ERRORS ANALYSIS ON THE USE OF PREPOSITIONS AMONG THE GRADE SEVEN STUDENTS AT AL-MUNEER VIDIYALAYA SAMMANTHURAI

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ABSTRACT: In this modern era, English drives the world in every aspect of human being's life. The number of people sharp to shine their future by learning English Language. As far as language learners are concerned that they have to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills to make their dream true. In Sri Lanka, the English language is being taught as a second language. Through this teaching-learning process, most of the students are being faced difficulties to achieve the skills of the English language. The nature of writing is needed perfect grammar patterns. This study confesses that many students of the second language make grammatical errors in the use of prepositions they unconsciously fail to follow the rules of the target language because of that they are not in a position to continue the activities related to the preposition and they feel uneasy to give an eager in learners prepositions and its grammatical rules. English is originated with many word classes. Among them prepositions play a vital role which cover many important areas. Students' errors in the use of preposition make the researchers to do this research in this particular topic. Therefore, the researchers decided to do a study regarding the errors in the use of prepositions among grade eight students of Al-Muneer Vidyalaya Sammanthurai within a limited period.

Therefore, this study is interested to reduce the errors by finding the errors, reasons for the errors, and the best way to use of prepositions through this research on the topic of "Error analysis in the use of preposition among the grade seven students at Al-Muneer Vidyalaya Sammanthurai".

Key words – English language, errors, grade eight students, prepositions, native language
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1. Introduction

A preposition is a word used to link nouns, pronouns, or phrases to other words within a sentence. Prepositions are usually short words, and they are normally placed directly in front of nouns. In some cases, you'll find prepositions in front of gerund verbs. In other words, a preposition is a word that shows the relationship between two things. Prepositions are often called the biggest small words in English because although they are generally short words, they are very important to the meaning of the sentence. A misused preposition can make a big difference between a clearly stated sentence and a confusing jumble of words. When used properly, however, prepositions provide the glue between parts of a sentence that allows you to share your scientific research more precisely and professionally.

Prepositions are used to connect nouns, pronouns, or phrases (called the object of the preposition) to other words within a sentence. They reveal the temporal, spatial, or logical relationship of their object to another word or part of the sentence.

While prepositions are limited in number, they are important because they act as vital markers to the structure of a sentence; they mark special relationships between persons, objects, and locations. For this reason, we should think carefully about how we incorporate the teaching and learning of prepositions into our classes. (Why-are-preposition-important-prepositions-are-often-called-the-biggest-small-wo/2394386817266278/)

1.1 Purpose of the study:
The purpose of this study is to present error analysis of using prepositions among 30 students of grade 8B at Al- Muneer Vidyalaya Sammanthurai. Improve the students' awareness and understanding of the use of prepositions through finding the obstacles in that area. The findings of this research show the way for English Language teachers/instructors to identify the common errors in the use of prepositions and help them to find out the best treatment.

1.2 The objective of the study
The objectives of the research are as follows;
• To classify the common errors of the students in the use of prepositions.
• To identify the reason for the errors of the students.
• To suggest the ways to solve the problems in the use of prepositions.

1.3 Significance of the study:
It is hoped that the findings of this study will help English Language teachers to understand the errors of the students in using the preposition. It is expected that teachers can get a clear idea about the reason behind the errors and identify the correct ways to solve that issue.

It is expected to help the student to realize their problems and increase their awareness in using the preposition. The suggestions of this research will help students to use a preposition without errors and lead them to write perfect writings without any difficulties. It is also hoped that this research will help the researchers to do more researches in this area in different views.

1.4 Scope of the study
This research presents an analysis of errors in using prepositions made by 30 students through finding the answer for **two research Questions.**

1.4.1 What are the common errors in the use of prepositions made by twenty students?
1.4.2 What are the reasons behind the errors of the 30 students in using prepositions?

This research deals with the area of the preposition. It focuses on the grammatical errors of the students who are committed in this area.
This research considers the students of Al-Muneer Vidyalaya Sammanthurai, especially the students of grade eight.

