

# PROBLEMATIC LOCATIVE PREPOSITIONS FOR IRAQI UNDERGRADUATE EFL LEARNERS :AN ERROR ANALYSIS STUDY

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## 1.1 Introduction:

Is it any wonder that prepositions create troubles for students whose English is a foreign language? We say we are *at* the hospital to visit a friend who is *in* the hospital. We lie *in* bed but *on* the couch. We watch a film *at* the theatre but *on* television. "For native speakers, these little words present little difficulties" ([www.webster.comnet.edu/](http://www.webster.comnet.edu/):1), but try to learn another language, any other language, and you will quickly discover that prepositions are troublesome wherever you live and learn. This paper contains some interesting (sometimes troublesome) prepositions with brief usage notes.

Prepositions are important words. "Individual prepositions are used more frequently than other individual words" ([www.grammar.englishclub.com.](http://www.grammar.englishclub.com/):1). The most commonly used prepositions in English are (in alphabetical order): at, by, for, from, in, of, on, to and with.(Fries,1940:16), ([www.haydut.cmpe.boun.edu](http://www.haydut.cmpe.boun.edu) Tr/:3) and ([www.utex-as.edu](http://www.utex-as.edu) :2).

To address all the potential difficulties with prepositions in idiomatic usage would require volumes, thus only the most problematic prepositions for Iraqi learners of English have been tackled in this paper.

## 1.2 Hypotheses:

It is hypothesized that prepositions, in general, are problematic for Iraqi learners of English as a foreign language. It is also proposed that the locative prepositions of place (*at*, *in* and *on*), in particular, are the most problematic prepositions for those learners, i.e., they do not master their use([owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/eslprep2.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/eslprep2.html):1). Actually, Iraqi learners of English tend to use those prepositions most commonly than others.

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study:

This paper is meant to serve as a review of the basic principles involved in using prepositions in general, and prepositions of location: (*at*, *in* and *on*) in particular, correctly when using English.

In this piece of analysis, it is intended to find out the extent to which the above hypotheses concerning the fact that mastering prepositions of English in general and the locative prepositions, in particular, (*at*, *in* and *on*) by Iraqi learners of English as a foreign language is not easy and that the tendency to use these particular prepositions more frequently than others is valid.

It is also meant to identify the nature of the difficulties (realized as errors of competence) faced by Iraqi learners of English when performing in a particular sub-system of English prepositions namely, prepositions of location. The sources of these difficulties stand as another aim of this paper.

In the light of the discussion held in this study concerning the subjects' performance on the items of the test, some pedagogical implementations are drawn as

a remedy that can help Iraqi learners of English as a foreign language to overcome the concerned problem of prepositions.

#### **1.4 Procedures and Limitations:**

In this paper, and for the purpose of analysis, the notion of 'difficulty' is interpreted in terms of an error committed by individuals manipulating some set of testing items. Another type of interpretation is carried out to attribute the error committed either to the inherent difficulty of the foreign language task itself or to the interference from the learners' native language or other reasons. This particular practice is based on a thorough description of the prepositional sub-system in English language. The description of English locative prepositions, however, is provided at the following pages in terms of the senses those prepositions convey.

A sample of forty first-year college students has been chosen for the purpose of our study. All participants are students at the Department of English /College of Education for Women at the University of Baghdad. The researcher does his best to obtain a homogenous test group.

The testees are asked to respond to an eleven-item test where they are urged to choose the suitable preposition to complete each sentence meaningfully. The construction of the test items has been done on the view that the testees would employ a variety of strategies in order to supply the missing proper preposition. In this sense, both successful and unsuccessful trials of the subjects are referred to in the analysis of the testees 'performance'. Successful trials are taken as evidence of ease production, unsuccessful trials, on the other hand, are considered evidence of difficulty for which reasons are to be dug out. Although we are concerned with both types of performance, our major concern is in unsuccessful trials as signs of difficulty to be passed over.

