

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the error analysis and a discussion of the findings are given in this chapter.

4.1 Presentation of Data Analysis

A total of 1457 errors are found in the instruments, with more errors occur in the grammar tests (1117 errors) and less in the compositions (340 errors). Table 1 and Figure 1 show the distribution of the prepositional errors found in both the tests and the compositions. Figure 2 shows the total distribution of errors in the nine concepts of prepositional meanings found in the data. The highest frequency of errors involves the concept of time with a total of 245 errors (17%). From here, it can be concluded that the subjects find it extremely difficult to learn and apply the preposition of time correctly as most of the errors (199 errors) occur in grammatical tests. This finding corresponds to the conclusion made by Hammarberg (1974) and Tran (1975), when they assert that the frequency of errors is proportional to the degree of language difficulty. The next concept of errors was the prepositions of place, which charted 221 errors (15.2%) followed by the concept of direction making up a total of 204 errors (14%). The concepts of verb-preposition and manner-agent yielded 201 errors (13.8%) and 195 errors (13.4%)

respectively. The other two were the concepts of adjective-preposition and cause-purpose. The former had 193 errors (13%) and while the latter had 89 errors (6.1%). This is followed by the concepts of similarity (64 errors, 4.4%) and association (45 errors, 3.1%) forming the two relatively lower frequency of errors. Lower frequency of prepositional errors of the concepts of similarity and association compared to the prepositional errors of other concepts found in the grammar tests indicate that the subjects have a clearer understanding of the concepts of similarity and association or are more familiar with their usage.

Table 1

Distribution of Prepositional Errors in the Instruments

Table 1

Categories/Prep	Fill in the blanks	Composition	Total	%
place	170	51	221	15.2
direction	141	63	204	14.0
time	199	46	245	17.0
manner - agent	147	48	195	13.4
cause - purpose	60	29	89	6.1
similarity	51	13	64	4.4
association	36	9	45	3.1
verb-prep	169	32	201	13.8
adj-prep	144	49	193	13
Total	1117	340	1457	100

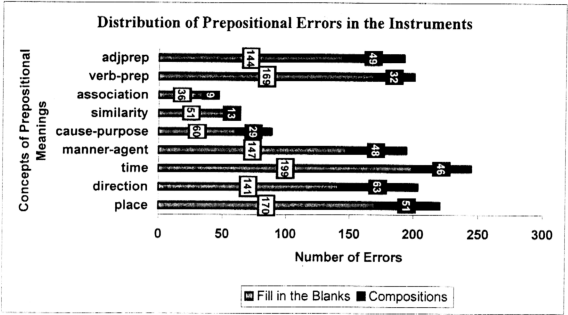


Figure 1

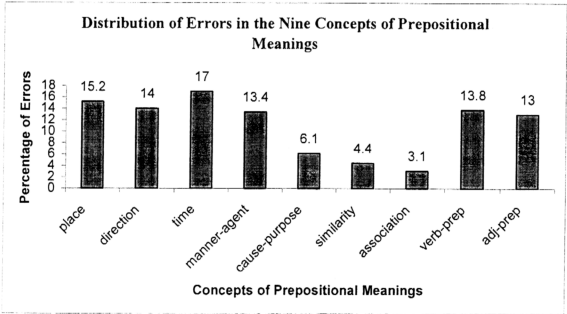


Figure 2

Table 2 shows the nine concepts of prepositional meanings in terms of the relative frequency of their errors in the three sub-categories, that is, wrong selection, omission and unnecessary insertion. Most of the errors occur in the concepts of time and place and these prepositional errors are found mainly in the sub-category of wrong selection (Figure 3).

Table 2

Distribution of Prepositional Errors in the Sub-Categories

Categories/Prep	Wrong selection	Omission	Insertion	Total	%
place	203	8	10	221	15.2
direction	193	8	3	204	14.0
time	223	16	6	245	17.0
manner-agent	181	10	4	195	13.4
cause-purpose	81	3	5	89	6.1
similarity	64	0	0	64	4.4
association	34	9	2	45	3.1
verb-prep	194	3	4	201	13.8
adj-prep	189	4	0	193	13
Total	1362	61	34	1457	100

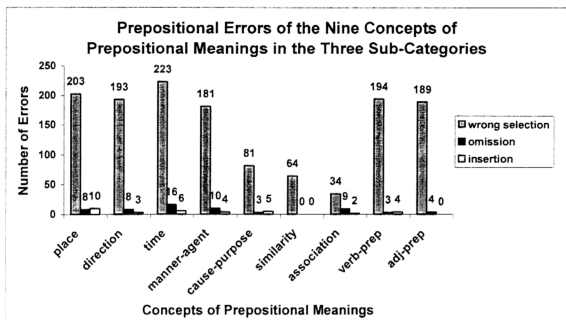


Figure 3

In the sub-category of wrong selection, prepositional errors of the concepts of time, place, direction and verb-prep account for the most number of errors (Figure 4). In the subcategory of omission, most of the prepositional errors are found in the concepts of time, manner-agent, association, place and direction (Figure 5). The concepts of place, time and cause-purpose account for the most number of errors in the sub-category of insertion (Figure 6).

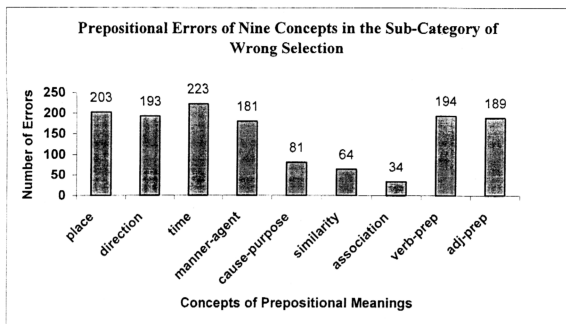


Figure 4

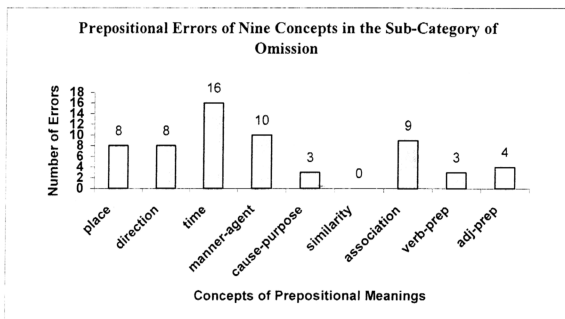


Figure 5

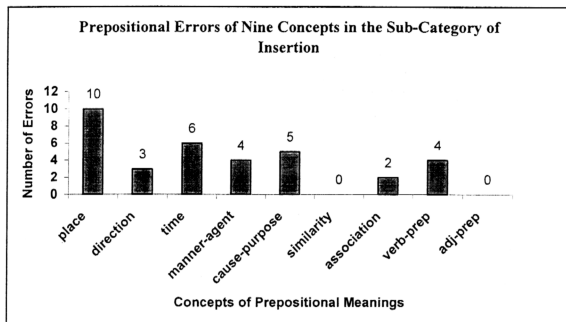


Figure 6

Most of the prepositional errors occur in the sub-category of wrong selection, that is, 1362 errors (95 %). Next is the sub-category of omission with 61 errors (4 %) and the least errors are found in the sub-category of insertion with only 34 errors (1 %). These results are shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8.

