . . . . .	139
P. Hubbard, H. Jones, B. Thornton, R. Wheeler, A training course for TEFL (Jadwiga NAWROCKA-FISIAK) . . . . .	143
A. P. Cowie, R. Mackin, I. R. McCaig, Oxford dictionary of current idiomatic English (Alfred F. MAJEWICZ) . . . . .	145
B. Abbs, V. Cook, M. Underwood, Authentic English for Reading (Wojciech MEHL) . . . . .	146
J. Eastwood, R. Mackin, A Basic English Grammar (Wojciech MEHL). . . . .	147
A. C. Gimson, S. M. Ramsaran, An English Pronunciation Companion to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (Wojciech MEHL) . . . . .	147
P. L. Sandler, C. L. Stott, Manage with English (Ligia ROZWADOWSKA) . . . . .	148
L. A. Hill, Ch. Innes, Oxford Children's Picture Dictionary (Ligia ROZWADOWSKA). . . . .	149
J. Blundell, N. Middlemiss, Career prospects; J. Higgins, Career prospects. Teacher's book (Ligia ROZWADOWSKA) . . . . .	149
Обучение иностранному языку как специальности (немецкий язык) (Marek SZALEK) . . . . .	150
A. S. Hornby, A. P. Cowie, Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English; A. Underhill, Use your dictionary — a practice book for users of "Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English" and "Oxford student's dictionary of current English" (Alfred F. MAJEWICZ) . . . . .	153

#### IV. REPORTS

Обучение иностранным языкам в Чехословакии в основной средней школе (Marek SZALEK) . . . . .	155
Bericht über die VII. Internationale Deutschlehrertagung des IDV in Budapest (Barbara SKOWRONEK) . . . . .	160
Bericht über das III. Internationale Lehrbuchautorensymposium des Internationalen Deutschlehrerverbandes (Horst BREITUNG, Ingrid KELLING) . . . . .	162
International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language: Seventeenth International Conference (Halina MAJER). . . . .	165
Societas Linguistica Europaea, XVI-ème Congrès annuel, (Poznań 19 — 21 août 1983 (Wanda KUBICKA-PRZYWARSKA) . . . . .	166

#### V. PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

## ERRORS MADE BY ARAB UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE USE OF ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS

LEWIS MUKATTASH

*The University of Jordan*

Received September, 1983

**ABSTRACT.** English prepositions are an everlasting problem for Arab learners of English. The study aims at discovering the type and cause of errors which Arab learners make in the use of English prepositions, as well as the type(s) of strategies which they use in the process of acquiring these prepositions. Seven groups of English prepositions whose members tend to be confused for each other due to interference from Arabic are presented and discussed separately from those error-types that are not caused by L1 interference.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

English prepositions are an everlasting problem for Arab learners of English. Indeed, they are notoriously difficult and do not cease to cause confusion and uncertainty to Arab learners even at a fairly advanced level of learning.

The reasons behind this phenomenon are multifarious. First, the meanings an English preposition has are varied, unpredictable and seem to be determined by the linguistic context in which the preposition occurs. For example, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* lists nine major meanings for the preposition *of* with each basic meaning subsuming a variety of sub-meanings (p. 837). On the other hand, *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* (new edition, 1972:914) makes the meanings of this preposition 23, some of which are explained via other prepositions: e.g. *by, on, in*. In 1940, Charles Fries discovered an average of thirty six and a half meanings recorded and illustrated in the *Oxford English Dictionary* for each of the nine most frequent prepositions: *at, by, for, from, in, of, on, to, with*. Secondly, different prepositions used with the same lexical word have different and quite often confusing meanings: cf. *look up, look at, look into, look for, look after, look on*, etc. Thirdly, different parts of speech of the same lexeme require different prepositions. For example, we *sympathize with* someone, have *sympathy for* him, and feel *sympathetic to* him (cf. Kreidler, 1966:

121).<sup>1</sup> Fourthly, many prepositions have abstract meanings, are not demonstrable, and cannot be learned by association with clearly defined classes of words (see Zughoul, 1979: 24). Finally, and as Takahashi (1969: 218) points out, much of the in learning English prepositions is due to the fact that "English speakers, even those who teach, are unable to offer a logical explanation for the occurrence of such prepositions or a conceptual guide of their usages".

In addition to the problems mentioned above, which are inherent in English prepositions, Arab learners have other problems related to the Arabic language. First, the number of Arabic prepositions is remarkably less than that of English prepositions, so the problem of under-differentiation is bound to arise in the interlanguage of Arab learners. Secondly, the senses associated with an English preposition exceed those associated with its Arabic counterpart. Thirdly, the collocational possibilities of prepositions and lexical items are not in one-to-one correspondence in English and Arabic. For example, in English we say *famous for* and *laugh at*, whereas in Arabic we say *mash-hoor bi* (=famous *with*) and *yadhHak 9ala* (=laugh *on*).

## 2. AIMS AND PROCEDURE

Because of the problems enumerated in the preceding section, it is to be assumed that Arab learners will resort to L1 in learning, processing and producing English prepositions. Daily classroom observation as well as preliminary findings of previous studies (see Mukattash, 1978, 1979) support this assumption. Nonetheless, in order to validate this assumption and to obtain more accurate and detailed information about Jordanian learners' problems in using English prepositions, this study in error analysis was carried out at the University of Jordan.