#### **2. Definition of Locative Prepositions:**

Locative prepositions which are the main concern of the study are defined as a type of prepositions that describe a physical relationship in terms of location, i. e. they tell where something is in relation to something else. In other words, they express spatial relations ([www.frontiernet.net/~scaves/position.html](http://www.frontiernet.net/~scaves/position.html) :2), e.g.:

My sister enjoyed the party at your house.

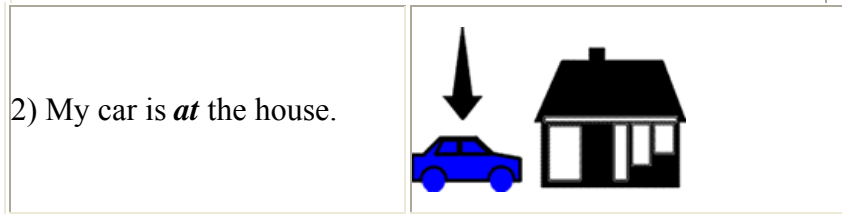
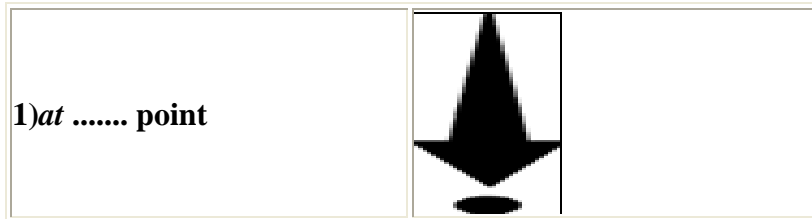
The student studied in the library.

In itself a word like 'in' or 'on' is rather meaningless and hard to define in mere words. For instance, when you do try to define a preposition like 'in' or 'at' or 'on', you invariably use your hands to show how something is situated in relation to something else. Prepositions are nearly always combined with other words in structure called prepositional phrases.

#### **3. Explanation of Locative Prepositions:**

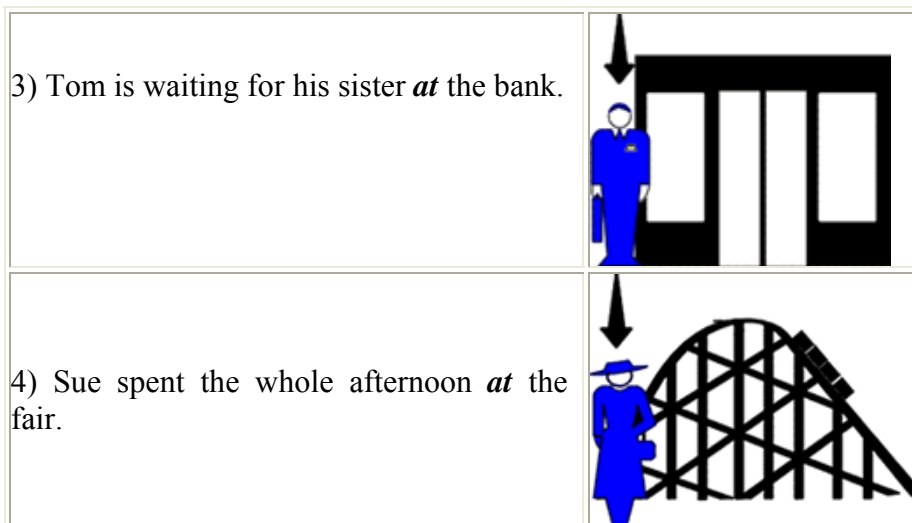
Prepositions of location express spatial relations. The following is an explanation of the spatial relations expressed by the three concerned prepositions. The tackled prepositions are classified into three types according to the number of the dimensions they refer to by using concepts from geometry: point, surface and area or volume.