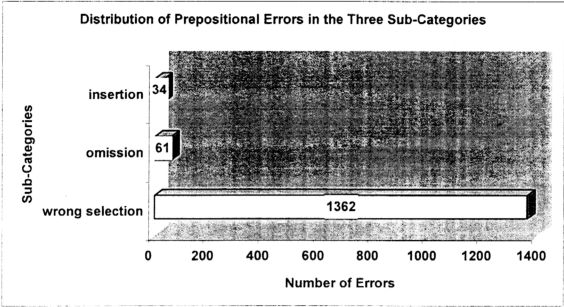


Figure 7

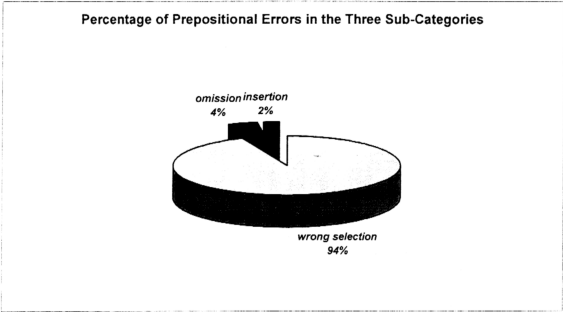


Figure 8

Prepositions of Time

This concept of prepositional meanings formed 17 % of the total errors in this study, accounted for the highest frequency of errors among the nine concepts of prepositional meanings investigated (Table 2). The sub-categorization of the prepositional errors of time is shown in Table 3 and the distribution of the prepositional errors is shown in Figure 9. These errors are chiefly found in the category of the wrong selection with a total of 223 errors. This is followed by the category of omission and unnecessary insertion with a total of 16 errors and 6 errors respectively. 11 prepositions occurred in this concept of prepositional meaning (Table 3). Their frequency of errors varied significantly with the numerous prepositions ‘on’ and ‘at’ forming 45 errors (18%) and 41 errors (17%) respectively. Next, the preposition ‘in’ yielded 35 errors (14%). This is followed by other prepositions, according to their ranking, ‘by’ (25 errors, 10%), ‘for’ (21 errors, 9%), ‘during’ and ‘within’ with a total of 19 errors each (8%) and ‘until’ (9 errors, 4%). Preposition ‘before’ constitutes only 7 errors (3%).

Table 3

Prepositional Errors of Time in Their Respective Sub-Categories

Table 3 Prepositions of Time					
Categories/Prep	Wrong selection	Omission	Unnecessary Insertion	Total	%
at	39	2	0	41	17
within	19	0	0	19	8
before	7	0	0	7	3
after	8	0	3	11	4
during	17	2	0	19	8

until	8	1	0	9	4
for	18	3	0	21	9
by	23	2	0	25	10
on	44	1	0	45	18
from	10	3	0	13	5
in	30	2	3	35	14
Total	223	16	6	245	100

Distribution of Prepositional Errors in the Concept of Time

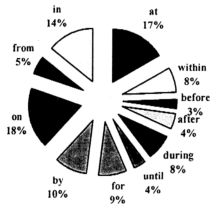


Figure 9

Prepositions of Place:

The concept of place (221 errors) accounted for the second highest number of prepositional errors among the nine concepts of prepositional meanings investigated (Table 2). The result of the analysis shows that the category of the wrong selection of prepositions accounted for the most number of errors among the three sub-categories (203 errors). This is followed by two other categories of errors, the omission and unnecessary insertion of prepositions with a total of 8 and 10 errors respectively.

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The distribution of errors for the prepositions of the concept of place in their respective sub-categories is shown in Table 4 and Figure 10. In Table 4, preposition 'by', 'against', and 'in' yielded the three numerous errors in the sub-categories of wrong selection, omission and unnecessary insertion with a total of 48(21%), 42(18%), and 28(13%) errors respectively. Next is the preposition of 'at' which had 26 errors (12%). This is followed by other prepositions, according to their ranking are 'underneath', with 15 errors (7%), 'above' with 13 errors (6%) and 'on' with 11 errors (5%). Preposition 'behind' and 'under' accounted for the two least errors with a total of 10 errors each (5%).

Table 4

Prepositional Errors of Place in Their Respective Sub-Categories

Table 4 Prepositions of Place					
Categories/Prep	Wrong selection	Omission	Unnecessary Insertion	Total	%
in	25	1	2	28	13
at	22	1	3	26	12
against	39	0	3	42	18
on	11	0	0	11	5
underneath	15	0	0	15	7
off	18	0	0	18	8
behind	10	0	0	10	5
above	12	1	0	13	6
under	10	0	0	10	5
by	41	5	2	48	21
Total	203	8	10	221	100

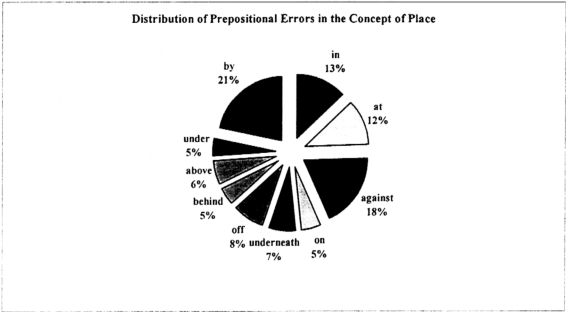


Figure 10

Prepositions of Direction

This concept of prepositional meaning formed 14% of the total prepositional errors in this study (Table 2) making it the third most frequent prepositional error. The sub-categorization of the prepositional errors is shown in Table 5 and the distribution of the prepositional errors in this concept is shown in Figure 11. Most of the errors occurred in the wrong selection of prepositions of which a total of 193 errors were found. This is followed by 8 errors in the category of omission and 3 errors in the category of unnecessary insertion. 10 prepositions were identified in this concept of prepositional meaning. The prepositions which formed relatively high frequency of

errors are 'towards', 'along', and 'forward' with a total of 35 errors (18%), 30 errors (15%) and 29 errors (14%) respectively. Next are the prepositions 'through', and 'of' constituting 23 errors each (11%). This is followed by other prepositions according to their ranking are 'onto' (17 errors, 8%), 'into' (16 errors, 8%), 'across' (15 errors, 7%), and 'at' and 'to' each with 8 errors (4%).

Table 5

Prepositional Errors of Direction in Their Respective Sub-Categories

Table 5 Prepositions of Direction					
Categories/Prep	Wrong selection	Omission	Unnecessary Insertion	Total	%
along	27	2	1	30	15
across	15	0	0	15	7
at	8	0	0	8	4
into	15	0	1	16	8
forward	29	0	0	29	14
towards	34	0	1	35	18
through	20	3	0	23	11
onto	17	0	0	17	8
to	6	2	0	8	4
of	22	1	0	23	11
Total	193	8	3	204	100

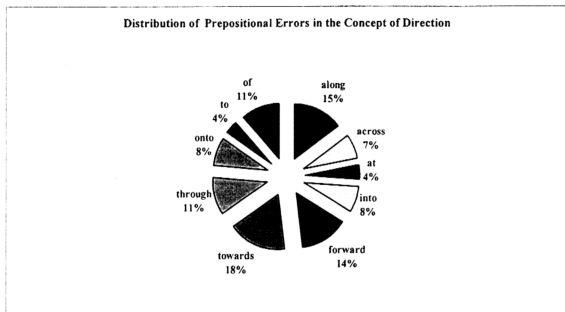


Figure 11

Prepositions of Verb-Prep Combination

This concept of prepositional meaning formed 13.8% of the total errors in the sample (201 errors), which is the fourth numerous errors in the ranking. The sub-categorizations of the prepositional errors are shown in Table 6 and the distribution of the prepositional errors in this concept is shown in Figure 12. Most errors occur in the wrong selection of prepositions, yielding 194 errors, 4 errors in unnecessary insertion of prepositions and 3 errors in omission of prepositions. 9 prepositions occurred in the concept and they are tabulated in table 6. The verb-prep 'speak against' and 'drop in' give the highest percentage of errors with 20%(38 errors) and 16 % (33 errors) respectively. This is followed by the verb-prep 'abide by' and 'come across'. The former

has 34 errors (17%) and the latter has 24 errors (12%). Next in the ranking are the verb-prep 'look after' and 'call off' with 20 errors (10%) and 19 errors (9%) respectively. The lowest percentage of errors occurred in the verb-prep 'put off' with only 8 errors (4%).

