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العدد الثامن

عشر

تحليل لغوي لحروف الجر "بواسطة" كأحد الحروف الجر المركزية المستخدمة من قبل طلاب

الدراسات الجامعية في العراق

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المستخلص :

حروف الجر هي حروف تستخدم لضغط المعنى في عدد قليل من الكلمات. ويشكل الاستخدام الصحيح للحروف الجر مجالاً مشكلاً في ممارسة اللغة لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق ، حتى الطلاب المتقدمين. وعلى الرغم من أهميته ، فإن التحقيق في حروف الجر لم يتلقى الاهتمام الكافي ، حيث لا يزال التردد والطريقة التي يتم استخدامها في كتابة الطلاب غير واضحين . لهذا الغرض ، قامت هذه الدراسة بتحقيق الاستخدام النحوي والدلالي للحروف الجر الإنجليزية في كتابة طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجامعات العراقية. تهدف هذه الدراسة تحديداً إلى فحص الاستخدام الصحيح النحوي والدلالي للحروف الجر الإنجليزية . by، لتحقيق هذا الهدف ، تم اختيار مئتي طالب من طلاب السنة الثالثة والرابعة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية في جامعة الأنبار كعينة للدراسة للفصل الدراسي الأول للعام الأكاديمي (2022-2023). تم اختيار المشاركين عشوائياً بناءً على خلفياتهم الخبرات والجنسية. تم تنفيذ تصميم بحث كمي وتصميم مستعرض حيث تم استخدام مهمة كتابة على شكل اختبار MCQ لجمع البيانات للدراسة الحالية. تم تحليل البيانات بشكل كمي باستخدام برنامج (SPSS الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعي). اظهرت النتائج وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات الصف الثالث وتلك للصف الرابع في نتيجة الاختبار، لصالح الصف الرابع في توعيتهم الأكبر بالتعرف على الاستخدام الصحيح للحروف الجر بين by هذا يؤكد الفرضية البديلة التي تقول أن هناك فرقاً ذو دلالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات الصف الثالث والرابع .



الكلمات المفتاحية: حروف الجر، الطلاب العراقيين، التداخل اللغوي .

A linguistic analysis of the prepositions "by" as central prepositions employed by Iraqi undergraduate students

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Abstract :

Prepositions are words in language used for compressing meaning into few words. The correct use of preposition constitutes a problematic area in language practice for Iraqi EFL students even advanced ones. Despite its significance, investigating prepositions has been a bit neglected as the frequency and the way it is used in students' writing which is still unclear. To this end, this study investigated the syntactic and semantic use of English prepositions in undergraduate Iraqi EFL university students' writing. Specifically, this study aimed at examining the correct syntactic and semantic use of English prepositions **by, over, with, under and beneath**. To attain these aims, two hundred from third-fourth year university students of the academic year (2022-2023), first semester, from English Department College of Education for Humanities-University of Anbar were selected as a sample of the study. The participants were randomly selected based on their background experiences and nationality. A quantitative research design method and cross-sectional design was implemented whereby a writing task in form of MCQ test was used to collect data for the current study. The data were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS(the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software.

Findings showed a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the third and those of the fourth grade in test result, in favour of the fourth grade in their more awareness of recognizing the correct use of the preposition **by**. This proved the alternative hypothesis which claimed that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the third and fourth grades.



The study concluded that the fourth grade students achieved better in using prepositions Syntactically and semantically. Additionally, EFL Iraqi college students are not able enough to differentiate the correct syntactic and semantic use of **over**. As well, Arabic interference is the major factor behind the inadequate performance of EFL Iraqi college students in the use of prepositions.

Key words: prepositions, Iraqi students, interference.

Introduction

Prepositions are words that indicate the connections between other words in a sentence. The word "preposition" has a simple definition, according to Yates J (1999, p. 5), which is "a word inserted before a noun or pronoun to establish its relationship with another word in the sentence." The fact that "the term preposition is broken into two syllables, pre/position," is noteworthy (Shehata M.2003, p.214)

According to Walker (1982, p. 123), a preposition is a word that demonstrates the connection between a noun or pronoun and another sentence component. Additionally, Cowan (1983, p.281) defined prepositions as a set of words that show a connection between the prepositional object and a few other words in the phrase. Here statements highlighted the crucial role prepositions play in sentences, citing examples like how they use nouns and pronouns to create phrase, and They linked these phrases to the rest of the sentence by using nouns and pronouns to build phrases. By saying that the functions serve as markers of time, place, cause, manner, agency association, or other relationships, the author provided an illustration. Additionally, prepositions frequently appear in phrases that work as adjectives or adverbs. Another definition of a preposition is a word placed before a noun or pronoun to indicate the location of the thing or person represented by it in relation to something else (Wren & Martin, 1999, p.106 as cited in Hassan, 2016).

