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ACQUISITION OF THE PREPOSITIONS IN ENGLISH
BY
TURKISH LEARNERS

MASTER THESIS

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ABSTRACT

ACQUISITION OF THE PREPOSITIONS IN ENGLISH BY TURKISH LEARNERS

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A preposition may be short in length or seem insignificant when compared with the other elements of the language of English. However, they have got quite a significant role in the shaping of sentences, connecting them and contributing to the formation of a whole sentence. Turkish learners, on the other hand, face a lot of difficulties in acquiring and using English prepositions. With this consideration in our mind, we have aimed to examine the acquisition of English prepositions by Turkish learners along with the problems in learning them.

Our study consists of six chapters. The first chapter is an introductory one concerned with what is presented in the present study. The second chapter is assigned to a variety of definitions and types of prepositions in English, supported by figures. The third chapter covers a thorough review of the literature in this subject. Then comes the fourth chapter presenting the research design primarily used for the study at hand; the materials and subjects included in the study are also given here. The fifth chapter discusses the results of our research, interpreting them in the light of the relationship between English and Turkish prepositions. The last chapter is a conclusive one, presenting our results at the end of the study. It has been concluded that Turkish learners have difficulty in understanding and using English prepositions because of the fact that there are not prepositions in Turkish, but postpositions. Another factor to cause such a difficulty is the overgeneralization of a single preposition in English.

ÖZET

İNGİLİZCE EDATLARIN TÜRK ÖĞRENCİLER TARAFINDAN EDİNİMİ

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

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İngilizce'deki diğer unsurlarla karşılaştırıldığında edatlar uzunluk olarak daha kısa görüldüğü gibi, önemsiz de görünebilir. Bununla birlikte cümlelerin şekillenmesinde, onları bağlayarak ve tüm bir cümlenin oluşumuna katkıda bulunarak oldukça önemli bir role sahiptir. Diğer yandan Türk öğrenciler, İngilizce edatları kullanmada ve edinmede pekçok zorlukla karşılaşır. Bu düşüncüyü gözönüne alarak, Türk öğrencilerin İngilizce edatları edinimini ve beraberinde karşılaştıkları problemleri incelemeyi amaçladık.

Çalışmamız altı bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölüm çalışmamızda sunulanlarla ilgili kısa bilgi veren giriş bölümüdür. İkinci bölüm İngilizce edatların tanımları ve türlerine ayrılmıştır ve bunlar resimlerle desteklenmiştir. Üçüncü bölüm bu konudaki literatür taramasından ibarettir. Dördüncü bölüm ise, mevcut çalışmada kullanılan araştırma metodunu içerir; çalışmada kullanılan materyaller ve denekler de bu bölümde verilmiştir. Beşinci bölüm, çalışmamızın sonuçları, İngilizce ve Türkçe edatlar arasındaki ilişki ışığında yorumlayarak tartışır. Son bölüm, çalışmanın sonunda elde edilen bulguları açıklayan bölümdür. Çalışmamızda, Türk öğrencilerin Türkçe'deki bir edatı genelleştirme yoluyla diğer İngilizce edatlarla karıştırması ve Türkçe'de edatların ön ek olarak değil, son olarak kullanılmasından kaynaklandığı sonucuna varılmıştır.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

DIE ERLERNUNG DER ENGLISCHEN PRÄPOSITIONEN DURCH TÜRKISCHE STUDENTEN

MAGISTERARBEIT

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Im Vergleich zu den Anderen Einheiten der englischen Sprache scheinen die Präpositionen zwar kurz oder gar unwichtig zu sein. Doch sie verbinden die Sätze und tragen auch dazu bei, daß die Sätze vollständig gebildet werden und spielen damit bei Entstehung der Sätze eine wichtige Rolle. Außerdem haben türkische Studenten große Schwierigkeiten, die Präpositionen der englischen Sprache zu lernen und zu benutzen.

Unsere Studie besteht aus sechs Teilen. Der erster Teil ist die Einführung und befasst sich über allgemeine Hinweise zur Studie. Der zweiter Teil ist über die Definitionen und Arten der englischen Präpositionen. Diese Definitionen werden hier mit Erklärungen unterstützt. Der dritter Teil der Studie befasst sich mit der Literaturoseinandersetzung auf diesem Gebiet. Im vierten Teil wird dann ein Forschungs-Projekt, der hier in diese Studie zugrunde gelegt wird, vorgeführt. In Teil fünf werden die Forschungsergebnisse, in der Hinsicht auf die Beziehung zwischen den türkischen und englischen Präpositionen, interpretiert. Der letzte Teil, also der Schlußteil der Studie zeigt die Ergebnisse unserer Arbeit.

Nach unseren Untersuchungen hat es sich ergeben, daß die Präposition in der türkischen Sprache nach dem Nomen kommt, im englischen jedoch steht sie vor dem Nomen, als ein selbständiges Wort und das ist eigentlich auch der Grund, weshalb die türkischen Studenten Schwierigkeiten beim Erlernen und Benutzen der englischen Präpositionen haben.

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None of the above is to be held responsible for the outcome in any way; all errors and misrepresentations are mine, unfortunately.

Emine AÇAK

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Prepositions are words that indicate the relationship between a noun and pronoun and another word in the sentence. They are usually placed before the noun or pronoun they govern. They are an important class of words in English. Their main purpose in the language is to relate other words to other parts of the sentence. They show relationships in time and space and relationships between the ideas. Many words that can be used as prepositions can also be used as adverbs, but not all of them can be used. They have little meanings in the dictionary sense. However, their function is important in the sentence. Although they seem to occupy small parts in the sentence, they are difficult for ESL learners to learn. Many studies demonstrate that the acquisition of prepositions in English by ESL learners is one of the most difficult issues in learning English. There are many researchers, White (1987), Lennon (1991), Klein (1993), Bowerman (1996) and Eröz (2000), who have studied on this subject. They observe learners' difficulties with the prepositions and try to find out the source of and solutions to these problems. Some of them examine the problems ESL learners face while learning English prepositions and some of them try to find a relation between language transfer and learning prepositions. They state that many languages have not got prepositions and instead, they have got postpositions as Turkish has. For that reason, the ESL learners often have some difficulties with prepositions both in using and learning them.

By looking at these studies, there emerges a need for examining the acquisition of prepositions by Turkish learners because Turkish learners have some problems with the prepositions in English. The main purpose of this study is to explore whether Turkish learners acquire the prepositions used in English and if so what kind of problems English prepositions pose on Turkish learners in this process.

The present study, constructed on such grounds, consists of six chapters. The first chapter is an introductory one concerned with the definition and usage of prepositions. In the second chapter, some background information about prepositions is given. Firstly, there are various definitions of prepositions from

different sources in order to understand what the prepositions really mean. Then comes a list of the types of prepositions. The list includes the prepositions which express relationships in space, position and direction, relative position, deferred prepositions, simple and complex prepositions, passage, time; time position, time duration, from means to stimulus, accompaniment, concession and other relations, and modification. Then basic and derived senses of prepositions are given. Most studies on prepositions have showed that the learners have more problems especially with the derived sense of prepositions than the basic sense of them. Finally, Turkish equivalents of prepositions in English are mentioned in this chapter because it is necessary to examine the differences and similarities between English and Turkish in order to comment on the errors produced by Turkish learners.

In the third chapter, there is a literature review part. Firstly, the role of Turkish on Second Language acquisition is examined because of the relation between language transfer and the acquisition of prepositions. Secondly, the studies on prepositions are given in order to compare and contrast the findings of these studies and those of the present study. Thirdly, there is a literature review of Error Analysis. According to this theory, errors are the most significant clues for researchers to analyse their learning of the target language. In the end, research questions of this study are given. Research questions show that the present study is concerned with the issues of the acquisition of the prepositions in English, the role of Turkish on the acquisition, basic and derived senses of prepositions and the relationship between the proficiency level of the Turkish learners and their acquisition of prepositions.

In the fourth chapter, research design is given. Firstly, the pilot study carried out prior to the present study is briefly mentioned. Then, subjects and materials used in the study are mentioned. There is some information about the number of subjects, their backgrounds and majors. There is also a part about the scoring, which shows how the data collected from different test materials are analysed.

In the fifth chapter, the overall results for each test - the cloze test, the grammaticality judgement task and the translation test - are given. The results of the

cloze test help to determine and evaluate the proficiency levels of the subjects answering the questions. Those of the grammaticality judgement task are considered with the purpose of finding out whether the subjects are good enough at prepositions, and at which points they are most liable to produce errors. Those of the translation test, on the other hand, measure the transfer of prepositions from Turkish to English the acquisition of basic and derived senses of prepositions and dimensional aspects of the prepositions in English.

In the last chapter, there is a conclusion part. The results of the study are mentioned briefly and some pedagogical implications that teachers should take into consideration in the lessons while teaching prepositions are given.



CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND

2.1 What are 'prepositions'?

A preposition is a small word used with a noun or pronoun to show its connection with another word. Prepositions are not a sub-class of adverbials. They are related to verbs. However, they form groups by modification, in the same way as conjunctions, i.e. 'right *behind* the door', 'not *without* some misgivings', 'all *along* the beach', and 'way *off* the mark'. "A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition plus a nominal group... such as *on* the burning deck". (Halliday, 1985, p. 424)

In addition to such information about prepositions, there are a lot of definitions of prepositions existing in different sources and here are some definitions to contribute to one's understanding of what a preposition is:

A preposition is a function word that appears before nouns and relates noun to some other construction in the sentence. (Macmillan, 1964)

A preposition is used to connect nouns and noun structures to other structures in the sentence. (Lougheed, 1988, p. 9)

Prepositions are a closed class of items connecting two units in a sentence and specifying a relationship between them. For instance: I don't like to drink out of a cracked cups', 'He was very grateful for her help.' and 'The elderly man in the raincoat looks ill'. (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p.188)

Prepositions are words which show the relationship between things, people or events. (Allsop, 1983, p.105)

Prepositions are an important class of function words in English. Function word is one that has little meaning in the dictionary sense, but whose main purpose in the language is to relate other words to each other and to form grammatical structures. The main function of prepositions is to connect nouns (and noun-like constructions) to other parts of the sentence. They have some inherent meanings. For instance; '*on* the table' is quite different from '*under* the table'; *on* usually means 'resting on the upper surface of' and *under* means 'lower than' but we cannot always depend on logic or meaning to tell us which

preposition must be used in which expression. For instance, while talking about an address, we live *at* an address, *in* a house, *on* a street, and *in* a city. There is quite a difference between throwing something *at* someone and throwing it *to* someone and shouting *at* someone and shouting *to* someone as in the following pictures (Fig 1):

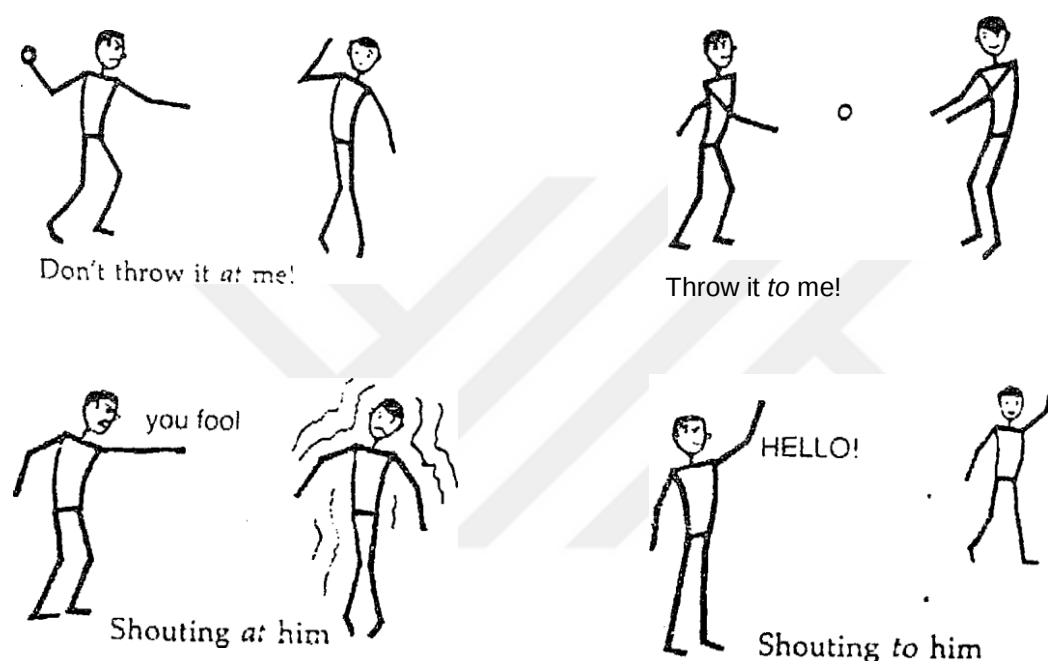


Fig.1 The usage of *at* and *to* (Allsop, 1983)

There are about fifty words in English that function as prepositions. In the following part, the types of prepositions are given with some pictures in order to make them clear.