Like other studies in error analysis, the present study has two main objectives: theoretical and pedagogic (see Richards, 1974; Arabski, 1979; Corder, 1981). More specifically, this study aims at discovering the type and cause of errors which Arab learners make in the use of English prepositions, as well as as the type(s) of strategies which they use in the process of acquiring these prepositions.

This study constituted one component of an English Proficiency Test that was given to 500 first-year students at the University of Jordan.<sup>2</sup> This component was meant to test the use of prepositions, and it consisted of 40 sentences with one blank

<sup>1</sup> Fillmore maintains that the choice of a preposition is mainly determined by the grammatical case of the NP which follows it: e.g. the 'agentive' preposition is *by*; the 'instrumental' is *by* if there is no agent, otherwise it is *with*; the 'dative' preposition is typically *to*, etc.. He further maintains that the 'locative' or 'time' prepositions are selected by the particular noun, *on Monday, at noon, in the afternoon* (Fillmore, Charles 1968. 'The Case for Case', in Bach, E. and Harms, R., eds., *Universals in Linguistic Theory*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1-88).

<sup>2</sup> This is a fairly comprehensive examination in reading comprehension, structure, idiom and vocabulary.

in each. The subjects were asked to fill in the blank with a preposition to be chosen from a list which they were provided with (see Appendix I).

The subjects are all native speakers of Arabic (Jordanian and Palestinian), and most of them had had eight year's instruction in English at school (four to six hours per week); a minority came from private schools, where they had had twelve years of formal instruction in English. The ages of the subjects ranged between 17 and 19 years.

The English Proficiency Test referred to above is an obligatory test for all first-year students, and thus there was no need to explain the purpose of the study to the subjects. On these grounds we may assume that the subjects took the test seriously (no student may graduate until passing this test). This positive aspect should, however, be countered to some extent by exam pressure and other possible extraneous factors.

After the administration of the test all answer sheets were checked and coded. The answers were then fed into the computer together with the relevant instructions. For each item we were able to get the number of examinees who used the correct preposition as well as the type and number of erroneous substitutions. We were also able to get the facility index (I. F.) for each item and for each semantic/syntactic group of prepositions.

### 3. ANALYSIS

Analysis of the data showed that the overall number of errors was 10667, and that the percentage of errors to usage was 53.3%. Appendix I lists all the prepositions tested as well as the type and frequency of major error-types. It also shows the average I. F. for each of the items tested.

Tables (I), (II), (III), and (IV) below show the contexts and frequency of major errors (i. e. those made by a minimum of 10% of the subjects) that occurred in the data. The symbol 'S' stands for 'sentence' and the number that follows it is the number of this sentence in the test and in Appendix I.

Other types of errors in the use of prepositions are listed in Appendix II. These errors, which will not be discussed in this paper, were gathered from an objective test

preposition	replaced by	number & context
ON	IN	149 (S1); 57 (S24)
	AT	67 (S1); 50 (S24)
IN	AT	61 (S29); 52 (S37)
	FOR	65 (S29)
	DURING	58 (S29)
	TO	195 (S37)
	WITH	160 (S38); 67 (S33)
AT	IN	65 (S39)

Table (I)  
(Context & number of errors in the use of ON, IN, AT)

preposition	replaced by	number & context
OF	FOR	45 (S3); 130 (S18)
	TO	53 (S18)
	FROM	24; (S34)
	WITH	78 (S35)
	OFF	66 (S35)
WITH	IN	68 (S2)
	TO	106 (S2)
BY	FROM	124 (S40)
	WITH	55 (S40); 82 (S30)
FOR	WITH	94 (S22)
	BY	117 (S22)
	SINCE	124 (S14)

Table (II)

(Context and number of errors in the use of FOR, BY, WITH, OF)

preposition	replaced by	number & context
ABOVE	OVER	54 (S16)
OVER	ON	47 (S31)
	UP	138 (S31)
	ABOVE	52 (S31)
UP	ABOVE	56 (S21)
	OVER	83 (S21)
BELOW	UNDER	185 (S15)
UNDER	IN	127 (S27)
AMONG	TO	46 (S23)
	BETWEEN	108 (S23)

Table (III)

Context and number of errors in the use of ABOVE, OVER, UP, BELOW, UNDER, AMONG)

preposition	replaced by	number & context
ZERO	ON	195 (S11)
	WITH	69 (S11)
	OF	334 (S25)
	AT	160 (S28)
	TO	131 (S28)
OF	ZERO	49 (S3)
ABOVE	ZERO	102 (S16)

Table (IV)

(Cases of redundancy and deletion in the use of prepositions)

comprising 24 multiple-choice items that was administered to 194 trained Jordanian teachers of English.<sup>3</sup> The idea of listing these errors is to show that some of the errors which foreign-language learners make are, in fact, the result of faulty instruction.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

##### 4.1. L1 Induced Errors

A cursory look at the error-types listed in Tables (I-IV) above will not fail to convince us that Jordanian/Arab learners of English are dominated by L1 in their use of English preposition. When talking about L1 in this context, it is necessary to distinguish between two varieties: (i) Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), and (ii) spoken Jordanian Arabic (JA). Indeed, and as will be seen below, some of the errors that occurred in the data are caused by interference from MSA, whereas others are caused by interference from JA. The second point that should be made in this connection is related to how Arab learners resort to L1 in learning and using English prepositions.