2. Literature review

A literature review is a text of a scholarly paper, which includes the current knowledge including substantive findings, as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to a particular topic (http://writingcenter.unc.edu). It gives vast knowledge on the particular topic in different views. Under the research area of error in the use of comparison of adjectives, many scholars did useful and unique researches. The works gave me the idea to approach it. There are several scholars and researchers have done researches on the errors of prepositions made by both secondary and tertiary level students.

2.1 Interlingual Error

Interference, language transfer, and cross-linguistic interference are also known as interlingual errors. Corder (1981) states that these kinds of errors occur when the learner's habits (patterns, systems, or rules) interfere or prevent him or her, to some extent, from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language. Lado (1964) says Interference (negative transfer) is the negative influence of the mother tongue (L1) on the performance of the target language (L2). Chelli (2013) defines that interlingual errors as being the result of language transfer, which is caused by the learner's first language.

2.2 Intralingual Error

Interference from the student's own language is not the only reason for committing errors. Students may make mistakes in the target language, since they do not know the target language very well, they have difficulties in using it. Richard (1974: 6) states, intralingual interference refers to items produced by the learner, which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalization based on partial exposure of the target language. (Eny MaulitaPurnama Sari .2015. Interlingual Errors and Intralingual Errors Found in Narrative Text Written by EFL Students in Lampung University of Muhammadiyah,
(Retrieved From; http://eprints.ums.ac.id/40012/20/NASKAH%20PUBLIKASI.pdf)

2.3 An overview of previous related studies

There are many scholars who did their researches on preposition-related areas. The findings help the learners to get rid of the errors they made. The scholars Gail G.McGee, Patricia J. Krantz, Lynn E McClannahan did research in 1985 on the topic 'The facilitative effects of incidental teaching on preposition used by autistic children.' In that they say, in the comparison of incidental teaching and traditional training procedures, three languages delayed autistic children were taught expressive use of prepositions to describe the local of the preposition to describe the location of preferred edibles and toys. Traditional highly structured training and incidental teaching procedures were used in a classroom setting, and generalization was assessed during- free play sessions. Results clearly indicate that incidental teaching promotes greater generalization and more spontaneous use of prepositions. These findings have important implications for language programming and teacher training, suggesting that incidental teaching should be included as a stranded component of language development curricular for autistic and other developmentally delayed children (Gail G.McGee, Patricia J. Krantz, Lynn E McClannahan.1985)

Joyal R.Tetrault, Martin Chodorow says that through their research article 'The ups and gown of preposition error dedication in ESL writing' in this paper they describe a methodology for detecting preposition errors in the writing of non-native English speakers. Our system performs at 84% precision and closes to 19% recall on a large set of student essays. In addition, they address the problem of annotation and evaluation in this domain by showing how current approaches of using only one rater can skew system evaluation. They present a sampling approach to circumvent some of the issues that complicate the evaluation of error detection systems. (Joyal R.Tetrault, Martin chodoro.1985)

Rachele De Felice, Stephan G. Pulman says that in their research article 'A classifier-based approach to preposition and determiner error correction in L2 English' (2008) in this paper, they present an approach to the automatic identification and correction of preposition and determiner errors in non-native (L2) English writing. They show that models of use for these parts of speech can be learned with an accuracy of 70.06% and 92.15% respectively on L1 text, and present first results in an error detection task for L2 writing. (Rachele De Felice, Stephan G. pulman.2008)

ROSA MARÍA JIMÉNEZ CATALÁN UNIVERSIDAD DE LA RIOJA did research on the paper article 'FREQUENCY AND VARIABILITY IN ERRORS IN THE USE OF ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS' The results of this study indicate that English prepositions are difficult for third-year Spanish secondary students. Our first hypothesis (see point 2) is clearly confirmed by their appearance in the first, fifth and sixth position on the list of frequent errors. The high percentage of the relative frequency of errors of a preposition as well as their systematic presence in the three centers. (ROSA MARÍA JIMÉNEZ CATALÁN UNIVERSIDAD DE LA RIOJA.2003)