2.2 Prepositions which Express Relationship in Space

Prepositions show relationship in space and this relationship depends on the meaning of the other parts of the sentence. Such prepositions introduce essential information that tells which meaning depends on the parts of the sentence. These are adjective phrases and follow the noun or pronoun that they modify. There is no verb between the nouns before and after prepositions in this

case especially the verb 'to be' is confusing here for the learners as its inclusion between the preposition and the preceding noun forms a whole sentence, not an adjective phrase. For instance:

The buses *in the city* run every ten minutes.

The houses *on the bay* were damaged by the hurricane. (Macmillan, 1964)

The most important ones of these prepositions are:

Above, across, against, along, among, around, at, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, by, down, from, in, in front of, inside, into, near, next to, off, on, onto, opposite, out of outside, over, past, round, through, to, towards, under, underneath, up.

2.3 Prepositions which Express Position and Direction

“Between the notions of directional movement and static position there is a cause-and-effect relationship, which applies equally to” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 192):

a. The positive prepositions as in the examples below:

1. Jack ran *to* the corner and then stood *at* the corner.
2. Put the book *on (to)* the top shelf and leave it *on* the top shelf.
3. She went *into* her office and stayed *in* her office.

In the first example, *to* refers to a direction, but *at* is used to express a position. In the second one, *on (to)* shows a direction while *on* indicates a position and in the last one *into* expresses a direction but *in* explains a position.

b. The negative prepositions.

1. Mildred moved *from* Bloomsbury last year and enjoys living *away from* the city centre.

2. Take the typewriter *off* the table and leave it *off*.
3. He walked *out of* the house and stayed *out of* the house all afternoon.

Prepositions refer to some basic spatial dimensions. We have three different dimensions that display physical space. Where places are regarded as points on a route or as institutions to which one is attached, it is called as *dimension type 0* which ignores dimension altogether, treating location as a point even if in reality it is a continent. As can be seen in Fig.2, prepositions may come to mean different dimensions.

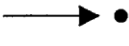
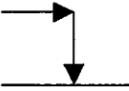
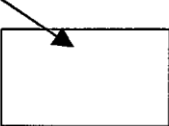
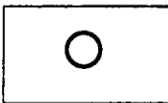
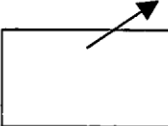
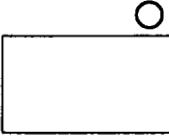
Positive		Negative		
Destination	Position	Destination	Position	
To 	at 	(away) from 	away from 	Dimension type 0 (point)
on (to) 	on 	off 	off 	Dimension type 1 or 2 (line <i>or</i> surface)
in (to) 	in 	out of 	out of 	Dimension type 2 or 3 (area <i>or</i> volume)

Fig.2. Dimensions of prepositions (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 191)

The following examples will also invoke this type:

Does this train stop *at* Lincoln?

Our daughter is *at* Oxford studying philosophy.

Dimension type 2/3 appropriate where that place is thought of in terms of residence as in the example:

I've never lived either *in* Lincoln or *in* Oxford.

Analogously, if the referent is considered as a surface, *dimension type 1/2* is appropriate, while if it is determined as necessarily enclosing, then dimension type 2/3 comes into play:

They were rowing *on* Lake Van.

I was swimming *on* Lake Van.

2.4 Relative Position

Rather than absolute position, many prepositions indicate the position of something relative to the position of something else (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p.193):

The police station is *opposite* my house.

My house is *opposite* the police station.

Some prepositions from antonymic pairs, as indicated in Fig 2, A is *above* X and B is *below* X (as X is *below* A and *above* B); C is *in front of* X. and D is *behind* X (as X is *behind* C and *in front of* D).

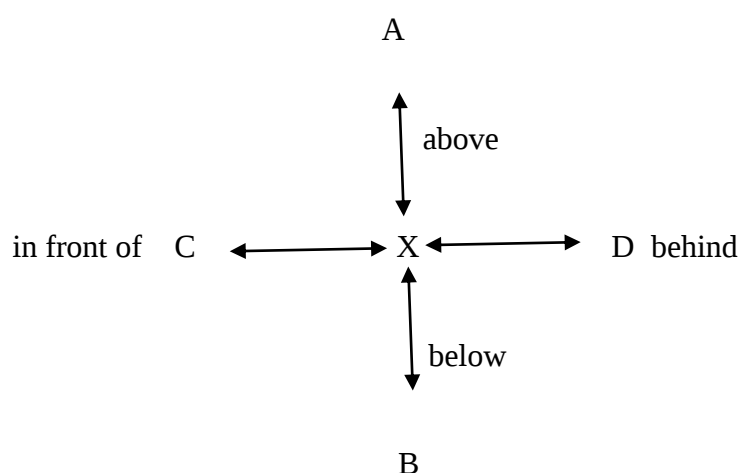


Fig. 3. The relative position (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 193)

Corresponding to *above* and *below* is *over* and *under* respectively, though the latter tends to mean 'directly below'. Similar to *in front of* and *behind* are *before* and *after*, though the latter tend to imply relative precedence rather than physical position. Like *under* are the less common *beneath* (somewhat formal) and *underneath*. With *on top of* we combine the sense of 'above' with abutment. Abutment is also normally implied with *by*, *beside*, and *with* (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 194):

She left the keys *by*
 with her purse
 beside

In contrast, *close to* and *near (to)* generally exclude actual contact; these prepositions are unique in admitting comparative inflection;

Please move this desk *close (r) to* the wall.
 near (er) (to)

Between positionally relates two objects or groups of object, whereas *among* (and *amid (st)*, more formally) deals with a more general plurality:

There must be space to walk *between* the chairs and the wall.
I left the letter *among* my birthday cards.

While *between* shows a location, which has two points of reference, *among* indicates a location, which has more than two points of reference. The converse of *between* and *among* is, to some extent, expressed by *around*.

There were trees *around* the house.
There was a house *among* the trees.

2.5 Deferred Prepositions

Although prepositions normally precede their complements, there are circumstances in which this cannot happen (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 189):

- a. Where the subject of a passive construction corresponds to the prepositional complement in the active analogue;

We have paid *for* the car.

The car has been paid *for*.

- b. Where the prepositional complement is thematized in sentences with infinitive or -ing clauses;

It is unpleasant to work *with that man*.

That man is unpleasant to work *with*.

It is not worth listening *to his advice*.

His advice is not worth listening *to*.

In addition, there are circumstances where deferment is optional, as indicated by Greenbaum and Quirk (1990, p.189), “depending chiefly on stylistic preference; where the prepositional complement is an interrogative pronoun, deferment indeed is normal”:

What are you looking *at*?

Who is she talking *about*?

In some conditions, “the close relation between the verb and preposition makes alternative arrangement awkward and rare” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 190, p. 189):

Who did you sell your house *to*?

To whom did you sell your house? (formal)

“A similar choice is more general where the prepositional complement is a relative pronoun” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 189):

The building (*that*) you are standing *in front of* was designed by Lutyens.

The building *in front of which* you are standing was designed by Lutyens (formal).

2.6 Simple and Complex Prepositions

“The commonest prepositions are a small number of monosyllabic items such as *at*, *for*, *in*, *on*, *to* and *with*, typically unstressed and often with reduced vowel except when deferred” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 190):

What are you looking *at*?

I am looking *at* this huge telephone bill.

In the first example above, *at* is used with the verb *look* and there is not deferment. In the second one, *look at* is used with an object *telephone bill* and object is a deferment here and stressed in the sentence.

In addition, however, there are “polysyllabic prepositions; some of these prepositional compounds are formed historically from the monosyllabic ones (e.g. *inside*, *within*) or derived from participles (e.g. *during*) or adopted from other languages (e.g. *despite*, *except*). Thus although prepositions are a closed class in comparison with truly open classes like nouns, they are less literally a closed class than determiners or pronouns”. (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 190)

“The number of prepositions has been increased partly by using more participles (for example, *barring*, *concerning*, *granted*) but chiefly by combining prepositions with other words to form 'complex prepositions'. There are two main types” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 190):

- a. A simple preposition preceded by a participle, adjective, adverb or conjunction, as with *owing to*, *devoid of*, *away from*, and *because of*.

b. A simple preposition followed by a noun and then a further simple preposition, as with *in charge of*, *by means of*, *at variance with*, *in addition to*, and *as a result of*

2.7 Prepositional Meaning

Although “the relationship between two linguistic units may be wide in meaning, most of them are either spatial or figuratively derived from notions of physical space” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 191):

I like being *in this room*. (1)

She will finish the work *in the present month*. (2)

His life is *in danger*. (3)

They told me this *in all seriousness*. (4)

The period of time in (2), the danger in (3), and the seriousness in (4) are all similar to the physical room in (1) in terms of three-dimensional space. The ways in which prepositions refer to some of the basic spatial dimensions should be understood as indicated in section 2.3. This shows three different kinds of distinction: “Prepositions distinguish between 'destination' (movement with respect to an intended location) and 'position' (static location). We have three dimension types: one which ignores dimension altogether, treating location as a point even if in reality it is a content” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 192):

He walked *to the lamp-post*.

They flew *to Australia*.

These examples present the lamp-post as a point. Both the lamp-post and Australia are points here and they do not express location. They reject dimension.

The second dimension type shows “what is in real space either one-dimensional or two dimensional” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 192):

She put her toe *on the line*.

They were alone *on the tennis-court*.

In these examples, ‘on the line’ expresses one-dimension and ‘on the tennis court’ expresses two-dimensions in the real space. These accept dimensions contrary to the examples ignoring two dimensions.

The third dimension similarly straddles two actual dimensions: two-dimensional or three-dimensional space. In this type, there is an area which has two dimensions as in the first example, *in the field* while in the second one, *the wardrobe* has three dimensions:

Some cows were grazing *in the field*.

My coat is *in the wardrobe*.

2.8 Passage

“The notion of passage combines position and motion, disregarding destination” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 194):

The referee complained as people were moving *behind the goalposts*.

I love walking *through woods* in spring.

“Other prepositions commonly used for passage are *by*, *over*, *under*, *across*, and *past*. It is worth noting the parallelism between positional *on* and *in* on the one hand and *across* and *through* on the other hand” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 194).

_____ 0 _____ on the grass	→ _____ across the grass
_____ 0 _____ in the grass	→ _____ through the grass

Fig-4 The passage (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 194)

“Passage and direction are frequently related to conceptual axes, especially the vertical and horizontal, as shown in Fig. 4. With (a) round, however, the relation is to a real or fancied point such as a corner or a center” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 195):

Be careful as you drive *round corners*.

The children were playing *around the park*.

“Spatial relations are often expressed by orientation to the speaker, so that the prepositional phrase in the sentence 'He lives *down the hill*' will relate not only to the vertical axis as in Fig. 4 but will imply 'further down from where I am speaking' or 'further down from the place I am speaking about'” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 195):

Their house is *past the church*. (*beyond the church* in relation to the orientation point)

They have gone *across the moors*. (from here)

2.9 Time

2.9.1. Time position

“Three prepositions, *at*, *on* and *in* are used in expressions answering the question 'when?' and reflect a concept of time as identical to space. Thus *at* is used for points of time, where time is conceived as being 'dimensionless'” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 196):

The film will begin *at 7.20 p.m.*

It is not only an instant that can be considered:

What are you doing *at the weekend*?

