

Cognitive Problems of Learners in English Preposition Usage

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Abstract

The present study has explored reasons for the faulty usage of English prepositions by Pakistani students of grade thirteen. Twenty-five participants were given forty-eight Urdu sentences to translate. Their errors were noted and analyzed. The analysis was supported by two strategies: interviews with the participants, and contrastive analysis of the test items. The findings suggest that the learners made mistakes because of three basic reasons: (1) Inter-lingual Correlations (2) Superimposition of Personal Time Scale and (3) Transfer. Inter-lingual Correlation is the literal translation of Urdu case markers/postpositions into English prepositions. Superimposition of Personal Time Scale means that the learners superimposed their personal time frame on the time frame of the text and remained confused about the use of since and for in the perfect progressive tenses. Transfer means that the learners translated the L1 sequences verbatim, in violation of the rules of L2 grammar. It is suggested that the teachers avoid teaching prepositions by translating them into L1; they should devise communicative situations instead. Use of exercises in collocation and oral drills may also be helpful.

Keywords: *Cognition, case markers, inter-lingual correlation overgeneralization, over-extension, transfer, personal time frame.*

1. Introduction

Learning of prepositions is not an easy task. A considerable body of literature can be found suggesting reasons for errors in this area. The researchers set out to test the validity of such reasons with students who learn English by the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in a public sector college of Bahawalpur. Both emic and etic approaches were used for the analysis. First, the researchers asked the students to give reasons for their usage; second, they undertook a contrastive analysis of problems arising from Urdu and English structures in the sentences used for the test. Answers to the following questions were sought:

- (1) How do learners assign meaning to prepositions?
- (2) To what extent does L1 transfer play a part in preposition errors?
- (3) To what extent does overgeneralization of L2 rules cause preposition errors?

As the present study was conducted in an Urdu-medium college, the researchers assumed that L1 interference was the prime suspect in causing errors. This assumption was supported by the researchers' professional experience.

2. Review of Literature

Merriam-Webster (2013) defines *preposition* as, 'a word or group of words that is used with a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase to show direction, location, or time, or to introduce an object'.

As to the learning of prepositions, Swan (2005, p. 425) points out that there are eighteen different functions of 'at' alone. A learner would find that each of those eighteen functions might correspond to different expressions in every L1. So, learning prepositions as products of underlying grammatical systems is difficult. Learners have no choice but to memorize expressions in isolation.

Swan's (2005) observations apply to any foreign learner of English, and we find what he says is relevant to Urdu speakers too. Urdu does not have prepositions in the English sense. It has an intricate system of cases marking on noun phrases, whether they are subjects, monotransitive, or ditransitive objects. In addition, postpositions are encountered in Urdu.

English and Urdu follow SVO and SOV structures respectively. Both languages also differ in argument structures. English is a Nominative-Accusative language. In English, both the subjects of an intransitive and the agent of a transitive verb have nominative markings and the objects of the transitive verbs have accusative markings. In Urdu, the subject of an intransitive verb and the object of a transitive verb may have Absolutive (nominative) marking, whereas, the agent of a transitive verb may have an ergative [ne] marking. This is called Ergative-Absolutive pattern. Nominative-Accusative pattern may also be found in Urdu. Therefore, Urdu is called a split Ergative (But and King, 2004, Butt, 1995) language; that is, either of the Ergative [ne] and the Nominative [Ø] cases may mark the agent NP of a transitive verb..

Ellis (1994) has summarized the research on Error Analysis. He has pointed out the following cognitive reasons that underlie the learners' errors:

Transfer means the literal translation of an L1 item (Ellis, 1994, p. 302).

Avoidance means avoidance of an L2 rule (Ellis, 1994, p. 304).

Overuse means use of an L2 item unnecessarily (Ellis, 1994, p. 305).