We find the notion *primary counterpart* a particularly useful one in accounting for many of the errors recorded in this study. Arabski (1979: 48) defines a primary counterpart as „an item which in IL [interlanguage] represents the whole group (list) of L2 translation equivalents and thus causes underdifferentiation errors”. A primary counterpart may be elicited from foreign-language learners by means of translation. For example, in the interlanguage of Arab learners, the English preposition *in* is the primary counterpart of the Arabic preposition *fi* and thus Arab learners tend to use it whenever the Arabic context requires the use of *fi*. The following is a representative sample of the contexts that require the use of *fi*:

<i>fi</i>	Imadraseh	at school
	Isa9ah ithamineh	at eight o'clock
	Inahar	by day
	lyoum lthani	on the second day
	lbustan	in the garden
	Ineehayeh	∅ finally

In theory, a primary counterpart may vary from one individual to another depending on the intensity of exposure to the L2 item and on the stage of learning in which this item is first introduced to the learner(s). However, speakers of a given speech community sharing the same educational and socio-economic background generally adopt the same primary counterpart for a given L1 lexical item.

In the following sub-sections we shall present and briefly discuss seven groups of

<sup>3</sup> The subjects, who came from five Teachers Training Institutes, were second-year English majors. The study was administered to them two weeks before they graduated to become teachers of English.

English prepositions whose members tend to be confused for each other due to interference from Arabic. The following symbols will be used in Arabic transcriptions: 'dh' voiced pharyngalized alveolar stop; 'th', voiceless dental fricative; 'TH' voiced dental fricative; 'sh', voiceless palato-alveolar fricative; '9', voiced pharyngal fricative; 'X' voiced uvular fricative; 'H', voiceless pharyngal fricative.

#### 4.1.1. *IN, ON, AT*

Arab learners of English tend to over-use the preposition *in* in the context of place, and time adverbials. This is due to the fact that the Arabic preposition *fi*, whose primary counterpart is *in*, is invariably used in all the contexts that require the use of *in*, *at*, and *on*: cf.

- |                                |                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| (2) a. <i>fi</i> lmasaa        | (at night)             |
| b. <i>fi</i> IXamis min tamooz | (on the fifth of July) |
| c. <i>fi</i> lsa9ah lthamineh  | (at eight o'clock)     |

This automatically accounts for the use of *in* instead of *on* in S24, which we repeat here as (3), as well as for its use instead of *at* in S39, which we repeat here as (4) (see Appendix I):

- (3) Mr. Lee is leaving *in* Wednesday (57 times)  
 (4) When we called to see her, she was not *in* home (65 times)

Table (I) above also shows that there were some errors in the opposite direction (i. e. using *at* and *on* instead of *in*). For example, *at* was used 57 times instead of *in* in (3) above. Obviously, this error is not a function of L1 interference, for — as pointed out above — the Arabic context requires the use of *fi* (*in*): It seems that the subjects who produced this error are beginning to realize that the preposition *in* cannot always replace *fi*, but they still do not know the distribution of *at* and *on*. This state of confusion is best illustrated by the learners' use of *at* instead of *in* 61 times in S29:

- (5) The train should arrive *at* a few minutes (S29)

This is a developmental error, caused by partial exposure to L2 and not by L1, for the Arabic linguistic context requires the use of *fi* (*in*) as is the case in English.

The above remarks also apply to *in*, *on*, and *at* when used with place adverbs.

#### 4.1.2. *ON, OVER, UP, ABOVE*

The three prepositions *over*, *up*, and *above* have one Arabic counterpart, *fawg*. Thus, for most Arab learners, these prepositions are in free variation. This explains the various types of substitutions in Table (III) above. To cite an example from this study, *up*, and *above* were used instead of *over* 138 times and 52 times respectively

in the following sentence:

(6) The prisoner escaped by climbing *up/above* the high wall (S31)

On the other hand, *over* was used instead of *above* 54 times in S16: cf.

(7) He is an honest man. He is *over* suspicion. (S16)

This situation is further complicated by another factor, namely the possible interchangeability of the Arabic prepositions *fawg* and *9ala*, the latter of which is the counterpart of the English preposition *on*: cf.

(8) Al-kitab  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 9ala (=on) \\ fawg (=over, above, up) \end{array} \right\}$  Imaktab  
(The book is *on* the desk)

This explains why Arab learners use *on* instead of the other three prepositions (*over*, *up*, *above*) and vice versa. For instance, in (6) above *on* was used instead of *over* by 47 subjects.