Robert Dale, Ilya Anisimoff, George Narroway did research in 2012 on the topic 'a report on the preposition and determiner error correction shared task' they reported that Incorrect usage of prepositions and

determiners constitute the most common types of errors made by non-native speakers of English. It is not surprising, then, that there has been a significant amount of work directed towards the automated detection and correction of such errors. However, to date, the use of different data sets and different task definitions has made it difficult to compare work on the topic. This paper reports on the HOO 2012 shared task on error detection and correction in the use of prepositions and determiners, where systems developed by 14 teams from around the world were evaluated on the same previously unseen errorful text (Robert Dale, Ilya Anisimoff, George Narroway.2012)

Martine Chodoro, Joyal R.Tetrault, Na Rea Han stated that through their research paper article 'Detection of grammatical errors involving prepositions' (2007) This paper presents ongoing work on the detection of preposition errors of non-native speakers of English. Since prepositions account for a substantial proportion of all grammatical errors by ESL (English as a Second Language) learners, developing an NLP application that can reliably detect these types of errors will provide an invaluable learning resource to ESL students. To address this problem, we use a maximum entropy classifier combined with rule-based filters to detect preposition errors in a corpus of student essays (Martine Chodoro, Joyal R.Tetrault, Na Rea Han.2007).

Rachele De Felice and Stephen Pulman said that through their research article 'Automatic Detection of Preposition Errors in Learner Writing' (2009) they present results from a range of experiments on article and preposition error correction for non-native speakers of English. They first compare a language model and error-specific classifiers (all trained on large English corpora) with respect to their performance in error detection and correction. Then they combine the language model and the classifiers in a meta-classification approach by combining evidence from the classifiers and the language model as input features to the meta-classifier. The meta-classifier in turn is trained on error-annotated learner data, optimizing the error detection and correction performance on this domain. The meta-classification approach results in substantial gains over the classifier-only and language-model-only scenarios. Since the meta-classifier requires error-annotated data for training, we investigate how much training data is needed to improve results over the baseline of not using a meta-classifier. All evaluations are conducted on a large error-annotated corpus of learner English (Rachele De Felice and Stephen Pulman.2009)

Hermet, Alain Desilets published a research paper on the topic 'Using first and second language models to correct preposition errors in second language authoring'(2009) In this paper, they investigate a novel approach to correcting grammatical and lexical errors in texts written by second-language authors. Contrary to previous approaches which tend to use unilingual models of the user's second language (L2), this new approach uses a simple roundtrip Machine Translation method that leverages information about both the author's first (L1) and second languages. We compare the repair rate of this roundtrip translation approach to that of an existing approach based on a unilingual L2 model with shallow syntactic pruning, on a series of preposition choice errors. They find no statistically significant difference between the two approaches, but find that a hybrid combination of both does perform significantly better than either one in isolation. Finally, they illustrate how the translation approach has the potential of repairing very complex errors which would be hard to treat without leveraging knowledge (Hermet, Alain Desilets.2009)

Through this literature review, this study has realized that there is a research gap is prevailing in my research area. So to fill that I would like to do this research in al-Muneer Vidyalaya,sammanthurai among grade 8 Tamil medium students.

3. Methodology

Research is a systematic collection analysis and interpretation of data to answer a certain question or solve the problems. (Altman. D.G). This study has selected the mix method to resolute for the problem. Furthermore, Research methodology means, it is a particular way of studying something in order to discover new information about it or understand it better. According to this statement, this study had chosen a methodology that is suited to analyze quantitative and qualitative data.

3.1 The subject of the study

This research is aimed to get the answers for the errors in the use of prepositions and the reasons behind them. For achieving the target, it is defined the subject of the study. The subject of this research is the grade eight Tamil medium students of Al- Muneer Vidyalaya Sammanthurai. There are four grades in eight class in this school. It has been chosen 30 students of grade 8B class as the subject of the study.

