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ERROR ANALYSIS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING:
A STUDY OF ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS

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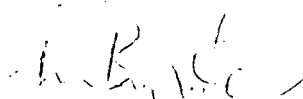
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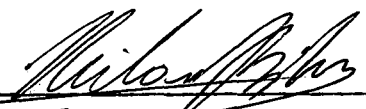
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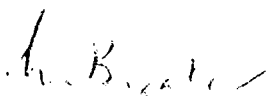


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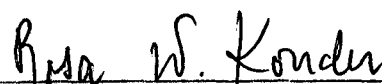


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À minha família,
Ao meu noivo.

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ABSTRACT

The present dissertation presents some theoretical aspects concerning the use of English prepositions. It also analyses and applies the theories of Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis to the errors the Brazilian students make in using English prepositions.

Besides detecting the main difficulties the students face in using the most frequent prepositions, this work also aims to identify the strategies these students employ in the acquisition of these forms. For this purpose, tests were applied to a small group of Letras students of Federal University of Santa Catarina.

The analysis of the results of the tests will allow this author to contribute to the teaching of English as a second language through pedagogical suggestions that can help teachers to overcome the students' difficulties.

RESUMO

A presente dissertação apresenta alguns aspectos teóricos do uso das preposições inglesas, ao mesmo tempo que aplica as teorias de Análise de Error e Análise Contrastiva nos erros que os estudantes brasileiros fazem ao usar as preposições inglesas.

Além de detectar as principais dificuldades que os estudantes enfrentam ao usar as preposições mais frequentes na língua inglesa, este trabalho também se propõe identificar as estratégias que estes estudantes usam na aquisição destas formas. Para isto, testes foram aplicados a um grupo de alunos de Letras da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

A análise dos resultados dos testes permitirão que esta autora contribua com o ensino da língua inglesa como segunda língua através de sugestões pedagógicas que possam ajudar os professores a superar as dificuldades dos alunos.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations used in the dissertation:

CA	=	Contrastive Analysis
EA	=	Error Analysis
MT	=	Mother Tongue
SL	=	Second Language
FL	=	Foreign Language
TL	=	Target Language
lg	=	foreign language
NPM	=	Noun postmodifier
Adj	=	Adjunct
VC	=	Verb Complement
NC	=	Noun Complement
pp	=	prepositional phrase
l	=	literal use
nl	=	non - literal use

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INTRODUCTION

The present dissertation attempts to study English prepositions among those who learn English as a foreign language concentrating on the theories of Error and Contrastive analyses as well the counting and comparison of the frequency of prepositions in authentic texts.

The reason for this author to examine the subject of English prepositions among Brazilian Students was that prepositions are one of the most difficult items to be acquired in English partly because of the complexity of the English system that allows one preposition to have several meanings and functions or the reverse and also because many times the English system functions differently from Portuguese.

Moreover the learning difficulties have been a subject of concern to linguists, psycholinguists and teachers and finding out the source of errors has been an important point of study in the acquisition of a foreign language.

Bearing this in mind, the ultimate purpose of this study is to identify the main difficulties the students face in dealing with prepositions and their specific uses or meanings and to concentrate on the reasons why Brazilian students from the Federal University of Santa Catarina make errors in their production of English prepositions, especially in the nine most frequent ones: of, in, on, at, from, for, to, by and with. The source of these errors may be shown through Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis. These two approaches will be used in order to explain the erroneous sentences produced by the students when using English preposition forms.

The analysis of errors will allow us to detect some of the

causes of errors considering that the errors are an indicator of the difficulties students face at a certain stage when learning a foreign language.

Through this study we also hope to identify what strategies the students employ and if they are helpful to them in learning the nine most frequent prepositions.

In addition, this study also consists of identifying the most frequent prepositions through an analysis of three authentic English texts: a technical text, a literary text and a journalistic one. The analysis consists of counting the frequency of occurrence of prepositions and observing their semantic and syntactic uses. The results of the analysis will serve to compare with the students' degree of errors in prepositions. A correlation will be made to see if the frequency of these items coincides with the degree of errors made by students.

In order to identify the students' difficulties in using prepositions we found it useful to apply three different types of tests: the gap test, the composition test and the oral test to see whether the errors made in controlled production also occur in oral production. These tests will detect only the difficulties in using the nine most frequent prepositions and their specific uses.

We also decided to apply these tests with two different groups of students: 4th and 7th phases, i.e., intermediate and advanced students in order to compare their performance.

