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**A Comparative and Contrastive Study of Preposition
in Arabic and English**

Yahya Mohammed Ali Al-Marrani, Ph.D. Candidate

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Abstract

This paper attempts a comparative and contrastive analysis of the subsystems of the prepositions in Arabic and English, in terms of their uses, function and meanings in order to find the major similarities and differences between Arabic and English and to account for any possible deviations that may characterize the performance of Arabic learners.

The result showed that there are similarities and differences between these two subsystems of the prepositions in Arabic and English. The similarities between them facilitate the development process of learning a foreign language (positive transfer), whereas differences make learning process of a foreign language difficult and Arabic learners make many mistakes (negative transfer or interference).

This study has pedagogical implications for teaching prepositions in English and to help teachers and motivate them to describe and analyse the learners' errors and also to prepare remedial exercises to eliminate the errors their students make in the use of prepositions.

Key words: prepositions, comparative, contrastive, similarities, differences

1. Introduction

Contrastive linguistic analysis (CA) is the comparison and contrast of the linguistic systems of two or more individual languages in order to bring out points of contrast as well as points of similarity between them.

Contrastive analysis is not intended to offer a new method of teaching, but it is a form of language-description across two languages which are particularly applicable to curriculum development, the preparation and evaluation of teaching materials, the diagnosis of learning problems and testing. Johansson and Hofland (1994:25) state that "language comparison is of great interest in a theoretical as well as an applied perspective. It reveals what is general and what is language specific and is therefore important both for the understanding of language in general and for the study of the individual languages compared".

Schuster (1997) indicates that English learners of German or German learners of English are destined to have a positive transfer because the two languages do have many similarities. On the other hand, the theory stipulates that learning will be quite difficult, or even unsuccessful, when the two languages are different.

Contrastive linguistics is not a unified field of study. The focus may be on general or on language specific features. The study may be theoretical, without any immediate application, or it may be applied, carried out for specific purposes.

Contrastive linguistics is a predictive technique. This means that by looking at the structure of two or more linguistic systems, we can predict the difficulties the learner is likely to encounter. It doesn't mean that for all mistakes a learner makes in the second language, the first language habits alone are responsible. Contrastive analysis is useful in discovering language universals, studying problems in translation and studying language types.

2. History of Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive analysis is not a new idea. The beginning of contrastive linguistics was marked by the publication of Robert Lado's *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957).

In the first chapter of this book Lado discusses four important points of the fundamental assumptions that led to the necessity for a comparison between two languages to explore both the dissimilarities and similarities of the two linguistic systems compared, the significance of contrastive analysis for testing and the significance of contrastive analysis for research.

3. Comparative and Contrastive Linguistics

A comparative and contrastive linguistic analysis differs considerably from a contrastive linguistic analysis. A comparative study is a diachronic comparison of two or more linguistic systems with a view to classifying languages into families. It is concerned with the history and evolution of languages. A comparative study is interested in establishing the similarities or correspondences between languages.

A contrastive linguistic study is a synchronic comparison. It studies languages belonging to the same period, without paying much attention to their histories or language families. It is more concerned with dissimilarities than similarities.

4. Lado's Approach to Contrastive Linguistics

Lado (1957) was concerned with the concept of difficulty in language learning. Starting out from the commonsense observation that the learner will find some features of a new language difficult and others easy, he argued that the key to degrees of difficulty lies in the comparison between the native and the foreign language he is learning. Since an individual tends to transfer the features of his native language to the foreign language he is learning, a comparative study will be useful in identifying the likeness and differences between the languages and thus enable the linguist to predict areas of difficulty for the second language learner. He suggests that contrastive analysis is very useful for a teacher who teaches a foreign language because it helps him in identifying the problems that a foreign language learner may experience in the learning process.

Lado (1957:2) states that “The teacher who has made a comparison of the foreign language with the native language of the students will know better what the real problems are and provide for teaching them”

The most important new thing in the preparation of teaching materials is the comparison of the native language and the foreign language and culture in order to find the hurdles that really have to be surmounted in the teaching.

The first point taken by Lado in his book *Linguistics Across Cultures* was the statement given by Fries that has a connection with preparing materials. Fries (1945:9) points out that “the most effective materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner”.

According to Lado’s approach, contrastive analysis is very important in curriculum development, the preparation and evaluation of teaching materials, to the diagnosis of learning problems and to testing.

