

Investigating Interference Errors Made by Azzawia University 1st year Students of English in Learning English Prepositions

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Abstract : The main focus of this study is investigating the interference of Arabic in the use of English prepositions by Libyan university students. Prepositions in the tests used in the study were categorized, according to their relation to Arabic, into similar Arabic and English prepositions (SAEP), dissimilar Arabic and English prepositions (DAEP), Arabic prepositions with no English counterparts (APEC), and English prepositions with no Arabic counterparts (EPAC). The subjects of the study were the first year university students of the English department, Sabrata Faculty of Arts, Azzawia University; both males and females, and they were 100 students. The basic tool for data collection was a test of English prepositions; students are instructed to fill in the blanks with the correct prepositions and to put a zero (0) if no preposition was needed. The test was then handed to the subjects of the study. The test was then scored and quantitative as well as qualitative results were obtained. Quantitative results indicated the number, percentages and rank order of errors in each of the categories and qualitative results indicated the nature and significance of those errors and their possible sources. Based on the obtained results the researcher could detect that students made more errors in the EPAC category than the other three categories and these errors could be attributed to the lack of knowledge of the different meanings of English prepositions. This lack of knowledge forced the students to adopt what is called the strategy of transfer.

Keywords : foreign language acquisition, foreign language learning, interference system, interlanguage system, mother tongue interference

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