Prepositions are terms like of, in, on, at, and to that are typically followed by a noun, noun phrase, personal pronoun, or noun substitute known as the object of the preposition, according to Stageberg (1981, p. 169).



Prepositional phrases are made up of a preposition and its object, like in the examples below.

-George sat between the two deans, for instance.

-John jumps on it.

Prepositions are most frequently used to indicate how two components of a phrase are related in space or time, according to Crystal (2003, pp. 165, 213).

We left **at** four p.m

They sat **on** the bench.

2.1 Prepositional phrase

A prepositional phrase is consisting of a preposition and its object, such as in the sentence: "The students travel **to their school**."

The preposition "to," the determiner "their," and the noun "school" make up the prepositional phrase "to their school." Prepositional phrases are defined by Trask (1993,p.215) 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. Wekker and Haegeman (1985,p.51) define prepositional phrases as those phrases that consist of a preposition (in, about, under, etc.) followed by a noun or a noun phrase.

According to Leech and Svartvik (1994,p.351), a noun phrase is typically the complement or object of a preposition (e.g. He put the book on the table) although there may be additional factors, as in:

1. Preposition + pronoun, as in:

- Kindly, do it for **me!**

It should be noted that the pronoun form in this case must be objective, such as me, him, etc.

2- Preposition + an-ing clause, as in:

By looking at the sky , Jim tried to over come his fears.

3- A preposition and an adverb, as in:

John can see the train from here

4- Preposition followed by a wh-clause, like in:

She was coming **from** what she called ' a small farm'



That clauses and to-infinitive clauses are the only two forms of nominal clauses that cannot be the complement of a preposition. The preposition is omitted with certain clauses, as in:

- I was astonished **at** the news.
- I was surprised that things in so quickly way have changed. ('**at**' is omitted)
- I was shocked to hear you say that ('**at**' removed).

that-clause construction can occasionally be changed into a form that works with a prepositional complement by adding the fact(that).

- I believe everyone is aware that there are issues.
- I believe that everyone is aware that there are some issues.

According to Miller (1946,p.211), a prepositional phrase can be used to mean:

a-Nominal: I'm talking **about the time before World War I**. (before the world war is the object of the 'to')

b. Adjectival: The paper **on the table** is made of mahogany. (The words 'on the table' describes the noun "paper").

adverbial: I put the cake **on the desk**. (in this sentence 'on the table' modifies the verb 'put')

an adverbial prepositional phrase can be used to indicate:

1. Time: I'll be here **on** Tuesday.
- 2- Location(place) : They live **in** America .
- 3- Style (manner) : He wrote his answer **with** care
- 4-Degree: He is **by** far older than she is.
- 5- Outcome (Result)or Impact (effect): He is unable to work **without** making a noise .

(So he does not make a noise).

6- condition: You could not complete it **without** my assistance.

7-Concession: I'll go ahead and do it.**in spite of** your efforts to stop me

8- purpose: She hired a charwoman **to** clean the rooms.

9- Authorship: the book was written **by** my friend .

10- Instrumentality: He has written the letter **with** fountain -pen.

11: means: He got happy **by** dishonesty.

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



13- cause: He was hurt **of** cancer.(because of cancer)

(Miller, ibid)

2.2 Syntactics of Prepositional

It is well known that prepositions turn nouns into adverbs (they get off work **at** night), and that prepositional phrases come after verbs and adjectives (He is **at** school) (She is good **at** math). Prepositional phrase structural rule allows for several observations concerning the shape of prepositions.

Prep →prep+Np

(Celce-Murica and Freeman,1999).

The **first** of these observations is that English prepositions are free morphemes, as opposed to other languages' constrained inflectional affixes. Prepositions are called pre-positions because they come before nouns, which is why they are given this name. In contrast, some languages like Japanese have prepositions as well, but they come after nouns. This does not imply that prepositions in English must always come before nouns. When a wh-question word is fronted, such as in the sentence: - Who is she speaking **to**?, prepositions may be moved to the end of the sentence.

Second, the rule states that noun phrases must come after prepositions since they are the preposition's object and, if a pronoun is present, it must be an object pronoun, as in "for us" or "to me."