**3.1 At-type prepositions:** the preposition 'at' indicates that the noun that follows is treated as a point in relation to which another object is positioned. In other words, the place is seen as a point, i.e. a place which is identified quite generally, without being thought of in terms of length, width, or height. This type of position relation can best be explained by pictures. Imagine the following examples :



*At* in this example (2) locates a car in relation to a house, understood as a fixed point.

Graphics and examples for this paper are taken from: ([owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/eslprep2.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/eslprep2.html)).



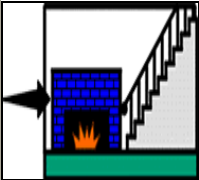


In 3), the bank can be understood as a point defining Tom's location, much as in 1) above. It makes less sense to think of a *fair* as a point in 4) since fairs are usually spread out over a fairly large area. Probably *at* is used in this case just because it is the least specific preposition; it defines Sue's location with respect to the *fair* rather than some other place.

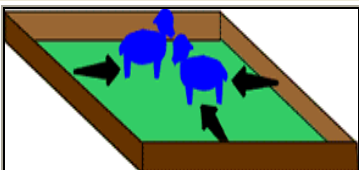
**3.2 In-type prepositions:** the preposition '*in*' denotes that an object lies within the boundaries of an area or within the confines of a volume. The volume is thought of in terms of length, width, height (or depth):




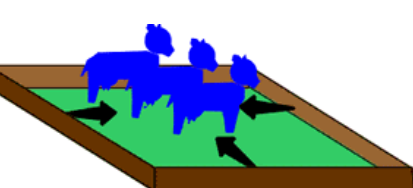

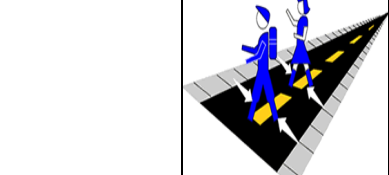
The following sample sentences clarify the meaning of '*in*'.

<p>6) The house is <i>in</i> Tippecanoe county.</p>		
<p>7) There are five rooms <i>in</i> the house, which has a lovely fireplace <i>in</i> the living room.</p>		

6) Locates the house within a geographical area. 7) Treats the house as a three-dimensional structure that can be divided into smaller volumes, namely, rooms, inside one of which is an object, the fireplace.

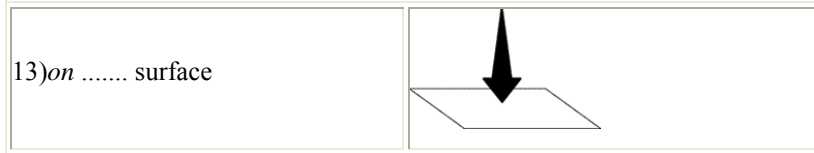
<p>8) The sheep are grazing <i>in</i> the pasture. (enclosed by a fence)</p>		
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Notice that *in* implies that the field is enclosed. It is also used when the space is presented as an area. As in the following examples:

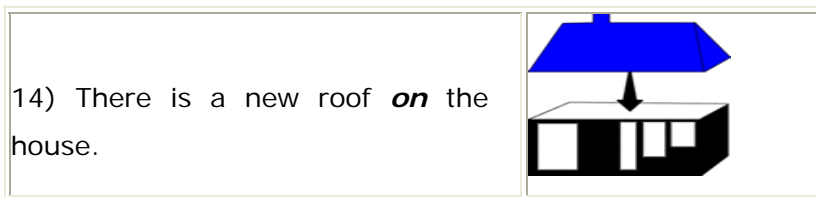
<p>9) A face appeared <i>in</i> the window. (area)</p>	
<p>10) Three cows are grazing <i>in</i> the field. (area)</p>	
<p>11) Two boxers are <i>in</i> the ring. (enclosed by ropes)</p>	
<p>12) The children are playing <i>in</i> the street.</p>	

In 12) the street is understood as an area enclosed by the sidewalks on either side. (Compare this with the discussion of sentence 18 ).