Lado’s study was programmatic. It outlined procedures of how to make such comparison in phonology, grammar, vocabulary and the cultural aspects of language.

5. Criticism Levelled Against Contrastive Analysis

There were different types of criticism that were levelled against the hypothesis of contrastive analysis. There were empirical criticism, practical criticism and theoretical criticism.

Different studies on second language learning proved that the first language habits are not alone responsible for all the mistakes a learner makes in second language.

One of these studies was an empirical study under taken by Randal Whitman and Kenneth Jackson (1972) (cited in Littlewood, 1984). It used four different contrastive analyses of English and Japanese, in order to predict the errors that would be made by Japanese learners of English. They compared these predictions with the errors actually made by the learners in a series of tests. Their conclusion was that contrastive analysis was of little use in predicting the items which proved difficult in their tests.

Practical experience suggests that many errors made by learners would not have been predicted by contrastive analysis. Heidi Dulay and Merina Burt (1973) identified in their study two kinds of errors, namely, *interference errors* and *developmental errors*.

The behaviourist approach claims that we can predict difficulties and errors by contrastive analysis. But Chomsky (1957) criticized the behaviourist approach and described its inadequacy. So this criticism by Chomsky is a theoretical criticism against contrastive analysis.

6. The Utility of Contrastive Analysis in the Arabic Situation

In spite of the fact that contrastive analysis has been criticized by scholars the world over, we can't overlook the merits of contrastive analysis in a foreign language learning /teaching situation.

To cite the Arabic situation, it is a well – known fact that [p] cannot begin an Arabic word. A vast majority of Arabic learners of English pronounce English word beginning with [p] by substituting [b] for [p]. The voiceless palato–alveolar affricate [tʃ] doesn't occur at all in Arabic and again many native speakers of Arabic replace [tʃ] by [ʃ] in their English speech.

In an Arabic dissyllabic word, the heavier of the two syllables invariably receives the accent and a very large number of native speakers of Arabic pronounce the word *orange* with the accent on the second syllable. It is not uncommon to hear an Arab learner of English say “The girl beautiful”. This again is an instance of the features of Arabic being superimposed in English.

To cite another example, we often hear our Arab students; say a sentence like “my father engineer”, without the auxiliary *to be* and without the indefinite article *an*. This undoubtedly is an example of the influence of Arabic because there are neither the auxiliary verbs *to be* in the Arabic linguistic system nor is there any indefinite article. Indefiniteness in Arabic is expressed by what is called “tanween” which is not discussed here since it is beyond the scope of this study.

A comparative and contrastive analysis of English and Arabic will certainly reveal to the analyst all these points of dissimilarities between the two languages.

Therefore, we can't set aside contrastive analysis as totally valueless. What we can say, as a matter of caution perhaps, is that a contrastive analyst shouldn't make the mistake of declaring that the divergences between two languages alone contribute to errors in the L₂.

Some researchers state that there are still many applied linguists who firmly believe in the predictive power of CA. In fact, one cannot deny that CA may have some potential in certain fields. For example, a contrastive analysis study, conducted by Abbas (1995), revealed that in the case of adverbial positions, learners of both English and Arabic have access to more than one place to accommodate the adverbial concerned in the sentence.

7. The Scope of the Study

The scope of the present study is restricted to a simple theoretical description of two subsystems in English and Arabic and the present study will give some pedagogical implications which will hopefully help the teachers in teaching English language in Arab world as a foreign language and to overcome the interference of Arabic in the learning process.

The researcher will concentrate on the use and the function of preposition in English and Arabic and will take the kind of Arabic that is usually referred to as *standard Arabic* and not one of the many dialectal variations of the language.

Standard Arabic is that variety of Arabic, which is usually used in print, and which is normally taught in schools and to non-native speakers learning Arabic. It is the language that is used in news broadcasts, and in official documents. It is the language of the press law courts and government. It is the language that is codified in Arabic language dictionaries and grammar books.

8. Method

In the following part the researcher will explain the research method, materials and procedures.