Third, the term "Prep" does not always refer to a single word in the regulation.

Although most prepositions are single words, some complicated prepositions, such as "because of," "out of," "on top of," and "in front of," are made up of two or more words.

In fact, certain prepositions that were originally two words, like "into" and "onto," have combined. Prepositional phrases are shown to follow by **copular verbs**, some **intransitive verbs**, and **transitive adjectives** where they are necessary to complete verb phrases or adjective phrases, as in:

The bus is **in** the park. Cop + prep.

She lay **on** her side. Verb + prep.

Adj + prep: I am averse **to** that food.



(Celce-Murcia and Freeman, ibid)

2.3 Uses of prepositions

2.3.1 Prepositions of Place

It is said that when a preposition is used to refer to place, the dimensional relations take place. These dimensional relations—which can be either subjective or objective—show the location in question, such as:

- our car is **at** the garage.
- a new roof is **on** cottage.
- the cottage has two beds **in** it .

When the preposition "at" is used, the cottage is reduced to a dimensionless place, only a single point from which the position of the car can be inferred. The cottage becomes a two-dimensional space with a roof when the preposition "on" is employed, while "on" can also be used with a one-dimensional object as in:

-**On** this line, sign your name.

(Quirk and Greenbaum ,1973).

The cottage becomes a three-dimensional object when **in** is used with it, though "**in**" can be used with an essentially two-dimensional items

- The vehicle is **in** a field. (Where "field" is depicted as an enclosed area)

(Quirk et al., 1985)

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1973), the distinction between "on" (surface) and "in" (area) has several connotations depending on context, for example:

On: , the snow had left patterns on the window. (In this instance, a "window" is a framed space.) There is also a difference between "at," which is one dimension, and "in," which can be either two or three dimensions. '**In**' can be used for continents, countries, provinces, and large regions of any type, but '**at**' or '**in**' can be used for towns, villages, etc. They can also be used to convey opinions. The normal rule is to treat a very large city, such as New York, London, or Tokyo, as an area; for instance:

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

However, if one thinks of distances across the globe, one can treat it as a point on a map, as in the following sentence:



-The plane refueled **at** America **on** its trip **from** London **to** New York **to** Moscow.

In agreement with Quirk and Greenbaum (1973), Murphy (2004) notes that the words "**in**" and "**at**" can be employed for building. Quirk and Greenbaum, however . Show the difference between them, '**at**' refers to a building in its institutional or functional aspect, whereas '**in**' refers to it as a three-dimensional structure, according to Quirk and Greenbaum (ibid.). For instance:

- Lina is **at** school

- John is **at** school.

While the second example indicates that he is truly inside the building and not, for instance, on the playing field, the first example indicates that he attends school (studies).

- sara can purchase items **in** a supermarket or **at** the supermarket.

Under conclusion, it may be said that "at" is one-dimensional and applicable in the following circumstances:

1. To refer to the location of an event; for instance:

-They attended a concert **at** the Festival Hall.

-The gathering was held **at** the office.

2. To make reference to certain times, primarily clock times; for instance:

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

3. To refer to the entirety of public holidays or festivals as intervals viewed as calendar points; for instance:

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

- Will you be traveling **at** Easter?

4- To describe specific times during the day, such as:

- I'll see you **at** supper

- we arrived **at** noon.

5. To make reference to an airport or a train station:

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

6. To refer to someone's residence (house):

- I spent last night at Tom's house.

7. To refer to a specific time, such as at work, school, or college:



- I'll be **at** work until 6:00 but I'll be **at** home the entire evening.

- Julia is a chemistry student **at** the university.

8. To discuss the length of a voyage by the sea, as in:

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

However, the preposition "in" can be used with the word "sea" without implying a journey(voyage) for instance:

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

9. Phrasal or group prepositions at the top of, bottom of, end of, front of, and back of; examples

- **At** the top of the page, type your name!.

- The residence of Jane is located **at** the other end of the street.

(Swan, 1980,p.86; Chalker,1989,p.220; Eastwood, 2000,p.13); (Murphy, 2004,p.242).

On the other hand, the following situations allow for the use of "in":

1-The word "In" has three dimensions ,it refers to someone or something that is in a line, a row, a queue, in bed, in the sky, in the world, in the country. In a snapshot, a picture, a book, a (news) paper, a magazine, in a letter, in a town or a village, for examples :

- I prefer to sit **in** the front row when I go to the movies.