She last saw her parents *at Christmas*.

Chaucer frequently speaks of books because *at that time* they were rare and highly valued.

“Where time is regarded as a period, the usual preposition is *in*, reflecting analogy with two or three-dimensional space” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 196):

In the evening, I listened to some Beethoven records.

Where did he live *in his childhood*!

I saw her *in March/ in 1988/ in the following week*.

“But in expressions referring to days, the preposition *on* should be preferred” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 196):

The baby was born *on July the twelfth/ on Sunday afternoon/ on Thursday night*.

2.9.2. Time duration

Prepositions show time duration in a sentence. If we ask a question starting with ‘how long’, the possible answer to this question should include *for*. In such expressions, *for* is used to explain a time duration in the sentence. For instance:

We stayed in a rented cottage *for the summer*.

“The same meaning, with some emphasis on the duration, can be expressed with *throughout* and *all through*. In contrast, *during* shows a stretch of time within which a more specific duration can be indicated” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 197):

During the summer, we stayed in a rented cottage *for a month*.

But with appropriate lexical support in the context, the distinction between *during* and *for* {*throughout*, etc) can be neutralized. For instance:

Try to stay alert *throughout* the entire ceremony
during

Duration expressions with *over* carry the implication of a period containing some division or 'fences'. Thus, one can stay *overnight*, *over the weekend*, *over the Christmas period*, etc but hardly *over the ceremony* or *over the evening*. "A duration specifying only a starting point or a terminal point is expressed by phrases with *by*, *before*, *from*, *after*, *since*, *till*, *until*, and *up to*" (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 198). For example:

She will be here *by Friday night*.

She will not be here *before Friday night*.

I worked *from eight o'clock* (onwards).

2.10 Cause and Purpose

There is a spectrum of relations extending from cause to purpose. For the part covering cause, reason, and motive, we have prepositional phrases with items such as *because of*, *on account of*, *for*, and *out of* (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 198)

He lost his job *because of his laziness*.

She was fined *for dangerous driving*.

He misdirected the letter *out of spite*.

They died *from exposure*. (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990)

But of course the notion of '*motive*' shades into purpose, goal, and target for all of which the common preposition is *for*:

An appeal is being opened *for a new hospital*.

They were appealing *for donations*.

We had better set out *for home*.

With the preposition of *at*, "the goal or target is usually viewed with hostility or contrast" (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 199):

The police rushed *at the house*, (charged)

The police rushed *to the house*, (hurried)

2.11 From Means to Stimulus

“Another spectrum of relations expressed by prepositions covers means, instrument, agency, and stimulus. The first two correspond to the question 'How?' with *by* used for means and *with* for instrument” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 199):

I go to work *by car*.

Please send this to the Delhi office *by telex*.

She won the match *with her fast service*.

He levered it up *with a crowbar*.

“stimulus and reaction are expressed chiefly by *at*” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 200):

I am surprised *at her attitude*.

Other stimulus and reaction prepositions include *about*, *in*, *of* and *to*:

I think he is jealous *of her*.

To me, her proposal is broadly acceptable.

2.12 Accompaniment

Specifically “when the complement is animate, *with* conveys the meaning 'in the company of, and *without* is the converse” (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 200):

I hope you will come to party *with your children*, (accompanied by)

For once, Catherine went *without her children*.

But the complement needs not be animate:

What will you drink *with your sandwich*?

She cannot concentrate on her homework *without silence*.

Expressions of accompaniment are used for possession, so that there is some interchange between *with (out)*, *of*, and the genitive:

The artist has great talent or we can say:

An artist *with* great talent.

An artist *of* great talent.

The artist's great talent.

Another close tie is with the notion of ingredients which is expressed by *with* and *(out) of*.

The sauce was made *with* pepper.

The fence is *of* wood but the posts are *of* concrete.

2.13 Concession and Other Relations

Prepositions expressing concession include *in spite of* and its more formal synonym *despite*, the still more formal *notwithstanding*, and the somewhat informal *for all*, and *with all* (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 201):

The article is being published *in spite of* or *for all* her disapproval.

For the concept of exception, the chief prepositions are *except (for)*, *excepting*, *with the exception of*, *excluding*, *apart from*, *aside from*, *but*, the rarer *save*, *bar*, and *barring*:

Except for the weather, our stay in Scotland was enjoyable.

Everyone seemed tired *but me*.

The converse of exception is *addition* that is expressed by *besides*, *as well as*, *in addition to* etc. For instance:

The orchestra was disappointing *except for* the soloist.
as well as

2.14 Modification

Both prepositions and prepositional adverbs can be modified in terms of measure and degree by being accompanied by intensifiers (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 202). For example:

She arrived *shortly after ten*.

at ten or *shortly after*.

He expected to be *well ahead of Compton* but he finished in fact *just behind*.

Though in many cases such modification seems clearly to apply to the preposition, there are some cases where it seems to apply to the whole prepositional phrase:

Should I stand at one side or right *in the middle*?

Many people are *against public ownership* completely.

2.15 Basic and Derived Senses of Prepositions

Prepositions also differ in meaning according to their basic and derived senses. Most of the studies on polysemy are concerned with polysemy relations between senses of a word. The discussion focuses on the different senses of a word. There are some examples concerning the basic sense of prepositions in the following:

1. There is a pen *in* the box.
2. He put the glass *on* the table.
3. They were waiting for him *at* the bus station.

In the examples above, the prepositions *in*, *on*, and *at* are all used in their basic senses.

The polysemy of spatial prepositions is of special interest because they are involved in rather abstract sense relations. “The prepositions are amongst the most polysemous words in English, and in different languages” (Taylor, 1989, p. 112). As any foreign learner of English will confirm, the polysemy of prepositions verges on the chaotic. Taylor (1989) explains that “the range of uses associated with any one preposition in one language rarely overlaps with the meanings of any single linguistic form in another language” (p.113). Prepositional usage is idiomatic, and 'just has to be learnt'. The staggering complexity of prepositional polysemy has been ignored.

Prepositions, in their spatial sense, serve to locate spatially one entity with reference to another. Taylor (1989) defines that the entity will be referred to as the trajector, or TR, while the entity that serves as a reference point will be referred to as the landmark, or LM. Prepositions may highlight many different aspects of the TR-LM relationship. An important distinction is between a static and dynamic relationship. If the relationship is static, the preposition denotes the place of the TR. Alternatively, the relationship may be a dynamic one of goal (the end- point of the TR's movement is highlighted), source (the starting point of the TR's movement is highlighted), or path (some or all of the trajectory followed by the TR is denoted). The notions of path and place are firstly into our consideration. There is a natural, metonymic relationship between the path that is followed by a moving entity, and any one of the infinite number of points located on the path. The relationship is an instance defined as synecdoche “sense or interpretation or a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole for a part” (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, 1973). That is a linguistic form that shows a path can also designate a place. For instance:

1. a. The helicopter flew *over* the town. (path)
 b. The helicopter hovered *over* the town. (place)

2. a. She drove *by* the bank. (path)
 b. She lives the bank. (place). (Taylor, 1989)

A particularly salient point on a path is the end-point. Again, a linguistic form showing a path also frequently exhibits a place construed as the end-point of a path (Taylor, 1989):

3. a. She walked *over* the hill. (path)
 b. She lives *over* the hill. (place, construed end-point of a path)
4. a. She walked *across* the street. (path)
 b. She lives *across* the street. (place)

and polysemy of goal and place; one sense has to do with a static relation construed as the final point of movement, the other with the static relation (Taylor, 1989):

5. a. They hung the picture *over* the armchair. (goal)
 b. The picture hangs *over* the armchair. (place)
6. a. He put the money *in* his wallet. (goal)
 b. The money is *in* his wallet. (place)

Less frequent is the polysemy of place and source. For instance:

7. a. The thief came *out of* prison. (source)
 b. The thief is now *out of* prison. (place)
8. a. The little girl was taken *away from* her parents. (source)
 b. The little girl now lives *away from* her parents. (place)

The source relation needs to be encoded in a specific way, e.g. by the use of a complex prepositional phrase:

9.
 - a. The notebook is *under* the desk. (Place)
 - b. She put the notebook *under* the desk. (Goal)
 - c. She took the notebook *from under* the desk. (Source)

Derived sense of prepositions has always been something of an embarrassment to generative linguistics. The source of the problem lies in the view that the meaning of words can be represented as bundles of necessary and sufficient features. Taylor (1989) discusses the possibility that many areas of experience are metaphorically structured by means of a rather small number of image schemas. Amongst these are:

- a. Containment. The image schema profiles a container, with its inside and outside, in the domain of three-dimensional space. The image schema is applied metaphorically to a large number of non-spatial domains. Linguistic forms are conceptualized as containers such as *put ideas into words, the content of an essay, etc.*
- b. A journey and its component parts. (i.e. origin, path and destination, with possible obstacles and detours on the way). Life itself is frequently conceptualized as a journey such as *We are going round in circles.*
- c. Proximity and distance. A schema based on spatial relations is projected onto non-spatial domains such as *a close friend.*
- d. Linkage and separation. Closely related to the proximity-distance schema is the schema of linkage and separation such as the following '*we make contact with people, we keep in touch*'.
- e. Front-back orientation. This schema is applied to the human body such as the future lies in front (*look forward to the future*), while the past is at one's back (*look back on the past*). Many languages make no formal distinction between 'in front of' and 'before', and between 'behind' and 'after'. What is in front of an event is what happens before; what is behind happens after.

- f. The part-whole relationship. The whole consists of parts arranged in a specific configuration such as a married couple forms a whole; on divorce they *split up*, or *break up*; later, they may *come together* again.
- g. Linear order. This arranges objects in a one-dimensional line, in terms of their increasing distance from an observer.
- h. Up-down orientation.
- i. Mass vs. multiplex conceptualizations (Taylor, 1989).

If we want to give a clear example to the derived sense of prepositions, we can say the preposition *on* is used in its different meanings with different words. For instance:

- 1. You can *rely on* him. He is so honest.

In this sentence, *rely on* means trusting somebody to work hard or well, or always to act, behave or happen in the way that you want them to.

- 2. I *went on* writing during the night and finally was able to finish it.

Here, *go on* means continuing to do something.

- 3. He *insisted on* a contract that gave him some sort of security.

If you *insist on* doing something or receiving something, you firmly ask for it, ask to do it and refuse to give in or accept anything else.

- 4. He *put on* his coat and went out quickly.

Put on, in this example, means wearing something.

2.16 Turkish Equivalents of Prepositions in English

Prepositions are used in English before the nouns and they relate words to the other parts of the sentence. Lewis (1989) explains that the sense of many English prepositions can be expressed by a roundabout phrase such as *before* or *in front of* *during* or *in the course of* *by* or *through the agency of* and *beyond* or *on the far side of*. Many Turkish expressions follow the pattern of the latter prepositional phrases such as *front (cm): Önümde* durdu-He stopped *in front of* me or *Önümüzden* geçtiler-They passed *before* us. Postpositional expressions are mostly used after nouns and express ‘place where’. Küçükboyacı (1976) expresses that prepositions are called as postpositions in Turkish because prepositions come after the nouns they govern. However, the prepositions in English come before the words or phrases. For this reason, they are examined under the heading of prepositions. Furthermore, he adds that there are prepositions in the languages (like English) which have subject + verb + object structure and postpositions in the languages (like Turkish) which have subject + object + verb structure (Greenberg, 1963).