Developmental Factors. Certain errors, like avoiding auxiliary inversion, were also observed in English speaking children. Such errors cannot be eradicated by instruction or drills. Like children, learners also get rid of them slowly, with the passage of time (Ellis, 1994, pp. 329-332).

Overgeneralization means the application of an L2 rule to a situation where it does not apply (Ellis, 1994, p. 351).

Jha (1991) studied the errors of the Maithili speakers of Nepal in the usage of preposition. He has described the following types of errors:

1. Omission of Preposition
2. Insertion of Preposition
3. Selection of incorrect Preposition

Jha (1991) has specified two main sources of the above errors: (1) L1 interference, (2) Overgeneralization. He attributes the error of *for* and *since* to faulty guidance. He believes the above two prepositions are taught “without any suitable contextualized illustrations” (p. 55).

Rehman (1990) prepared an MCQ based Test for advanced learners. The questions carried incorrect use of prepositions. In multiple choices, one answer was correct. He noted the following errors:

1. The learners used incorrect prepositions,
2. The learners inserted a preposition where it was not needed,
3. They skipped a preposition where it was needed.

3. Method

The present study pursues qualitative research design. The researchers studied the preposition errors of twenty-five undergraduates of Government S. E. College Bahawalpur to access their cognitive problems. The researchers considered testing their comprehension by two types of exercises: (1) through translation of Urdu sentences, (2) by asking them to write a paragraph in English. Using MCQs as a third possibility was dismissed because of data-distortion that might accrue through wild guesses. The second type would have been useful but none of the subjects of this study had the ability to write a paragraph, so they were given Urdu sentences to translate into English. In the college where this study was conducted, English is taught by the old Grammar Translation Method (GTM). The participants were quite familiar with this type of test. The sentences for translation were selected, with minor amendments, from the grammar book of 10th grade (Chishti and Hashmi, 2010), which has the approval of the government of Pakistan. The researcher selected the sentences in the light of Stockwell and Bowen’s Model (1965), cited by Ellis (1994); Rehman (1990), and Jha (1991).

Type of difficulty	L1: English L2: Spanish	Example
1 Split		'for' is either <i>por</i> or <i>para</i>
2 New		grammatical gender
3 Absent		'do' as a tense carrier
4 Coalesced		'his/her' is realized as a single form <i>su</i>
5 Correspondence		<i>-ing, -ndo</i> as complement with verbs of perception, e.g. 'I saw the men running'; <i>vi a los hombres corriendo.</i>

Model of Contrastive Analysis by Stockwell and Bowen et al (1965), cited by Ellis (1994, p. 307). That is, the learners' use of prepositions was tested:

1. By sentences in which Urdu case markers/postpositions could be literally translated.
2. By sentences in which case markers/postpositions and preposition had no one-to-one correlation.
3. By sentences in which a case marker/postpositions was to be translated as a null preposition.
4. By sentences in which a null case/postpositions was to be translated as a preposition.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher gave the test to 25 students of his class. After collecting their answers, the researcher asked them the reasons of their translations. The researcher drew inference on the basis of two evidences. First, if a learner told the reason of a particular usage, his witness was used as evidence for an inference. Second, if the faulty part was extraordinarily close to L1 structure, and evidently contrary to the grammatical rules of L2, its similarity with L1 rules, and its difference with L2 rules, were considered evidences of L1 interference.

Urdu Correlates of English Prepositions Errors: 51 Learners: 21

Learners, usually, develop inter-lingual correlation between the most frequently translated pairs. These inter-lingual correlations become fixed in the learners' minds as rules. The learners take the correlates as perfect translations, and drag L2 expression to L1 situations. As a result, errors occur. Jha (1991) has mentioned this type of errors which occur because of "no on-to-one correspondence between Maithili postpositions and English prepositions" (p. 54).