3.2 Data collecting techniques
3.2.1. Pre-test

For the purpose of the test, this study selected 30 students as a target group. Then they have been provided a pre-test for the purpose of finding the difficulties in using the preposition. The pre-test was made up of 10 questions to fill in the blanks with suitable prepositions. It is considered the type of prepositions of English to set the pre-test paper.

3.2.2. Post-test

After finding the difficulties in the use of prepositions, they have been provided some feedback. For testing the progress of the students, they had been provided a post-test too.

3.2.3. Interview

This research used the interview as one of the techniques to collect data. It is made a face-to-face interview with the English teacher of the grade 8B. It helped to make a purposeful conversation. The important study-related questions were asked and the teacher answered by using her experience and knowledge.

3.2.4. Observation

It is used the observation as a method to find out the progress of the students as doing feedback sheets. The test and interview helped to collect primary data for the research

4.Collection of Secondary data

For secondary data, it had been used google scholar journal articles, study-related English books and previous researchers' works. It is considered more on grade 8 English books. Also, had been used many study-related researches papers and articles on the internet.

5.Research instruments

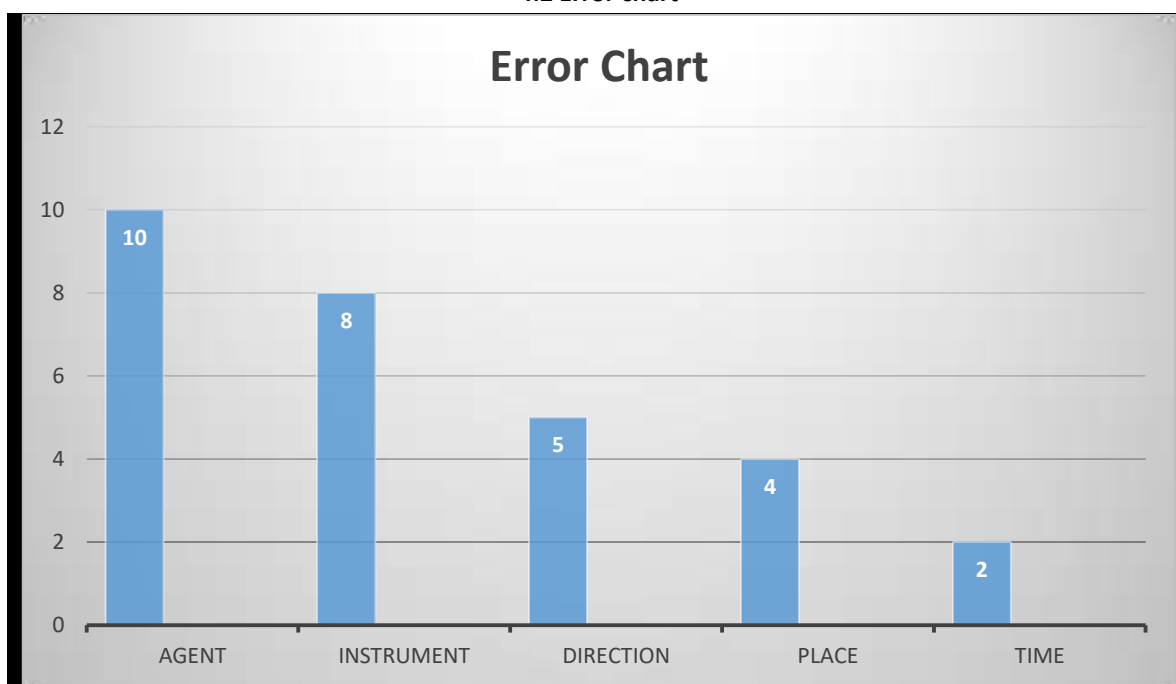Worksheets, questionnaires and feedback sheets were used in the research for collecting data.