The gap test will be also applied with nine native speakers (four American and five British) with the aim of discovering what (if any) alternatives are likely to be accepted as correct. These responses could then be admitted for the students test. Their responses will also be compared with

Brazilian students' responses.

The two written tests will be taken at the beginning of the semester and the students will be tested in the classroom and the oral test will be taken at the end of the semester and the students will be tested in a language laboratory and their performance will be recorded on tape. The students had 50 minutes to answer the written tests and 15 minutes to answer the oral test.

The reason for applying these tests at different times is to see whether the same types of errors occur in the three tests at different periods.

Before applying the tests, a questionnaire in Portuguese will also be answered by the students so that we can have a general idea about the language background of each one. The aim of applying this questionnaire is just to obtain information about the students' instruction in a foreign language as well as to see their own auto-evaluation of their level of English knowledge.

The results of the tests will be arranged in Tables and will allow to find out what kind of errors the students made, in what senses the prepositions are most easily acquired and the analysis of these errors will show the possible causes of them and it will help this author to give suggestions to overcome problems and improve teaching or learning of prepositions.

The present dissertation will comprise five chapters.

The first chapter will be dedicated to a general review of the theories of Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis, with the aim of making use of the theories for a better understanding of the material studied.

The second chapter will present a summary of the

analysis of English prepositions made in some grammars as well as a study of the frequency of such forms in three authentic texts analysing syntactic and semantic uses of these forms in the texts. This analysis will be based on grammatical points raised by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, Svartvik and others. The objective of this study is to establish the most frequent prepositions and meanings to occur in the language and to try to systematize them.

Chapter Three deals with the tests applied to Brazilian students to see which types of difficulties they have. Tests will be applied to students of Letras at Federal University of Santa Catarina who are in the 4th and 7th semesters of the course. In addition, nine native speakers (Some are professors of the university) will answer one of the applied test and their responses will serve as guide for the correction of Brazilian students' responses. In this chapter the methodology used, results and conclusions will be included.

In the fourth chapter, the error analysis will be described including several causes for the errors the students made, a list of the rules tested relating to the strategies adopted by the students, a discussion of the effect of these strategies on the learning of English prepositions and conclusions.

The final chapter focuses on the pedagogical application of the discoveries of the three previous chapters and suggests teaching methodology and order of presentation of the nine most frequent English prepositions so that teachers and students can overcome the difficulties and improve their knowledge of such forms.

Finally, the conclusion attempts to restate the discoveries made in the previous chapters and the application

of the theories used in this study confirming or not the hypotheses established for the present dissertation.

The subject of this dissertation was restricted to the examination of the nine most frequent English prepositions: of, in, on, at, from, for, to, by and with. As was said before, the choice of these prepositions was based on the counting of the English preposition forms in three authentic texts.

The number of students who participated in the three applied tests was not uniform. These varied from one test to another. Thus 25 answered the gap test; 21 did the composition and only 15 participated in the oral test. This variation did not always produce a good sample of the required forms.

Although the students tested belonged to different levels, the results presented here do not reveal the order of learning but only indicate the degree of difficulty the students feel for each preposition and the respective tested meaning at this stage. Besides this, these results will show what prepositional uses would need most practice so that we can suggest remedial teaching or emphasis which could prevent the problems found later at advanced levels.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1 - INTRODUCTION

Considering that the field of second language learning has been the focus of many discussions in the last decades, the present chapter will attempt to present some preliminaries about learning and acquisition, fluency and accuracy in foreign language class as well the linguistic aspects of the psychology of second language learning such as what an error is, the significance of errors, contrastive and error analyses and the cause of errors. This information will be presented with the aim of providing enough background so that we can be confident when studying the informants' difficulties in using English prepositions.

Many people think that learning and acquisition are the same thing, but in fact they aren't. The reason for mentioning these terms in the introduction of this chapter is primarily to distinguish them. The difference between these two systems is that language acquisition is subconscious and requires natural communication in the target language, i. e., the speaker should be concerned with the understanding and production of messages they are carrying whereas language learning is conscious and is concerned with error correction and the presentation of explicit rules (Krashen and Seliger: 1975: 1-2).

There is an assumption that adults have these two independent systems for developing ability in second languages, that these systems are interrelated, and that acquisition is far

more important than learning. We know that the learners do not acquire all items or structures at the same time, but one can see clearly that the order of acquisition of structures in language acquisition tends to vary. The learners don't have a conscious awareness of the rules they possess, thus they may self correct on the basis of a "*feel*" for grammaticality.