Correlation of [se] and to/from/with Errors: 25 Learners: 08

The Urdu case marker [se] has various oblique and adverbial functions. They are Agentive, Comitative, Instrumental, Spatial, Temporal, and Adverbial (Rizvi, 2007, 2008). In many cases, it can be translated as *from*, *to*, and *with*. Some examples of the overextension of this correlation are given below. For detailed information, vide Khurshid (2010).

7. 7p Pt1^{7, 6}

[kɪja t̪um ne p̪əvaːz k -a loʈf - ʊʔaːj-a]?
 Int. P.2.s Erg. flight.f.3.s. Gen.m.s joy.f.3.s.Nom. lift. Perf.m.s.?
 Did you enjoy flight?

Abd⁸: (*Did*) Do you enjoy **to**⁹[se]¹⁰ flight?

Ajm: Did you **get enjoy** [loʈf ʊʔaːja] **with** [se] flight?

Ami: Did you enjoy **from** [se] flight?

Muh: Did you enjoy **from** [se] flight?

Qmr: Did you enjoy **from** [se] flight?

(Khurshid, 2010, p. 166)

Cognitive Problem. The correct answer lacks a preposition. The literal translation allows Genitive, or Oblique cases. The learners knew the difference between the phrase structures of the last two cases. None translated the former as the latter. They, rather, used Oblique structure instead of the Genitive structure. Though the learners did not translate the Genitive [ka] as *of*, yet they have used *from*, *to*, and *with* to mean [se].

⁷ In the above code, the numbers (like 7.7) mark the question number. Letters in lower case, next to the question number (a, p, n, w) are abbreviations of: Affirmative, Negative, Polarity question, Wh-question. Next, P1, P2, P3, P4; Pt1, Pt2, Pt3, Pt4; F1, F2, F3, F4 represent the twelve tenses.

⁶ Contrastive analysis of the Urdu and English grammatical features

⁸ Code name of the participant.

⁹ The errors are boldfaced.

¹⁰ The intended meaning of the participant.

7.38n P4

[hɑm pa:ntʃ̃ - sa:l se kɪʃa:b-ẽ - nəfĩ xəri:ɖ rəh -e fi -ẽ]

P.1.p.Nom. five.3.s.Nom. years.m.p.3. fromTemp. books. f.3.p.Nom. not buy Prog. m.p. be.pres.p.We have not been buying books for five years.**Ajm:** We are (have¹¹) not (been) buying books **from** [se] (for) five years.**Akm:** We have not (been) buying books **from** [se] (for) five years.**Irf:** We are (have) not (been) purchasing the books **from** [se] (for) five years.

(Khurshid, 2010, p. 167)

7.45a F4

[lɑʃka ɖʌs bəɖʒ -e se rʌsi kʰɛtʃ̃ rəh -a h-o g -a]

Boy.m.3.s.Nom. ten.m.3.s.Nom. o'clock.Obl. Temp. rope.f.s.Nom. pull Prog.m.s. be.s. will.m.s.The boy will have been pulling the rope since 10 o'clock.**Ajm:** Boy will **be** (have been) pulling rope **from** [se] (since) 10 pm.**Akm:** Boy (will have been) trying to push the door **from** [se] (since) ten o'clock. **Irf:** The boy will have (been) pulling the rope **from** [se] (since) 10 o'clock. (Khurshid, 2010, p. 168)

7.48w F4

[xɑ.nɑ bəɖɔf - ɖʒʌnwəri se kəhɑ reh rəh-e fi-õ g -e]?

Gypsy.3.m. Nom. January.m.3.s. Temp. where live Prog.m.p. be.p. will.m.p.?Where will the gypsies have been living since January?**Ajm:** Where will Jipsin (have been) remain (living) **from** [se] (since) January.**Irf:** Where will the gipsy (have been) living **from** [se] (since) January.

(Khurshid, 2010, p. 169)

Cognitive Problem. In the above answers, the learners' confusion was that they learnt the Urdu case marker [se] as the translation of the English prepositions *from*, *with*, *for*, *since*, and *to*. This correlation was over-extended (Ellis, 1994).