-James isn't yet awake. He remains **in** bed.

- Who is the lady **in** that picture?

2. Using the timescales of weeks, months, seasons, years, and centuries; for illustration:

- it occurred in christmas week .

-In What month you born in?

3. With such expression "in the corner of" is used, as in:

-The table is **in** the corner of the room.

4. "In" can be used with the phrases "in a car" and "in a taxi," for instance:

-Ali arrived **in** a taxi.

(swan,1980,etal.)

The difference between "in" and "into" is illustrated by Thomson and Martinet (1986,p.98–9): '**in**' as displayed above typically denotes a position, whereas the word "**into**" denotes movement or entrance, as in:



-we climbed **into** the vehicle.

- I put the beer **into** a tankard .

With the verb "put," "in" or "into" can be used; for instance:

-Ahmed put his hands **in/into** his pocketets.

The following situations call for the usage of the preposition "**on**":

1. According to Eastwood (2000,p.291), the word "on" is two-dimensional.

It functions as a surface. For instance:

-**on** the walls, there were a lot of pictures.

-There are so many marks **on** your shirt.

2. It can be used to indicate that something is perched (rested)on top of an object's surface; for example, we might say that something is **on** a chair/ a table, **on** an island, **on** the ground, **on** the lake, **on** a farm, or **on** the earth.

- The hotel is located **on** a tiny island in the midst of a lake.

-**On** page 5, continue.

-hurry,the lunch is **on** the table.

-We cruised around the lake in a boat **on** the lake all afternoon.

(Quirk and Greenbaum, 1972;Swan) and (Murphy,2004).

2. It can be used in conjunction with the word "floor" to describe which floor of a home someone resides in; for example, we might say that someone or something is on the first floor. For instance,

-He lives on the third floor

-Our apartment is on the second floor.

(Swan,1980) and (Murphy, 2004).

4. You can use the phrase "on a line," "on a river," "on a road," or "on the coast" to describe something that is touching or near a line. For example:

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

(Swan, ibid., p. 88)

5. It can be used to denote a method of support that comes from below, is supported by, or is fastened to; for example:

- The building's pillars support the roof.

(Eastwood,2000,p.18)

6. It can designate a location, an item, or a body part as the object of an activity:



- we knocked **on** the door.

- He was struck **on** the head by the stone.

(ibid,p.46).

7- It can be used with the phrases "on a map," "on a menu," "on a list," "on the right," "on the left side," "on the envelop," "on the right side," "on the ceiling," "on the entrance," "on the page," and "on the nose." For instance:

-Information of TV shows can be found on page 7 of the newspaper.

- Place the stamp on one of the envelope's corners.

(Muephy,2004)

8. It can be used for transportation in general; we typically say: on a bus, on a train, on a plane, or on a ship; for example:

- The bus was full. **On** it, there were too many people.

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

Be aware that we can also say things like : "by automobile," "by bus," "by car," etc. However, we can also add: on a horse (back) or on a bicycle . Take note of other common phrases such on foot instead of by foot (without the article) and by car ,by train, or by plane (not with car,in car,etc).

(ibid,p.250)

It should be noted that the formal form of "upon" sometimes used as a form of "on." But "on" is the more frequent word in most situations; for instance:

- He sat **upon** the ground.

(Quirk and Greenbaum, 1972) and (Quirk, 1988).

The difference between "**on**" and "**onto**" is demonstrated by Thomson and Martinet (1986):

The word "on" can refer to both movement and position, as in the sentence:

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

- snow fell **on** the mountain.

When there is movement with a shift in level, the word "**onto**" might be used (most often in reference to people and animals); for instance: --People went **onto** their roofs.

- The cat climbed up **onto** the mantel.



A general rule is added by Eastwood (2000,p.292-3), "in" and "on" express position, whereas "into" and "onto" express movement, for example:

-We were sitting **in** the café

-They occupied **on** the balcony.

-We entered **into** the café.

-He walked **onto** the balcony .

Other place prepositions include

(by, over, above, below, on top of, with, underneath, below, in front of, before, after, beside, to, near (to), between), according to Quirk et al (1985) and Quirk and Greenbaum (1973). Three categories can be made from these prepositions:

1-When there are two items or groups of objects, the first group, which contains "by, over, under, with, to," denotes relative position, relative destination, and passage, for instance:

-He was **by** his brother's side. (=at the same side).