Table 6

Prepositional Errors of Verb-Prep in Their Respective Sub-Categories

Table 6 Prepositions of Verb-Prep

Categories/Prep	Wrong selection	Omission	Unnecessary insertion	Total	%
put off	8	0	0	8	4
carry on	12	0	0	12	6
abide by	33	1	0	34	17
come across	24	0	0	24	12
speak against	37	0	1	38	20
look after	20	0	0	20	10
call off	17	1	1	19	9
go through	12	1	0	13	6
drop in	31	0	2	33	16
Total	194	3	4	201	100

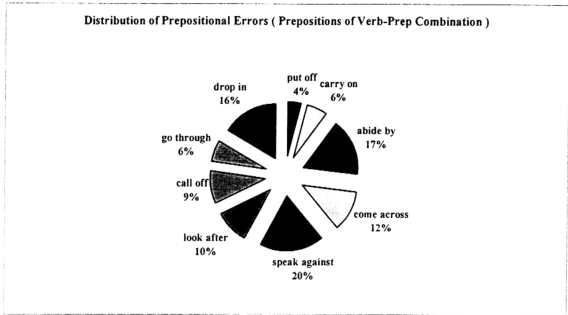


Figure 12

Prepositions of Manner - Agent

This concept of prepositional meaning accounted for 195 errors (13.4%) among the nine concepts in this study (Table 2) making it the fifth most frequent prepositional error. In the sub-categories of the errors made, remarkably high occurrence of errors occurred in the category of wrong selection with a total of 181 errors. On the other hand, the lowest occurrence is found in the category of unnecessary insertion with a total of only 4 errors and the category of omission has slightly more errors, that is, 10 errors.

The distribution of errors for the prepositions in this concept is presented in Table 7 and Figure 13. The preposition 'from' accounted for the most numerous errors with a total of 31 errors (16%). Next is the preposition 'by' with a total of 29 errors

(15%). This is followed by 'with' with a total of 27 errors (14 %). Next is 'of' with 26 errors (13%). Other Prepositions according to their rank are 'on' (20 errors, 10%), 'to' (18 errors, 9%), 'through' (16 errors, 8%), 'for' (13 errors, 7%), 'in' (10 errors, 5%) and 'without' with 5 errors (3%).

Table 7

Prepositional Errors of Manner- Agent in their Respective Sub-Categories

Table 7 Prepositions of Manner - Agent					
Categories/Prep	Wrong selection	Omission	Unnecessary Insertion	Total	%
with	25	1	1	27	14
in	8	1	1	10	5
without	5	0	0	5	3
on	17	2	1	20	10
of	24	2	0	26	13
by	26	3	0	29	15
for	13	0	0	13	7
through	16	0	0	16	8
to	17	1	0	18	9
from	30	0	1	31	16
Total	181	10	4	195	100

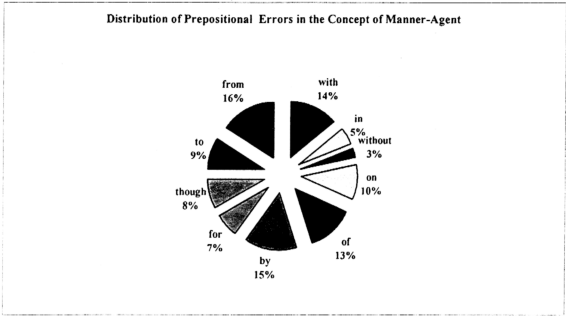


Figure 13

Prepositions of Adj-Prep

Table 2 shows this concept of prepositional meaning forming one of the relatively high percentages of errors (13%, 193 errors) among all the other concepts investigated, making it the sixth most frequent prepositional error. The sub-categorization of the prepositional errors as presented in Table 8 shows that the highest occurrence of errors occurs in the category of the wrong selection of prepositions with 189 errors and with only 4 errors in the category of omission.10 prepositions are identified in the concept and the distribution of the prepositional errors of this concept is shown in Figure 14. The three prepositions of adj-prep which yield relatively high

occurrences of errors are 'good at' (34 errors, 17%), 'proud of' (32 errors, 16 %), and 'angry with' (28 errors, 15%). This is followed by 'similar to' and 'keen on' (21 errors, 11 %). Moderate numbers of errors occur in the adj-prep of 'absent from' and 'work in' with 19 errors (10%) and 17 errors (9%) respectively. The prepositions which form less than 10 errors according to their ranking are 'parallel to' and 'different from' with 7 errors each (4%), and 'satisfied with' with 6 errors (3%).

Table 8

Prepositional Errors of Adj-Prep in Their Respective Sub-Categories

Categories/Prep	Table 8				Total	%
	Wrong selection	Omission	Unnecessary Insertion	Prepositions of Adj- Prep		
proud of	31	1	0		32	16
good at	32	2	0		34	17
similar to	22	0	0		22	11
angry with	28	0	0		28	15
keen on	20	1	0		21	11
absent from	19	0	0		19	10
work in	17	0	0		17	9
parallel to	7	0	0		7	4
different from	7	0	0		7	4
satisfied with	6	0	0		6	3
Total	189	4	0		193	100

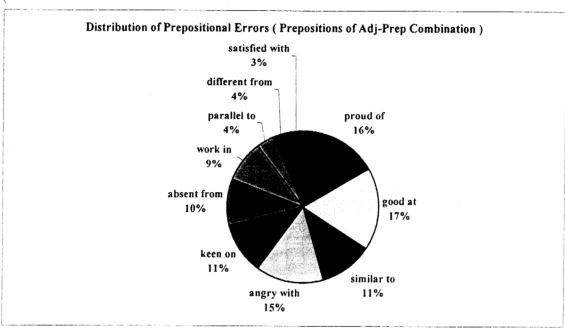


Figure 14

Prepositions of Cause - Purpose

This concept of prepositional meaning formed 89 errors (6.1%) in this study (Table 2) making it the seventh most frequent prepositional error. In the sub-categories of the errors made, the category of wrong selection of prepositions has a remarkably high occurrence with a total of 81 errors. This is followed by the other two categories with a total of 3 errors in the category of omission and 5 errors in the category of unnecessary insertion.

The distribution of errors for the prepositions in this concept is shown in Table 9 and Figure 15. In Table 9, both the prepositions ‘of’ and ‘with’ accounted for the most

errors with a total of 20 errors (23%) and 14 errors (16%) respectively. This is followed by the preposition ‘by’ (13 errors, 15%) and ‘for’ with 12 errors (13%). The other prepositions according to their ranking are ‘to’ and ‘from’ with 9 errors each (10%), ‘on’ (5 errors, 6%), ‘up’ (4 errors, 4%) and ‘under’ (3 errors, 3%).

Table 9

Prepositional Errors of Cause - Purpose in Their Respective Sub-Categories

Table 9 Prepositions of Cause-Purpose					
Categories/Prep	Wrong selection	Omission	Unnecessary Insertion	Total	%
by	12	0	1	13	15
from	9	0	0	9	10
of	17	3	0	20	23
with	13	0	1	14	16
under	3	0	0	3	3
up	4	0	0	4	4
for	10	0	2	12	13
to	8	0	1	9	10
on	5	0	0	5	6
Total	81	3	5	89	100

Distribution of Prepositional Errors in the Concept of Cause-Purpose

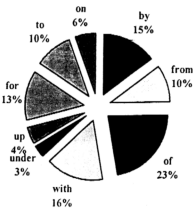


Figure 15

Prepositions of Similarity

This concept of prepositional meaning charted 4.4% of the total prepositional errors in this study (Table 2) making it the eighth most frequent prepositional error or the second least numerous errors identified in the sample. The sub-categorization of the prepositional errors is shown in Table 10 and the distribution of the prepositional errors in this concept is shown in Figure 16. All the errors are made in the category of the wrong selection of prepositions with a total of 64 errors.