8.1 Materials

The researcher to compare and contrast prepositions in English and Arabic and to collect data for study, the researcher selected some Arabic grammar books to collect data about Arabic prepositions. These books were written by Arabic scholars (Al-Hanadwah, 1999; Al-Hashmi,1345; Al-Moa'man, 1985; Al-Rajihi,1988; Hassan Abbas, 1973; Makalalah, 1993) and some English grammar books to collect data about English prepositions. These books were written by (Beaumont and Granger, 1989; Chalker, 1989; Murphy, 1991; Quirk, Green and Leech, 1985; Swan, 1984)

8.2 Procedure

This study was directed toward studying the subsystem of prepositions in Arabic and English in terms of uses, function and meanings in order to identify the major similarities and differences between English and Arabic. At the start, the investigation began with the description and analysis the function of prepositions in English and Arabic, and the use and meanings of prepositions in both languages.

8.3 Analysis of Prepositions in English and Arabic: A Comparison and Contrast

8.3.1 Functions of prepositions in English and Arabic

Prepositions in English are used to connect a noun and another noun grammatically or noun to noun phrase to show the relation between the two nouns.

For example:

- 1) There is a horse *in* the farm.
- 2) The book is *on* the table.

In the examples (1) and (2) the prepositions *in* and *on* show the relation between noun and noun phrase *horse* and *the farm*, and the *book* and the *table*, the prepositions *on* and *in* join a noun to another noun or noun to noun phrase.

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Similarly, in Arabic the preposition is used to connect a noun to another noun grammatically to show the relation between them.

3) / ʕa:dil fi: ʔal madrasah/ .

* Adel in the school.

Adel is in the school.

4) / ʔat tɪflɔ fi: ʔal ʔadi:qah/

* The child in the garden.

The child is in the garden.

In examples (3) and (4) the preposition /fi:/ is used to connect two nouns / ʕa:dil / and /ʔal madrasah / and / ʔat tɪflɔ / and / ʔal ʔadi:qah/

The preposition /fi:/ joins a noun to another noun.

Note: The prepositions in English are more in number whereas, the prepositions in Arabic are few. Also in English there are complex prepositions which may be subdivided into two and three word sequences such as *next to, in front of, by the side of, in place of* etc. But in Arabic there are no complex prepositions which may be subdivided into two and three word sequences. All prepositions in Arabic are simple prepositions.

8.3.2 Prepositions in English also are used to connect the verb and the noun grammatically to show the relation between them.

For example:

5) The cat jumped *off* the table.

6) He writes *with* a pen.

In example (5) the preposition *off* shows the relation between the actions expressed by the verb *jumped* and the *table*, the preposition *off* joins a noun to verb. Also the preposition *with* joins the noun *pen* to the verb *writes*.

8.3.3 Similarly in Arabic, the preposition is used to connect a verb and a noun. The preposition helps a transitive verb to pass over to its object.

7) / ʔahabtɔ bɪ: ʔa:lid /

* went I with Khalid .

I went with Khalid.

8) /marrartɔ bɪ ʔahmad/

Passed I by Ahmed.

I passed by Ahmed.

In examples (7) and (8) the preposition /bI / shows the relation between the verb and the noun. The preposition /bI/ joins a noun to a verb.

8.3.4 The prepositions in English are used to connect a noun and an adjective grammatically to show the relation between them.

For example:

- 9) She is fond *of* coffee.
- 10) I am tired *of* waiting.
- 11) Your writing is similar *to* my writing.

In examples (9), (10) and (11) the prepositions *of* and *to* show the relation between the adjectives *fond*, *tired* and *similar*, and the nouns *coffee*, *writing* and noun phrase (*my writing*). The prepositions (*of* and *to*) join a noun to an adjective.

But in Arabic, the preposition does not connect a noun and an adjective.

9. Prepositions and objects of preposition in English and Arabic

9.1 In English the preposition and object of preposition occur as complements of a verb.

For example:

- 12) We depend *on* you.
- 13) We were looking *at* his awful paintings.

In examples (12) and (13) the preposition and object of preposition act as complements of a verb.

9.2 Similarly in Arabic, the preposition and object of preposition occur as a complement of a verb.

- 14) /ðahaba ʕalı ʔila ʔal madrasah /
* Went Ali to the school.
Ali went to the school.

- 15) /maʕa: ʔahmad ʔila ʔal ħadi:qah/
* Walked Ahmed to the garden.
Ahmed walked to the garden.

In examples (14) and (15), the prepositions and object of prepositions act as complement of a verb.

9.3 In English the preposition and object of preposition occur as complement of an adjective.

For example:

- 16) I am sorry *for* his result.