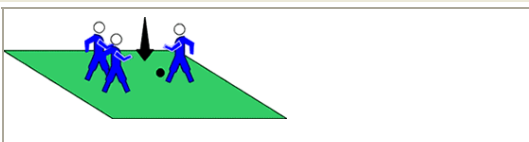
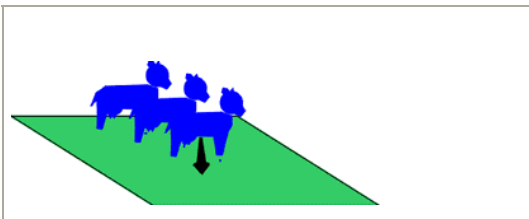


**3.3 On-type prepositions:** the preposition 'on' defines the position of an object with respect to a surface on which it rests. The place is seen as a surface, i.e. is thought of in terms of length and width, but not height (or depth). The surface is often the top of some object (on=on top of).



The meaning of the preposition 'on' can be illustrated with sample sentences.



Sentence (14) treats the house as a surface upon which another object, the roof, is placed<sup>(1)</sup>. *On* is used when the space is considered as a surface. It implies only that the following noun denotes a surface and not necessarily an enclosed area:

15) Three players are practicing <b>on</b> the field. (surface)	
16) The cattle are grazing <b>on</b> the open range. (not enclosed by a fence )	
17) The frost made patterns <b>on</b> the window. (The field is seen as a surface).	
18) Our house is <b>on</b> Third Street.	

<sup>1</sup> The surface need not be flat or horizontal

Here *on* locates the house on either side of Third Street: it doesn't mean that the street is a surface on which the house sits. Because the street is understood as a line next to which the house is situated, *on* functions much like *at* in its normal use: it locates the house in relation to the street but does not specify the exact address. For that purpose, *at* is used because the address is like a particular point on the line. Compare: "Our house is *at* 323 Third Street". The place is thought of in terms of length, but not breadth or height (depth).

All of these sentences answer a question of the form, "Where is \_\_\_\_\_?", but each gives different information.

#### **4. Uses of locative prepositions:**

**4.1 The preposition *at* is used in the following descriptions of place/position:** (noting that 'at' is the least specific of the prepositions in its spatial orientation, it has a great variety of uses.)

##### **It is used**

##### **- With specific places/points in space:**

She kept the horse at a nearby farm.  
I had a cup of coffee at Helen's (house/flat).  
Angie's still at home.  
I'll meet you at reception.  
  
There's a man at the door.  
I saw her standing at the bus stop.  
Turn right at the traffic lights.  
The index is at the back of the book.  
Write your name at the top of each page.

##### **-With public places and shops:**

Jane's at the dentist/hairdresser.  
I studied German at college/school/university.  
Shall I meet you at the station?  
We bought some bread at the supermarket.

##### **-With addresses:**

They live at 70, Buncombe Place.  
With an object located in space:  
The paper is lying at my feet.  
She was waiting at my desk.

##### **-With events:**

I met her at last year's conference.  
She wasn't at Simon's party.

##### **-With intersection:**

Meet at the corner.

##### **-With target:**

Look at John.

##### **-With area:**

Meet me at the theatre.

Meet me at the cinema.

**AT** is used with the following words: class, \*the library, the office, \*school, work

**4.2 The preposition 'on' as a locator in place is used in the following descriptions of place/position: -With surfaces, or things that can be thought of as surfaces:**

The letter is on my desk.

There was a beautiful painting on the wall.

The toy department is on the first floor.

Write the number down on a piece of paper.

You've got a dirty mark on your jumper.

He had a large spot on his nose.

She placed her hand on my shoulder.

**-With roads/streets, or other things that can be thought of as a line, e.g.: rivers (meaning along):**

Debbie lives on Croft Lane.

The bank is on the corner of King's Street.

Goblins is on the Rhine.

Bournemouth is on the south coast.<sup>2</sup>

It's the second turning on the left.