Correlation of [pʌr] and *on/of* Errors: 08 Learners: 07

Generally, the learners translate the Urdu Locative marker [pʌr] as *on*, and in some cases as *of*. Some examples of this correlation are given below. For detailed information, vide Khurshid (2010).

¹¹The researcher's suggestion.

7.23p F2

[kʲa m-ẽ gʱoɽ -e peh se uɽaɽ rəh -a fi -ũ g -a]?
 Int. P.1.s.Nom. horse.m.3.s.Obl. on. from(source) dismount Prog.m.s. be.1.s will.m.s.?
 Will I be dismounting from the horse?

Abd: Shall I be *leaving of* [pʌɽ] (*dismounting from*) the horse?

Ami: Will I (*be*) coming down *on* [pʌɽ] (*dismounting from*) the horse.

Bil: What I will be come back *on* [pʌɽ] (*dismounting from the*) horse?

Muh: Shall I (*be dismounting*) coming down (*from*) *on* [pʌɽ] the horse?

(Khurshid, 2010, p. 169)

7. 36w F3

[ʌfsəɽ ne tʊmhɑ:ri dʌɽxwɑ:stʰ pʌɽ kʌb ɣoɽ kʲ-a h -o g -a]?
 Officer.m.3.s. Erg P.pos.f.2.s request.f.3.s on.Loc. when attention.m.3Nom did.m.s. be.s. will.m.s.?
 When will the officer have considered your application?

Ami: When will officer consider *on* your request?

Fia: When will the officer have considered *on* your application.

Moh: When will your officer (*have*) considered *on* your application?

(Khurshid, 2010, p. 169)

Cognitive Problem. In the above answers, the learners' confusion was that they had learnt the Urdu locative marker [pʌɽ] as the usual translation of 'on'. This correlation was over-extended (Ellis, 1994).

(c) Correlation of [ka], [ki], [ke] and of Errors: 02 Learners: 02

Usual translation of the Urdu Genitive markers [ka], [ki], [ke] is *of*.

7. 17a Pt2

[mere va:lɪq - ʌpn -e dʌstʰo k -a mʲɪzɑ:ɽ kʌɽ rəh -e tʰ -e]
 P.pos.1.p. father.m.3.s.Nom. P.pos.m.p. friends.3.p. Gen.m.s. wait do Prog.m.p. be.past.m.p.
 My father was waiting for his friends.

Shb: My father (*was*) were waiting *of* [ka] (*for*) his friends. (Khurshid, 2010, p. 170)

7.33a F3

[ləʔk -e mʈiħa:n k -i t̪əjɑ:ri kʌr rəh -e fi-ð̄ g -e]
 Boys.m.3.p.Nom. exam.m.3.s Gen.f.s. preparation.f.3.s.Nom do Prog.p. be.p. will.m.p.
 Boys will have been preparing for the exam.

Sha: *Boys will have prepared of [ki] (for) the Examination.* (Khurshid, 2010, p. 170)

Cognitive Problem. In the above answers, the learners had learnt of as the usual translation of the Urdu Genitive markers [ka], [ki], [ke]. This correlation was overextended.

(d) Correlation of [ke lije] and for Errors: 09 Learners: 08

Usual translation of the Urdu postposition [ke lije] is *for*. Some examples of the overextension of this correlation are given below. For detailed information, vide Khurshid (2010).

7.5a Pt1

[voh d̪ʒɑ:n - bət̪ʃɑn -e k -e lije bʰɑ:g-a]
 P.3.Nom life.f.s.Nom. save. Inf. Gen.obl.for.Post. ran. Perf.m.s.
 He ran to save his life.