17) The letter I wrote was *full of mistakes*.

In examples (16) and (17), prepositions and object of prepositions act as complement of an adjective.

But in Arabic the prepositions and object of prepositions do not occur as complement of an adjective but they occur as an adjective for the object of the sentence.

18) /raʔartʊ radʒʊlan ʕala saɪjaratɪh/
*Saw I a man on car his.
I saw a man on his car.

In example (18) the preposition and object of preposition act as an adjective for the object of the sentence.

9.4 In English the preposition and object of preposition occur as adverbials.

For example:

19) In the afternoon, we went to Sana'a.
20) I like sitting by the window.

In examples (19) and (20) the preposition and object of preposition act as an adverb.

9.5 Similarly in Arabic, the preposition and object of preposition occur as an adverb.

21) /raʔartʊ ʔan nadʒm fi: ʔas sama:ʔ /
* saw I the star in the sky.
I saw the star in the sky.

In example (21) the preposition and object of preposition act as an adverb.

9.6 In Arabic the preposition and object of preposition occur as predicate for the subject.

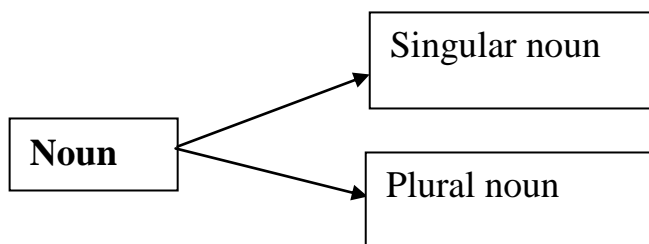
22) /ʕa:lɪd fi: ʔas su:q /
* Khalid in the market.
Khalid is in the market.

9.7 In example (22) the preposition and object of preposition act as predicate for the subject.

10. Position of preposition in English and Arabic

10.1 In English the prepositions occur in the middle of the sentence before a singular noun or a plural noun.

S + V + prep +

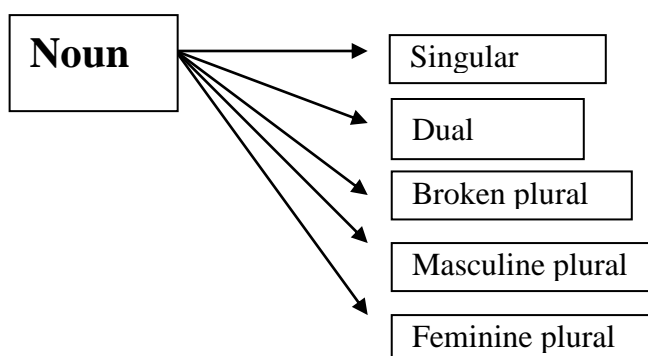


- 23) They sit *on* the chairs.
- 24) They write *with* pens.
- 25) The books are *under* the table.
- 26) Adel travelled *to* London.

In examples (23) and (24) the prepositions *on* and *with* occur before plural nouns. In examples (25) and (26), the prepositions (*under* and *to*) occur before singular nouns.

10.2 Similarly, in Arabic the preposition occurs in the middle of the sentence before overt nouns.

V + S + Prep. +



- 27) /zʊrtʊ ʔalmʊdarrɪs fi: ʔal madrasah
- * Visited I the teacher in the school.
- I visited the teacher in the school

In example (27) the preposition /fi: / occurs in the middle of the sentence before singular noun.

- 28) / ʔahaba ʔahmad ʔila ʔal mudarrɪsatam/
- * Went Ahmed to the two teachers.
- Ahmed went to the two teachers.

In example (28) the preposition /ʔila / occurs before dual.

- 29) / ʔahaba ʔa t tʊlla:bʊ ʔila ʔal mada:rɪs/
- * Went the students to the schools.
- The students went to the schools.

In example (29) the preposition /ʔila/ occurs before a broken plural.

30) / dʒalastʊ ʔila ʔal mʊdarrisi:n/

* Sat I with the teachers. (Masculine)

I sat with the teachers.

In example (30) the preposition /ʔila/ occurs before a masculine plural.

31) /naðartʊ ʔila ʔal mʊdarrisa:t/

* looked I at the teachers. (Feminine)

I looked at the teachers.

In example (31) the preposition /ʔila/ occurs before a feminine plural.

10.3 In English the preposition occurs in the middle of the sentence before a pronoun.

S+ V + Prep. + Pronoun.