There are only two prepositions found in this concept of prepositional meaning in this study (Table 10 and Figure 16). Their frequencies of errors do not vary significantly and the preposition ‘like’ accounted for more errors (39 errors, 61%) compared to the preposition ‘as’ with a total of 25 errors (39%), that is, 14 errors less than the former.

Table 10

Prepositional Errors of Similarity in Their Respective Sub-Categories

Table 10 Prepositions of Similarity					
Categories/Prep	Wrong selection	Omission	Unnecessary Insertion	Total	%
as	25	0	0	25	39
like	39	0	0	39	61
Total	64	0	0	64	100

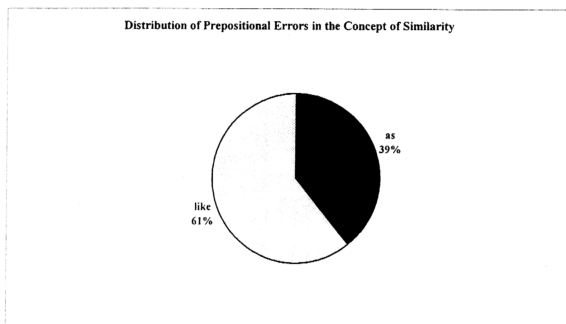


Figure 16

Prepositions of Association

Table 2 shows this concept of prepositional meaning constituting 3.1%(45 errors) of the total prepositional errors in this study, which is the least numerous errors. The sub-categorization of the prepositional errors is presented in Table 11 and the distribution of the prepositional errors in this concept is shown in Figure 17. Similarly, the highest occurrence of errors occurred in the category of wrong selection of prepositions of which 34 errors are identified. 9 errors are found in the category of omission and only two errors in the category of unnecessary insertion. Two prepositions

are found in this concept of prepositional meaning. They are ‘among’ and ‘between’. Preposition ‘among’ yielded a higher frequency with the total of 30 errors (67%) compared to the preposition ‘between’ which has only 15 errors (33%). (Figure 17)

Table 11

Prepositional Errors of Association in Their Respective Sub-Categories

Table 11 Prepositions of Association					
Categories/Prep	Wrong selection	Omission	Unnecessary Insertion	Total	%
between	11	3	1	15	33
among	23	6	1	30	67
Total	34	9	2	45	100

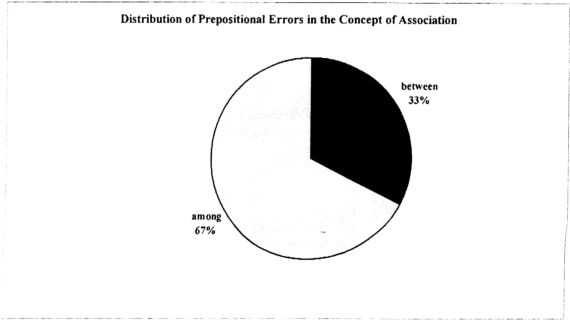


Figure 17

4.2 Examples of the Prepositional Errors

Some examples of the erroneous forms of the prepositions used in the nine concepts are shown below:

4.2.1 Prepositions of Place

(a) Category of Errors: Wrong Selection

The hospital is behind the flats ***of** Jalan Light. (**off**)

There is a large car park ***at** the right of the hospital. (**on**)

There are many lakes ***at** Taman Tasik. (**in**)

Please lean the ladder ***on** the wall. (**against**)

We stay ***at** Selangor. (**in**)

We stay ***in** 213 A, Jalan Merak, 47100 Puchong. (**at**)

In the forest, we slept ***at** the camp. (**in**)

We were stranded ***at** an island. (**on**)

He sat with his back ***at** the rock. (**against**)

(b) Category of Errors: Unnecessary Insertion

***At** there, we slept for days.

We took a rest* **in** there.

***In** there, we hired a guide.

(c) Category of Errors: Omission

We arrived ^ the camp finally. (**at**)

There is a bird flying^ the roof. (**above**)

They can find a lot of shopping arcades^ Kuala Lumpur. (**in**)

She bought the drinks^ the roadside. (**by**)

4.2.2 Prepositions of Direction

(a) Category of Errors: Wrong Selection

We jumped ***to** the water to swim. (**into**)

It was easier going ***to** the hill than climbing up. (**down**)

When we arrived ***to** the beach, he parked his car under a shady tree. (**at**)

I ran ***to** the beach. (**along**)

Then, I walked ***to** the beach to look for seashells. (**along / on**)

The soldiers marched ***forwards** to meet the commander. (**towards**)

(b) Category of Errors: Unnecessary Insertion

We entered ***into** the camp.

He ran ***towards** to the field.

(c) Category of Errors: Omission

We went ^many mountains. (**up**)

We past ^ many fields. (**by**)

We cleaned up and take ^ our things. (**away**)

4.23 Prepositions of Time

(a) Category of Errors: Wrong Selection

The train will arrive ***on** an hour's time. (**in**)

Please be here ***at** Monday for the interview. (**on**).

The students must pass up their books at the latest ***on** Tuesday. (**by**)

Malaysia got its independence ***on** 1957. (**in**)

It ended well* **on** the end. (**at**)

We went for a stroll ***at** the morning. (**in**)

We heard a shout* **in** midnight. (**at**)

(b) Category of Errors: Unnecessary Insertion

During ***in** the holidays, we went to England.

***At** finally, we reached there.

(c) Category of Omission

The day past^ very quickly. **(by)**.

4.2.4 Prepositions of Manner-Agent

(a) Category of Errors: Wrong Selection

He was stung ***with** a swarm of bees. **(by)**

The boy was accidentally knocked down* **with** a car. **(by)**

He is good* **in** swimming. **(at)**

(b) Category of Errors: Unnecessary Insertion

They had to walk* **by** legs.

The water is ***in** clear colour.

We began to plan ***about** our journey.

(c) Category of Errors: Omission

The sand was red ^ colour. **(in)**

We filled up our bottles^ water. **(with)**

We were very tired ^ walking. **(of)**

The thief was caught ^ the police yesterday. **(by)**

4.2.5 Prepositions of Cause - Purpose

(a) Category of Errors: Wrong Selection

We did not have a bed ***for** sleep on. **(to)**

This medicine is *** to** your cough. **(for)**

He has gone to a clinic ***for** see a doctor. **(to)**

It is a good chance ***for** gaining more knowledge. **(of)**

(b) Category of Errors: Unnecessary Insertion

We spent half a day to rest ***with** our body.

John was busy arranging ***with** the camels.

While John set up the tent, I cooked ***for** lunch.