#### 4.1.3. BELOW, UNDER

The two prepositions *below* and *under* have one Arabic counterpart, namely *taHt*. However, it is generally the case that *taHt* is translated by *under*, which suggests that the latter is the primary counterpart of the former. The results of this study lend credibility to this assumption. For example, in S15 the preposition *below* was replaced by *under* 185 times: cf.

(9) The Dead Sea is *under* sea level (S15)

Errors in the opposite direction are rare indeed. For example, in S27 *under* was replaced by *below* 6 times only:

(10) She hid the money *below* the carpet (S27)

An interesting error that occurred in the data involved the use of *in* instead of *under* in (10) above. For most native speakers of Arabic the appropriate preposition in (10) is *taHt* (=under), as is the case in English. However, it was pointed to me that in some local dialects in Jordan *fi* (=in) is acceptable, which accounts for the replacement of *under* by *in*.

#### 4.1.4. BETWEEN, AMONG

As in the case of *below* and *under*, these two prepositions have one Arabic counterpart, namely *bein*. However, it is *between* that acts as L2 primary counterpart to *bein*. This was brought out by the results of this study. For example, *between* was

used instead of *among* 108 times in S23:

- (11) Divide this apple *between* the three of you. (S23)

On the other hand, *among* was used instead of *between* 21 times only; cf.

- (12) Mrs Jones divided the money *among* her two sons. (S7)

#### 4.1.5. OF, FROM

The two prepositions can be translated by the Arabic preposition *min* (see Ba'albaki, 1972: 371, 628). However, the primary counterpart of *min* is *from* and not *of*. This explains why Arab learners tend to use *from* instead of *of*, but not the other way round.

Table (II) above shows that *of* was replaced by *from* 245 times in S34: cf.

- (13) The girl is afraid *from* the dog (S34)

On the other hand, *from* was replaced by *of* 6 times only:

- (14) How far is New York *of* California? (S12)

Before closing this sub-section, it is convenient to look at some other errors which involved the replacement of the preposition *of* by other prepositions, and which are thought to be cases of L1 interference. These errors are, however, determined by the narrow linguistic/lexical context and do not constitute typical substitutions as in the case of the substitution of *of* by *from*. First, *of* was replaced by *for* times in the following context:

- (15) She appeared to be in need *for* a holiday. (S18)

The Arabic context in (15) requires the use of the preposition *li*<sup>4</sup>, which is a prefix that equals the preposition *for*. Secondly, *of* was replaced by *with* 78 times in S35

- (16) Their living room is full *with* books. (S35)

Again, this is a case of L1 interference, for the Arabic context requires the use of *li*, a prefix that equals *with*.

#### 4.1.6. FOR, SINCE

The basic Arabic counterpart of *for* is *li* and of *since* is *munTHu* (see Ba'albaki, 1972: 362, 857). The problem which Arab learners have in using these two prepositions (i.e. *for* and *since*) resides in the fact that *munTHu* (whose primary counterpart

<sup>4</sup> Some of the Arabic prepositions occur as prefixes whereas others are free morphemes. There are, however, no syntactic differences between the two types.

is *since*) combines the senses of both *for* and *since*: it can refer to duration (leading up to the present moment) or to a definite point in the past: cf.

- (17) lam yusafir *munTHu*  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{sittata shuhoor (= six months)} \\ \text{Tamooz (= July)} \end{array} \right\}$   
 (He has not travelled since *six months/July*)

This explains why 124 students used *since* instead of *for* in the following context:

- (18) The soldier has lived in this house *since* over ten years (S14)

Errors in the opposite direction (i.e. the replacement of *since* by *for*) are very minimal in the interlanguage of Arab learners. In the present study, for example, *since* was replaced by *for* only 22 times in the following context:

- (19) She has not been in England *for* 1950 (S23)

It should be pointed out, however, that the Arabic counterpart of (19) does not allow the use of *li* (= *for*). In other words, the error in (19) is not caused by L1 interference.

#### 4.1.7. WITH, BY

Although each of *by* and *with* has different counterparts in Arabic, the two may be translated into Arabic by means of the nominal prefix *bi* (see footnote 4). This prefix can, for example, replace all the occurrences of *with* and *by* in (20) and (21) respectively:

- (20) a. He worked *with* zeal  
 b. He cut it *with* a knife  
 c. It was stuffed *with* straw  
 (21) a. We came *by* train  
 b. He did it *by* force  
 c. Multiply five *by* eight  
 d. I go *by* her house every day

Thus in translating the Arabic *bi* into English, some learners will use *by* while others will use *with*, not realizing the co-occurrence restrictions on these two prepositions.

On the whole, Arab learners tend to use *with* instead of *by* more frequently than the other way round. In the following sentence *with* was used instead of *by* 82 times:

- (22) I cannot move this heavy table *with* myself (S30)

On the other hand, *by* was used instead of *with* only 24 times in S14: cf.

- (23) Old Mr. Reed climbed the tree *by* difficulty. (S14)

#### 4.1.8. Preposition Deletion

There were few cases of inappropriate preposition deletion caused by L1 interference. First, the deletion of the preposition *of* in (24) below is due to the fact that there are two Arabic verbs that correspond to *consist of*, one followed by a preposition (*yatakawan min* (=from), and the other not (*yaHtawi*): cf.