32) She looks *at* me.

33) The bag is *under* it.

34) They will listen *to* you.

In examples (32), (33) and (34) the preposition *at*, *under* and *to* occur before pronouns.

10.4 Similarly, in Arabic the preposition occurs in the middle of the sentence before a pronoun.

V + S + prep + pronoun

35) /marra ʕa:dil bɪha: /

* Passed Adel by her.

Adel passed by her.

36) / ðahaba ʕa:lɪd ʔilaihɪm/

* Went Khalid to them.

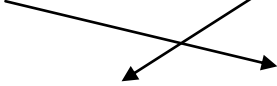
Khalid went to them.

In examples (35) and (36) the preposition /bɪ / and /ʔila / occur before pronouns.

10.5 In Arabic we can put the preposition at the beginning of the sentence before a noun by changing the word order in the sentence.

S + prep + noun = prep + noun + S

37) / ʕali fi: ʔal madrasah/



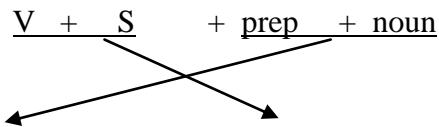
/ fi: ʔal madrasah ʕali /

* In the school Ali.

Ali is in the school.

In example (37) the preposition /fi: / occurs at the beginning of the sentence.

38) / ʔila ʔal madrasah ḍahaba mḥammad /



/ ʔila ʔal madrasah ḍahaba mḥammad /

Prep + noun V + S

* To the school went Mohammed.

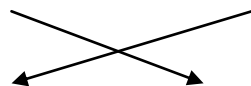
Mohammed went to the school.

In examples (38) the preposition /ʔila / occurs before noun at the beginning of the sentence.

But in English we cannot put the preposition at the beginning of the sentence before a noun by changing the word order of a sentence.

39) Ahmed went to school.

S + V + Prep. + Noun



Prep. + Noun + S + V

* To School Ahmed went

10.6 In English prepositions occur before – *ing* verb form (Gerund):

Prep. + *ing* verb form

40) He travelled *to* Taiz *without* saying anything.

41) She is not used *to* eating so much.

But in Arabic prepositions do not occur before a verb.

10.7 In English the preposition occur at the end of the sentence in the following cases:

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(a) If its object is the relative pronoun (that- whom- which-who)

- 42) I have the book that you asked *for*.
- 43) Here is the pen that I was talking *about*.
- 44) that is the boy who I was speaking *of*.
- 45) that is the house which I live *in*.

(b) If its object is an interrogative:

- 46) Where are you *from*?
- 47) What are you looking *for*?

(c) For the sake of emphasis :

- 48) This I insist *on*.
- 49) He is known the entire world *over*.

(d) In Exclamations:

- 50) What a mess he's got *into*!

(e) With an infinitive purpose:

- 51) Here is a chair to sit *on*.
- 52) You are nice to be *with*.

But in Arabic prepositions do not occur at the end of the sentence

11. Meanings and uses of prepositions in English and Arabic:

11.1 Prepositions of Place:

In English there are some prepositions which denote a place such as *in, at, to, into*.

- 53) My brother lives *in* Yemen.
- 54) I met Ahmed *at* the airport.
- 55) We are going *to* London next week.
- 56) The man ran *into* the shop.

Similarly in Arabic, there are some prepositions which denote places such as /min/ /fi:/ /ʔila/.

- 57) /radʒaʕtʊ min ʔal dʒa:mɪʕah/ .
* Came back I from the university .
I came back from the university.

- 58) /ʔal mʊʕalɪmʊ fi: ʔal madrasah/
* The teacher in the school.
The teacher is in the school.

- 59) / ʔahabtʊ ʔila taʕɪz / .
* Went I to Taiz.

I went to Taiz.

11.2 The Prepositions of position:

In English there are some prepositions which denote position such as *on, at, in*

- 60) I will meet you *at* the station.
- 61) There are some books *on* the table.
- 62) Ahmed was *in* the water.

Similarly, in Arabic, there is one preposition which denotes position / *ʕala* / .

- 63) /wadaʕtʊ ʔal kɪta:b ʕala ʔa t ta:wɪlah/
* Put I the book on the table.
I put the book on the table.

11.3 Prepositions of time:

In English there are some prepositions which denote time such as *at, in, on, by, for, during, before, after, since, until, till*.