Another important aspect to be mentioned in the field of methodology and language acquisition is whether we should emphasize more fluency or accuracy in foreign language classes.

Nowadays it has been questioned if the methodology devised in the past to acquire a language was really successful to learn or acquire a foreign language. It is known that the language courses traditionally followed the following pattern: 1) presentation of language items 2) drill and 3) practice in context which emphasized more knowledge of rules, i. e. accuracy. However, at present, language teaching is beginning to respond to methodological changes. There is already a new model: communicative teaching which follows the following pattern: 1) communication as far as possible; 2) then presentation of language items necessary for effective communication and 3) then drill if necessary (Brumfit, 1979). Thus this model stresses more "*fluency*" than "*accuracy*". The most important thing is to communicate even if with mistakes.

If teachers take this model into account they may be sure that the students will make errors in their performance. Here we will examine the students' performance to see what type of difficulties they face when using English prepositions.

The ideal approach would be to devise a course in which we can combine the concepts of fluency and accuracy so that the foreign learners speech can approximate to the native

speakers'. But this not possible for the moment, so language is concentrated more on the concepts of fluency in order to correspond to its aims.

It is also known that when a learner is acquiring a language, he/she adopts unconsciously some learning strategies. In analysing his errors we can see that the learner recreates for himself the system of the language using universal learning strategies (which can be seen in the learning of the grammar of the second language). Some of these strategies seem to be universal, i.e., they are employed by learners of a first and second language. (Richards. 1975: 116).

One of these strategies is the tendency towards simplification of the rules of the languages by the language learner. In doing so, the learner begins by constructing general rules which do not account for redundant and unnecessary parts of the grammar. Overgeneralization and analogy are instances of the same process. Besides these, the learners of a second language also use language transfer (mother tongue influence and transfer - of - training). The immediate objective for many language learners is to construct a grammar in which the smallest number of rules can do the amount of work, i.e., they can make a new language easier to learn and use.

The present study will make an error analysis of English prepositions by Brazilian students. It is expected that they also adopt the above strategies in the learning of English.

Before talking about the difficulties that the foreign learners face when they are learning a second language it is necessary to describe first and second language acquisition.

1.1 - FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

To start with, we shall say that the reason for mentioning the ways both languages are acquired is that this study could show what information to look for in the acquisition of English prepositions by foreign students.

1.1.1 - First Language Acquisition

It is known that different children learn language in similar ways. We don't know how many processes are involved in language learning but the few that have been observed appear repeatedly from child to child.

Breyne Arlene Moskowitz (1978: 82) has researched how children learn to speak and has concluded that the children reveal themselves as active language learners because they are continually analysing what they hear and proceeding in a methodical way: *"they break the language down into simplest parts and develop the rules they need to put the parts together"*.

It is known that the first prerequisite to acquire a language is exposure, that is, a child can only acquire language if there is language in her environment and if she can employ that language to communicate with other people in her immediate environment.

According to Moskowitz, children begin to learn a language by babbling during the first six months of their life, but they have completed the greater part of the basic language acquisition process by the age of five. By that time, the children have learned the systems of grammar (phonology, syntax, semantics, lexicon and pragmatics) by breaking each system down into its smallest combinable parts. In the first two years of life a child

spends much time working on one part of the task breaking down the language to find the separate sounds that can be put together to form words and the separate words that can be put together to form sentences. After the age of two the basic processes continue to be refined and many sounds and words are produced in the order part of language acquisition - developing rules for combining the basic elements of language is realized in a very methodical way: the most general rules are hypothesized first, and as time passes they are successively narrowed down by the addition of more precise rules applying to a more restricted set of sentences. This procedure is followed for any area of language learning.

The child continues to revise and refine the rules of the internal grammar at least until the age of 10. The speed with which children accomplish the complex process of language acquisition is particularly impressive.

Observing the processes the children follow to learn a language, the first one to be used is that of simplification and then overgeneralization. They overgeneralize a single rule before learning to apply it more narrowly and before constructing other less widely applicable rules.

It's interesting to say that the errors children make are considered by themselves as correct and grammatical with respect to their own internalized grammar. These errors are indicators of the nature of a child's hypotheses about the grammar of language.

1.1.2 - Second Language Acquisition

By second language or foreign language is meant the acquisition of another language after having acquired the basics of a first.