(c) Category of Errors: Omission

We had to stop because ^ our camels. (of)

We lost our way in the desert as a result^ the storm. (of)

As a result, we were faced ^ another problem. (with)

4.2.6 Prepositions of Similarity

(a) Category of Errors: Wrong Selection

Swee Lan can swim *as a fish. (like)

There is no place *as home. (like)

He was trained* like a lifeguard. (as)

She looks familiar just *as a senior perfect in the school. (like)

4.2.7 Prepositions of Association

(a) Category of Errors: Omission

There is no secret ^ two of us. (between)

^four of us, Siti is the brightest. (Among)

(b) Category of Errors: Unnecessary Insertion

***Between** Siti and Aminah are acquaintances.

***Among** John, Mariam and Mei Lin are classmates.

4.2.8 Prepositions of Verb-Prep Combination

(a) Category of Errors: Wrong Selection

She looks ***of** her sister while her parents are away. (**after**)

We must abide ***to** the rules. (**by**)

He spoke ***on** him in the court. (**against**)

He drops ***to** the keys into the bag. (**in**)

That idea did not come ***in** her mind. (**across**)

(b) Category of Errors: Omission

We must abide^ our school rules. (**by**)

The headmistress calls ^ the meeting. (**off**)

The soldiers have to go^ a tough training. (**through**)

4.2.9 Prepositions of Adj-Prep Combination

(a) Category of Errors: Wrong Selection

The parents are proud ***on** her children's results. (**of**)

He is good ***in** gardening. (**at**)

She was angry ***at** me. (**with**)

This row of houses is parallel ***with** that. (**to**)

She is not too keen ***in** jazz. (**on**)

She has been absent ***at** school for a few days. (**from**)

He is still not satisfied * **of** anything but the best. (**with**)

(b) Category of Errors: Omission

The parents are proud ^ their son. (**of**)

He is good ^ her studies. (**in**)

He is keen ^ taking up the projects. (**on**)

She is very keen ^ traveling. (**on**)

He is satisfied ^ his son's performance in school. (**with**)

That row of shops is parallel ^ the road. (**to**)

4.3 Discussion of Findings

4.3.1 Prepositions of Place

4.3.1.1 Wrong insertion of 'in'

Twenty-five errors were made in this subcategory. 'In' was replaced by 'at' and 'on'. Some examples of common errors found in the sample are as follows,

- a) There are many lakes ***at** Taman Tasik. (**in**)
- b) We stay ***at** Selangor. (**in**)
- c) In the forest, we slept ***on** the camp. (**in**)

The errors could be due to the students' L1 interference, that is, in Bahasa Melayu 'di' is used before a noun to indicate a place. The correspondent English preposition for 'di' is 'at'. However, in English, three prepositions 'in', 'on', and 'at' are used to indicate place, for example, 'at Jalan Puchong', 'in Selangor', and 'on the island'. Making a correct choice of preposition to fit into a sentence is not an easy task for the Malay learners who only have one preposition 'di' to indicate place relation in their L1. Therefore, this negative transfer from L1 to the target language could be the contributing factor to these errors.

The use of 'at' instead of 'in' may also be a result of overgeneralization of a certain linguistic feature in the target language. In this case, the overgeneralization of 'at' appears before a geographical place. The students may have come across the

expression such as 'at Jalan Puchong', 'at the restaurant' 'at home', 'at the beach' and others. Consequently, they applied this linguistic feature in the target language by using "at" before all geographical places.

4.3.1.2 Wrong Selection of 'at'

The preposition 'at' was replaced by other prepositions of which 'to' and 'on' were the most prominent ones. Some of the examples of errors made in this category are as follows:

- a) We arrived ***to** the school. (**at**)
- b) We arrived ***on** Kuantan at 4pm. (**at**)

In (a), an overgeneralization in the use of 'to' was used to connect an action to its destination or goal, for example,

- a) She walked **to** the nearby supermarket.
- b) He tiptoed **to** his room.
- c) He went **to** his relative's house.
- d) They moved **to** a new house recently.

The Malay learner's overgeneralization of the above sentence patterns appears to have resulted in their application of 'to' in another context, which is inappropriate as in 'We arrived ***to** the school'.

One possible explanation of the error in " we arrived ***on** Kuantan at 4 pm." (Sentence b) would be the confusion of the students in the application of the three of the corresponding English prepositions for 'di', that is, 'in' 'on' and 'at', for example,

Bahasa Melayu	English
di restoran itu	at the restaurant
di pantai itu	at /on beach
di Melaka	in Malacca

As a result of the confusion in terms of using the right corresponding English prepositions in replacing 'di', the Malay students made such errors.

4.3.1.3 Omission of 'at'

A verb that takes a preposition is semantically associated with another verb, which is not followed by a preposition, for example,

They **reached** KLIA at 4pm.

They **arrived**^ KLIA. (**arrived at**)

The verb 'arrived' is semantically associated with the verb 'reached'. The Malay students omitted 'at' after the verb 'arrive' since the verb 'reach' is not followed by a preposition. Thus, based on this association, the Malay learners could have concluded that 'arrived' does not take the preposition as in 'reached' and this resulted in deviant structures.

4.3.1.4 Unnecessary insertion of 'at'

Ten errors occurred in this subcategory. These errors can be attributed to the interference of a certain B.M grammatical feature. Some of the examples of these errors are:

We reached ***at** Genting Highlands.

We went to the swimming pool to swim ***at** there.

The students may have used the translation method in the use of the preposition in sentences. They translated the BM sentence pattern “ Kami sampai di Genting Highland”. Incorrect semantic association is a possible cause for the error in the sentence, “We went to the swimming pool to swim ***at** there.” A verb that takes no preposition is associated semantically with one which is followed by a preposition, for example,

They arrived at Genting Highland.

They reached ***at** Genting Highland.

‘Arrived’ takes a preposition while ‘reached’ does not. However, since ‘reached’ is semantically associated with ‘arrived’, ‘reached’ is then considered as a verb that takes a preposition ‘at’ as well.

Overgeneralization can also be another possible cause of the unnecessary insertion ‘at’. The use of ‘at’ is over generalized through the students’ familiarity in applying ‘at’. The use of ‘at’ is used to show the relationship between an action and a place. For example,

She stood **at** the gate.

He turned **at** the corner.

They arrived **at** Kuala Lumpur last night.

4.3.1.5 Wrong Selection of 'on'

Many of the errors occurred in this subcategory. 'At', 'in', 'for', 'along', and 'to' are used to substitute 'on', for examples,

- (a) We walked ***at** the beach. (on)
- (b) He sat ***at** the big branches of the tree. (on)
- (c) We sat ***at** the mat. (on)
- (d) They were stranded ***at** the island. (on)
- (e) ***In** my way home, I witnessed a fatal accident. (on)
- (f) ***Along** the way to the campsite, we passed by some paddy fields. (on)
- (g) The money will be spent ***for** food. (on)

In sentences a, b, and c, the use of 'at' for 'on' was probably due to the to the interference of the B.M preposition 'di'. In BM, 'di' is used to indicate the notion of place. However, in English, this notion is represented by three common prepositions, that is, 'in', 'on', 'at'. Thus, it is a difficult attempt for the students to make a correct choice of preposition.

In sentence (e), the use of 'in' may also be the result of the influence of the Malay students' L1. The direct translation of the phrase 'dalam perjalanan pulang ke rumah' will be 'in my way home' of which the use of 'in' is not appropriate in this sentence context. This error is caused by negative transfer from the students' L1 to the target language.

In sentence (f), the use of 'along' is not appropriate in the sentence context. Incomplete learning can be the cause for this error which means that the students have only half-learned a structure, a word, an expression or any other feature of the second language (Ngara , 1983). The students may have come across the phrase 'on the way', once or twice. However, they may not remember the expression and substitute 'on' with other nearest prepositions.

In sentence (g), similarly, this error is caused by the negative transfer from Bahasa Melayu to English. For example, 'untuk' as in the phrase 'dibelanja untuk makanan' when translated to English will be 'spend for food'. Consequently, the students select the wrong choice of preposition by substituting 'on' with 'for' of which results in the deviant structure in (g).