Prepositions in Turkish are different from those in English. In order to understand the difference, case suffixes and postpositions in Turkish should be understood clearly. Case suffixes are affixations that define the relationship between a noun (nominal) and other constituents of a syntactic structure. In Turkish, case suffixes are as follows:

1. Absolute (Plain) Case: The noun is in its simplest form without any suffixes attached to it. For instance:

Ev	boya	- n -	dı.
▼	▼	▼	▼
House	paint	passive suffix	3 rd person singular past tense
‘The house was painted’			

2. Accusative (Specific Object) Case: The noun is the object of the action or state and it usually precedes a transitive verb. For instance:

Ev - i boya - dik
 ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼
 House accusative paint 3rd person
 case marker plural past tense
 ‘We painted the house.’

3. Dative (Goal) Case: The noun is the indirect object of the verb. For instance:

Ev - e gel - dik.
 ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼
 House dative come 3rd person.
 case marker plural past tense
 ‘We came to the house.’

4. Locative Case: The noun denotes the location or place of the action. For instance:

Ev - de kal - dim.
 ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼
 House locative stay 1st person
 case marker past tense.
 ‘I stayed at home’

5. Ablative (Source-Route) Case: The noun shows the source of an action or point of departure:

Ev - den gel - dim.
 ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼
 House ablative come 1st person
 case-marker past tense
 ‘I came from the house’

6.Genitive (Possessive) Case: The noun denotes possession:

Ev - in bahçe - si
▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

House genitive garden the
case-marker

‘The garden of the house’

Postpositions correspond to prepositions in English, however, as their name suggests, they follow the words they govern unlike English prepositions that precede the words. Postpositions are categorized according to the suffix they require on the words that precede them:

1. Postpositions with ablative suffix on preceding substantive:

...den sonra - After

Saat 5' ten sonra (*after* 5 o'clock)

...den önce = Before

Senden önce (*before* you) «

2. Postpositions with dative suffix on preceding substantive:

...e kadar = Until, upto.

Saat 10'a kadar (*Until* 10 o'clock)

...e doğru = Towards

Eve doğru (*towards* the house)

3. Postpositions with absolute or genitive case:

ile = With

Benim ile / benim/e (*with* me)

için = For (absolute)

Kardeşler için (*for* the brothers)

...in için = For (possessive)

Kardeşlerim *için* (for my brothers)

4. Postpositions expressing location:

...nın *üstünde* / *üstüne* = On (top of)

Sıranın *üstünde* (on the desk)

...nın *içinde* / *içine* = In (side of)

Kutunun *içinde* (in the box)



CHAPTER 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 The Role of Turkish on Second Language Acquisition: Language Transfer

Most of the studies on prepositions show that there is an inevitable role of the first language on SLA and SLA mirrors the first language development. Many researchers who will be presented in the next section accept language transfer and find that there is mostly a negative transfer from the first language (L1) to the second language (L2) while acquiring prepositions. For that reason, it is necessary to give some information about language transfer and to understand to what extent language transfer affects SLA. Some definitions of language transfer are given below:

Language transfer is a technical term denoting the 'positive' interaction of two or more 'similar areas of language or languages resulting in 'correct' linguistic output (positive transfer) or denoting the 'negative interaction of two or more similar areas of language or languages resulting in 'incorrect' linguistic output (negative transfer). (Gass & Selinker, 1983, p. 821)

Language transfer is the activation of a certain knowledge base, procedure, or operation in one area of language or language with the effect to perform the same operation in another 'similar' area of language or language learning. (Möhle & Raupach, 1983)

Language transfer is the use of native language (or other language) in the acquisition of a second (or additional) language. (Gass & Selinker, 1983, p.372)

Odlin (1989, p. 27) stated that “language transfer was the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired”. LI transfer occurs when the influence results from the learner’s mother tongue. There are plenty of definitions of language transfer. Looking at these definitions, we can say that language transfer is one of the factors that categorize second

language learner systems. Sentences in the target language may exhibit interference from the mother tongue. According to Ellis (1985, p. 21), behaviourist learning theory states that “old habits get in the way of learning new habits”. Thus in L2 acquisition, the patterns of the learner’s mother tongue that are different from those of the L2 get in the way of the learning the L2. This is referred to as ‘interference’. George (1972) found that 'one-third of the deviant sentences from second language learners could be attributed to language transfer', a figure similar to that given by Brudhiprabha (1972).

Apart from these researchers, another two, Kellerman and Zobl also renewed interest in LI transfer and studied on this subject. Zobl (1982) classified the effect of the LI on SLA in two groups:

1. The effect of the LI on SLA: **how**. Zobl identified two patterns of LI influence on SLA. These were: “The pace at which a developmental sequence traversed and the number of developmental structures in such sequences. He noted that a learner's LI could inhibit and accelerate passage through a developmental sequence, although apparently not alter the sequence itself, except by occasionally adding a different initial starting structure. Where an LI form was similar to a developmental one, this could make the learner persist with the developmental form longer than learners without such a form in their LI, and could also extend the structural domain of the immature form” (Larsen- Freeman & Long, pp. 188-189).

2. The effect of the LI on SLA: **when (markedness)**: “The general claim was that linguistically unmarked features of the LI would tend to transfer while linguistically marked features would not (Larsen-Freeman & Long, p. 194).

3. The effect of the LI on SLA: **when (perceived transferability)**. Kellerman showed that “whether or not learners actually transfer a form could depend in part on how likely they thought it to be acceptable in another language, or their perception of the L1-L2 'distance', i.e. how marked its use in their own LI appeared to them. Demonstrating such principles often required elicitation and experimentation rather than simple observation and description” (Larsen-Freeman & Long, p. 198).

The researchers agreed that “the role of the LI was more complex but fortunately not as negative as was first thought by proponents of the contrastive

analysis. It could lead to errors, overproduction and constraints on hypotheses” (Larsen-Freeman & Long, p. 201). They also added that “L1-L2 difference did not necessarily mean difficulty in SLA. On the contrary, it was the similarities between native and target language that tended to cause many problems. However, the structural identity between two languages did not necessarily result in positive transfer, either” (Larsen-Freeman & Long, p. 201).

Kellerman found in his studies that “transfer is a strategy available to compensate for lack of L2 knowledge. However, its use with idioms, lexis and syntax, at least, and probably with all aspects of language except phonology, would be constrained by the learner's perception of L1-L2 distance, with marked forms (here meaning those which were less frequent, less productive, less semantically transparent, and less core) being potentially less transferable than unmarked ones” (Larsen-Freeman & Long, p. 199).

In another study by Ijaz (1986), she placed the emphasis on the importance of language transfer and she said that the weight of the semantic dimensions of words in the native language was transferred to the corresponding words in the L2. In lexical usage, the L2 learners constantly favoured the lexical semantic structures that had close equivalents in their native language. She suggested by looking at the findings of her study that the linguistic usage of advanced second language learners was influenced by their mother tongue in a much more subtle fashion than the frequency of erroneous usages clearly traceable to their native language might suggest.

Selinker (1988) took as his object of inquiry the English Interlanguage (IL) speech of 13 and 15-year-old Israeli children, native speakers of Hebrew, compared with the speech of the native Hebrew of the same children, as well as

After reviewing the literature on language transfer, it is necessary to add that language transfer is not the only factor that affects SLA. There are also some other factors as indicated by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), briefly given in the following order:

1. Age (child acquisition, adult acquisition)
2. Aptitude (verbal intelligence, interest, vocabulary, auditory ability)
3. Motivation.
4. Attitude (parents, peers, learning situation, teachers, ethnicity)
5. Personality (self-esteem, extroversion, anxiety, risk taking, sensitivity to rejection, empathy, inhibition, tolerance of ambiguity)
6. Cognitive style (field independence/dependence, category width, reflectivity/impulsivity, aural/visual, analytic, gestalt)
7. Hemisphere specialization.
8. Learning strategies:
 - a. Metacognitive strategies; advanced organizers, selfmanagement, self-evaluation, directed attention.
 - b. Cognitive strategies; repetition, note-taking, translation, key word, transfer, imagery, recombination.
 - c. Social meditation; cooperation (O'Malley et al., 1985).

Apart from these factors, there are also some other factors such as language disability, interest, sex, birth order, prior experience etc.

In conclusion, these studies have shown clearly that language transfer is one of the most important issues in SLA and this factor should be taken into consideration seriously because a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of language transfer provides recognition of its importance as part of the overall picture of SLA.

3.2 Prepositions

English has prepositions because these allow us to get away with a smaller lexicon than we would need if, for each complex notion expressed by a verb plus preposition combination, we had a formally simple word. English has a syntax in which prepositions are subordinate to verbs, rather than the reverse, because semantically the relation that prepositions express is typically subordinate to the relations that verbs express. This does not tell us why English has separate words for expressing these prepositional notions, rather than, say (a), having affixes attached to nouns or NP's to express them. To (a), there is presumably no answer: the fact that English has words rather than case markings for prepositional ideas is no doubt accidental, since there are many other languages that do use case markings to express notions which are expressed by affix. Finnish, for instance, has a large number of cases, but also a respectable number of prepositions.

Many studies have shown that ESL learners are frequently confused at prepositions, especially regarding when or how to use a preposition in a suitable place in a sentence. Researchers who have been studying on this subject examine especially the difficulties of some prepositions or errors made by learners. In this part, the studies on prepositions will be examined in order to find out the problems of ESL learners while using prepositions.

White (1987) found that “learnability by positive input alone was illustrated by the differential distribution of pied-piping and preposition-stranding in languages, some allowing only one (pied-piping) and some both” (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 393). As explained by Ellis (1994) explained that pied-piping referred to the proximity of two tied grammatical elements. For example, the preposition *for* and the pronoun *whom* placed next to each other in the sentence: “For *whom* did you get the present?” He defined preposition stranding by contrasting it with pied-piping: A preposition did not always have to be proximate to the noun or pronoun to which it grammatically belonged, as in the sentence: ‘Who did you get the present for?’

“The conservative, unmarked hypothesis must be the restrictive one, that only pied-piping would be possible” (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, 393):

With which friend does Dorothy live?

and that preposition stranding was not:

Where did you get that fish *from*?

Which friend does Dorothy live *with*?

He continued that “a child learning Spanish, which disallowed preposition-stranding, would adopt the conservative stance, and heard nothing in the input which did not confirm to that rule. A child learning English, however, would also start by assuming pied-piping, and then hear examples of preposition stranding and learn to use both structures” (Larsen-Freeman&Long,1991, p.394). He also claimed that if a child knew that the preposition stranding and pied-piping or only preposition-stranding were possible, then he would have no problem with learning English. He added that pied-piping would be verified by the input if the child was exposed to Spanish. However, that input would not provide needed negative evidence.

Some theorists proposed that the language faculty included learning procedures or principles that were not properly part of Universal Grammar. However, these principles operated in tandem with language faculty to enable the child to eliminate or avoid errors. The Subset Principle is an example of such a principle (Berwick, 1985). Ellis (1994) expressed that “if learners constructed a conservative grammar, Y, which generated a subset of the sentences generated by some other grammar, X, this grammar could subsequently be expanded on the basis of positive evidence. On the other hand, if learners started with a superset grammar, X, they would require negative evidence to narrow its scope in order to construct Y.

Alptekin (personal communication) expanded these ideas by saying that learners acquire a conservative grammar first. Later, they expand this grammar. Otherwise, we cannot explain the building up of native speaker’s competence in LI without the need or continuous presence of negative evidence. He continued that learners often acquire the L2 in the same manner as the LI. For that reason, they build a conservative grammar and then added on rules to their developing

grammar in the L2. This explanation could be exemplified by the following phrases in Turkish: *tepe-de* (on the hill), *araba-da* (in the car) and *istasyon-da* (at the station). There were three separate morphemes indicating location in English. However, in Turkish, there was only one morpheme, *-de/-da* showing location for this phrase. He concluded that Turkish learners should start with one of the three English morphemes (often *in*, which was the most frequent and least marked) and then overgeneralize. Here, negative evidence became necessary to prevent fossilization. Turkish learners did not need negative evidence because Turkish had the conservative grammar (*-de/-da*) in this respect.