2.3.2 prepositions of Time:

2.3.2.1 Time- when

"At, on, and in "refer to "time when," according to Quirk et al. (1985) and Quirk and Greenbaum (1973), .they are Similar to those things of positive prepositions of position . There are only two dimensions in the time domain: the point of time and the period of time. . In general, the words "**on**" and "**in**" are used to denote a period of time, respectively, "**At**" is used to refer to a point of time. Generally, "**in**" is used for period that is longer or shorter than days. In contrast to, "**on**" is used for days, whereas "**for**," "**during**," etc. are used to denote duration.

The following is the syntactic features of prepositions of time with examples:

1-The 'At' preposition

"At" is used in the sentences below:

1) To speak of points in time, particularly clock time, as n:

- They arrived **at** 5:00 p.m.

- We'll meet **at** 6:30 o'clock.

(O'Driscoll, 1988,p.92-3; Lindstromberg, 1997,p.57)



2) To refer to a period of time that includes all public holidays or festivals which are watched as a date on the calendar.

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

- Do you buy gifts for each child **at** Christmas?

According to a popular belief, Americans use the phrase "on the weekend" while British people prefer to use the phrase "at the weekend."

2) To make reference to ambiguously defined times, such as **at** breakfast, at night, for example,

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

(Leech and Svartvik, 1994,p. 83)

3) In phrases like "at the moment," "at that time," "at that moment," "at any moment," "at the same time," "at a period," "at an age," "at once," and "at first sight," as in:

-Shakespeare passed away **at the age** of fifty-two.

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

(ibid., 82)

2 -The preposition "on"

The following instances are where the word "on" can be used, according Murphy and Smalzer (2003,p.242-3):

1) With expressions that used for dates and the weekdays as a unit of time such as "on Friday/Fridays," "on May 16, 1999," or "on May the first", for instance:

-I've been asked to a wedding **on** February 14,

2) To describe a single national holiday day, such as (on Christmas Day, on my birthday) for instance:

-I will meet my friends **on** Christmas Day.

3) A given day's dawn, noon, evening, and night; for example:

-I hope to see you **on** Friday morning.

Other examples from Thomson and Martinet (1986) include:

-Salma arrived **on** the morning of Friday the 1.

It should be emphasized that the word "on" is used to refer to specific times of the day rather than the entire day, such as the morning, evening, etc.



Otherwise, "in" is used in place of "on" to refer to any time during the day, with the exception of (at night);

4) With the following expressions (on arrival, on arriving, on reaching, etc.)

I used the phrase "on getting to" to signify "as soon as, immediately after," as in

-**on reaching home**, I changed my clothes and took a bath .

3-The preposition "in"

'In' can be used in the following situations, according to Murphy and Smlazer (2003,p.232):

1) For longer durations (months, seasons, years, and centuries, like in October, 1988, the 18th century, the past, in (the) winter, in the middle age, in the future)

- I started working here **in** January of 1990.

2) Prior to certain times of the day, such as the morning, afternoon, and evening, (but **at** night).

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

- The stars can be seen **at** night if the sky is clear.

(Murphy, 2004,p.242)

3) To specify the length of time required to perform an action, such as: (in a few minutes, in six months, in a week, in a second, etc).

- Andy is no longer there. He will return **in** a week.

(ibid. : 244)

(4) Thomson and Martinet (1986) distinguish between these phrases "on time," "in time," and "in good time." "On time" implies (at the scheduled time, neither earlier or later]; as in: -

- The conference was efficiently run. Everything started and ended on time.

Late is the opposite of "on time":

- Be **on time**. Avoid being **late**.



The phrase "in time" (for something or to do something) indicates "in good time, soon enough" (i.e., "in time for + noun = not late"; "in good time (for)" means with enough time to spare), as in the sentence:

-pupils should be **in time** for their bus.

- I was **in good time** for my arrival at the concert hall (for the concert).(may be the concert began at 8:00 and I arrived at 7:30)

The opposite of in time is too late:

- I arrived at home **too late** to see the football game.

(Murphy and Smalzer, 2003)

5) According to Murphy (2004), one might say "at first/ at last," in the beginning/end .

-I'm leaving **at the end** of January.

The reverse of "at the end" is "at the beginning," like in the following example:

- A table of contents is frequently seen **at the beginning of** a book.