It is known, through research, that if a child can learn two languages simultaneously, the same does not happen to adults because these learn through structures that have lost their flexibility after puberty. The child however can learn one or more languages with ease because the cerebral cortex mechanism in the child is still in the process of development (Barry Mclaughlin: 1977: 439).

The task of acquiring a language for an adult is uncomfortable because he has lost most of his aptitude to do so. Moreover adults have few memories of the intense effort that went into the learning process as well as being fully conscious of being taught the few grammatical rules that are considered as "*correct usage*" or the norms of "*Standard language*". Another important point is that they are not exposed to a natural environment to learn, but to an artificial situation in the classroom and it is very difficult for them to separate their memories of school lessons from those of true language learning.

But in spite of the points mentioned above, each adult can create her internal grammar or understand an infinite number of sentences she has never heard before. She is able to know what is acceptable and what is not. She does so based on her feeling of grammaticality.

1.1.3 - Difference between First and Second Language

Pit Corder (1979) has pointed out some differences between mother tongue and target language acquisition. The main ones are:

- While the learning of the mother tongue is inevitable we can perceive that there is no such inevitability about the learning of a second language;

- The learning of the mother tongue is part of the whole maturational process of the child while the learning of the second language begins only after the maturational process is complete;

- The third difference is that in the learning of the mother tongue the child starts with no overt language behaviour whereas in the second language learner such behaviour exists;

- And finally, the motivation for learning a first language is quite different from that for learning a second language.

Besides these differences, there are some hypotheses about how languages are learned but these are being questioned and new ones are being established. One of the recent hypotheses is that the child is born with an innate predisposition to acquire language and that he must be exposed to language for the acquisition process to start; that he possesses an internal mechanism of unknown nature which enables him from the limited data available to him to construct a grammar of a particular language. The way he does this is unknown and is a field of study at the present time by linguists and psychologists. Based on this hypothesis, Palmer stated that the adult was seen as capable as the child of acquiring a foreign language. Palmer maintained that:

"... we are all endowed by nature with the capacity for assimilating language and that this capacity remained available to us in a latent state after the acquisition of a primary language."¹ (Richards, J. C. 1979. p. 25).

If we take into consideration the same processes for both languages, we may postulate that the strategies which will

be discussed later (p. 36) and the procedures adopted by the learners of the second language are the same, the main difference being one of motivation, considering that motivation (Lambert: 1969) to learn the first language is determined by *"basic desires to communicate with the family members and others in the linguistic community while the motivation to learn the second language is determined by his attitudes and by his orientation toward learning a second language"*.

1.1.4 - Similarities between 1st and 2nd languages

The main similarities we can find between L 1 and L 2 acquisition are related to the learning strategies. It appears that both groups of learners follow the same strategies in constructing their internal grammar: simplification, overgeneralization, analogy, loss of sentence medial items and so on. Ervin Tripp (1970) has pointed out that both L 1 and L 2 learners appear to work from simpler to more complex structures, to use meaning as a clue for interpreting syntactic features to relate word order to meaning and to prefer simpler word order to more complex order strategies.

But the hypothesis which states that the process are the same for both languages has received counter argument. The argument is that the individual is biologically programmed to learn language before puberty and that optimal grammatical coding is available only to children, not to adults (King 1969, Saporta, 1966, Wilkins, 1974). Besides this, the child is thought to process language in a different way from the adult.

In predicting the difficulties that the students will have in learning a second language, it has been believed that where the structures of the two languages are the same, no

difficulty is anticipated and the learner will tend to transfer his knowledge from the mother tongue to the other language but where the two languages are different we can predict that the learners will have difficulties, indicated by a great frequency of error in performance. All knowledge that the learner has about the structure of the first language will serve to formulate hypotheses about the structure of the second language. In using the knowledge he may commit errors which generally he is not able to recognize and correct.

1.2 - ERRORS

Before talking about contrastive and error analysis theories, it's necessary to mention what an error is first. Thus the purpose of this section is to present several definitions for errors according to the linguists' point of view.

The need for analysing several definitions of errors is to provide background that can help us to identify an error in the students' test when using English prepositions.

The first definition to be introduced is that of Pit Corder which says errors "*are breaches of the code*"² (Corder, 1979: 256) and a result of unacceptable utterances. They are the sign of an imperfect knowledge of code, that is, the learners have not yet internalized the formation rules of the second language.