While White was studying the acquisition of prepositions by children, Lennon (1991) looked at the errors produced by advanced learners of English in spoken performance. In his study, Lennon used four female West-German university students of English. The subjects spent six months at the University of Reading in England. During the study, he categorized the errors produced by the learners into some groups. At the end of the study, he concluded that even among advanced learners of English, despite many years of classroom instruction and ongoing exposure to the L2 community, error was still frequent. He pointed out that error was found to be highly concentrated in specific categories, however, and it appeared that the learners' main problems were with lexis and preposition choice.

Richards (1971) also studied English errors produced by speakers of different nations such as Japanese, Chinese, Burmese, French, etc. In the study, there were six tables and each table had different developmental errors and he discussed these errors in terms of four groups (Richards, 1971, p. 6):

1. Over-generalization.
2. Ignorance of rule restriction
3. Incomplete application of rules.
4. False concepts hypothesized

One of the tables included errors in the use of prepositions. In this part, Richards discussed errors in the use of prepositions in the second group above. He

called these errors intralingual and developmental errors. According to him, rather than reflecting the learners' inability to separate two languages, “intralingual and developmental errors reflected the learners' competence at a particular stage, and illustrated some of the general characteristics of language acquisition” (Richards, 1971, p. 1). He added that “analogy was a major factor in the misuse of prepositions. The learner used the same preposition with similar verbs” by analogy (Richards, 1971, p. 9), for instance:

'He showed me the book led the learner to produce;

'He explained me the book'

He said to me' gave;

He asked to me'

We talked about it' led;

We discussed about it'

'Ask him to do if gave;

'Make him to do'

These errors were representative of some errors we might expect from anyone learning ESL. They were “typical of systematic errors in English usage, which were found in numerous case studies of the English errors of speakers of particular mother tongues” (Richards, 1971, p. 4). We could also find such errors in Turkish learners. These errors were the sort of mistakes which persisted from week to week and which were repeated one year to the next with any group of learners.

Oller and Inal (1971) reported an experimental investigation of the cloze methodology as a test of proficiency in English preposition usage for non-native speakers. In the study, there were three groups: The first group contained nineteen native speakers of English; the second group consisted of fifty-three native speakers of Turkish, thirty-nine of them being male and fourteen female, and all from different majors; the third group was composed of one hundred and ten foreign students that represented thirty different language backgrounds and thirty-six different major fields of study. The study demonstrated that “a cloze test of preposition usage provided useful diagnostic information regarding difficulties

for students from mixed language backgrounds as well as for the speakers from the same native language background” (Oller & Inal, 1971, p. 315).

Coventry et al. (1994, p. 1) discussed “two separate issues in terms of the semantics of spatial prepositions; these were the general factors of a functional geometry mediating the use of spatial prepositions and object-specific effects”. The study concluded that knowledge about how particular objects interacted with each other contributed to the representation of the functional relations that determined preposition usage.

Klein (1993) examined the omission of prepositions in English in his study. He focused on the question of whether L2 learners were guided by UG (Universal Grammar) and markedness considerations when they exhibited a null-prep grammar. At the end of the study, there were two kinds of phenomena involving omitted prepositions and these fitted into UG in very different ways:

1. As a result of core parameter setting (null-prep)
2. As a peripheral exception (bare NPs)

Eröz (2000) studied the problems of Turkish ESL learners with English prepositions. In her study, one hundred and forty participants (ninety upper-intermediate, fifty pre-intermediate level participants) were given tests in order to examine the errors participants produced while using prepositions. 50% of the subjects answered the questions incorrectly, and patterns in these incorrect preposition choices were examined. Patterns that seemed to be a result of transfer from the subjects' LI (Turkish) were closely scrutinized. At the end of the study, prepositions that corresponded to certain case suffixes were found to be conducive to more problems than others. Problems due to certain postpositions were also observed. She categorized the problems into three groups:

Case suffix related problems.
Postposition related problems.
Translation related problems.

She also proposed that teaching prepositions in context would probably help the learning of prepositions and would be more effective than presenting and explaining them in the students' mother tongue. It was important for the students to get the concept of a preposition and to grasp the various meanings of prepositions in different contexts.

Bowerman (1996), in her study with children, expressed that space was an important preoccupation of young children from birth on; in her study with infants, she explored the spatial properties of their environment, at first visually and proprioceptively, and then through action. She considered what her studies could suggest about her interaction between nonlinguistic and linguistic factors in the acquisition of spatial semantic categories, and about the kinds of hypotheses children might bring to the acquisition of spatial words. During her study, she found out that children generalized the newly learned spatial words rapidly and talked about underextensions and overextensions of spatial properties. In the study, she compared English and Mexican languages. Mixtec that was spoken in Mexico did not have all-purpose contact and support word but English did.

At the end of the study, Bowerman (1996, p. 425) concluded that the existence of crosslinguistic variation in the semantic packaging of spatial notions created a complex learning problem for the child: “Even if learners began by mapping spatial morphemes directly onto precompiled concepts of space (which was not all obvious) they could not get far in this way; instead, they must work out the meanings of the forms by observing how they were distributed across contexts in fluent speech. Learners' powers of observation appeared to be very acute, since their spatial semantic categories showed remarkable language specificity by as early as seventeen to twenty months of age”.

Lakkis and Malak (2000) compared the prepositional uses in Arabic and English and found prepositions in English which had equivalents in Arabic and others that did not. There were structures, which were equivalent in both languages and others that were not. The subjects in the study were the entire population of the University Orientation Program (UOP) at the American University of Beirut (AUB). The overall population at UOP consisted of fifty

students who had various linguistic backgrounds. For all of them the LI was Arabic.

Based on the results, they concluded that “in the case of prepositions, students relied on transfer to judge the appropriate usage of prepositions. Deviation occurred either in the form of instruction or frequent exposure when learning had already taken place. An instructor of English, whose native language is Arabic, can use the students' LI for structures that use equivalent prepositions in both languages. If there are verbs or expressions in the LI and L2 that have different structures taking prepositions or not having equivalent in one of the languages, instructors should teach these differences to their students” (Lakkis & Malak, 2000, p. 30). They claimed that rules helped the students choose the correct preposition, so whenever there was a rule that simplified the usage of prepositions, instructors should call the students' attention to it.

Elyıldırım (1996) found that Turkish learners identified the case marker used in their native language with the construction of direct object with preposition complement in the target language. Learners tended to accept the sentences with the preposition *to* instead of *for* due to LI interference in which dative case marker corresponded to both *for* and *to* in the target language. For instance:

The architect designed a concert hall *to* the general public.

This sentence should be used with *for* instead of *to* as the case marker '-e' could be used for both prepositions in the target language. She concluded that these results provided clear evidence of LI interference regarding the issue of identification of the case marker with the prepositional complement structure in the target language.

3.3 Error Analysis

In this part, there is some information about error analysis because most of the studies on prepositions focus on error from a language processing and language acquisition perspective. Learners' errors might provide clues to the

source of difficulties that most learners meet during the acquisition of prepositions.

Error Analysis has a long tradition. Prior to the early 1970s, French (1949) said that Error Analysis consisted of little more than impressionistic collections of 'common' errors and their linguistic classification. The goals of traditional Error Analysis were pedagogic, which meant that errors provided information that could be used to sequence items for teaching or devising remedial lessons. The absence of any theoretical framework for explaining the role played by errors in the process of SLA led to no serious attempt to define error or to account for it in psychological terms. Also the enthusiasm for Contrastive Analysis grew. According to Contrastive Analysis, the prevention of errors was more important than the identification of errors. It was not until 1960s that there was a resurgence of interest in Error Analysis.

In order to understand Error Analysis, we should firstly give the definition of Contrastive Analysis briefly that will be mentioned later. Contrastive Analysis assumes that the conviction that linguistic differences could be used to predict learning difficulty has given rise to the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis: where two languages were similar, positive transfer would occur; where they were different, negative transfer, or interference, would occur (Larsen-Freeman&Long,1991, p.120).

Ioup (1984) said that “the enduring quality of Contrastive Analysis was not to sheer obstinacy. It was observed earlier that no one could deny the LI influence on the L2 performance. Thus, the native language of a foreign speaker could be identified with some degree of assurance, at least where phonological evidence was available, although identifying the LI of SL learners based on syntactic evidence alone was not successful” (Larsen-Freeman&Long,1991, p.124-125)

Inspired by Chomsky's theory, “first language acquisition researchers began studying the speech of children acquiring English as an LI” and “Chomsky's view was that language acquisition was not a product of habit formation, but rather one of the rule formations” (Larsen-Freeman&Long,1991, p.124, 125, 126). Cook (1985) explained Chomsky's view of Universal Grammar which the language properties inherent in the human mind made up and which consisted of not only particular rules or a particular language but also a set of general principles which

applied to all languages, “once acquired these rules would allow learners to create and comprehend novel utterances. They would not have understood and would not have produced these utterances. They limited to imitating input from the environment. Chomsky's theory of language acquisition received support from the first language acquisition researchers recording the errors of children. Children acquiring English as their LI were found to commit errors” For Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p.126). For instance:

She doesn't *wants* to go.
I eated it.

These examples indicated that “they had internalized rules for subject-verb agreement and past tense formation in English, respectively, but had not yet mastered the limitations of the rules. These original errors showed that the children were not simply repeating forms from the input they met”. (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 126)

“To be sure, SL learners still committed errors which could be traced to LI interference and as such were termed *interlingual* errors by Richards” (Larsen-Freeman&Long, 1991, p.127). SL learners, regardless of their LI, were committing a large number of similar errors. Richards called these errors as *intralingual* errors. Researchers could learn a great deal about the SLA process by inferring the strategies that SL learners were adopting. “Certain errors were classified as overgeneralization by Richards (1971), caused by the learners' failure to observe the boundaries of a rule. Other errors were attributed to simplification by George (1972) or redundancy reduction, such as when plural marker was omitted from' a noun preceded by a cardinal number larger than one” (Larsen-Freeman&Long, 1991, p.127). Others were labelled as communication-based errors (Selinker, 1972), which resulted when speakers invoked communicative strategies, and induced errors (Stenson, 1974) that were brought about by a teacher's sequencing or presenting two linguistic items in a way, which created confusion in the mind of the language learner (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p.127). There are

some examples of these kinds of errors given by Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991, p. 129) in the following:

1. Interlingual - Interference
Is the book of my friend.
2. Intralingual - Overgeneralization
I wonder where are you going.
3. Simplification (Redundancy reduction)
I studied English for two year.
4. Communication - based
The learner uses 'airball' for balloon (word coinage)
5. Induced errors
She cries as if the baby cries, (for 'she cries like a baby')

According to Corder (1967), errors were a necessary part of linguistic development, and these errors were of significance because they might represent the discrepancy between the grammar of the learner's 'transitional competence' and that of the target language. Corder (1974) spelled out the procedure for Error Analysis. He classified this procedure into five groups as follows:

1. Selection of a corpus of language
2. Identification of errors in the corpus
3. Classification of the errors identified
4. Explanation of the psycholinguistic causes of the errors
5. Evaluation or error gravity ranking of the errors (Lennon, 1991, p.181)

Corder (1981, p.5) added that “the application of linguistic and psychological theory to the study of language learning added a new dimension to the discussion of errors; people now believed they had a principled means for accounting for these errors; that is to say that they believed them to be the result of interference in the learning of a second language from the habits of

the first language”. To Richards (1971), the errors in such sentences below might be called intralingual and developmental errors. For instance:

Did he comed?

He coming from Israel.

These errors were mainly representative of the learner's competence at a particular stage, and showed some of the general features of language acquisition.

Ellis (1985) pointed out that Error Analysis provided two kinds of information about interlanguage. The first one was concerned with the linguistic type of errors produced by L2 learners. The second type of information included the psycholinguistic type of errors made by L2 learners.

Lennon (1991) tried to find the problem of performing Error Analysis in terms of theoretical and practical basis. Firstly, he explored the error definition, then error identification, and finally error distinction. He introduced two new dimensions of error, 'extent' and 'domain'. To him, “‘domain’ reflects the listener's viewpoint (error recognition) and ‘extent’ speaker's correction (error repair). Error domain and extent functioned as dual measures to classify and differentiate errors systematically without recourse to speculation about the psycholinguistic causes of error” (Lennon, 1991, p.194).