In contrast to "in the beginning/at first," "in the end" "at last" or "finally" or "after some time" is the opposite .When describing the outcome of an event, the words in the end and at last are often used:

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

Methods and Research Design

A crucial component of conducting research is the research design. Thus, determining how the researcher obtains answers to the study questions is, the primary goal of research design. Furthermore, a research design that is proper can help the researcher to get data collection, analysis, findings, and conclusions. A research design, which covers data collection techniques, sample selection, and data processing techniques, is related to the research study. However, this study adopted **cross-sectional design** and **quantitative research method (quantitative statistical analysis was used with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS))**.

As a result, this study was planned in a way that quantitative data are chosen, then analyzed numerically to get sufficient and clear analysis about the use of English prepositions ,since the goal of quantitative study is frequently



limited and specific, concentrating on a large number of measurable variables. In comparison to qualitative method.

. Thus, quantitative specifically, is any study that collects data through methods that produce numerical information. More broadly, the concept frequently denotes a method of research that tries to explain phenomena causally by identifying variables that might serve the foundation for experimental research.

(Richards and schmidt,2002;creswell,2007)

Sampling

Random sampling was applied in the current study based on the chosen research design, aims of the study, and its research questions. Random sampling, on the other hand, refers to a method of selecting a sample of observations from a population to make assumptions about the population. This is also known as probability sampling. The counterpart of this sample is a non-probability sample or a non-random sample. (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, according to Creswell (2005), For a design known as random sampling or probability sampling, each item in the population must have an equal and independent chance of being selected in the sample. Equal means that every item in the population has the same probability of being selected; that is

The choice of an item in the sample is not influenced by other considerations such as personal preference. The concept of independence means that the selection of an element does not depend on the selection of any other element in the sample; that is the selection or rejection of an item doesn't effect on the rejection or acceptance of others. Since in quantitative research you are guided by the desire to choose a random sample, while in qualitative research you are guided by who is likely to provide you with "Best information", One hundred undergraduate EFL students from the University of Anbar/ College of Education for Humanities-English Department in their third and fourth year of the academic year 2021–2022 were chosen for the current study to compare their answers. Those students are required to select the right letter from several options of close-ended sentences. Accordingly, The participants were randomly chosen because



they shared the following characteristics: they are English language learners, they belong to the same academic year, and they have studied the meaning and applications of English prepositions during their first semester of third and fourth-year studies. So, data were collected randomly from university students since they have much knowledge concerning the rules of using prepositions letters in their writings.

Randolph Quirk(1985) as Quirk deals with them from semantic side, whereas Sagar deals with them from the syntactic side Hence, the written test were quantitatively analyzed to investigate the effect of using prepositions letters in written sentences. According to Quirk(1985) Correct handling of a preposition is not easy because most of them tend to have multiple functions, and different prepositions have the same uses. Prepositions are thought to be the most frequently used linguistic classification in English because they act as relationships between two units, most frequently producing preposition phrases, and supposing various semantic functions. Quirk introduced two types of prepositions which are simple English prepositions, such as at, in, and for, that is consist of one word, whereas other prepositions consist of more than one word such as along with, away from, out of which are called complex prepositions. Therefore the researcher followed the model in his analyzed the use of simple prepositions as he divided it into:

Simple Prepositions

1-Monosyllabic Preposition

As, at, but, **by**, down, for, from, in, **over**, like, near, of, off, on, out, past, per, pro, qua, re, round, sans, since, than, through, till, via, to, up ,
with.

2-polysyllabic Preposition

About, above, across, after, against, along, amid, among, anti around, before, behind, below, **beneath**, besides, **underneath**, between, beyond . , despite, during, except, inside, into, onto, opposite, without etc

As far as the intended model is concerned, Quirk et al. discusses prepositions according to their prepositional uses into Four main sub-categories of the uses are labelled: **space, time, cause, and instrument.** This study adopted



space,time,instrument. The choose of these classification occurred according to the letters of this study ,as well as, the nature of the test design.

The temporal usage :These prepositions are used to denote the amounts of time during which an action takes place. The prepositions on, at, in, by, under, within, during, **over**, since, for, and from express temporal relations. The following list illustrates the temporal meaning that each preposition expresses:

1-by:is used to denote the idea of specified period of time(by ten o'clock)

2-over:indicates that something takes place in more than particular period of time(over year).

The classification of time prepositions of duration is very vague. They are presented into two groups which are **duration (i)** for,during,**over**,all,(all) through and **duration (ii)**from ...to, until,upto. Prepositions that respond to the question how long? Are included in the first group. However, it does not appear to be a useful criterion for classifying duration prepositions into two categories. Prepositions from...to, until, and up to provide an answer to that question as well.