It has been said that we all make mistakes when we are speaking our mother tongue and that we are able to recognize our own mistakes for what they are and how to correct them but in the case of a second language learner this does not happen because he is not able to recognize his mistakes and in trying

to correct them he often makes another error.

According to George (1972: 2) an error is *"an unwanted form which the teacher does not want"*³. He also argues with Pit Corder, saying that errors come from a particular teaching program. They are systematic and reflect a defect in knowledge. Whenever an unwanted form occurs in a learner's production of spoken and written English, we can say it is the result of a process or processes. The occurrence of errors is explainable in the following way: The learner is exposed to experience of English from his teacher and his coursebook - this is the input to the learner. The output is the production of spoken or written English. When the learner's output includes an unwanted form which was not part of the input we say it is an *"error"*.

Generally, errors have been determined by testing acceptability or non - acceptability by native - speakers - so, *"an acceptable form is one that has been or might be produced by a native speaker in some appropriate context or would be accepted by other native speakers as belonging to the language in question"*⁴. (Chau, Tran-Thi 1975: 119-43) In order to identify the prepositional errors made by Brazilian students, the same test was applied to a group of native speakers to evaluate the students' responses as correct or not.

Thus, the reason for studying errors is that for many years, errors have been seen as a negative aspect of language teaching but now this view is changing. Errors should be seen as indicators of the difficulties the learners face at certain stages of the learning process. In knowing the learner's difficulties, the teacher can provide feedback for the points considered hard for them.

The first thing to observe in a study of error is that they fall into two groups: Those which are systematic or

predictable which result from the inadequate strategies of learning and those which are unpredictable or unsystematic, which result in some factors such as memory lapses, physical states (fatigue, strong emotion), etc. The first type is called errors of competence and second is called errors of performance (Corder 1967). Errors of competence reflect either a transitional stage in the development of a grammatical rule or the final stage of the student's knowledge. Errors of performance are occasional and haphazard and these can be corrected with more or less complete assurance by the learners.

Besides errors, which are systematic, the learners also commit mistakes and lapses. These differ from errors because they are identified as failures in performance to use a known system correctly and they are a result of some neurophysiological breakdown or imperfection in the process of encoding and articulating speech. They are caused by tiredness, nervousness or some type of situation of stress or uncertainty or when our attention is divided or even when we are absorbed in some linguistic activity. They are not of particular importance to the language teacher because the speaker is immediately aware of them.

To sum up what has been said, the study of errors has led to the construction of theories such as Contrastive and Error Analyses which concern themselves with an intensive contrastive study of the systems of the L 2 and the mother tongue of the learner. Besides this, through theories the teachers can find out areas of difficulties which the learner would encounter and special care and emphasis can be given to overcoming these difficulties. These theories will be used in this study. In the next sections the value of these theories will be discussed.

in order to detect the students' difficulties in using English prepositions as well to explain the possible sources of errors.

1.3 - CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

Contrastive Analysis as a systematic branch of linguistic science is of recent date. Its real beginning is marked by the publication in 1957 of Robert Lado's *"Linguistics Across Cultures"*. In this book, Lado quotes Charles Fries, the American structuralist who applied the principles of linguistic science to the teaching of English. He says,

"The most effective materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner".⁵ (Nickel, Gerhard. 1978: 3)

Thus the idea of contrasting languages for teaching purposes is not new. Traditional grammars make use of the contrastive approach when they compare constructions or function of the target language with those of the source language. Such comparisons have been quite useful for pedagogical purpose but they suffer from a general failure because the traditional grammar on which they are based is not sufficiently explicit to allow exact analyses.

Contrastive Analysis has been the focus of controversy since it became part of applied linguistics. Several Scholars such as Ritchie (1967), Lee (1968), Wardhaugh (1970), Gradman (1971) have attacked its theoretical bases, both psychological and linguistics, but Selinker thinks that it is curious that C.A. developed in a period when other useful theories have been used

for studying the errors. However, Whitman and other scholars continue doing contrastive studies in a belief that such studies provide a valid basis for the development of language learning materials. They also believe that the empirical success of C.A. should be explained, but Jackson (1971) thinks that this empirical support may be questioned.

In the last ten years, two different versions have appeared concerning Contrastive Analysis hypotheses: (Schachter 1977: 441-450). C. A. apriori, which is also called "the predictive or strong version", and C. A. aposteriori, which is known as "the explanatory or weak version".