**-With transportation:**

We travelled to Toronto on the train.

**-More specifically it is used with public or commercial means of transportation:**

A bus, a train, a plane, a ship, a bicycle, a motorbike, a horse, an elephant, the radio and television.

**-It is used to show direction:**

on the left, on the right, on the way.

**-With the following words:**

\*the bed, the door, menu, cover, carpet, the ceiling, the floor

**--He declared bankruptcy last week, and now he's out on the street .This is(out on the street) is an idiom meaning that he's poor or destitute. It must be learned as a unit.**

**4.3 The preposition *in* is used for different purposes. In the following section, some of the descriptions of place/position could help the reader too much (study them carefully):**

**-With geographical regions:**

Driving in France is very straightforward.

Orgiva is a very small village in the mountains.

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\*You may sometimes use different prepositions for these locations

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**-With cities, towns and larger areas:**

Do you like living in Nottingham?  
They were having a picnic in the park.  
She works somewhere in the toy department.

**-With buildings/rooms and places that can be thought of as surrounding a person or an object on all sides, i.e., 'in' expresses confinement:**

Your brother's in jail.  
I've got S12 in my pocket.  
Can you take a seat in the waiting room, please?  
I've left my bag in the office.  
There's a wedding in the church this afternoon.  
Lots of people were swimming in the lake

**-With transportation<sup>(3)</sup>: a car, a taxi, a helicopter, a boat, a lift,(elevator)**

I went to Vancouver in my car.

**-With containers:**

There's fresh milk in the fridge.  
I think I've got a tissue in my pocket.  
The money is in the top drawer of my desk.

**-With liquids and other substances, to show what they contain:**

Do you take milk in your coffee?  
I can taste garlic in this sauce.

There's a lot of fat in cheese and butter

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**-when the area has metaphorical instead of actual boundaries, such as when field means "academic discipline," in is used:**

She is a leading researcher **in** the bioengineering field.

**-It is used with the following words:**

\* the bed, the bedroom, the car, \*the class, the library, \*school, the newspaper, the sky, a row, Oxford Street.

A general pattern again emerges if we consider these different aspects of usage. We can think of **at** as one-dimensional, referring to a specific place or position in space. **On** is two dimensional, referring to the position of something in relation to a surface. **In** is by contrast three-dimensional, referring to the position of something in relation to the things that surround it. Thinking of the prepositions in these terms helps

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<sup>3</sup> Some speakers of English make a further distinction for public modes of transportation, using **in** when the carrier is stationary and **on** when it is in motion. My wife stayed **in/on** the bus while I got out at the rest stop. The passengers sat **in/on** the plane awaiting takeoff.

\*You may sometimes use different prepositions for these locations



us explain certain facts. For instance, **in** is generally used for larger places and **at** for smaller, more specific places, so we say:

We arrived in Inverness two hours ago.

But:

We arrived at the campsite two hours ago.

However, if we think of a city or larger places as a specific point in space, we can use **at**, e.g.:

The train stops at Birmingham and Bristol.

Or if we think of a smaller place as three dimensional, we can use **in**, e.g.:

We've lived in this little village for many years.

We sat in the grass.(volume: i.e.the grass is long.)

But we say : We sat on the grass.(when we mean a surface :i.e.the grass is short.)

### **5.Item analysis:**

Below is a detailed discussion of the subjects' performance on the items of the test .The subjects' responses are analyzed in terms of the proper uses of locative prepositions discussed in (section 4).The frequencies of using each preposition are rendered into percentages. And the reasons justify each of both types of responses are mentioned.