The spatial usage:

A preposition of place is a preposition which is used to indicate to a place where something or someone is located. **Basic space prepositions** are analysed by four parameters: (i) dimension, (ii) type of relation,(iii)positive/negative,(iiii)directional.The first parameter:

A-Dimension:

under can refer to both **locations** and **movements to destinations**:

I hung it on the wall **under** the picture.

It's always been on the wall **under** the picture.

By:refer to static location

-I sat **by/beside** my aunt.

The other thing to be noted is that by (in common with some other prepositions) has another/ alternative meanings. In the sense of past, rather than next to, it can be used for movement:

-I ran by [past] the shop.

Over:



Above or higher than:

The helicopter flew **over** the city.

Across or from one side to the other:

She walked **over** the bridge.

Beyond or past a certain point or limit:

He's **over** 40 years old

During or throughout a certain period of time:

Over the weekend, I visited my grandparents

In a position of control or authority:

The manager has authority **over** the employees.

In reference to a covering or layer:

The floor was covered **over** with a rug.

B-prepositions of direction

-The spices are **over** the sink.

By: it gives the meaning of near

He entered by one of the windows.-They were sitting **by** the tree.

By: passing through

- He entered **by** one of the windows

With:

Instrumental: In this sense, "with" indicates the instrument or tool used to perform an action.

-I wrote this letter **with** a pen

Comitative: In this sense, "with" indicates the presence of another person or thing accompanying the subject of the sentence.

-I went to the park **with** my friends.

Manner: In this sense, "with" indicates the way in which something is done or the manner in which an action is performed.

-She spoke **with** a lot of enthusiasm.

Cause: In this sense, "with" indicates the reason for an action or event.

-He was trembling **with** fear

Time: In this sense, "with" indicates a particular time or duration. , "He worked with dedication for eight hours.

Analysis of the preposition **by**



This subsection addresses the first aspect raised in the first objective of the current study which concerns the assessment of the various semantic uses of the preposition 'by' by the 3rd and 4th grade university students of English. The results presented in the following tables are the overall results which indicates the respondents' awareness of the various semantic uses of the preposition 'by'. Table 4.1 displays the results of T-test of the assessment of the preposition 'by' in the meaning of manner by 3rd and 4th grade university students of English.

4.2.1.1 Analysis of the preposition by in terms of manner

Table 4.1 Assessment of 3rd and 4th grade university students' use of the preposition 'by' in the meaning of manner

Sentence No.	Stage	No. of Cases	Correct scores	Mean	SD	MD	T value	P. value (sig.)
Sentence 7	3 rd	100	88	0.88	0.171	0.000	0.000	1.000
	4 th	100	97	0.97	0.171			
Sentence 21	3 rd	100	81	0.81	0.338	0.000	0.000	1.000
	4 th	100	87	0.87	0.338			

As seen in table 4.1, the T-test analysis revealed no significant differences between the 3rd and 4th grade university students in the use of the preposition 'by' in the meaning of manner in sentences 7 and 21 ($t= 171, p. 1.000, t= 0338, p. 1.000$, respectively).. This indicates that the 3rd grade university students means (M= 0.88 & 0.81) were approximate in their assessment of 'by' to that of the 4th grade ones (M = 0.97 & 0.87). This means that both groups were aware of the correct semantic and syntactic use of 'by' in the meaning of manner which can be justified by the easiness of recognizing this type of preposition in the meaning of manner. This is because of the influence of the respondents' Arabic language which has preposition in the same meaning equivalent to that of English.

4.2.1.2 Analysis of the preposition by in terms of agent

Table 4.2 Assessment of 3rd and 4th grade university students' use of the preposition 'by' in the meaning of agent



Sentence No.	Stage	No. of Cases	Correct Scores	Mean	SD	MD	T value	P. value (sig.)
Sentence 8	3 rd	100	12	0.12	0.123	0.000	0.000	0.01
	4 th	100	15	0.15	0.145			
Sentence 12	3 rd	100	77	0.77	0.423	0.000	0.000	0.02
	4 th	100	82	0.82	0.425			
Sentence 28	3 rd	100	10	0.10	0.113	0.000	0.000	0.01
	4 th	100	40	0.40	0.133			
Sentence 34	3 rd	100	79	0.79	0.409	- 0.19	- 4.389	0.000
	4 th	100	98	0.98	0.141			