Ajm: *He (ran) run for (his) saving.* [d̪ʒɑ:n bət̪ʃɑ:n ke lije] **Akm:** *He runs (ran) away for [ke lije] (to) saving (his) life.*

Ami: *He ran for [ke lije] (to) safe (save) his life.* (Khurshid, 2010, p. 171)

Cognitive Problem. In the above answers, the learners over-extended the correlation of *for* and [ke lije].

7.27p P3

[kʲɑ us ne gað həmeʃɑ k -e lije t̪ʰoʃ d̪j -a h -e]
 Int. P.that(p.person).s. Erg. village.m.3.s.Nom. always Gen.Obl.for.Post. leave give.Perf.m.s. be.pres.m.s.?
 Has he left the village for good?

Dil: *Was (Has) he left (Ved) the village for for ever?*

7.(Khurshid, 2010, p. 171)

Dil said he had used 'for' twice in order to translate the preposition *for* and the idiom *for ever* separately.

Cognitive Problem. In the above answers, the learners' had used *for* as the usual translation of [ke lije]. This inter-lingual correlation was over-extended (Ellis, 1994).

Correlation of [pi:tʃne] and *behind* Errors: 08 Learners: 08

The Urdu postposition [pi:tʃne] is usually translated as the English preposition *behind, back, and before*. Some examples of the over-extension of this correlation are given below. For detailed information, vide Khurshid (2010).

7.11p F1

[kja log - tʃor k -e pitʃ -e bʰa:g-ẽ g- -e]?
Int. people.p.m.Nom. thief.m.3.s Gen.Obl. after.Obl.Post. run. 3.p. will.m.p?

Will people run after the thief?

Abd: Will the people run *(behind) before* [pi:tʃne] *(after the thief)?*

Ajm: Will people run *behind* [pi:tʃne] *(after) the thief?*

Muh: Will the people run *behind* [pi:tʃne] *(after) the thief?*

Qam: Will the people run *back* [pi:tʃne] *(after) the thief.* (Khurshid, 2010, p. 172)

Cognitive Problem. In the above answers, the learners literally translated [pi:tʃne] as *behind, back, and before*. This inter-lingual correlation was over-extended (Ellis, 1994).

Correlation of [ko] and *about* Errors: 01 Learners: 01

Urdu Accusative marker [ko] may be translated as *to*. But in the example below, the learner translated it as *about*.

7.2n P1

[m -ẽ is ʌdʒnəbi ko nəhi dʒa:n -t- -a fi -ũ]
P.1.s.Obl. this.mod. stranger.m.3.s Acc. not know.Imp.m.s. be.pres.1.s.

I do not know this stranger.

Kas: I do not know *about* this stranger.

(Khurshid, 2010, p. 172)

Correlation of [mẽ] and *in* Errors: 05 Learners: 04

The Urdu Locative marker [mẽ] is usually translated as *in*.

7.29a Pt3

[mer -e gʰər a:n -e se pəhle mer-a beta - sku:l - d̪ʒa t̪ʃʊk -a t̪ʰ -a]

P.pos.1.Obl. home.m.3.s.Nom. come.Inf. Temp.before.Post P.pos.1.s. son.m.3.s.Nom. school.m.3.s.Nom. go Perf. m.s. be.past.m.s.

My son had gone to school before I came home.

Abd: *My son had gone to the school before I reached in[mē] the house.* (Khurshid, 2010, p. 173)

7.30n Pt3

[refri k -e si:t̪i bəd̪ʒa:n-e se pəhle kʰɪla:t̪i meɖa:n mē nəɦi ut̪r -e t̪ʰ -e].

Referee.3.s.Gen.Obl. whistle blow. Inf. Temp.before.Post. players.m.3.Nom. ground.m.3.s. in.Loc. not enter.p.Perf. be.past.m.p.

Players had not entered the ground before the referee blew the whistle.