#### **Item 1.**

##### **I went to Vancouver -----my car.**

According to the analysis of the subjects' performance ,the proportion of the correct answers on this item amounts to 56%,i.e, the subjects choose the suitable option '*in*' completing the sentence. This good proportion can be attributed to two reasons; the students realize the proper use of the preposition '*in*' for means of transportation especially those having limited confines and that they are affected by their (colloquial) mother tongue where an Arabic equivalent sentence like this requires such a preposition .It is right to say that correspondence between the two languages simplifies the task of learning. However, another option is available in the subjects' native language where the statement requires the preposition '*by*'. Thus 31% of the responses used the wrong preposition '*by*' affected by their native language.

Ignorance of the proper use of the prepositions '*on*', '*at*' and '*of*' has led 13% of the students to the wrong direction:6 % go for '*on*', 4% go for '*at*' and 3% for '*of*'(See Table (1)).

#### **Item 2.**

##### **We travelled to Toronto-----the train.**

69% of the total number of the subjects are in agreement on the use of the preposition '*in*' as being suitable for this item. This high proportion of errors reflects a high degree of ignorance of the proper use of the preposition '*on*' on the part of the subjects. They are not aware of the various and exact uses of this preposition; they go for the exact equivalent of the Arabic translation of the target item. This forms an evidence of subjects' reliance on translation and mother tongue resources. So is the use of the preposition '*by*' by 20% of the students.7% of the subjects employ the preposition '*through*'.

Only 4% of the subjects choose the appropriate preposition 'on'. In fact the reason behind these correct answers can be attributed to their awareness of the correct use of the preposition 'on' in this item. On the contrary, the rare employment of the appropriate preposition 'on' could be attributed to learning language rules of use mainly through non-English native teachers and through textbooks which do not include sufficient explanation and exercises on such topic. In other words, these learners do not have appropriately enough contact with the target language.

### **Item 3.**

#### **I spoke to him -----the telephone.**

The frequency of the use of the right preposition, i.e. 'on' is chosen by 25% of the students showing a relative awareness of the various slight differences among a number of elements denoting the same general sense. In fact, this has been proved as one of the prominent features of the subjects' performance. Though, they revealed some degree of awareness of the major locative senses denoted by prepositions.

This claim is supported by the following sample of responses: 30% of the subjects choose 'by' and 39% choose 'in' due to the interference from Arabic through literal translation.

Ignorance of the proper use of the prepositions 'at' and 'from' has led 2% of the students to choose the former and the same proportion to choose the latter. The students do not realize that 'at' has locative senses other than its common temporal ones. 2% of the subjects employ no preposition.

### **Item 4.**

#### **I live -----the 7<sup>th</sup> floor-----21 oxford streets-----London.**

In the first part of the target item, the proportion of the wrong responses amounts to 80%, 70% of them choose 'in' and 5% choose 'at' and another 5% leave it without preposition. This high proportion of wrong responses is due to the same mentioned reasons: 'mother tongue interference' which forms the main strategy followed by the students in interpreting the foreign language, and the inherent difficulty of the subsystem of locative preposition. The correct preposition 'on' as being appropriate for the first part is used by 20% of the students. It is a good proportion in comparison with the responses of the other items of the same test. It refers to their familiarity with the proper use of the preposition 'on' in this particular sense.

Concerning the second part of the same target item, only 25% of the subjects' responses are correct. They choose the suitable preposition 'at' to complete the sentence. On the contrary 75% of the responses are wrong; 48% choose the preposition 'in', 23% choose 'on' and 4% choose the preposition 'at' for the same two reasons mentioned previously in (Item 4. Part 1). In addition to being ignorant of the proper uses of each of these prepositions (at, on, in, by), they are unrealizing that a preposition may have more than one sense.

The subjects' highly successful performance on the third part of this particular item supports the hypothesis concerning the students' sensitivity to only one sense of the senses conveyed by these prepositions. The rate of the right responses is about 92%. The learners' tendency to use the preposition 'in' in this regard could be attributed to their familiarity with the proper use of this preposition. They are exposed to it in

their pre-university study and enough attention is paid to it in their university study. The remaining 8% of the responses are distributed between 5% for 'at' and 3% for 'on'. These unsuccessful performances serve as evidence of the subjects' unawareness of the different senses of English locative prepositions.