4. Data analysis

This chapter examines the results from the data collection methods and tries to analyze the errors through the finding of the errors, causes for the errors, progressive activities, and the correct ways to overcome the issues. According to the result of the test, observation, and interview, all the procedure has been analyzed into the data. It was examined the errors and the reason for the errors in the use of prepositions by using pretest and interview with the consideration of the number of the students and frequent errors. It had been analyzed the solutions and improvement of the students by using observation and the post-test. To be considered the average makes of both tests, SPPS software was also used to analyze the data.

4.1 Results of pretest

It was provided the pretest for 30 students to find out the grammatical errors in the use of prepositions. It included 20 questions they have to fill the gaps. The duration of the test is 20 minutes. The result of the test is as follows.

4.2 Error chart

Error Chart

Through this above chart It has been realized that students faced problems such as unable to choose the correct prepositions, lack of knowledge to categorize the prepositional types and fail to follow the correct prepositional elements which are suite to the sentences.

4.3 Result of interview

Interview with the English teacher played a major role to identify the levels of the students and the reason behind it. Interview was held before pretest. The interview was conducted to know the teacher' responses related to the errors in the use of preposition from her experience and through the five important questions were asked to the teacher.

From the interview, Most of the students had a confusion with the grammatical rules of preposition. They failed to consider the unique grammatical rules of it. They were mostly influenced by their mother language. The environment did not give enough space to deal with the target language (English language). If students want to improve their levels in preposition, they need more care and have to make them clear in the in the subject arena of preposition.

4.4 Summary of the interview

Second Language learners made errors in learning target language. Here, students made errors in the use of prepositions due to some reasons. They are as follows;

- **Reason for the errors**
    1) **Lack of understanding in the rules of using prepositions:**
       Most of the students had poor understanding in the use of preposition. They had lack of knowledge and confusion. In fact they know most of the prepositional aspect, but they struggle to paste them in a suitable places.

    2) **Omission of preposition:**
       The students drop using any preposition that is necessary for the correct interpretation of the sentence
       Example: a) They are going university.

b) He walked three hours.

c) He wakes up 5 o'clock in the morning.

d) She is laughing me

3) **Unwanted Insertion of preposition:**

The learners include a preposition that should not be used in a sentence as in

Example: a) They discussed about the matter.

b) We reached at the station at 5 p.m.

c) He has described about the accident.

d) I am going to home.

4) **Choosing of incorrect preposition:**

The learners use any preposition in a sentence instead of the correct one as in

Example: a) I have been reading from morning.

b) He prevented me to go there.

c) He broke the lock by a hammer.

d) Alcohol taking is harmful for health.

5) **Interlingual transfer:**

When learners learn a new language, they are already accustomed to a set of rules and they apply these rules in producing utterances in the new language. Brown (1994), stated that most of the learners" errors in the second language result primarily from the learner's assumption that the second language forms similar to the native language. It appears that transfer can occur in two different ways. Transfer can be positive when similarities exit between the first and second language and these facilitate second language learning. In contrast, when dissimilarities exist, the learner's first language knowledge interferes with second language learning. That is called interference, which becomes one of the sources of errors in the second language. When learners make errors because of the first language, those errors are known as interlingual errors. The study has found that in two ways the learners make errors in using correct prepositions because of the interference of the first language.

Example: "**naan tholai pesiel uraiyadinean**"

I talked **in** the phone**. (In correct)**

I talked **over** the phone**. (Correct)**

Example: The cat sat **above** the table**. (In correct)**

The cat sat **on** the table**. (Correct)**

6) **Intralingual transfer:**

A large number of errors committed by second language learners are similar regardless of their first language. Those errors are caused by intralingual transfer. As James (1998) defines, intralingual errors are created without referring to L1 resources. The outcomes produced by the learner are non-existent in the second language but result from the misapplication of language rules. Intralingual errors are found to involve overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction**s.**

In the context of second language learning, intralingual transfer is frequently   referred to as overgeneralization- a process that occurs as the second language learners' act within the target language. It can be explained as extensions of general rules to specific items where

the general rules do not apply.   In English, certain prepositions are frequently used with certain words. For example, „to" after „go" is common or „for" after „wait" etc. . . But this does not occur always.