- (24) The present book consists Ø three chapters (S3)

Secondly, the deletion of the preposition *off* in

- (25) Jim was playing on the swing. He fell Ø and broke his leg (S20)

is caused by the fact that the Arabic verb corresponding to *fell* cannot be followed by a preposition in this particular linguistic context. Thirdly, the preposition *of* was also deleted in the following context (24 times though):

- (26) She appeared to be in need Ø a holiday. (S18)

This error is an obvious case of interference from JA and not MSA, which requires the use of the preposition *li* (=for): see 4.1.5. above.

#### 4.1.9. Preposition Redundancy

There were two cases of redundancy in the use of prepositions caused by L1 interference. First, the preposition *on* was used redundantly 195 times in the following context:

- (27) She played *on* the piano for an hour (S11)

This error is due to interference from JA: the Arabic verb *ya9zif* (=play) is followed by the preposition *9ala* (=on). Secondly, *to* was used redundantly 131 times in:

- (28) They reached *to* the place of the accident late (S28)

Again, this error is caused by L1 interference: the verb *waSala*<sup>5</sup> (*reached*) may be optionally followed by the preposition *ila* (=to).

Other cases of redundancy not caused by interference from Arabic will be discussed in an ensuing section (see 4.2. below).

#### 4.1.10. Other Replacements

Other errors caused by L1 interference that do not fall within easily definable patterns include the following cases:

- (i) The use of *for* and *to* instead of *between*: cf.

<sup>5</sup> The symbol 'S' stands for a voiceless pharyngealized alveolar fricative.

(29) Mrs Jones divided the apple *for/to* her two sons (S7)

(ii) The use of *to* instead of *in*: cf.

(30) She appeared to be in need *to* a holiday (S18)

(iii) The use of *for* instead of *to*: cf.

(31) We are not accustomed *for* such rude behaviour (S19)

In fact the replacement of *for* by *to* and vice versa is a noticeable phenomenon in the speech and writing of Arab learners, and is caused by the fact that the Arabic counterparts of these two prepositions (i.e. *li* and *ila* respectively) can substitute each other in certain contexts: cf. waSalna *ila* Imakaan; waSalna *lilmakaan*.

(iv) The use of *with* instead of *for*: cf.

(32) I bought this picture *with* two dinars (S22)

(v) The use of *to* instead of *among* (see (29) above): cf.

(33) Divide the apple *to* the three of you (S23)

(vi) The use of *during* instead of *in*: cf.

(34) The train should arrive *during* a few minutes (S29)

(vii) The use of *to* instead of *in/from*: cf.

(35) It is now six years since his arrival *to* Italy (S37)

#### 4.2. Developmental Errors

The percentage of systematic errors (i.e. those made by a minimum of 10% of the subjects) that were judged to be cases of L1 interference was found to be 76% of the overall number of errors. This means that 24% of the errors were caused by other factors.

In the ensuing sub-sections we shall present and comment on those error-types that are not caused by L1 interference.

##### 4.2.1. False Analogy/Overgeneralization

An obvious example of false analogy/overgeneralization can be seen in the following example where the subjects used *by* instead of *on*: cf.

(36) We decided to go to beach *by* foot (S6)

The learners are familiar with prepositional phrases indicating means of travel: e.g. *by air, by sea, by bus, by train*. etc.. and by false analogy they are led to produce

\**by foot*. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the Arabic context in (36) above requires the use of the preposition *9ala* (=on) but not *bi* (=by).

#### 4.2.2. Ignorance of Syntactic Restrictions

The preposition *of* was used redundantly 344 times (i.e. 68.8% of the subjects) in the following context:

(37) Most *of* people in Europe speak English (S25)

As is the case in English, the Arabic context does not allow the use of a preposition in front of the noun *people*. In other words, the error in (37) cannot be ascribed to Arabic. What seems to be involved here is case of ignorance of syntactic restrictions: the learners are accustomed to using the preposition *of* after words like *most*, *many*, *much*, etc. (e.g. *most of the candidates*, *much of the bread*, *many of the men*), but they do not seem to be aware of the fact that the preposition *of* is not permissible in front of indefinite NPs.

#### 4.2.3. Graphic Similarity

Some of the errors that occurred in the data may be ascribed to the graphic similarity of certain L2 prepositions. For instance, *of* was replaced by *off* 66 times in the following context:

(38) Their living room is full *off* books (S35)

It should be pointed out in this respect that the Arabic context requires the use of the preposition *bi* (=with): see 4.1.5. above.

Similar errors are also reported to have been made by Polish learners of English (see Arabski, 1979:52).

#### 4.2.4. Partial Learning

In 4.1.1. above we cited some error-types involving erroneous substitutions (e.g. *at* and *on* instead of *in*; *at* instead of *on*) which are not caused by L1 interference. The following is a representative example:

(39) The train should arrive *at* a few minutes (S29)

The error here is not caused by L1 interference, for the learners would have produced the correct preposition had they transferred from Arabic. Most probably this error is due to partial learning: the learners realize that *at* is a preposition of time, but they still do not know the full range of linguistic environments in which it occurs (see also 4.1.6. above).