As shown in the above Table, the t-test analysis revealed significant difference in the means of the 3rd and 4th university students' use of the preposition 'by' in the meaning of agent in sentences 8,12,28 and 34 (t=0.145, p. 0.01, t=0.425, p.0.02, t=0.133, p.0.01, t=0.409, p.0.000 respectively). This indicates that the 4th grade university students' means (M= 0.15, 0.82, 0.40 & 0.98, respectively) were higher than those of the 3rd one. This means that the former tended to be highly aware semantically and syntactically of the use of 'by' in the meaning of agent rather than the latter (M = 0.12, 0.77, 0.10 & 0.79, respectively). This may be attributed to the 4th grade students' advanced level as being exposed to complex grammatical structures for a long time, including those involving passive voice and the use of "by" to refer to the agent of an action. However, despite the 4th grade student's awareness of the use of 'by' in the meaning above, they are still, in certain situation (S 8 & 28) as well as those of the 3rd grade, not aware of the right use of 'by' in the meaning of agent. This may be justified in terms of the complex structure of these sentences which makes it challenging for them to differentiate the meaning of 'by' in this sense from that of instrument.

4.2.1.3 Analysis of the preposition by in terms of instrument

Table 4.3 Assessment of 3rd and 4th grade university students' use of the preposition 'by' in the meaning of instrument



Sentence No.	Stage	No. of Cases	Correct Scores	Mean	SD	MD	T value	P. value (sig.)
Sentence 9	3 rd	100	6	0.6	0.6	0.000	0.000	1.000
	4 th	100	12	0.12	0.101			
Sentence 26	3 rd	100	5	0.5	0.5	0.000	0.000	0.02
	4 th	100	24	0.24	0.112			
Sentence 27	3 rd	100	85	0.85	0.141	0.000	0.000	1.000
	4 th	100	91	0.91	0.141			
Sentence 37	3 rd	100	75	0.75	0.435	- 0.21	-	0.000
	4 th	100	96	0.96	0.197			
Sentence 49	3 rd	100	25	0.25	0.435	0.000	0.000	1.000
	4 th	100	25	0.25	0.435			
Sentence 49	3 rd	100	25	0.25	0.435	0.000	0.000	1.000
	4 th	100	25	0.25	0.435			
Sentence 77	3 rd	100	33	0.33	0.473	0.05	0.765	0.04
	4 th	100	49	0.49	0.451			

As illustrated in Table 4.3, the T-test analysis showed significant differences between the 3rd and 4th grade university students in the use of the preposition 'by' in the meaning of instrument in sentences 37&77 ($t=0.75$, $p=0.000$, $t=0.49$, $p=0.04$, respectively). This indicates that the 4th grade university students assigned higher means ($M=0.96$ & 0.81) than those of 3rd one ($M=0.75$ & 0.33) in the assessment of 'by'. This means that despite both groups' awareness of the semantic and syntactic use of 'by' in the meaning of instrument, 4th grade students were more aware. Awareness which can be justified by the influence of their mother tongue, Arabic, in which the equivalent preposition of "by" is "bi," which is English-like preposition. Therefore, Arabic-speaking students may be familiar with the basic concept of using "by" in this context. Additionally, students simply find it easier to understand and remember the rules for using "by" with instruments as opposed to location or time and other meanings of by.

As for the non-significant results in Table 4.3, This indicates that the 3rd grade university students ($M=0.6$, 0.85 , 0.25 ,) were approximate in their



assessment of 'by' to that of the 4th grade ones ($M = 0.12, 0.91$ & 0.25). This means that both groups were unaware of the correct semantic and syntactic use of 'by' in the meaning of instrument which can be justified by insufficient exposure to enough examples of this usage in their own language learning experiences. This could lead to confusion about when to use "by" and when not to use it. Furthermore, the use of "by" to indicate an instrument is not always straightforward, as there are some cases where it is optional and others where it is mandatory. For example, "He wrote the letter with a pen" and "He wrote the letter by hand" are both acceptable, but "He wrote the letter with hand" would be incorrect.

As for the sentence 27, the means of the 3rd and 4th grade university students' use of 'by' in the meaning above ($M = 0.85$ & 0.91) indicate both groups' awareness of the meaning of this preposition. This can be explained by Firstly, the phrase "by profession" is a common collocation in English, and may have been encountered frequently in language learning materials or through exposure to English-language media. Additionally, the structure of the sentence is relatively simple and straightforward, which may make it easier to understand and produce accurately. Finally since "by" is a commonly used preposition in English, it may be a more familiar and easily recognizable choice for these students.

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