“The most significant contribution of Error Analysis lay in its success in elevating the status of errors from undesirability to that of a guide to the inner working of the language learning process. As a result of the evidence from Error Analysis, errors were no longer seen as unwanted forms, but as the evidence of the learner's active contribution to SLA” (Ellis, 1985, p. 53).

3.4 Research Questions

The review of the previous studies showed that most of the studies have been concerned with the difficulties in learning and using prepositions and have attempted to clarify these problems. With regard to empirical studies, the number of research is inadequate and there are lots of questions whose answers are

unknown. The aim of the present study is to throw light on some of these questions.

Observations made in the classroom language teaching indicated that Turkish learners have some problems with prepositions in English. Previous studies have also been concerned with this issue and observed similar problems about the acquisition of prepositions by ESL learners. Eröz (2000) observed that Turkish learners have difficulties with prepositions in English whenever prepositions are used far from their basic meanings. In her study, she used different kinds of prepositions and concluded that there are some difficulties met by Turkish learners. However, she mentioned the issue of sense relations and the findings showed that Turkish learners could not understand this distinction and produce errors while using prepositions in English. Prepositions have a basic meaning and the other meanings are derived from this meaning. Turkish learners have to meet the challenges of learning the basic meaning and then derived meanings of prepositions.

Many studies have shown that learner's native language might have an effect on the acquisition of prepositions in English. This effect might be positive as well as negative. If the translation equivalent in Turkish overlaps with the lexical item in English, the positive effect occurs and vice versa. Eröz (2000) also investigated the language transfer and found that there was native language impact on the acquisition of prepositions.

L2 proficiency refers to a learner's skill in using the L2 in different tasks. The level of proficiency is effective on the ability of the learner to understand and use the prepositions. However, Lennon (1991) studied on the errors made by the advanced learners and found that the advanced learners also produced errors while using prepositions in spite of many years of classroom interaction and ongoing exposure of L2 community. This does not mean that advanced learners are always liable to make the same errors as the learners of lower levels; on the contrary, this is obviously indicative of the difficulty of the learners of any level with the use of prepositions. The rate of making a prepositional error in usage is proportional with the level of proficiency: The lower the level of proficiency, the higher the

possibility of a prepositional error. In our study, too, learners' proficiency and the issue of the acquisition of prepositions are taken into consideration.

In view of these assumptions, this study investigated the following research questions:

1. Do Turkish learners acquire English prepositions?
2. Is there any difficulty as regards sense relations, basic or derived senses, which Turkish learners face in the acquisition process of prepositions?
3. Is there an impact of the native language on the acquisition of preposition?
4. Is there any relationship between proficiency and the acquisition of English prepositions by Turkish learners?

CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH DESIGN: Methodology

Subjects: This study was carried out with seventy-nine Turkish learners of English. Forty-two of the learners attended the first year of Malatya High school and thirty-seven of them was learners studying English as their majors at the Program of English Teacher Training, a new (one-year-old) program carried out in Erzurum by Open Education Faculty at Anadolu University. This is the first year of the program, which is intended to train the students at their twenties as the prospective teachers after a two years' education to be later extended to four years, a period only at the end of which they are entitled to make a whole teacher.

Materials: There were three kinds of tests given to the students. The first one was a cloze test assessing learners' proficiency. In the cloze test, there was a passage and every sixth word was deleted in the passage. These words were randomly chosen in that order without placing the emphasis on a single type of word. In other words, the deleted words were prepositions, verbs, adjectives or nouns; not all of them were prepositions or nouns. Then the students were asked to fill in the blanks by using a word appropriate both in meaning and type. There were some changes in the test before given to the students for this study. The students who participated in the pilot study had met some difficulties in understanding the meaning of some words while filling in the blanks. For that reason, some words such as 'shelter' and 'disaster' were changed into 'hinder' and 'very bad'.

The second one was a Grammaticality Judgement Task measuring comprehension. In this task, there were thirty-five sentences. The sentences were constructed out of three prepositions: *at*, *on*, and *in*. There were nine sentences including preposition *at* and thirteen sentences including *on*, and thirteen sentences including *in*. Some of the sentences in the task referred to basic meaning of prepositions as in the following:

You are standing *on* my foot.

The dog was lying *on* the ground.

The students were asked to judge whether the sentences above are good in English or not. The sentences were the examples measuring the basic sense of prepositions. Some of the sentences including the derived sense of prepositions were used to find out the effect of derived sense relations on the acquisition process. For instance;

Mary and Jane have nothing *at common*, (in common)

The post office is *at strike*, (on strike)

The sentences above were incorrect sentences in English. They were given to the students in order to understand their knowledge of derived sense of prepositions. If they have adequate knowledge about the derived sense of prepositions they would tick the sentences as incorrect ones and underline the wrong items in the sentences. The students were asked to judge whether the sentences in the task were correct or incorrect. They were given three options, 'good', 'not good', and 'no idea' in order to evaluate their acquisition of prepositions. They would put an 'X' next to the sentences which they thought they were written in good English; they would put an '/' next to the sentences which they thought they were not written in good English. They would put a '?' next to the sentences when they have no idea about the sentences. Example sentences indicating the marking procedure were given in the instruction section.

The last test was a translation test. There were thirty sentences in Turkish in the test. The students were asked to translate these sentences into English. As Odlin (1989) stated, learners' native language has an important impact on the acquisition of the second language acquisition. For this reason, the aim in this test is to examine whether Turkish learners transfer prepositions from Turkish to English. For instance:

Hava sıcak olduğu zaman gölgede dururum.

Kısa bir tanışmadan sonra masaya oturduk ve öğlen yemeği yedik.

In these sentences, the words ‘gölgede’ and ‘masaya’ seem to cause trouble to the Turkish learners because Turkish equivalents of these words are different from those in English. Turkish students may use ‘under the shade’ for ‘gölgede’ and ‘to the table’ for ‘masaya’. They may also overgeneralize some items in English. For instance:

O Londra’ya gece gitti.

O, akşamları genellikle televizyon seyrediyor.

The words ‘gece’ and ‘akşamları’ may cause Turkish learners to overgeneralize. They may think that ‘in night’ and ‘in the evening’ or ‘at night’ and ‘at evenings’. In Turkish, the items are both the words expressing time. So they can use the same prepositions for the similar words. In addition to the language transfer, sense relations play an important role on the acquisition of prepositions. Basic and derived senses of prepositions may cause some troubles to the Turkish learners because there is a difference between the basic and derived senses of prepositions, which is unknown for Turkish learners. So, this study examined the sense relations and there are some test items measuring this subject. For instance:

Cumartesi günü voleybol oynayacağız.

Su 100 derecede kaynar.

While ‘cumartesi günü’ is the basic sense of prepositions, ‘100 derecede’ is the derived sense of prepositions. Turkish learners may meet some problems while translating these two items because they should know the difference between these items while translating the sentences from Turkish to English.

The materials used in the study, namely the cloze test, the grammaticality judgement task and the translation test, are given in the Appendices part at the end of the study.

Prior to the present study, a pilot study was carried out with twenty students at the Faculty of Medicine at İnönü University in Malatya. The students were given three different tests consisting of a cloze test, a grammaticality

judgement task and a translation test. The results of the pilot study showed that students had some difficulties with the prepositions. 60% of the students answered most of the questions incorrectly. They gave incorrect answers especially to the questions measuring the acquisition of the prepositions in English, the basic and derived senses of prepositions and language transfer. The students, excluding none of them, were unable to find the proper preposition in one sentence, for which we had to replace them by another sentence. This sentence was as follows: “O ressam genellikle yağlı boya resim yapar.” This sentence was replaced by the one “Cevaplarınızı İngilizce yazın”. These difficulties were due to the lack of knowledge, basic and derived senses of prepositions and translation-related problems. After seeing these difficulties, we decided to carry out a study concerning these preposition-related problems of Turkish learners.

Scoring: After we had collected the data, learners' proficiency level was found by using the cloze test. Learners obtained 1 point for each correct or plausible answer given to the blanks in the test. The maximum score that could be obtained from the test was 30. The scores of the cloze test assessing learners' proficiency were found and the scores were evaluated according to this statistical procedure. Subsequently, basic statistical scores, such as mean and median scores with standard deviation and also the maximum and minimum scores, were calculated.

The raw scores that learners obtained from the Grammaticality Judgement Task were calculated. Each correct answer was given 1 point. Incorrect answers were given no point. The option 'don't know' and also the blank answers were excluded from the data analysis. Using the raw scores, the percentage scores were calculated and some basic statistical analyses were made.

The raw scores, which learners got from the translation test, were calculated. Each correct answer was given 1 point. Incorrect answers were given no point. The questions that were not answered by the learners were not taken into consideration.

CHAPTER 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prepositions seem to cause some difficulties to the ESL learners if we look at the results of the study carried out by various researchers. Turkish learners have also many problems with the prepositions in both learning and using them. A cloze test, a translation test and a grammaticality judgement task were given to the learners in order to find out the answer to the question whether Turkish learners acquire the prepositions in English. After we had collected data from these tests, the correct answers given to each sentence in the cloze test, the grammaticality judgement task and the translation test were counted. The statistical programme MINITAB 10.1 was used to carry out the basic statistical analysis of the results. Table 5.1 demonstrated the overall results of the tests according to the correct answers of the students.

Table 5.1 The overall results for the cloze test, the grammaticality judgement task, and the translation test.

	N	MEDIAN	MEAN	STDEV.	MIN	MAX
CLOZE TEST	79	14	13.77	4.80	5	25
GRAMMATICALITY JUDGEMENT TASK	79	18	17.77	3.66	10	27
TRANSLATION TEST	79	18	17.22	5.13	2	26

N = The number of subjects

MIN = The minimum score obtained by the learners

MAX = The maximum score obtained by the learners

The results given in Table 5.1 demonstrated that the mean score for the correct judgements made by the learners in the cloze test was 13.77 out of 30 with a standard deviation of 4.8. The mean score in the grammaticality judgement task was 17.77 out of 35, with a 3.66 standard deviation. In the translation test, the mean score is 17.22, with a 5.13 standard deviation. The standard deviation in the

grammaticality judgement task was lower than that of the translation test. This difference may have been regarded as normal if we consider that the learners face the difficulty in the translation test of transferring a Turkish statement including a preposition into English, whereas they find it easier to judge an already written statement in the grammaticality judgement task. These results indicated that Turkish learners were confused by the incongruity between the prepositional structures of both languages, which could be almost tantamount to admitting that they were devoid of the ability to think structurally and creatively in both languages. As Eröz (2000) observed, the overall results displayed that Turkish learners were frequently troubled by the use of the prepositions in English.

Table 5.2 presented the overall results for the language transfer. The sentences measuring the language transfer were determined and the results were found according to the correct answers of the learners to these questions.

Table 5.2 The overall results for the language transfer in the grammaticality judgement task and the translation test.

	N	MEDIAN	MEAN	STDEV:	MIN.	MAX.
GRAMMATICALITY JUDGEMENT TASK	14	20	31.21	25.87	0	72
TRANSLATION TEST	24	53.50	48.29	18.18	3	74

N = Number of the sentences assessing language transfer

The results presented in Table 5.2 showed that the mean score was 31.21 with a standard deviation of 25.87 in the grammaticality judgement task while the mean score was 48.29 with a standard deviation of 18.18 in the translation test. These results were very low when the total number of the subjects taking part in the study was taken into account. The standard deviation of the grammaticality judgement task was higher than that of the translation test. While acquiring the target items in the second language, the learners generally relied on their LI to transfer the items which seemed to be the close equivalents in their own language as mentioned by Lakkis and Malak, (2000) in Chapter 3.2. The results provided clear evidence of LI interference regarding the issue of the prepositions in English. This evidence could be understood in Table 5.3 and Table 5.4 clearly.

Table 5.3 The results of the language transfer according to the grammaticality judgement task.