4.3.2 Preposition of Direction

4.3.2.1 Wrong selection of 'to'

Six errors were made in this sub-category. The common errors are as follows:

- a) ***In** my surprise, he made it to the final. (**To**)
- b) I decided to go ***at** my destination. (**to**)
- c) She prefers coffee ***than** tea. (**to**)

The error in (a) is due to over-generalization of the students' L1 to the target language. When there is a structure which does not correspond with that of the students' L1, they tend to generalize the sentence pattern. The students may have come across 'in my

opinion', consequently, apply 'in' to 'in my surprise' because both of the expressions are similar in their grammatical pattern, that is, 'preposition-possessive pronoun-noun of affective notion.'

The error in (b) could be the result of perceiving 'my destination' as a specific or static location instead of direction in the sentence context. Consequently, 'at' is used. However, it is not justified to conclude that this error is caused by the interference of the students' L1 because the English preposition 'to' and its B.M. counterpart 'ke' often agree in meaning and function. For example,

English: I walked **to** school.

Bahasa Melayu: Saya berjalan **ke** sekolah.

However in sentence (c), 'I prefer coffee than tea', 'than' is used instead of 'to', can be due to the interference of the Malay learners' L1. This is because in B.M, it is 'Saya lebih suka kopi daripada teh' and the correspondent English word for 'daripada' is 'than'.

Another possible cause for this error is overgeneralization of the use of 'than' for comparison, for example,

1. He is taller **than** his brother.
2. They are richer **than** their neighbors.

4.3.2.2 Omission of 'to'

Two errors occurred in this sub-category. They are as follows :

- (a) They go ^ Port Dickson for a picnic. (to)
- (b) They walked ^ the canteen. (to)

This error cannot be traced to the interference of any grammatical pattern in B.M. As in B.M., 'pergi' and 'berjalan' need the preposition 'ke' to show the notion of direction as well. One possible explanation of the errors is that an over-generalization of the use of 'to' as 'go'. As a result, the students considered 'to' being redundant as 'go' and 'walked' have already indicated the meaning and function of 'to'.

4.3.2.3 Wrong Selection of 'through'

Twenty errors (Table 5) were made in this category. The preposition 'along' was used to substitute 'through'. An example of the error is as follows:

- (a) They had to walk* **along** the forest before seeing the sunlight.

This error was a result of over-generalization. The Malay students may have come across the prepositional phrases using 'along' as follows:

1. **along** the corridor
2. **along** the road
3. **along** the pathway

As 'forest' also takes up a long route as 'the beach', 'the corridor' and 'the road', the students have extended the application beyond its restrictions to form the deviant structure 'along the forest' as in (a).

4.3.2.4 Omission of 'through'

Three errors occurred in this sub-category. An example is as follows:

1. We passed ^ the thick jungle. (**through**)

This error can be caused by the negative transfer from the Malay language to English, which is a form of L1 interference. The B.M. counterparts for 'through' are 'melalui', 'menerusi' and 'melintasi' which function as verbs in a sentence, for example,

English: We **passed through** the thick jungle.

B.Melayu: Kita **melintasi** hutan tebal itu.

To the Malay learners, adding 'through' after 'passed' will be considered redundant as 'passed' itself means 'melintasi'. As a result, the Malay learners generate a sentence with a deviant structure such as, 'we passed the thick jungle'.

4.3.2.5 Wrong selection of 'towards'

Thirty-four errors occurred in this sub-category. 'To' and 'forward' are used to replace 'towards'. Some common examples are as follows:

- a) The child walks ***to** his father. (**towards**)
- b) The birds fly ***to** the west. (**towards**)
- c) The man ran ***forward** that direction. (**towards**)

The above error could be due to the influence of the B.M grammatical pattern in the use of 'ke' in similar meaning as 'to' for the notion of the direction. Thus, the Malay

learners tend to use 'to' after the verbs 'crawl', 'walk', 'run', and 'fly', without considering the sentence context. This can be illustrated in the following sentences:

Bahasa Melayu:

English

Dia berlari ke arah itu .

He runs ***to** that direction. (**towards**)

Burung itu terbang ke arah Barat .

The bird flies ***to** the West. (**towards**)

Another possible explanation for the errors is overgeneralization in the use of 'to', for example,

- 1) He runs **to** the toilet.
- 2) I walk **to** the park.
- 3) The child crawled **to** the staircase.
- 4) The birds fly **to** the trees.

The Malay learners extend this application to other sentences of different contexts. They tend to select the prepositions, which are familiar to them based on the BM grammatical patterns.

The error in (c) is caused by confusion between 'forward' and 'towards' as both of the prepositions can be used to express the notion of direction which indicates an action moving to the front. This can be illustrated in the following examples found in the data:

- 1) The soldiers marched **towards** the commander.
- 2) The soldiers marched **forward** to meet the commander.

Another possible explanation for the error is incomplete learning. The Malay students did not observe the different categories, which should come after the prepositions ‘forward’ and ‘towards’. ‘Towards’ should be followed by a noun while ‘forwards’ by an infinitive- to as shown in the following examples:

- The soldiers marched towards **his commander**.
- The soldiers marched forward **to meet** his commander.

4.3.2.6 Wrong selection of ‘into’

Fifteen errors occurred in this sub-category. ‘Into’ was replaced by ‘in’ and ‘to’. The examples are as follows:

- (a) The frog jumped* **in** the well. (**into**)
- (b) The boy jumped ***on** the sea. (**into**)
- (c) We got ***to** the water after changing to our swimming suits. (**into**)

The use of ‘in’ for ‘into’ is due to a lack of knowledge about their cause and effect relationships. ‘Into’ is used to show destination while ‘in’ is used to show position. This can be illustrated in the following examples:

Destination:	Position
He jumped into the water.	He was soaked in water for hours.
They went into the forest.	They were lost in the forest.

4.3.2.7 Wrong Selection of 'of'

Twenty-three errors were made in this subcategory. 'In' and 'at' were used to replace 'of'. This error could be caused by incomplete learning. Some of the examples are as follows:

- (a) We pushed the table to the middle ***in** the room. **(of)**
- (b) The birds build their nests on the roof ***in** the house. **(of)**

Errors in (a) and (b) are caused by incomplete learning of the prepositional phrase. The Malay students may have come across the expressions like "in the room", "at Jalan Puchong" and others. Consequently, they apply 'in' and 'at' before the spatial nouns without considering the sentence contexts that require a preposition 'of' to show 'belong to'. For example, 'roof of the house' and 'in the middle of the room'.

4.3.3 Prepositions of Time

4.3.3.1 Wrong selection of 'on'

Forty-four errors were made in this subcategory. 'For', 'at' and 'in' were used to replace 'on'. Some of the common examples are as follows:

- (a) ***For** the first day we went for sightseeing in town. **(on)**
- (b) ***At** the second day, we went for sightseeing in town. **(on)**

- (c) It was sunny ***at** the last day. (**on**)
- (d) I went for the trip* **in** 3 rd December 2000. (**on**)
- (e) ***At** that day, I was very ill. (**on**)

One possible explanation for the above errors is the L1 interference in the target language. The Malay students were influenced by the use of BM prepositions 'pada'. In BM, 'pada' is commonly used to express time. However, there are several types of time words in English, that is, 'in', 'on' and 'at' which have their own rules of use. 'In' is normally used to refer to month and year, for example in July, and in 2000. 'On' is used normally for days of the week. While 'at' is normally used to indicate a point of time, for example, 'at 6pm', 'at noon', and etc. The use of BM preposition 'pada' differs from its three corresponding English prepositions are illustrated in the following examples,

B.Melayu

Pada bulan Disember

Pada hari Rabu

Pada pukul 6.00 p.m

English

in December (period of time)

on Wednesday (day of the week)

at 6 p.m. (point of time)

Another possible cause for some errors in this subcategory is the overgeneralization in the use of specific English prepositions to inappropriate sentence contexts. For example, 'at that moment', and 'at that time', are grammatically correct but when 'at' is applied to an inappropriate context as in (e), the deviant structure 'at that day' was formed.