Abd: *The player had not **inter(Ved) in** [mē] the stadium before the referee vistled.*

Fia: *The player had reached **in** [mē] the ground before the referee visseled.*

Qam: *The players had not reached **in** [mē] the ground before the umpire whistlea.*

Was: *The players does not entered**in** [mē] the ground till the reffree whistles.*

(Khurshid, 2010, p. 173)

Cognitive Problem. In the above cases, the English object is a bare NP, whereas the corresponding Urdu object NP is headed by a Locative marker [mē]. The learners refrained from skipping the Locative marker [mē], and inserted its correlate *in*. In this way, they translated an NP as a PP.

Superimposition of the Personal Time Frame

When the learners are not sure of the time frame of a tense, they try to assign their intuitive time frame to it.

Use of *Since* and *For* Errors: 17 Learners: 12

Usually, in English perfect progressive tenses, 'since' and 'for' head the adjunct phrases that refer to the 'starting point' of an action, and the duration of an action, respectively. Usually, this difference is not easy for the learners to understand.

7.37a P4: **Jam:** *Aslam (has been) is fling the kite **for** (since) afternoon.*

7.38n P4: **Zaf:** *We are not (have not been) buying books **since** (for) five year.*

7.39p P4: **Jam:** *(Has) Is the patient (been) resting **for** (since) afternoon.*

7.41a Pt4: **Irf:** *The students were (had been) making a noise **since** (for) half (an) hour.*

Moh: *The students had been making a noise **since** (for) last half an hour.*

- Qmr:** The students *(have been)* are making a noise **since** *(for)* half an hour.
Saf: The students have been making a noise **since** *(for)* half an hour. 42n
 Pt4:
Saf: Mybrother had not been taking examination **for** *(since)* 11th.
 43p Pt4: **Mat:** Had your brother been giving you advise **since** *(for)* two days.
 44w Pt4: **Moh:** Where they had been depositing the money *(for)* last six months.
Saf: Where had he been collecting the rupees **since** *(for)* six years?
Usm: Where *(had)* they *(been)* collect^{ing} money **since** *(for)* six years.
Wse: Where *(had)* they **had** been collecting the money **since** *(for)* six years.
 45a F4: **Abd:** The boy will *(have been)* be pulling the rope **for** *(since)* 10 o' clock.
Qam: The boy will have been pulling the rope **for** *(since)* ten o clock.
 46n F4: **Fia:** The swimmers will not have been swimming in river **for** *(since)*
 yesterday.
 48w F4: **Usm:** Where the geipsy live **for** *(since)* January?(Khurshid, 2010, pp.
 230-231)

Cognitive Problem. This confusion occurred because the learners could not keep two time frames apart. They inter-mixed their own situational context with the time frame of the text. For example, if a sentence in the test had the phrase [dʒəʊnʋəri se], 'since January', and the date of the test was 6 March, the learners would calculate the difference between March and January. Thinking that the duration (two months) was already known, they would write *'for January' instead of 'since January'. Similarly, if a sentence had the phrase [do mʌhi:ne se], 'for two months', the learners would take two months before the time of the Test as the reference time. Thinking that the starting point is already known, they would write *'since two months' instead of 'for two months'.

Transfer Errors: 14 Learners: 13

Transfer (Ellis, 1994) is different from inter-lingual correlation (Khurshid, 2010). The latter occurs as a result of one word literal translation, while the former is the literal translation of an L1 chunk. In the use of preposition, transfer occurs when an L2 preposition is replaced by an empty L1 slot. Some of the examples of empty slot transfer are given below. For detailed information, vide Khurshid (2010).

6n Pt1:

[tʊm ne mer -i ba:t - nəfiː sʊn -i]

P.2.s. Erg. P.pos.f.1.s. talk.f.3.s.Nom. not listen.Perf.f.s.

You did not listen to me.

Abd: You are ^(did) not to listen ^(to) me.

Ajm: You ^(did) not listened ^(to) my talking.

Ami: He did not listen ^(to) me.