**Item5.**

**Jane is waiting for you -----the bus stop.**

Once again the hypothesis of 'relative awareness' on the part of the Iraqi learners of English as a foreign language is validated. 7% of the subjects succeeds in choosing the appropriate preposition 'at' to fill in the blank. This means that 93% of the responses are wrong. This high proportion of errors is due to the fact that English has elements to express place or location other than 'in' whose proportion amounts to 86% among the students' responses. Moreover the fact that the preposition 'at' has locative senses other than the temporal one. The ignorance of this fact has taken the subjects away from the target option. This can be taken as evidence of inherent difficulty of the English locative prepositional system. The frequency of using no preposition is 1%. 2% of the subjects tend to use 'by' and 4% tend to employ the preposition 'out'.

**Item 6.**

**The food is ----the table.**

It is observed through the analysis that the subjects' familiarity with only one of the senses that the preposition 'on' conveys: (supported by a surface or touching something) has led most of them towards the right option. The frequency of their use of this preposition is 91%. Contrarily, several students show preference to use the preposition 'at'. The frequency of the use of this preposition is 5%. 2% is the frequency of the use of the preposition 'at'. The preposition 'in' has been chosen by 1%, and 'from' by 1% also.

**Item 7.**

**Your name is written -----the top of the page.**

The intensive proportion of errors that amounts to 85% provides us with the evidence for the same hypotheses of 'relative awareness', 'mother tongue interference' and 'inherent difficulty'. 72% of the total number of the wrong responses go for 'on', 7% go for 'in' and 2% go for 'by', 1% go for 'for', another 1% choose 'from'. 2% of the students use no preposition. The frequency of the correct choice is only 15% (See table (1)).

**Item8.**

**The frost made patterns -----the window.**

Once again, the subjects' familiarity with only one sense of the various senses denoted by the preposition has led them to answer this item correctly with the proportion of 49%. It is a good rate in comparison with the other items' responses. The errors committed by the subjects are attributed to the semantic overlap within the English prepositional system. Take for example the choice of the preposition 'through' by 18% and 'in' by 25% of the subjects. Ignorance is the reason behind the choice of the preposition 'at' by 3% and 'of' by 5%.

**Item9.****A face appeared -----the widow.**

The window in this example is understood as an area enclosed by four wooden or iron sides. Consequently, the appropriate preposition to be used is 'in'. The subjects are not aware of this use of this preposition. They are familiar with the use of 'in' for names of land areas and for means of transportation affected at the same time by their mother tongue. The main reason behind the learners' relative awareness is that their teachers do not involve them in interactional activities which necessitate varying the choice of the sense of the preposition.

The students do not distinguish the noun as an enclosed area or surface (the hypothesis of familiarity). They depend on their mother tongue translation that 'on' means (على) and 'in' means (في). Thus, they find that the choice of through, from and 'on' seem to be appropriate. The frequency of using 'through' amounts to 35%, the frequency of choosing 'from' is 29% and 'on' is 20%. The frequency of the use of the following prepositions is: 'of' is 3% and 'at' is 5%. By contrast, the preposition 'in' has been chosen by only 10%.

**Item 10.****Two boxers are----- the ring.**

In the light of the analysis held in this paper, it is proved again and again that the subjects tend to be familiar with only one sense for each preposition. The inherent difficulty is a major reason behind the increased rate of wrong responses. They are familiar with the general meaning of the preposition 'on' that means supported by a surface, but they ignore the denotation of the surface as an open area and not enclosed. The ring is enclosed by ropes. Another reason is that Iraqi teachers do not give enough attention to their students, appropriate use of the language in the classroom, which if happens, will increase the learners' awareness of this aspect of language learning. That's why the proportion of using 'on' amounts to 70% whereas the frequency of the use of the proper option 'in' is only 21%.