In the C. A. Apriori approach, the analysis is made point by point of the phonological, morphological, syntactic or other subsystem of two languages. The investigators can analyse two different languages and discover the similarities and differences between them. When they do so, they can make predictions about the points of difficulties for the speaker of language A who is attempting to learn language B considering that similarities will be easier to learn and the differences harder. They also defend the idea that the prediction of areas of difficulty will not account for all of the learning problems that occur in the classroom. Problems can be caused by previous teaching and motivation (Schachter 1977: 441).

However, C. A. aposteriori is said to be a subcomponent of Error Analysis, that is, the investigator makes an analysis of the constructions in language B, and the comparable construction in language A, in order to discover why the errors occur. Here, error analysis will show the investigator just the difficulties that the learner has in the target language and these difficulties will show up errors in production. Moreover, the frequency of

occurrence of specific errors will indicate their relative difficulty.

Investigators such as Lee (1957), Ritchie (1967), K. Jackson (1972), Gradman (1971) argue that only C. A. *aposteriori* has any validity for the investigation of second language acquisition. They defend the idea that C. A. *apriori* sometimes predicts difficulties that do not occur especially in syntax, resulting in a waste of time in the classroom. If such a thing is true, then this approach is wrong. The second argument is that C. A. *aposteriori* allows the researcher to direct his attention to those areas considered by error analysis to be the difficult ones.

As both approaches have their weaknesses, the only approach that provides answers to the questions about second language acquisition would be a combination of approaches, C. A. *apriori* and error analysis which will give us information on what the L 2 learning process is all about.

Some criticisms addressed to C. A. are centred around the following points:

First, looking at language differences C. A. ignores many other factors which affect the second language learner's performance, such as his own learning strategies, the training procedures, overgeneralization of the rules and so on.

Second, C. A. can not predict the types of error caused by interference from the materials previously studied.

Third, the objectivity of C. A. methodological procedures is questionable. Every contrastivist felt free to use his preferred model of language structure which led to different results presenting different predictions.

Thus, the problem of predictions and explanation of

learner's difficulties has been divided in two groups: on the one hand, C. A. led by Gradman, Hamp, Ritchie, Wolf and Wilkins, and on the other hand, E. A. which arose as a reaction to C. A. led by Di Pietro, Rivers, Strevens, Pit Corder, Ferguson and many others. These proposed a sophisticated error analysis that involved both an adequate linguistic categorization of errors and statistical treatment of them revealing the particular difficulties of a specific groups of students.

Summing up this section so far, Contrastive Analysis is a series of statements about the similarities and differences between two languages. Its main concern is the comparison of the performance of the learner of various tongues. But it has been criticized because it only predicts the difficulties in learning a foreign language. It is based on two main assumptions: that the native language interferes with the learning of a SL, and that the greater the difference between NL and the TL, the more difficult it is for the learner.

It has been pointed out that C. A. as a scientific tool in the investigation of various tongues is of some value, but whether the findings are of much more value in second language learning, there are still many question marks.

However, C. A. can be useful in reconstructing the explanations of certain types of error such as: *We like of horses very much,"etc., which have some connection with the mother tongue. For this reason this approach will be needed in the present study.

1.4 - ERROR ANALYSIS

Error Analysis appeared as a reaction to Contrastive Analysis and it is a means of finding in a shorter way the analysis of learner's difficulties in foreign languages. As C.A. has been criticized because its analysis of production errors only shows that they are attributable to mother tongue interference, E. A. appeared to reveal that not all second language errors have their sources in the mother tongue. Besides this, E. A. has been well received because it follows the psycholinguistic view of language acquisition that attempts to explain the creative nature of the language acquisition process as described by Chomsky (1965).

1.4.1 - The Aim of Error Analysis

The primary aim of error analysis is to analyze the learner's errors to give evidence of his competence in the foreign language and to detect the learner's difficulties at different stages.

Proponents of Error Analysis have argued for its usefulness both on theoretical and practical grounds. They have stated that only a careful study of a large corpus of errors made by speakers of the target language provides empirical data for developing a syllabus.

In relation to Error Analysis functions, we can say that for theoretical purposes, it gives the teacher a better understanding of second language learning. For pedagogical purposes, it can help to assess the difficulties and errors by looking at a qualitative linguistic classification of error (e. g. analyze the levels of linguistic description: phonology,

syntax, etc) and quantitative aspects of the frequency of each type of error presented in percentages. When this is done the teacher has a view of what difficulties and errors there are and can help the learner to overcome them. Thus, the syllabus can be formulated based on the relationship of the learner's general knowledge about language structure and the structure of the foreign language.