#### 4.2.5. Ignorance of Lexical Meaning

Some errors were caused by the learners' ignorance of the the meaning of lexical items preceding or following the preposition. For example, the inappropriate deletion of *above* (102 times) in the following example is caused by the learners' ignorance of the meaning of the noun *suspicion*: cf.

(40) He is an honest man. He is Ø suspicion. (S16)

It should be pointed out that the Arabic context requires the use of the preposition *fawq* (=above, over).

### 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although based on one test-type only and restricted in scope, the results of this study may have some implications for foreign-language teaching and learning.

#### 5.1. Foreign-Language Learning

The results of this study show that Jordanian/Arab learners are dominated by L1 interference in their use of English prepositions. This is in agreement with the findings of previous studies carried out by the writer (see Mukattash, 1978, 1979).

Our results are also similar to those of Arabski (1979: 46 - 56), who found that a substantial number of the errors which his Polish learners made in their use of English prepositions were, in fact, caused by interference from Polish. Our findings and those of Arabski cast doubts on the validity of Richards' analysis and interpretation of errors made by E.F.L learners in the use of English prepositions: Richards (1971) claims that errors in the use of English prepositions are caused by analogy from L2 and thus are universal. One of the problems with Richards' analysis and interpretation resides in the fact that he does not make any attempt to see how the error-types which he lists compare to the facts of the learners' native languages. Indeed, the occurrence of an error in the interlanguage of a number of E.F.L learners with different language backgrounds does not constitute solid grounds for considering this error universal. For error analysis to be meaningful it must have a contrastive component, and for error interpretation to be valid, the researcher must have access to the learner(s) providing the linguistic data.

It is worth pointing out in this connection that many of the errors (in the use of prepositions) which Richards lists and judges to be caused by analogy from L2 are, in fact, characteristic of the interlanguage of Arab learners (e.g. *consist with; play on the piano; went to home; reached to the place; angry on him; in T.V.*; etc.). More research is still needed in this area to determine whether such errors as those listed by Richards are caused by L1 interference or are the result of a learning strategy that functions independently of L1.

The results of this study also show that interference may be 'simultaneous': from two related source languages as in the case of MSA and JA. It will be interesting to find out under what psychological conditions Arab learners tend to resort to either variety of language in learning or producing L2 items.

### 5.2. Foreign-Language Teaching

One major problem involved in the teaching of English prepositions resides in the fact that each preposition expresses different senses and that each preposition enters into various syntactic-semantic relations with other L2 prepositions. Another problem stems from the fact that foreign-language learners tend to learn L2 prepositions via the prepositional system of L1. This has been brought out by the results of this study and by the results of previous studies (see Arabski, 1979).

The remarks in the preceding paragraph and the results of this study imply that in order for foreign-language learners to master the uses of English prepositions, they need to be made aware of the following three types of contrast: (i) how the various senses expressed by an L2 preposition contrast with each other, (ii) how a preposition contrast with other L2 prepositions that are related to it semantically and/or syntactically, and (iii) how a preposition contrasts with its L1 counterpart.

I argue elsewhere (see Mukattash, forthcoming) that contrastive teaching facilitates the comprehension of new L2 structures and hence leads to meaningful learning (see also Marton, 1972). Contrastive teaching may be conducted in two different ways: first, contrasting new L2 items with previously acquired L2 items, and, secondly, contrasting L2 items with L1 items. I wish to suggest in this connection that both types of contrastive teaching are particularly suitable for the teaching of English prepositions to adult foreign-language learners.

### APPENDIX I

(the test upon which this study is based, and which was given to 500 first-year university students)

#### instructions

Fill in the blanks with one of the following prepositions or with an *X* if no preposition is needed: *in, on, at, to, of, by, for, since, until, during, with, between, below, under, above, over, up, off, among.*

*sentences:* each sentence is followed by the facility index (I. F.) and by the type and frequency of systematic errors

(S1) Did you see the play *on* television last night? (I.F. 0.39)

errors: *IN* (149); *AT* (67)

(S2) "Are you familiar *with* this district?", the guide asked. (I.F. 0.31)

errors: *IN* (68); *TO* (106)