I'm going home

We are waiting at the station.

This misconception leads the general learners to commit errors in using right prepositions and produce sentences like

Example: (a) I'm going to home.

(b)We are waiting for the station.

Again, It is a common tendency of human beings to simplify rules, even children simplify rules. The learner finds correct use of prepositions in the sentences like:

Example: (a) We went to the station.

(b) He said to us, "I am ill."

When it becomes known to all general learners that in the above sentences prepositions are correctly used, this logically leads him to produce sentences like:

Example: (a) We went to home.
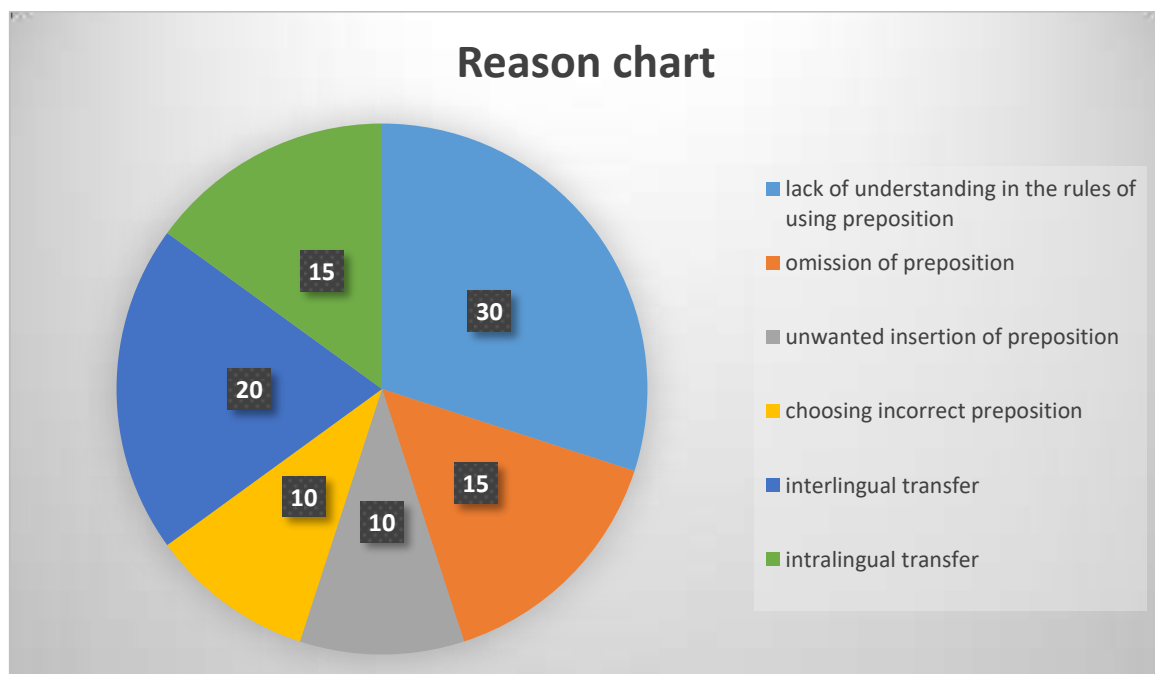
(b) We reached to the station.

(c) I will tell to you the next day.

Reason chart

It can be seen the reasons of the errors by using chat. It made up by the frequent errors   with number of the students who made the particular frequent error and the reasons of the errors

Here It is mentioned the above reasons as follow.