4.3.3.2 Wrong selection of 'in'

Thirty errors occurred in this sub-category. 'At' and 'on' are used to substitute 'in'. Some of the common errors are as follows:

- (a) ***At** the morning, we went for jogging. **(In)**
- (b) We played football* **at** the evening. **(in)**
- (c) ***On** the afternoon, we took a nap. **(In)**
- (d) They went for the trip ***on** December 1999. **(in)**

The errors are traceable to overgeneralization in the use of 'at'. The students may have come across the expressions such as 'at noon' and 'at night', 'noon', 'midnight', and 'night' are nouns, which show the notion of time. Therefore, by over generalizing, the students used 'at' for other temporal nouns as well which resulted in the deviant structures in (a) and (b) and (c).

The error in (d) could be caused by incomplete learning. The Malay learners are confused by the use of 'in' and 'on'. The former is used for month and the latter is used for date, for example, 'in December', and 'on 2nd December'.

Those errors can also be traced to L1 interference in the target language. In B.M.grammatical rules, 'pada' is put before any temporal noun. However, in English, three different prepositions 'on', 'in', and 'at', are used for temporal nouns. By perceiving that there is only one English preposition for temporal noun as in their L1,

the students tend to select the wrong choice of prepositions, for example, when the Malay learners consider 'on' as 'pada', they would use 'on' for all temporal nouns.

These errors are also due to the difficult task in selecting the correct preposition, 'on', 'in' and 'at', in different sentence contexts. This can be illustrated in the following examples.

Bahasa Melayu	English
Pada waktu petang	in the afternoon
Pada waktu malam	at night
Pada hari Isnin	on Monday
Pada bulan Disember	at the end of December

4.3.3.3 Unnecessary insertion of 'in'

Three errors occurred in this subcategory. Some of the examples are as follows:

- (a) We had to sit for another paper ***in** the next period.
- (b) They went for sightseeing ***in** the next day.

The insertion of 'in' is as a result of the negative transfer from L1 to the target language. When students transferred 'pada keesokan hari' to 'in the next day', they have applied the same grammatical rule to English of which a preposition is needed before temporal nouns as in 'pada keesokan hari'. This resulted in the deviant structures in (a) and (b).

This error can also be traced to incomplete learning. In English, a preposition is commonly put before a temporal noun. However, a preposition is not needed before the

'next day'. When the students are not aware of this exception in the English grammatical rules, they made such errors.

4.3.3.4 Wrong Selection of 'at'

Thirty-nine errors were made in this sub-category. The prepositions 'in', 'during', and 'on' were used to replace 'at'. Some of the common errors are shown in the following examples:

- (a) ***In** the same time, we boiled some water. (**At**)
- (b) They heard a sound ***in** noon. (**at**)
- (c) ***In** midnight, we heard a sound. (**At**)
- (d) ***On** 7 o'clock, we took our dinner. (**At**)
- (e) ***During** the end of the term, we had our exams. (**At**)

The errors were caused by the lack of language in using the correct prepositions with a specific set of temporal nouns. 'Pada' can co-occur with several types of temporal nouns, whereas, different English prepositions such as 'in', 'on', 'at' and 'during' can co-occur with several types of temporal nouns. Therefore, it is a difficult task for the Malay learners to decide on the correct preposition for the temporal noun. Here, when the students selected 'during the end of December', probably they perceived the prepositional phrase as a period of time instead of a point of time. This wrong selection also shows that an incomplete learning process has occurred and the students have only half-learned a grammatical rule.

4.3.3.5 Omission of 'at'

Two errors occurred in this subcategory. They are as follows:

(a) ^ about 5 o'clock, it began to rain. (At)

(b) I went to the complex ^ nearly 8 p.m. (at)

L1 interference cannot be accounted for the errors made in (a) and (b). In B.M., 'pada' is put before 'kira-kira' to form the prepositional phrases 'pada kira-kira pukul 7 p.m.' or 'pada hampir pukul 7 p.m.'. One possible explanation is that the students may have perceived that 'nearly', and 'about' as prepositions, thus, omitting 'at'.

4.3.3.6 Unnecessary Insertion of 'at'

Two errors occurred in this sub-category. They are as follows:

(a) We dropped by Ali's house *at the next day.

(b) We went hunting *at the day after.

These errors were due to L1 interference through negative transfer. In B.M., a preposition must precede a temporal noun. For example, 'pada keesokan hari'. When the Malay learners literally translated the phrase to English, it became 'at the next day'.

4.3.3.7 Wrong Selection of 'for'

Eighteen errors were made in this sub-category. 'At', 'on' 'in' and 'to' were used to substitute 'for'. Some of the examples of these errors are as follows:

- (a) ***At** a few seconds, I was shocked. (**For**)
- (b) After jogging* **in** a few hours, I was exhausted. (**for**)
- (c) I did not e-mail him* **on** a month. (**for**)
- (d) We have to wait ***to** another day before we can leave the place. (**for**)

These errors cannot be traced to any Bahasa Melayu grammatical pattern because 'for' is used in the same manner as the corresponding B.M. prepositions. Therefore, it is not due to L1 interference. The corresponding B.M. preposition 'for' is 'selama' or 'untuk' depending on the sentence contexts. This can be illustrated in the following examples:

English

- (1) I have been staying here **for**
two years.
- (2) The gift is **for** my teacher.

B.Melayu

- (1) Saya telah tinggal di sini
selama dua tahun.
- (2) Hadiah ini adalah **untuk** cikgu.

These errors were probably caused by the confusion among the different prepositions used for time-notions such as 'at', 'in', 'on' and 'for'. A lack of knowledge in the diversified functions of 'for' accounted for the errors. 'At' is used to express a point in time, 'in' is for a period of time while 'on' is for a specific time. Similarly, the

preposition 'for' can also be used to indicate a specific time, a period of time, a point of time and a certain amount of time. Consequently, the students were confused with the application of 'for' and selected the wrong choice of preposition by substituting 'for' with 'on', 'in' and 'at'.

4.3.3.8 Unnecessary Insertion of 'after'

Three errors occurred in this sub-category. Confusion between 'after' and 'later' in the target language has resulted in the following errors:

(a) ***After** three months later, we only heard from him.

(b) They married *** after** one year later.

The Malay students were not aware that 'after three months' and 'three months later' are similar in meanings as they used both prepositions 'after' and 'later' together with the noun phrase 'three months'. This resulted in the deviant structure 'after three months later'. Therefore, either 'after' or 'later' can be used in the prepositional phrase. Insertion of 'after' in the phrase '***after** 3 months later' and '***after** 1 year later' is considered redundant.

4.3.4 Prepositions of Manner-Agent

4.3.4.1 Wrong Selection of 'on' and 'in'

Thirteen errors occurred in this sub-category. Some of the common examples are as follows:

(a) Both of them travel ***with** a camel. (on)

(b) A portrait done ***by** charcoal. (in)

These errors are probably due to the ignorance of rule restriction. The Malay learners have come across some common prepositional phrases, which consist of a verb and a preposition, for example,

1. We **travel with** him.
2. We **travel with** our friends.
3. He **travels with** his wife.
4. I **travel with** my family members.
5. This model is **done by** Ali.
6. That work is **done by** them.

Without knowing the rule restriction of the language, the Malay learners generalized and applied the same rule to a sentence of a different context, meaning and function, that is, the preposition 'with' comes after the verb 'travel' and 'by' comes after 'done'. Thus, deviant structures in (a) and (b) are formed when they collaborate the same preposition with the same verb, for example, 'travel with' and 'done by' even though the rule does not apply in the context.