- 64) Ahmed went to Sana'a *at* eight o'clock.
- 65) They got married *on* 13 April.
- 66) I'll see you *in* the morning.
- 67) I'll be home *by* five o'clock. (=at or before five)
- 68) I have lived in this house *for* six years.
- 69) My mother was in hospital *during* the summer.
- 70) The train will arrive *before* 8p.m.
- 71) We ate in a restaurant *after* the film.
- 72) He has been ill *since* Monday.

- 73) I waited for him

{	<i>Until</i>	}
---	--------------	---

till five o'clock.

Similarly in Arabic, there are some prepositions which denote time such as /*min*/, /*fi*/, / *ʔila*/, / *hatta*/ .

- 74) / ʕaradʒtʊ min ʔal fadʒr /
* Went out I from the down.
* I went out from the down.
- 75) /radʒaʕatʊ fi: ʔas sa:ʕah ʔal ra:brʕah/
* Come back I at o'clock four.
I came back at four o'clock.
- 76) / ʕa:kartʊ ʔila ʔal fadʒr /
* Studied till the down.
I studied till the down.

77) / ða:kartʊ hatta ʔa saba:h /
 * Studied I until the morning.
 I studied until the morning.

11.4 /mʊð / and /mʊnðʊ/ in Arabic and *since* in English.

The preposition /mʊð / and /mʊnðʊ / are used in Arabic to denote time. Similarly in English the preposition *since* is used to denote time.

But the difference between / mʊð / , / mʊnðʊ / and *since* is that/mʊð / and / mʊnðʊ/ are used in present and past time, while *since* is used in present perfect and present perfect continuous .

78) / ma:raʔaitʊka { $\begin{matrix} \underline{mʊð} \\ \underline{mʊnðʊ} \\ \text{since} \end{matrix}$ } jaum ʔal dʒʊmʕah/ . (Past time)
 * didn't see you since Friday.
 I haven't seen you since Friday.

79) /ma:raʔaitʊka { $\begin{matrix} \underline{mʊð} \\ \underline{mʊnðʊ} \\ \text{since} \end{matrix}$ } jaʊmina ha:ða: / . (Present time)
 * don't see you since this day.
 I haven't seen you since this day.

In example (78) / mʊð / and / mʊnðʊ / denote past time in Arabic and in example

(79) they denote present time in Arabic.

80) He has been ill *since* Monday (present perfect)

81) I have been waiting *since* 1 o'clock. (Present perfect continuous)

In example (80) *since* refers to time in the present perfect and in example (81) it refers to time in the present perfect continuous.

11.5 Prepositions which express resemblance:

In English the preposition *like* expresses resemblance.

82) She is just *like* her mother.

83) He plays football *like* his brother.

Similarly in Arabic, the preposition /ʔalka:f/ expresses resemblance .

84) / ʕali ka lʔasad/

* Ali like lion.

Ali is like a lion.

11.6 The prepositions which express possession:

In English there are some prepositions which denote possession such as *of*, *which*, *without*.

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- 85) He is a friend *of* mine.
 86) A man *with* a long black beard.
 87) A beard *without* a moustache is like a violin *without* a bow.

Similarly in Arabic the preposition /ʔalla:m/ denotes possession .

- 88) /ʔal manzil li ʔahmad /
 * The house for Ahmed.
 The house is for Ahmed.

11.7 Prepositions which denote causative:

In English there are some prepositions which denote causative such as *out of*, *to*, *because of*.

- 89) She acted *out of* spite.
 90) *To* my surprise, no body replied to the advertisement.
 91) She lost her job *because of* her age.

Similarly in Arabic, there are some prepositions which denote causative such as /min/ , /ʔan/ , /fi:/ , /ʔalba/ , /ʔalla:m/, /kai / .

- 92) /ma:ta min ʔal ʔaʔf / .
 * died he from fright.
 He died because of fright.

- 93) /dʒiʔatʔ ʔan maʔʔid / .
 * Came I to appointment.
 I came according to a former appointment.

- 94) /qʔtla ʔali fi: sarja:rah / .
 * Killed Ali for a car.
 Ali was killed because of a car.

- 95) /qʔtla biðanbıhi /
 * Killed he by his sin.
 He was killed because of his sin.