The choice of the prepositions 'at' with frequency of 4% and 'for' with 20% frequency is due to the subjects' entire ignorance of the use of these prepositions and even their meanings. 3% of the subjects' responses is the employment of no preposition.

**Item 11.****Grandma went -----upstairs.**

In the data collected for this research, only 7% of the learners use the correct choice, i.e. employ no preposition (x). But they frequently use the preposition 'to' with frequency amounting to 45% and less frequently the preposition 'in' with frequency about 21%. 19% of the students exhibit interest to use the preposition 'at'. 3% go for 'out', another 3% goes for 'on' and 2% go for 'from'.

**Table(1)**

Item No.	Correct Prep.	% of Correct Responses	Distribution of Errors		
			%of Erroneous Responses	Preps	Errors in%
1	IN	56	44	at by of on	4 31 3 6
2	ON	4	96	by in through	20 69 7
3	ON	25	75	at by from in x	2 30 2 39 2
4	ON	20	80	at in x	5 70 5
	AT	25	75	at in on	4 48 23
	IN	92	8	at on	5 3
5	AT	7	93	by in out x	2 86 4 1
6	ON	91	7	at by in of	5 1 1 2
7	AT	15	85	by for from	2 1 1

				in	7
				on	72
<b>8</b>	ON	49	51	at	3
				in	25
				of	5
				through	18
<b>9</b>	IN	10	90	at	5
				from	29
				of	3
				on	20
				through	35
<b>10</b>	IN	21	79	at	4
				for	2
				in	70
				x	3
<b>11</b>	X	7	93	at	19
				from	2
				in	21
				on	3
				out	3
				to	45

## 6. Conclusions and Pedagogical Implementations:

In the light of the discussion held above for the subjects' performance on the items of the test, the following conclusive remarks are stated along with some pedagogical implementations drawn on these remarks

I. English prepositions of location are inherently difficult. Consequently ,English prepositions in general are not easy to learn.

II. Iraqi learners of English- at advanced levels are not aware of the relative difference in the senses denoted by various prepositions of location. They tend to have three types of errors:

- i. Choosing the wrong preposition because prepositions of similar denotation are often confused
- ii. Omitting a needed preposition.
- iii. Using a preposition where it is not needed.

Such errors occur often in the learners' responses, because they tend to depend on (literal) translation and rely on mother tongue resources as common strategies.

Based on the statements above, the following pedagogical implications and recommendations may be presented:

1. Concerning the teacher, he has to train the learners' intensive training in this particular area by means of communicative tasks and real –life situations.
2. The teacher has to supplement the present exercises with Arabic counterparts, since the native language of the learners proved to be a vital factor in learning prepositions of English .This will allow the learner to recognize the discrepancy between the two languages in this area, a factor which will contribute much to the removal of interference errors.
3. There must be independent exercises of the prepositional uses within the teaching syllabuses to provide the learners with the chance of productive practice.
4. On the hand of the learner, s/he has to refer to a dictionary for precise meaning and usage, because many of these prepositions have more than one meaning.
6. The best way to become comfortable with prepositions is to practice, practice, and practice.
7. Work through a newspaper or magazine, article, noting the uses of prepositions and idiomatic phrases associating them with the principles of their uses.
8. The student has to review his /her class papers, noting and correcting any prepositional errors. To correct his/her writing for prepositions,
  - I. the learner has to underline in his/her paper the prepositions which he/she is unsure about;
  - ii. ask the teacher or consult the dictionary or listen to a native speaker;
  - iii. keep a list to memorize the accurate meanings of the prepositions and their uses iv. memorization is the best key.Still it often takes many years to perfect.

#### **Notes:**

(1) <http://www.fineorint.com.pp.111>

(2) <http://www.dailygrammar.com/176to180.shtml.pp.2>

(3) <http://owl.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/eslprep2.html.pp.7>

(4) <http://webster.commnet.edu/grammar/prepositions.htm.pp.5>

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