LANGUAGE TRANSFER	RAWSCORES	PERCENTAGES
2 at the station	72	89
5 in October 2,1997	22	28
8 in the party	13	16*
13 by ink	6	8*
14 at sunrise	38	48
15 on the daytime	13	16*
16 in Christmas	18	23
18 look to	13	16*
23 at home	64	81
27 at New Year's Eve	0	0*
29 in time	55	70
31 on a chair	4	5*
32 in July	68	86
35 on time	51	65
Total =14	437	39.35

The learners accepted the incorrect prepositions as correct ones in the grammaticality judgement task. As presented-in Table 5.3, for instance, they could not recognize the incorrect preposition in the phrases '*in the party*' or '*at New Year's Eve*'. They produced these errors owing to Turkish interference. Although there was a negative influence of the language of Turkish on the acquisition of some sentences mentioned previously, the positive influence of Turkish on some items was obvious such as in '*at home*' or '*in July*'. While the learners used the preposition *in* correctly in the item '*in July*' they made the same thing for another item in '*in October, 2, 1997*'. They overgeneralized this item and ticked the item as correct. Most of the learners produced the same error for the item '*by ink*'. They could not understand the incorrect preposition usage in the item because the Turkish equivalent of the preposition was *Ue* and this sentence was an acceptable form in Turkish and the learners might have thought that it was the same in English. None of the learners could see the error in the phrase '*at New Year's*'

Eve’ and they accepted this item as a correct one. This error may have occurred owing to the Turkish impact on the acquisition of the item. The overgeneralization of the item by the learners was due to some errors. These errors were classified as overgeneralization which was caused by the learners' failure to observe the boundaries of a rule as indicated by Richards (1971) in Chapter 3.3. A majority of the learners could not notice the error in the phrase '*sat on a chair*' because of Turkish interference. This error could be attributed to the postposition related problem in Turkish. Turkish equivalent of this phrase was '*sandalyenin üstüne oturmak*'. *Üstüne* was a postposition expressing location in Turkish. They had incomplete knowledge of prepositions as Turkish had pospositions. 84 percent of the learners again could not tick the error in the sentence '*I wonder why Jim keeps looking to his watch*'. In Turkish, the learners translated the phrase '*look to*' as '*şey-e bakmak*'. Here, '*şey-e*' in Turkish referred to the preposition *to* in English. The learners' native language had a negative impact on this item. 86 percent of the learners thought that there was no error in the phrase '*on the daytime*'. The learners might have thought that the preposition *on* was a suitable answer in the sentence because *on* was used to express the daytime such as *on Wednesday* and they perceived *on the daytime* as a suitable answer in this sentence. They might have overgeneralized this item.

Table 5.4 The results of the language transfer in the translation test

LANGUAGE TRANSFER	RAW SCORES	PERCENTAGES
1 (cumartesi günü)	60	75
2 (İngilizce yazın)	57	72
3 (Almanya’da)	74	93
4(Yolun ortasında)	37	46*
5 (masada)	64	81
6 (bankada)	35	44*
7 (masaya oturduk)	3	4*
8 (televizyonda)	52	65
9 (partide)	41	51*
10 (gölgede)	21	27*
11 (denizde)	23	29*
12 (akşamları)	32	41*
13 (1995’de)	65	82
14 (mayıs’ın 3’ü)	27	34*
15 (gece)	68	86
16 (yılbaşında)	37	47*
17 (şu anda)	49	62
18 (Otobüs durağında)	57	72
20 (başının üstünde)	63	80
23 (saat 6’da)	70	89
24 (gelecekte)	62	78
25 (iki saat içinde)	55	70
28 (yirminci yızyılda)	46	58
30 (yazın)	61	77

TOTAL=24

1159

60.95

In the translation test, they translated Turkish sentences mostly by using their knowledge of Turkish. This- might account for their errors. As George (1972) expressed, most of the errors produced by the learners could be attributed to the LI influence. It was seen in Table 5.4 that the learners translated the sentence ‘*Masaya oturduk.*’ as ‘*We sat on/to/down the table.*’ They used *to* mostly and *on* and *down* partly, considering them to be the English equivalent of the

postposition in Turkish ‘-ye, -ya’. It was obviously noticed in the sentence *Gölgede oturdum.* ’ that they preferred the prepositions ‘at’ to stand for the Turkish postposition ‘-de/-da’ without thinking of its English context, and the preposition ‘under’ to stand for the Turkish postposition ‘-nin altında’ by comparing the situation to a tree under which they sat. This showed that Turkish learners acquired the prepositions in English in the same manner as Turkish. So they built a conservative grammar as indicated by Alptekin in Chapter 3.2.

Table 5.5 displayed the overall results for the basic sense. The raw scores were calculated according to the correct answers of the learners to the basic sense of the prepositions in the translation test and the grammaticality judgement task.

Table 5.5 The overall results for the basic sense in the grammaticality judgement task and the translation test.

	N	MEAN	MEDIAN	STDEV.	MIN.	MAX.
GRAMMATICALITY JUDGEMENT TASK	7	64.71	70	8.75	52	72
TRANSLATION TEST	5	63	63	9.08	49	72

N = Number of sentences

According to the results in Table 5.5, while the mean score was 64.71, with a 8.75 standard deviation in the grammaticality judgement task, the translation test’s mean score was 63, with a 9.08 standard deviation. The overall results seemed to be equal in both tests and indicated that Turkish learners generally acquire the basic sense of prepositions.

Table 5.6 The results of the basic sense according to the grammaticality judgement task

BASIC SENSE	RAW SCORES	PERCENTAGES
9 (at weekends)	71	90
17 (on my foot)	70	89
19 (on the way)	71	90
22 (in a moment)	52	66
28 (in the afternoon)	53	67
30 (in the centre)	64	81
33 (on the ground)	72	91

Total = 7 453 82

Table 5.7 The result of the basic sense according to the translation test

BASIC SENSE	RAW SCORES	PERCENTAGES
17 (şu anda)	49	62
20 (başının üstünde)	63	80
22 kutunun içinde)	72	91
23 (saat 6'da)	70	89
30 (yazın)	61	77

Total = 5 315 79.8

On the basis of the results in Table 5.6 and Table 5.7, it could be assumed that Turkish learners did not have many difficulties with the basic sense of prepositions in English because the percentage scores of the learners were very high as shown in Tables 5.6 and 5.7. For instance, in the grammaticality - judgement task, 91 percent of the students accepted the sentences '*the dog was lying on the ground*' and '*...Come with me, we can talk on the way*' as correct ones. They recognized the correct preposition usage in these sentences thanks to their adequate knowledge of the basic sense of the prepositions in English. In the same way, a majority of the learners again realized the basic sense of prepositions and used their knowledge while translating the sentences from Turkish into English in the translation test. 91 percent of the learners translated the sentence

"Kutunun içinde kalem var." and 89 percent of them translated the sentence 'Saat 6'da bir randevum var. ' correctly. Nearly all the sentences measuring the basic sense of the prepositions in English were correctly answered by 80 percent of the learners or more than those in both tests. These results clearly expressed that Turkish learners acquired the basic sense of the prepositions in English.

Table 5.8 The overall results for the derived sense of prepositions in the grammaticality judgement task and the translation test

	N	MEAN	MEDIAN	STDEV.	MIN.	MAX.
GRAMMATICALITY JUDGEMENT TASK	10	47.40	49	14.12	23	69
TRANSLATION TEST	5	31.20	39	21.31	8	53

N = Number of the sentences

The mean score was 47.40, with a 14.12 standard deviation in the grammaticality judgement task and the mean was 31.20, with a 21.31 standard deviation in the translation test. The standard deviation in the translation test was higher than that of the grammaticality judgement task. The distribution was large in the translation test. On the basis of these results, it could be said that Turkish learners had some problems in acquiring the derived sense of the prepositions in English in comparison with the basic sense of the prepositions. The percentage scores calculated from the correct answers were given in Table 5.9 and 5.10 and confirmed this finding.

The main reason for this difference was that the basic sense of the prepositions did not cause much complexity for the learners because they easily acquired this sense. However, they were confused when they encountered the derived sense of the prepositions. They thought that they could practise the same thing in the sentence including the derived sense of the prepositions as they did in the sentence including the basic sense of the prepositions. This meant that when they knew the meaning of the preposition in one context, they applied it to another sentence because of having incomplete knowledge of the derived sense of the

prepositions. The same preposition could be used in different sentences with different meanings. If the learners did not understand the differences between the sense relations then they produced errors.

Table 5.9 The results for the derived sense in the grammaticality judgement task.

DERIVED SENSE	RAW SCORES	PERCENTAGES
3 (at common)	23	29*
4 (at present)	41	52*
6 (congratulate on)	59	75
10 (succeed in)	56	71
11 (on the phone)	46	58
20 (at strike)	27	34*
21 (on my opinion)	55	70
24 (laugh on)	48	61
25 (believe in)	50	63
26 (keen on)	69	87

Total = 10 474 60

The percentage scores of the derived sense of the prepositions in the grammaticality judgement task as shown in Table 5.9 revealed that the learners met some difficulty in recognizing the errors in the sentences such as '*Mary and Jane have nothing at common* ' and '*The post office is at strike* They accepted these incorrect sentences as correct ones. The learners, on the other hand, ticked the sentence '*Terry is not here at present*' as the incorrect sentence although this sentence was a correct one. These errors could be the representatives of the learners' inadequate knowledge of the derived senses of the prepositions. It was more striking in the translation test to observe the learners' errors in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 The results for the derived sense in the translation test

DERIVED SENSE	RAW SCORES	PERCENTAGES
19	47	59
21	39	*49
26	9	*11
27	8	*10
29	53	67

Total = 5 156 39.2

Table 5.10 demonstrated the percentage scores of the learners for the derived sense of the prepositions in English in the translation test. For instance, only 90 percent of the learners could translate the sentence '*Bu menüde fiyatlar yok*' into English correctly and they preferred using the preposition *in* instead of *on*. 89 percent of the learners used *in* or *on* for the sentence '*Bu onların denizdeki ikinci günüdür*'. 51 percent of the learners preferred *in* or omitted the preposition in the sentence '*Su 100 derecede kaynar*'. These errors might have occurred as a result of having incomplete knowledge of the derived sense of the prepositions in English. The results made it clear that the basic sense of the prepositions was acquired more easily than the derived sense of the prepositions in English. Eröz (2000), in Chapter 3.2, found similar results in her study. For instance, she used the prepositional phrase *take after* and observed that Turkish learners did not translate this into Turkish correctly.

Table 5.11 The overall result for the dimensions in the grammaticality judgement task

DIMENSIONS	N	MEAN	MEDIAN	STDEV.	MIN.	MAX.
	4	15.75	10.5	12.23	8	34

Apart from the errors concerning the language transfer, basic and derived senses of the prepositions, dimension related errors seemed to cause much trouble to Turkish learners. Table 5.11 represented this problem clearly. The mean score was 15.75, with a 12.23 standard deviation. The standard deviation was high in

the items. This implicated that dimensional aspect of the prepositions was difficult to understand for the learners. This might be due to the learners' inability to understand dimensions of the prepositions in English.

Table 5.12 The dimensions in the grammaticality judgement task

DIMENSIONS	RAW SCORES	PERCENTAGES
1 (in an island)	10	*12
7 (on the snow)	11	*14
12 (in a plane)	8	*10
34(on the bus)	34	43
Total = 4	63	19.75

The percentage scores given in Table 5.12 exhibited that Turkish learners faced many difficulties in acquiring the dimensional aspect of the prepositions in English. 88 percent of the learners did not see the error in the sentences '*She was brought in an island*', 86 percent of them did not recognize it in '*She likes to walk on the snow*' and 90 percent of them did not realize it in '*Jane has never been in a plane*'. These sentences were examples to the dimensions of the prepositions and these results made it clear that Turkish learners had not got enough knowledge of this aspect of the prepositions.