1.4.2 - The Uses of Error Analysis

As to the use of Error Analysis, Jack Richards has emphasized the significance of errors in three different ways. First, for the teacher, because they provide feedback and tell him something about the effectiveness of his teaching materials and techniques as well as showing him what parts of the syllabus have been inadequately taught. Second, for the researcher, because they provide evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing when they are learning the language. Third, for the learner, they are a way for him to test his hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning; besides being a device he uses in order to learn the language.

1.4.3 - Procedures of Error Analysis

With respect to the procedures to be used to detect the learner's difficulties, the first thing to do is to choose the corpus. Then, the errors should be recognized, reconstructed, classified and their frequency stated. The final stage is the explanation of errors and of the frequencies of different errors. This will be our procedure in the study of students' difficulties of prepositions which will be presented in the third chapter.

When we talk of a "*corpus*" we mean the tests of written and oral production in the foreign language. The amount of material depends on the nature of the research topic. When the researcher delimits the corpus, he should take care to include all information about the learners which might be relevant in explaining the occurrence of errors made by different learners. The group of students should be as homogenous as possible.

McKeating (1981: 220) asserts that recognition of an error depends on interpretation i.e., "*on what we know (or assume) the learner meant*" as well as "*on what standard of performance is considered to be acceptable*". Context is all important in recognizing an error because without knowing the context we can not assume whether a certain item to be used is correct or not. Thus interpretation is central to the whole process, because our interpretation of what we think the student meant may help us to recognize an error and will determine our reconstruction.

Douglas Mckeating gives some clues to interpret and recognize an error: 1) the general context; 2) a knowledge of similar errors made by similar students; 3) a knowledge of the students' M T and the possible results of phonological interference or direct translation into English; 4) direct questioning, perhaps in the M T, as to what the student meant.

He also emphasizes two points in reconstructing errors: 1) the need to distinguish sometimes what the native speaker would have produced in the same context from what the learner was trying to produce, that is, the English forms he was aiming at but getting wrong; 2) The most obvious reconstruction for the teacher is not necessarily the version at which the student was aiming but the one which involves the least alteration. For example, if the student produces a sentence like: "**He threw*

some mangoes with a stick" this can be readily changed to *"he hit some mangoes with a stick"* considering that this is the most obvious reconstruction for the teacher or for the native-English Speaker.

In order to make a classification one must first distinguish between errors and mistakes and determine that an error is in fact present. Then it is also necessary to adopt an objective system of classification to compare the occurrence and frequency of different types.

In describing an error, we are explaining it in terms of the linguistic process or rules which are being followed by the speaker.

According to Pit Corder, the description of error can be made at various degrees of depth, generality or abstraction. The most superficial level merely describes errors in terms of the physical difference between the learner's utterance and the reconstructed version. Thus one of the systems of classification of errors adopted by Pit Corder comprises four categories: omission of some required elements; addition of some unnecessary element; selection of an incorrect element and misordering of elements. This classification is useful because it can be used for any kind of test: translation, compositions, oral reports, cloze tests, etc. It's worth mentioning that this classification will be adopted for two tests of my research: the oral report and composition, since in creating their own contexts, the students can add, substitute or even omit an appropriate preposition.

Moreover, a linguistic classification of errors also involves determining them to various levels of linguistic description, i. e, phonological (both speaking and listening),

orthographic (spelling and punctuation), syntactic (grammatical), lexico-semantic (choice of vocabulary affecting meaning), situational or socio-linguistic (appropriacy). Many times it is not possible to determine an error to only one level of description. For example errors involving prepositions sometimes involve both syntax and semantics. The following sentence contains an error of this type. The substitution of one preposition for another can have important semantic and syntactic consequences as in: *Paul went in the school", where the verb "to go" requires to.

As was stated above, the best way to describe the linguistic nature of errors is to detect them in the utterances produced by learners when they are trying to communicate with others. To do so, Pit Corder suggests that:

"... it requires that the teacher understand the source of errors so that he can provide the appropriate data and other information, sometimes comparative, which will resolve the learner's problems and allow him to discover the relevant rules".⁶ (Corder. 1979: 293)

As to the frequency of errors, this must be based on the number of possible mistakes. The frequency of errors should be based on counting recurrent or systematic errors. If an error occurs with the same lexical item in the same tests it should be counted as a single error; two or more mistakes of the same grammatical rule in the same test should be counted separately if they occur with different lexical items.