The ignorance of rule restriction also occurs when the Malay learners use the same preposition with other verbs where it does not apply. For example, 'she **went with**

her husband' is correct grammatically and semantically. However, when the Malay learners use the same preposition 'with' together with other verbs, for example, ' she travels ***with** the camel', and '**done** ***with** charcoal', deviant structures are formed.

4.3.4.2 Wrong Selection of 'by'

Most of the errors were made in this sub-category. (29 errors) Some of the common examples are as follows:

(a) They were arrested ***from** the order of the Kuala Lumpur Magistrate. (**by**)

(b) ***With** the order of the court, a warrant was sent. (**by**)

The errors were due to L1 interference whereby the Malay learners transferred their knowledge of Bahasa Melayu prepositions to English prepositions. The one to one correspondence between the B.M. prepositions and English prepositions has caused the mismatch of meanings. This can be illustrated in the following examples:

B. Melayu	English
(1) Mereka ditangkap atas arahan dari Majistret Kuala Lumpur.	They were arrested *from the order of the Kuala Lumpur magistrate.(by)
(2) Dengan perintah mahkamah, satu waran telah dihantar.	*With the order of the court, the warrant was sent. (by)

4.3.5 Prepositions of Cause-Purpose

4.3.5.1 Unnecessary Insertion of 'for'

Two errors occurred in this subcategory. An example is as follows:

- (a) While Charbati set up the tent, I cooked ***for** lunch.

These errors were mainly due to L1 interference in the target language. In Bahasa Melayu, 'memasak untuk makan tengah hari' when transferred literally to English would be 'cooked for lunch'. In B.M., the preposition 'untuk' serves as the indicator of purpose. However, such preposition is sometimes considered redundant in an English sentence.

4.3.5.2 Omission of Preposition 'of'

Three errors were made in this sub-category. These errors could be mainly due to L1 interference. They are as follows:

- (a) We did not go out because ^ the rain. **(of)**
 (b) He met with an accident, as a result ^ his carelessness. **(of)**
 (c) They were late for the meeting because ^ the heavy traffic-jam. **(of)**

L1 interference could have attributed to these errors. The negative transfer from L1 to the target language has caused the Malay learners to omit the preposition 'of'. In B.M., no preposition is needed in the construction of the above sentences, as 'kerana' is

enough to indicate reason. However, in the English version of the sentences, the prepositions are crucial.

4.3.5.3 Wrong Selection of 'to'

Eight errors occurred in this sub-category. The common errors are shown in the following examples.

(a) They did not have enough food ***for** eat. (**to**)

(b) They set up the tent *** for** sleep. (**to**)

L1 interference accounted for the errors. In B.M., 'untuk' serves as an indicator of purpose and its corresponding English preposition is 'for'. Thus, by literally translating the phrase, the Malay learners produced the above deviant structures.

4.3.6 Prepositions of Verb-Prep and Adj-Prep

4.3.6.1 Wrong Selection of the Prepositions

Many errors were made in this category. Some of the common errors are as follows:

(a) She looks ***of** her younger sister. (**after**)

(b) He spoke ***on** him in the court. (**against**)

(c) The parents are proud ***on** her children's results. (**of**)

These errors were probably due to the confusion in the use of prepositions with various verbs and adjectives. Prepositions of these concepts have numerous meanings. For

example, 'look for', 'look after' and 'look out' have different meanings when the verb 'look' is combined with different prepositions. Thus, the Malay learners find it difficult to match the correct prepositions to the verbs or adjectives to produce the correct meanings based on the sentence contexts.

Besides that, the students' own lack of exposure and limited experience in the use of these types of prepositions made the process of selection even harder. This results in a high percentage of errors in these categories.

4.3.7 Prepositions of Association

4.3.7.1 Wrong Selection of 'between' and 'among'

Forty-five errors were made in this category with thirty-four errors in the sub-category of wrong selection. Some of the common errors are as follows:

(a) ***Between** the three of us, she is the cleverest. (**Among**)

(b) ***Among** the two girls, Cheryl is taller. (**Between**)

These errors were perhaps due to incomplete learning of rules. The Malay learners may have understood that the prepositions 'between' and 'among' are used to indicate more than one person but failed to differentiate the functions, that is, 'between' is used to describe two persons or objects, while 'among' is for more than two persons or objects.

Ignorance of the above rule restriction led to the production of the above deviant structures.

4.3.7.2 Omission of Prepositions 'between' and 'among'

Nine errors occurred in this sub-category. Two common examples are as follows:

(a) There is no secret ^ the two of us. (**between**)

(b) There is no co-operation ^ the three of them. (**among**)

These errors are not traceable to a Bahasa Melayu grammatical pattern because 'between' and 'among' have a B.M. counterpart 'antara' and 'kalangan'. The insertion of 'antara' is essential in the B.M. version of the above structures. This is illustrated as follows:

B.Melayu

Tidak ada rahsia **antara** kami berdua.

Tidak ada kerjasama di **kalangan** mereka bertiga..

English

There is no secret **between** the two of us.

There is no co-operation **among** the three of them.

The omission of 'between' and 'among' could be the result of overgeneralization. The Malay learners may have come across sentences in the target language which begin with 'there', for example, '**There** are **two girls** in the class' and '**There** are **many children** in the party'. Based on the structures of the these sentences, a preposition is not needed before a phrase referring to the total number of people, for example, '**two girls**' and

'many children'. Consequently, without considering the sentence context and meaning, the Malay learners omit the preposition **'between'** before 'the two of us' (sentence a) and **'among'** before 'the three of us' (sentence b) as these phrases also refer to the total number of people.

4.3.7.3 Unnecessary Insertion of **'between'** and **'among'**

Two errors occurred in this sub-category. The two examples are as follows:

- (a) ***Between** Ali and Siti are acquaintances.
- (b) ***Among** Abu, Aminah and Mei Lin are classmates.

The insertion of **'between'** before the names of two persons and **'among'** before the names of three persons could be due to an over-generalization of certain structures in the target language. The Malay learners could have had the experience of using the preposition **'between'** before two persons' names, for example, 'there is a misunderstanding **between** Sally and Siva.' and the preposition **'among'** before three persons' names, for example, 'there is a misunderstanding **among** Aminah, Fatimah and Nadia.' Similarly, the learners applied the same rules to the above sentences but without considering the different sentence contexts and meanings. This resulted in the formation of deviant structures.

4.3.8 Preposition of Similarity

4.3.8.1 Wrong Selection of **'as'** and **'like'**

Sixty-four errors occurred in this sub-category. Some of the common examples are as follows:

- (a) There is no place ***as** home. (**like**)
- (b) Swee Lan can swim ***as** a fish. (**like**)
- (c) She was trained ***like** a police. (**as**)

These wrong choices of prepositions could not be attributed to the L1 interference because 'as' and 'like' have their own Bahasa Melayu counterparts. This can be illustrated in the following examples:

B.Melayu

English

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| (1) Tidak ada tempat seperti rumah | There is no place like home. |
| (2) Dia telah dilatih sebagai seorang polis. | He was trained as a police. |

One possible explanation for the errors in (a), (b) and (c) is that the Malay learners may have confused in the use of the prepositions of 'like' and 'as' to be indicators of comparison. This is because they may have come across the phrases like 'as good as', 'as tall as' and 'like father like son'. -

The findings of the study as presented in this chapter revealed that Malay ESL learners have made prepositional errors in the nine categories of prepositions as laid out in the study. This shows that these prepositions pose the most difficulty for Malay students and the causes of the error occurrences have been discussed in detail in this chapter. In general, they are L1 interference, overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules and false concept hypothesized. A conclusion

of the study and suggestion for the teaching of English prepositions will be dealt with in the following chapter.