Chart-2

Reason chart

- lack of understanding in the rules of using preposition — 30
- omission of preposition — 15
- unwanted insertion of preposition — 10
- choosing incorrect preposition — 10
- interlingual transfer — 20
- intralingual transfer — 15

We can identify some deep causes for the errors in the use of preposition. It is found from the research that, these are the reasons for the errors in the use of preposition. After finding the reasons for the errors in the use of prepositions, I continued my research to finding the solution for it.

4.5 Result and discussion of observation

After the pretest, this study explains the type of preposition by giving the handout with the rules for using preposition. After explaining, I gave them some questions based on the material. That activities were based on the errors of the students they made. Then I encouraged them to answer the activities and helped them to get clear idea about preposition.

In this period of time, the observation is used as a method to identify the process of progression of the students in using prepositions. After explaining that with the rules of prepositions they tried to do the activities with confident. Many students got relief from their confusion in the use of preposition.

In fact, they consume more time to find out the meaning of all the words that the test paper contains. It is advised to teach them not to waste the time on that and contextually guess the meaning and try to answer all the questions better.

In the pretest, they felt uncomfortable in answering the questions. They took much time to answer the questions. On the other hand, in action period students were eager to answer the questions. They completed the activities with perfect timing. According to the observation, when the students got the proper idea about the preposition, they learned as active learners. They saw positive attitude to learn preposition without hesitation. This observation helped to identify the way of improvements of the students in using prepositions. Through the observation, this study found that the special academic care of the students can be improved them as soon as possible.

4.5 Result of post-test and discussion

After the action period, it is provided a post-test to make sure the development of the students in the use of preposition in the use of preposition. Post-test included the same questions and the same duration of pretest. The result of the post test is given with the comparison of the result of pretest.

The result of the post-test shows the improvement of the students in using prepositions. Most of the students tried their level best in the post test. They tried to follow the rules of English language in the use of prepositions without confusion. The average rate of progress is increased by 30.66% itself. It clearly shows the progress of the students in using prepositions.

5. Recommendation

This part is going to suggest to improve the students' understanding in the use of preposition and reduce the errors in the use of it. Also, this part expresses the achievement and the overall view of the research.

5.1 Suggestions

Based on the result of the study, this part provides some suggestions to reduce the errors in the use of preposition and improve the students' understanding,

- Firstly, the trainer or teacher should encourage the students and try to change their negative attitudes in learning in preposition. A space must be given to the students to realize their errors in an uncomplicated way.

- Different types of preposition must be given to the students. It will help them to clear their confusion in that. Practice will make them perfect.

- Clear explanation must be given to the students about rules of English for preposition. Careful attention must be given of prepositional type and its aspects.

- Affective and creative teaching must be given to the student. This teaching should include proper material which helps the students to improve their understanding in the use of preposition.

- Teaching strategy should be modified. Teaching aids should use in an effective way.

- As preposition learning is a boring thing, students may be given some interesting stories and they may be asked to find out the prepositions used in the story and asked to explain why they are used in such positions.

This study aims that these suggestions will help to deal with the errors in the use of prepositions in a successful way.

5.2 Conclusion

After finishing the whole steps of this research, this study would like to draw some conclusions about the result of this research. At the beginning of the research it has been found many students' errors in the use of preposition. They faced many difficulties in dealing with prepositions. They had many confusions in the use of preposition. It is proven by the result of pre-test. They were influenced by interlingual and intralingual transfer.

When the student got proper and affective explanation they relived from their confusion. They showed positive attitudes in learning prepositions. They behaved as active students. It could be said that this research was successful. Finally, it is found the students' improvement in the use of preposition. It is proven by the rate of progress. The average rate of progress was 30.66%.

Until the learners are given proper instructions in using prepositions, they will continue committing errors. Through systematic investigation proper ways can be suggested to instruct. If the learners are taught and practiced properly according to the ways suggested, they will be able to reduce errors in using prepositions which is a matter of great concern of our teachers and students
As Selinker (1969) said, errors are important for the language teacher because they indicate the learner's progress in language learning. It should be handled in a careful way. When the students get proper treatment for their errors, they can be the best performers in the target language.

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