- (S3) The present book consists of three chapters. (I.F. 0.38)  
errors: FOR (45); FROM (38); Ø (49)
- (S4) Travelling by air is more convenient than other forms of transport. (I.F. 0.76)  
errors: IN (27) (a fairly easy item)
- (S5) Bill's essay dealt with the unemployment question. (I.F. 0.47)  
errors: Ø (23); FROM (21)
- (S6) We decided to go to beach on foot. (I.F. 0.87)  
errors: BY (30) (a fairly easy item)
- (S7) Mrs Jones divided the money between her two sons. (I.F. 0.67)  
errors: FOR (47); TO (44); AMONG (21)
- (S8) During his stay in Britain he met various people. (I.F. 0.75)  
errors: IN (23); SINCE (22)
- (S9) You will have to wait here until tomorrow morning to find out the results. (I.F. 0.71)  
errors: FOR (36)
- (S10) Thousands of soldiers were killed during/ in the Second World war. (I.F. 0.68)  
errors: AT (40); BY (51)
- (S11) She played Ø the piano for an hour. (I.F. 0.14)  
errors: ON (195); AT (63); WITH (69)
- (S12) How far is New York from California? (I.F. 0.77)  
errors: TO (52) (a fairly easy item)
- (S13) Old Mr Reed climbed the tree with great difficulty. (I.F. 0.68)  
errors: IN (38); BY (24)
- (S14) The soldier has lived in this house for over ten years. (I.F. 0.60)  
errors: SINCE (124)
- (S15) The Dead Sea is below sea level. (I.F. 0.39)  
errors: UNDER (185)
- (S16) He is an honest man. He is above suspicion. (I.F. 0.18)  
errors: OVER (54); Ø (102)
- (S17) He cannot distinguish between an honest and a dishonest man.  
(I.F. 0.61)  
errors: WITH (30); Ø (24); AMONG (21)
- (S18) She appeared to be in need of a holiday. (I.F. 0.15)  
errors: FOR (130); TO (53); DURING (47)
- (S19) We are not accustomed to such rude behaviour. (I.F. 0.24)  
errors: OF (45); FOR (40); WITH (57)
- (S20) Jim was playing on the swing. He fell off and broke his leg.  
(I.F. 0.24)  
errors: IN (53); ON (74); OVER (58)
- (S21) You must climb Ø/up these steps to reach the roof. (I.F. 0.55)  
errors: ON (40); ABOVE (56); OVER (83)
- (S22) I bought this picture for two dinars. (I.F. 0.31)  
errors: WITH (94); BY (117)
- (S23) Divide this apple among the three of you. (I.F. 0.39)  
errors: BETWEEN (108); TO (46)
- (S24) Mr. Lee is leaving on Wednesday. (I.F. 0.60)  
errors: IN (57); AT (50)
- (S25) Most Ø people in Europe speak English. (I.F. 0.15)  
errors: OF (344); OFF (46)
- (S26) The audience laughed at the funny clown. (I.F. 0.64)  
errors: FROM (20); ON (18)

- (S27) She hid the money *under* the carpet. (I.F. 0.39)  
errors: *IN* (127)
- (S28) They reached  $\emptyset$  the place of the accident late. (I.F. 0.22)  
errors: *AT* (160); *TO* (131)
- (S29) The train should arrive *in* a few minutes. (I.F. 0.44)  
errors: *AT* (61); *FOR* (65); *DURING* (58)
- (S30) I cannot move this heavy table (*by*) myself. (I.F. 0.64)  
errors: *WITH* (82)
- (S31) The prisoners escaped by climbing (*over*) the high wall. (I.F. 0.38)  
errors: *UP* (138); *ABOVE* (52); *ON* (47)
- (S32) She hasn't been in England *since* 1950. (I.F. 0.73)  
errors: *IN* (60); *FOR* (22)
- (S33) She is not interested *in* her work. (I.F. 0.56)  
errors: *WITH* (67)
- (S34) The girl is afraid *of* the dog. (I.F. 0.37)  
errors: *FROM* (245)
- (S35) Their living room is full *of* books. (I.F. 0.63)  
errors: *WITH* (78); *OFF* (66)
- (S36) They stood outside (*of*) the door. (I.F. 0.56)  
errors: *AT* (48)
- (S37) It is now six years since his arrival *in/from* Italy. (I.F. 0.38)  
errors: *AT* (52); *TO* (195)
- (S38) The professor spoke *in* a high voice. (I.F. 0.52)  
errors: *WITH* (160)
- (S39) When we called to see her, she was not (*at*) home. (I.F. 0.80)  
errors: *IN* (65)
- (S40) The cat was always being chased around the table *by* the dog. (I.F. 0.25)  
errors: *FROM* (124); *WITH* (55)

### Appendix II

(type and number of errors made by 194 teachers of English)

*note:* each item is followed by the facility index (I.F.), and each distractor by the number of subjects who attempted it

1. .... last vacation I met a man from France. (I.F. 0.36)  
A. *AT* (91)                      B. *ON* (10)                      C. *IN* (23)                      D.  $\emptyset$  (70)
2. I was very sick on Monday, so I didn't go to work. (I.F. 0.81)  
A. *ON* (158)                      B. *AT* (6)                      C. *IN* (16)                      D. *DURING* (0)
3. The library is open ..... 8 A.M. until 2 P.M. . (I.F. 0.66)  
A. *BY* (8)                      B. *SINCE* (45)                      C. *FROM* (128)                      D. *ON* (13)
4. Ahmed likes swimming ..... the sea. (I.F. 0.64)  
A. *BEHIND* (9)                      B. *ON* (15)                      C. *INTO* (45)                      D. *IN* (123)
5. I hung the towel .... my shoulder. (I.F. 0.69)  
A. *UP* (38)                      B. *THROUGH* (5)                      C. *BY* (16)                      D. *OVER* (132)
6. Put the meat ..... the refrigerator so it doesn't spoil. (I.F. 0.81)  
A. *AT* (21)                      B. *IN* (156)                      C. *TO* (1)                      D. *ON* (15)
7. Mr Smith left ..... England yesterday. He will have arrived by now. (I.F. 0.69)  
A. *AT* (18)                      B. *FOR* (129)                      C. *IN* (32)                      D. *BY* (12)