Table 5.13 The overall results of the learners according to their proficiency score in the cloze test

PROFICIENCY	N	MEAN	MEDIAN	STDEV.	MIN.	MAX
HIGH	14	20.5	20	1.99	19	25
INTERMEDIATE	40	14.9	15	2.14	11	18
LOW	25	8.1	9	1.96	.5	10

The proficiency level of the learners was found according to the cloze test. Learners who obtained the points between 25 and 19 from the cloze test were high-level learners, those who obtained the points between 18 and 11 were intermediate-level learners and those who got the points between 10 and 5 were

low-level learners. The mean for the high-level learners was 20.5, with a 1.99 standard deviation, the mean was 14.9, with a 2.14 standard deviation for the intermediate-level learners and the mean was 8.12, with a 1.96 standard deviation for the low-level learners. Using the scores obtained from the grammaticality judgement task and the translation test by the learners forming each proficiency group, we calculated the mean scores showing the distribution of scores in relation with proficiency. The difference was high between the high level learners and the low-level students according to the mean scores of two levels. This indicated that there was an effect of the proficiency on the scores among each proficiency level in the cloze test. The learners with high proficiency level answered most of the questions in each test correctly in comparison with the learners with low-level proficiency. However, it might be a mistake to say that the learners with high-level proficiency were very good at using the prepositions properly in English or all of them acquired the prepositions in English. They, of course, had met difficulties in the acquisition process and they also made many errors. As Lennon (1991) stated in chapter 3.2, even among the advanced learners, the error was still frequent in using the prepositions in English.

Table 5.14 The results of the grammaticality judgement task according to the proficiency level of the learners.

PROFICIENCY	N	MEAN	MEDIAN	STDEV.	MIN	MAX
HIGH	14	18.07	17.5	3.66	13	24
INTERMEDIATE	40	17.48	17.5	4.04	10	27
LOW	25	17.8	18	3.2	12	23

In Table 5.14, the mean for the high level learners was 18.07, with a 4.04 standard deviation, the mean for the intermediate level learners was 17.48, with a 4.04 standard deviation, and the mean for the low level learners was 17.8, with a 3.2 standard deviation. By looking at the results, it was found that the learners with the high level proficiency were better in acquiring the prepositions in English than those with the low level students. However, there was not a big difference between the learners with the high level proficiency and the learners with the intermediate level proficiency.

Table 5.15 The results of the translation test according to the proficiency level of the learners

PROFICIENCY	N	MEAN	MEDIAN	STDEV.	MIN.	MAX.
HIGH	14	19.86	20	3	14	25
INTERMEDIATE	40	18.55	18	3.83	9	26
LOW	25	13.6	14	6.02	2	26

The mean for the learners with the high level proficiency in the translation test was 19.86 out of 25, with a 3 standard deviation, the mean was 18.55 out of 40, with a 3.83 standard deviation for the learners with the intermediate level proficiency and the mean was 13.6 out of 25, with a 6.02 standard deviation for the learners with the low level proficiency. The standard deviation for the learners with low level proficiency was much higher than the learners with high level proficiency. The difference between these two levels was striking and this result made it clear that proficiency was an important factor in the acquisition of the prepositions in English. With regard to the high level and intermediate level learners, they knew English better than low level learners but there was no big difference between high level learners and intermediate level learners. This meant that Turkish learners with high level proficiency were better than those with the low level proficiency in using and understanding the prepositions in English but the learners with the high level proficiency still tended to make errors. The prepositions seemed to be one of the most difficult subjects for the Turkish learners Even if the learners had high proficiency level, they could encounter some problems in acquiring the prepositions.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn from the results of the data. Turkish learners generally acquired the prepositions in English but they met some difficulties in the acquisition of some specific aspect of the prepositions in English. They tended to overgeneralize the inaccurate meanings due to the incomplete knowledge of the prepositions they had in English. Therefore, they should be instructed about the implausible and impossible sense extensions of the prepositions in English.

Language transfer had an impact on the acquisition of the prepositions in English. In this study, it was observed that most of the learners' errors were due to the influence of Turkish. In the tests, the learners preferred using Turkish equivalents of the prepositions. So, they produced errors. Turkish had not got prepositions but postpositions. While answering the questions in the tests, they thought the sentences in Turkish and translated them by the help of Turkish. They sometimes answered the questions correctly because of the positive influence of Turkish especially in the questions including the basic sense of the prepositions. Here, Turkish helped the learners to answer the questions. On the other hand, they produced errors owing to the negative influence of Turkish on the acquisition of the prepositions. Most of the prepositions were not the same in English as in Turkish. So, they transferred their native language.

The results revealed that there was an order of the acquisition of the prepositions. For Turkish learners the basic senses of prepositions are acquired earlier than the derived sense of the prepositions. The learners encountered more difficulties in using the derived sense of the prepositions than the basic sense of them. They could not totally understand the difference between the sense relations of the prepositions. This indicated that there was no need to spend a long time to teach the basic sense of prepositions in English. After introducing basic sense of the prepositions in English, the learners' attention should be directed to derived sense of the prepositions. Some practice exercises should be given to endow learners with lexical competence concerning the prepositions in English.

The various uses of the prepositions should be taught in different sentences in order to strengthen their knowledge of the derived sense.

Turkish learners generally had some difficulties with prepositions in English. Their difficulties were mainly owing to two groups. Firstly, they had case suffix related problems. Especially the preposition *at* seemed to cause more problems for the learners. Secondly, they had difficulties with the postpositions. Since Turkish had postpositions, whereas English had prepositions. This big difference between two languages caused problems to Turkish learners and most of their errors were because of this reason. It was generally known that English prepositions that corresponded to postpositions in Turkish do not cause so many difficulties. This study showed that this was not the case.

Subset principle was seen as one of the difficulties of Turkish learners. Learners constructed a conservative grammar and practiced this in answering the questions in the tests. They acquired English in the same manner as Turkish. So they built a conservative grammar and then added on rules to their developing grammar in English. While they were using only one morpheme in Turkish to express a phrase containing a preposition, there were various morphemes for the same item in English. For that reason, they put the same preposition for the different phrases in English. So we should teach Turkish learners to start with one of the three English morphemes; *on*, *in* and *at*.

The results of the study also displayed that Turkish learners produced some errors owing to the dimensional aspect of the prepositions in English. The learners had not got enough knowledge concerning the dimensions of the prepositions. For this reason, the learners should be given some information about this issue in order to make them avoid producing errors in using dimensions of the prepositions.

In order to decrease the difficulties of Turkish learners with prepositions, teaching prepositions in context will enhance the learning of prepositions and will be more effective than presenting and explaining them in Turkish. It is important for the learners to get the concept of a preposition and to grasp various meanings of prepositions in different contexts.

In sum, the present study threw light on the acquisition of prepositions in English by Turkish learners. The study has been concerned with the basic and derived senses of the prepositions in English. It was assumed that the learners had some problems with this aspect. Then, it examined the question whether learners' native language have an influence on the acquisition of the target items. Besides these, it investigated dimensions of the prepositions in English and the acquisition of this issue by the learners. However, there is a need for further studies dealing with the issues related to the acquisition of the prepositions by the learners from different language backgrounds, their problems with the prepositions, teaching methodology and active use of prepositions.



APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Grammaticality Judgement Task

Name and Surname:

Number:

Read the following sentences carefully. Put an - X - to the blank next to any sentence that you think is not expressed in good English. Put a - / - next to any sentence that you think is expressed in good English. If you are not sure whether a sentence is good English or not, put a - ? - in front of that sentence. Do not change your answers after marking. Underline the part which you think is not good English in the sentences that you have marked with X.

1.She was brought in an island.
2.They left their bags at the station.
3.Mary and Jane have nothing at common.
4.I am sorry but Terry is not here at present.
5.He bought that car in October 2, 1997.
6. Jane congratulated Barry on passing the difficult exam that they had last Tuesday.
7.She likes to walk on the snow.
8.When I saw her, she was in the party with her new boyfriend.
9.That girl usually goes to the cinema at weekends.

10. ... He really worked hard for the race and finally he succeeded in.
11. ... This old woman talks too much to some of her friends on the phone so that the phone bill is very high.
12. ... Jane has never been in a plane.
13. ... The teacher did not accept his homework which was not written by ink.
14. ... She went to New York at sunrise.
15. ... The plane flies only on the daytime.
16. ... People give each other gifts and send cards in Christmas.
17. ... You are standing on my foot.
18. ... I wonder why Jim keeps looking to his watch.
19. ... Sorry, I have to hurry up. Come with me, we can talk on the way.
20. ... There are not letters today. The post office is at strike.
21. ... On my opinion, Dennis is a crazy man.
22. ... I will not be late; I will be ready in a moment.
23. ... The Smiths spend a lot of time at home.
24. ... When John made his speech, everyone laughed on him.
25. ... A lot of people I know really believe in ghosts.

26. ... She is not very keen on the idea of climbing.
27. ... At New Year's Eve, people have given parties to celebrate the end of the old year and the beginning of the new.
28. ... He expects to get to Ankara in the afternoon.
29. ... Please meet me in time to have a little talk before the meeting begins.
30. ... They put the table in the centre of the room.
31. ... She was so tired that she immediately sat on a chair.
32. ... There will be a boat race in July.
33. ... The dog was lying on the ground.
34. ... The children usually go to school on the bus.
35. ... You are always late for class. Won't you try to be on time?

Appendix 2 Translation Test

Name and surname:

Number:

1. Cumartesi günü voleybol oynayacağız.
2. Cevaplarınızı İngilizce yazın.
3. Dayım Almanya’da yaşıyor.
4. Çocuklar yolun ortasında oynuyor.
5. Biz masada konuştuk.
6. Biz bankada karşılaştık.
7. Kısa bir tanışmadan sonra masaya oturduk ve öğlen yemeği yedik.
8. O, genellikle telvizyonda film seyreder.
9. Onlar partide eğlendiler.
10. Gölgede oturdum.
11. Bu onların denizde ikinci günüdür.
12. O, akşamları genellikle televizyon seyreder.
13. Annem ve babam 1995’de tanıştılar.
14. Bugün Mayıs’ın 3’ü.

15. Mary, Londra'ya gece gitti.
16. İnsanlar yılbaşında dans ederler.
17. Şu anda bir şeye ihtiyacım yok.
18. Jack seni otobüs durağında bekliyor.
19. Peter, basketbolda iyidir.
20. Ayşe başının üstünde kırmızı bir şapkaya sahipti.
21. Su, 100 derecede kaynar.
22. Kutunun içinde kalem var.
23. Saat 6'da bir randevum var.
24. Gelecekte bir arabam olmasını isterim.
25. İki saat içinde orada olacak.
26. Lütfen mantonu giyin.
27. Bu menüde fiyatlar yok.
28. Yirminci yüzyılda teknoloji çok gelişti.
29. Onun hayatı tehlikede.
30. Yazın genellikle yüzerim.

Appendix 3. Cloze test

Name and surname:

Number:

Our school sports were held last week, and the whole afternoon was very bad. Firstly, few people did not come and there is nothing worse than trying to win a race with only few people watching you.

Most people had stayed at ----- (1) to watch the Cup Final ----- (2) television, or had been cancelled ----- (3) by the weather. It rained ----- (4) afternoon from the moment the ----- (5) pistol was fired, until the ----- (6) medal had been presented. I ----- (7) in the high jump. This ----- (8) running up to do my ----- (9) jump then landing in a ----- (10) of cold muddy water. For ----- (11) start, it was raining so ----- (12) that we couldn't see the ----- (13) in the 5000 meters, and ----- (14) turned out that they had ----- (15) stopped on the other side ----- (16) the field and were hiding ----- (17) a tree. My last event (18) ----- the javelin, but each time ----- (19) tried to throw, it slipped ----- (20) my hand. In each case, ----- (21) couldn't see where I was ----- (22) and when I threw my ----- (23) into the air it disappeared ----- (24) the direction of the railway ----- (25) and was never seen again. ----- (26) Monday morning, most of the ----- (27) were in bed with bad ----- (28) two athletes were in hospital ----- (29) broken legs, and were just ----- (30) waiting for the finish of the 5000 meters.

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