(Khurshid, 2010, p. 238)

Cognitive Problem. In the above answers, the learners did not write *to* because its corresponding Urdu dative/accusative case, [ko], was not given in the corresponding Urdu sentence. If the sentence had been like [us ne meri bat ko nāhī̄ sōna], they might not have skipped *to*.

Structure Transfer in Preposition Phrases Error: 07 Learners: 07

Sometimes, learners transfer L1 structure to L2 in the way that they either substitute a preposition with an incorrect one, or skip it altogether. Some examples of such transfer are given below. For detailed information, vide Khurshid (2010).

7.9a F1: Aun: We will work hard to success in the examination.

(Khurshid, 2010, p. 250)

Aun translated [ke lje] as *to*, and [ka:mja:bi] as *success*. His mind seems to be hanging between *to succeed* and *for success*.

In the translations of sentence 7.17a Pt2 below, one error was noted in each answer. It was skipping of *for* in the adjunct phrase.

7.17a Pt2: Ami: My father were ^(was) waiting ^(for) his friends. **Jam:** My father has ^(was) waiting ^(for) his friend.

Wse: My father were ^(was) waiting ^(for) their ^(his) fellows.

(Khurshid, 2010, p. 250)

Cognitive Problem. In English, *waiting* is one word but its corresponding expression in Urdu takes three words: [m̄t̄z̄a:r] + [k̄ær] + [r̄æhe]. *Wait* is a verb (Vo form) in English, whereas [m̄t̄z̄a:r] is a Nominative NP. No oblique marking like [t̄æk], [se], [m̄ē] etc. mediates between the NP [m̄t̄z̄a:r] and the light verb [k̄ær] (Davison, 2004). Actually, the light verb [k̄ær] transforms the NP [m̄t̄z̄a:r] into the infinitive VP [m̄t̄z̄a:r k̄ærna]. In the given sentence, the NP [m̄t̄z̄a:r] and the NP [d̄os̄t̄q̄] are joined together by the genitive marker [ka]. They may be taken as a single unit, [d̄os̄t̄q̄ ka m̄t̄z̄a:r]. The learners took this Genitive NP, [d̄os̄t̄q̄ ka m̄t̄z̄a:r], as a single unit and derived from it the infinitive VP [d̄os̄t̄q̄ ka m̄t̄z̄a:r k̄ærna]. In their mind, they divided the VP into two, instead of three, units: the merged NPs on one side, and the light verb [k̄ær] on the other. Merging of two NPs had its impact on the VP structure. The learners overlooked

the intermediary genitive case marker [ka], and skipped the corresponding preposition *for*.

The study concludes that the in GTM based instruction, L1 interference deeply affects the learners' usage of prepositions. The learners either establish one-to-one correlation between case markers and prepositions, or sometimes transfer a full structure. The other reason was that the learners confused their situational time frame with that of the text. Now, in the light of these findings, the study provides the following answers to the research questions:

1. The learners assign meanings to prepositions by inter-lingual correlation, by negative transfer, and by superimposing their personal time frame.
2. L1 interference is a big reason of learners' errors in the usage of preposition.
3. Very few instances of over generalization of L2 rules in the usage of preposition were collected. However, in many cases, the learners over-extended the inter-lingual correlations.

4. Conclusion

This paper helps the teachers of English to re-adjust their strategies. Now, instead of using inter-lingual correlations, they should try to teach prepositions with the help of communicative situations. They should remind the learners again and again that no one-to-one correspondence exists between the Urdu case markers and English prepositions. The confusion in the usage of *since* and *for* can be removed by more skillful contextualization of the two expressions, and by reminding the learners of keeping their own temporal context aside. The effects of negative transfer can be controlled by counseling and by giving repeated drills of the necessary structures. Moreover, the cognitive techniques for the teaching of prepositions may also be used. Recommended readings in this regard are Langacker (2008) and Tyler (2012). Exercises in collocation may also be helpful. A recommended workbook is Woolrad (2004).

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