8. The dog jumped ..... the window into the garden. (I.F. 0.79)  
 A. ABOVE (18)      B. IN (6)      C. BY (17)      D. THROUGH (153)
9. He drove .... Aqaba to see water skiing. (I.F. 0.67)  
 A. FOR (30)      B. AT (25)      C. TO (130)      D. IN (9)
10. Jordan is developing ..... great speed. (I.F. 0.33)  
 A. BY (30)      B. IN (79)      C. AT (64)      D. ON (20)
11. I was followed ..... the police for days. (I.F. 0.76)  
 A. Ø (29)      B. WITH (8)      C. FROM (9)      D. BY (148)
12. The wall is fifty meters ..... length. (I.F. 0.51)  
 A. IN (98)      B. ON (18)      C. AT (60)      D. BY (18)
13. Mary knitted a dress ..... her mother. (I.F. 0.52)  
 A. AT (3)      B. AS (48)      C. FOR (100)      D. TO (43)
14. Yesterday I met a man ..... very large ears. (I.F. 0.63)  
 A. BY (9)      B. WITH (122)      C. OF (22)      D. IN (41)
15. Seventy percent .... the people are Muslims. (I.F. 0.70)  
 A. OF (136)      B. OFF (19)      C. FROM (33)      D. BY (6)
16. I prefer this book .... that one. (I.F. 0.34)  
 A. FOR (18)      B. ON (13)      C. TO (66)      D. THAN (97)
17. Can I depend .... you not to tell anyone. (I.F. 0.86)  
 A. AT (10)      B. WITH (12)      C. ON (166)      D. TO (6)
18. Many people believe ..... life after death. (I.F. 0.79)  
 A. AT (19)      B. WITH (17)      C. BY (4)      D. IN (154)
19. She remarried for the sake ..... her children. (I.F. 0.58)  
 A. FOR (33)      B. OF (113)      C. BY (25)      D. FROM (23)
20. She has shown much interest ..... Jim's work, (I.F. 0.64)  
 A. TO (17)      B. WITH (34)      C. IN (124)      D. BY (19)
21. His father doesn't have influence ... him. (I.F. 0.15)  
 A. AT (91)      B. INTO (14)      C. OVER (29)      D. FOR (59)
22. Jerash is famous .... its Roman ruins. (I.F. 0.27)  
 A. BY (34)      B. WITH (50)      C. FOR (52)      D. OF (58)
23. You're not afraid .... ghosts, are you? (I.F. 0.62)  
 A. OFF (22)      B. FROM (48)      C. OF (119)      D. BY (4)
24. He couldn't speak to me because he was busy .... the exams. (I.F. 0.66)  
 A. TO (10)      B. FROM (12)      C. BY (44)      D. WITH (127)

## REFERENCES

- Arabski, J. 1979. *Errors as Indications of the Development of Interlanguage*, Uniwersytet Śląski Katowice.
- Ba'albaki, M. 1972. *Al-Mawrid: A Modern English-Arabic Dictionary*, fifth edition, Dar El-ilm Lil-malayan, Beirut.
- Corder, S. P. 1981. *Error Analysis and Interlanguage*, O.U.P.
- Fowler, H. W., Fowler, F. G., eds. 1964. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, fifth edition, O.U.P.
- Fries, C. 1941. *American English Grammar*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York.
- Kreidler, C. W. 1965. "English Prepositions", *English Language Teaching, Journal*, 20, 2.
- Macdonald, A. M., ed. 1972. *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*, new edition, Chambers.
- Marton, W. 1972. "Pedagogical Implications of Contrastive Studies", *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia*, 4, 115-125.
- Mukattash, L. 1978. "A Pilot Project in Common Grammatical Errors in Jordanian English", *Interlanguage Studies Bulletin*, 3, 2, 250-291.

Mukattash, L. 1979. "Further Studies in Jordanian English", unpublished manuscript, the University of Jordan.

Mukattash, L. 1984. "Contrastive Analysis and the Adult E.F.L. Learner", to appear in *World Language English*. 3,3, 178-182.

Richards, J. C. 1971. "A Non-Contrastive Approach to Error Analysis", *English Language Teaching Journal*, 25, 3. reprinted in Richards, J., ed. (1974), 172-188.

Richards, J. C., ed. 1974. *Error Analysis*, Longman.

Takahashi, G. 1969. "Perception of Space and Function of Certain English Prepositions", *Language Learning*, 19, 3 & 4.

Zughoul, M. R. 1979. "Teaching English Prepositions", *English Teaching Forum*, 17, 3, 24-29.

REFERENCES

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1978. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1979. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1980. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1981. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1982. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1983. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1984. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1985. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1986. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1987. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1988. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1989. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1990. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1991. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1992. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1993. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1994. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1995. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1996. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1997. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1998. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 1999. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.

Abdel-Jalil, J. 2000. *Contrastive Analysis of the Development of English Grammar*. University of Jordan, Amman.