- 96) / ð ahabtʔ li ʔataʔallam /
 * went I to learn.
 I went to learn

- 97) / dʒiʔatʔ kai ʔazu:rak /
 * Came I to visit you.
 I came to visit you.

11.8 Prepositions which express an accompaniment.

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In English the prepositions *with* and *without* express accompaniment.

98) I would like a steak *with* a green salad.

99) You must go *without* me.

Similarly in Arabic, there are some prepositions which denote accompaniment such as /fi:/, /ʔila/, /ʔalba/.

100) /χaradʒa ʔal ʔami:r fi: maʕkibih/

* Went out the prince with his procession.

The prince went out with his procession.

101) /dʒalastʊ ʔila ʔabɪ /.

* Sat down I with father my.

I sat down with my father.

102) /bɪʕtʊka ʔad da:r bi ʔaθa:θɪha /

* Sold you the house with its furniture.

I sold the house to you with its furniture.

11.9 Prepositions which express exception:

In English the preposition *except* denotes exception.

103) everyone was present *except* her.

104) I work everyday *except* Friday.

Similarly in Arabic, there are some prepositions which denote exception such as /χala:/, /ʕada:/, /ha:fa:/

105) /hadara ʔat tʊllab { χala:
ʕada:
ha:fa: } ta:lɪbm/

* attended the students except one student.

The students attended except one student.

11.10 In Arabic there are some prepositions which denote substitute such as /min/, /ʕan/.

106) /ʔaʕdʒabatka ʔalhajah fi: ʔalmadi:nah min ʔalqarjah/

* admired life in the town from the village.

You admired life in the town more than in the village.

107) /ʔʊhðʊr ʕan ʔaxi:k/

* attend instead your brother.

You must attend instead of your brother.

11.11 In Arabic there are some prepositions which occur as nouns such as /ʕan/, /ʕala/, /mʊð / and / mʊnðʊ /.

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108) /dʒiʔatʊ mɪm ʃan Jami: niħ/
 * Came I from side right his.
 I came from his right side.

109) /qafaztʊ mɪm ʃala ʔal ħa:ʔit /
 * jumped I from above the wall.
 I jumped over the wall.

110) /ma: raʔaʃħa ^{mʊð} mʊndʊ ʃaʊm ʔas sabta/
 * didn't see her since Saturday.
 I haven't seen her since Saturday.

But in English the prepositions do not occur as nouns.

11.12 In Arabic, there are some prepositions occur as verbs such as /ħala: /, /ħada/ and / ħa:ʃa/.

111) / ħadara ʔal mʊdarisu:n ^{ħala:} ^{ħada:} ^{ħa:ʃa:} mʊdarisan / .

* attended the teacher except one teacher.
 The teachers attended except one teacher.

In English prepositions do not occur as verbs.

11.13 In English there are some prepositions which occur as conjunctions such as *before, after, since*.

- 112) They had gone home *before* they finished their work.
- 113) They went home *after* they had finished their work.
- 114) I have not visited him *since* he returned from Europe.

But in Arabic, there is no preposition that can occur as a conjunction.

12. Conclusion

When the learners start learning a second language, they already know a set of rules to understand and produce language. These rules are, of course, pertaining to the learner's mother tongue. When the learner tries to produce utterances in the second language he is learning, he will apply the rules he already knows. This is referred to as transfer. If the rules of his mother tongue are different from the rules of the second

language he is learning, he will make mistakes. This process is described as *negative transfer* or *interference*.

When there are similarities between the rules of mother tongue and second language, there is *positive transfer* which is called *facilitation*. Corder (1978) suggests that the first language of the learner may facilitate the development process of learning a second language by helping him to progress more rapidly along the universal route when the first language is similar to the second language.

So, a contrastive analysis between the first language and the second language attempts to predict the kind of errors that a student is likely to make while learning a second language or a foreign language. If the teacher of any foreign language knows about the various aspects of the learners' mother tongue and the language they are learning as a second language or a foreign language, it will be possible for him to predict the mistakes his learners are likely to commit and correct these mistakes by preparing remedial exercises.

The findings of analysis of the two subsystems of the prepositions in Arabic and English, in terms of their uses, function and meanings revealed that there are similarities and differences between the subsystems of prepositions in Arabic and English. The similarities help Arabic learners to learn a foreign language (English) very quickly and perfectly because the rules of both languages are the same, whereas differences stand as an obstacle in learning a foreign language (English) because the learners try to apply their mother tongue's rules when producing utterances in English. So, contrastive analysis helps to predict the kind of errors that a student is likely to make while learning a second language or a foreign language.

In conclusion, the result of this study showed that the differences and similarities between Arabic and English proved that each language has specific rules, so learners should be aware of these differences in order to avoid possible problems when producing utterances in a second or foreign language.

13. Pedagogical Implications of This Study

Contrastive analysis between the first language and second language is very helpful. It helps teachers to predict the difficulties the learner is likely to encounter. Also it explores both the dissimilarities and similarities between the first language and the second language.

From the differences that emerge from this analysis the teacher can predict the language items that will cause difficulty and the errors that the learner will be prone to make. Also, the teacher can use these predictions in deciding which items need to be given special treatment in the courses that he teaches or the materials that he writes. Also, the teacher can use intensive techniques such as repetition drills in order to overcome the interference and establish the necessary new habits.

This analysis may help teachers and motivate them to describe and analyse the learners' errors and also to prepare remedial exercises to eliminate the errors their students make in the use of prepositions.

For example, Yemeni learners learning English as a foreign language make many mistakes when they use the prepositions *in*, *at*, *on*.

- (1) * I will meet you *in* 9 o'clock. (At nine)
- (2) * I will meet him *in* the station. (At the station)
- (3) * I usually go out *in* Friday afternoon. (On Friday)

This is because Arabic does not distinguish between *in*, *on* and *at*. So it is acceptable in Arabic to use the preposition /fi: / as follows:

- (4) /fi: ʔas sa:ʕah ʔat ta:sɪʕah /
At nine o'clock.
- (5) /fi: ʔal maħattah /
At the station
- (6) /fi: jaʕm ʔal dʒʊmaʕah /
On Friday

The teacher may solve this problem by giving remedial drills to eliminate specific errors from their learners' English. The teacher should give enough drills based on the learner's errors to remedy these errors. These drills should include several types of exercises like exercises of completing the sentence by using prepositions and exercises of selecting the prepositions.

Remedial exercises such as the following can be used effectively in the classroom.

Exercise 1: Complete the sentences using the prepositions *at*, *in*, *on* :

- 1) Ali is his bedroom.
- 2) I will meet you the station.
- 3) Fatma lives Sana'a Street.
- 4) She always goes out Sunday afternoon.
- 5) They went for a walk The park.
- 6) We stayed the Queen hotel.
- 7) She keeps her money her bag.
- 8) They got married 12 March.

Exercise 2: Select the correct preposition to fill the blanks in the following sentences:

- 1) He left London (on, at, in).....9 o'clock (on, in, at)..... Tuesday
- 2) I live (on, at, in)Mukalla.
- 3) My father will arrive (on, at, in) July.

- 4) I will meet him (on, at, in) The airport.
- 5) Have you heard this news (on, at, in) The radio?
- 6) He spent his money (on, at, in) Books.
- 7) My sister gets up (on, at, in) Six o'clock The morning.
- 8) The holiday ends (on, at, in) August.

Another problem that may arise as a result of the interference of Arabic is that Arab learners may be confused in the use of the prepositions *between* and *among* when they write / speak English, , because Arabic does not distinguish between the prepositions *between* and *among*. So /bana/ (between) in Arabic is used in speaking of two or more than two.

Let us see the following examples.

- 7) The money was distributed between the students. (Among the Students)
- 8) The property was divided among the two brothers (between The two brothers)

In the above examples, the errors occur as result of the difference between the two languages. These two examples are unacceptable English because *between* in English is used in speaking of two and *among* is used in speaking two or more than two.

- 9) /ʔal ma:lʊ wʊzzɪʃa bana ʔattʊla:b / (more than two)
* The money was distributed between the students.

- 10) /ʔal ma:lʊ wʊzzɪʃa bana ʔal ʔaxawan/ (two only)
* The money was distributed between the two brothers.

The teacher may solve this problem by giving remedial exercises to eliminate errors from his or her learners of English.

Exercises like the following can be used effectively in the classroom.

Exercise 3: Put in the spaces below the correct preposition (*among* or *between*)

- 1) The house stands two farms.
- 2) She was standing a crowd of children.
- 3) His house is hidden the trees.
- 4) I saw something The wheels of the car.
- 5) Ahmed is standing Ali and Saleh.

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