It's important to remember that error gravity should serve as a basis for remedial teaching since the parity of an error lies in the extent to which it interferes with communication.

The last part of the process of Error Analysis is the

explanation of the causes of errors which is much more speculative than objective.

The next section will present the several possible causes or sources and types of errors according to various linguists' points of view.

1.5 - THE SOURCES OR CAUSES OF ERRORS

It's not an easy task to explain the causes of errors, but it is generally maintained that many errors are attributable to the influence of the mother tongue or an other language the learner knows, because when the learner is faced with the need to communicate something which requires knowledge or skill in the language which lies beyond what he possesses, he will have to resort to the mother tongue. The assumption is that what can be said in one language can be said in another but languages differ in their way of expressing the message.

Thus, one explanation for errors is that these may occur not only because of the differences between NL and FL but also because constructions are difficult in the foreign language itself. Furthermore, certain errors may occur because of general learning strategies in the L 1 and L 2 learner. So, we can explain most of the errors: 1) by contrasting L 1 and L 2 and 2) by aiming at the foreign language itself.

When the non - occurrence of errors exists, this could be due to the fact that the construction has been well taught and not to the fact that it is inherently easy. And likewise a high frequency of errors may result from inadequate teaching materials or methods. It's quite likely that the difficulties faced by different learners vary in accordance with age, period

of study, stay in the foreign country, etc and these should be taken into account when we evaluate the errors.

As has been mentioned above, it's difficult to determine the causes of given errors, but when teachers or researchers are dealing with errors they must try to account for why they occurred.

For this purpose, a Table will show the main causes of errors according to Selinker, Richards and George's points of view, illustrated with examples.

TABLE I

The Terminology of classification of Errors

SELINKER	RICHARDS	GEORGE
. language transfer e.g. I go <u>in</u> Florida	. Interlingual errors e.g. "I went <u>in</u> Ontario"	. Mother tongue Interference e.g. "I like <u>of</u> ice- cream"
. Transfer - of - training e.g. "The use of <u>He</u> for he/she caused by drilling exercises"	. Intralingual errors e.g. "He <u>is</u> speaks French"	. Cross - association e.g. "I went <u>on</u> January and came back <u>on</u> July".
. Strategies of the second language learning e.g. "I'm feeling thirsty"	. Intralingual/ Developmental errors e.g. Yesterday, I <u>go</u> to school	. Error due to perception of redundancy e.g. He <u>runned</u> a lot.
. Strategies of L2 com- munication e.g. "Entry will be by tickets"	. Developmental Errors e.g. "Is the breakfast is good?"	-
. Overgeneralization of the target language rules e.g. What <u>did</u> he intended <u>to</u> say?"	. Intralingual errors e.g. Where you go?	. Overgeneralization e.g. "In this poem Wordsworth has described <u>about</u> nature".

Now let's think about how these error types can be identified and their causes explained.

1.5.1 - Error Types

1.5.1.1 - Interlingual Errors

The first group of errors - Interlingual or Mother Tongue Interference errors (Richards and George) or Language Transfer (Selinker) are those caused by the use of elements from the mother tongue while speaking the target language. These errors reflect the attempt of the learner's to transfer his knowledge from the M T to the T L because of the compatibility of both languages.

One point to be considered here is that the strategy of transferring can be seen as positive or negative (Ronald Sheen: George: 1980). It is regarded "positive" when M T and the T L in question do share the same rule or semantic correspondence in the L 2 system. In this case the transfer is not regarded as an error. E. g. "*He told me of his adventures*" is a case of positive transfer because the similarity of structures in both Portuguese and English (Port. verb. form "*falar de*" can correspond to "*tell of*" in English).

Negative transfer happens when the learner uses one element or rule of the mother tongue in the T L mistakenly thinking that they are similar E. g. "**Everyone has a story which hap,rened either with themselves or a relative or a friend*" is a typical case of negative transfer because the learners used the preposition with in the context when English system does not allow that. As the verb "*acontecer*" in Portuguese is followed by "com" the learners tend to closely translate the L 1 item for the L 2. Other examples caused by negative transfer are the following: "**I went in Ontario; *I'm reading a book of Hardy; *The day of yesterday, I went to the movies, etc*".

Similarly, according to George, mother tongue interference can promote or hinder the learning of features in English. It causes proactive inhibition that sometimes leaves the later experience intact or may lead to a modification of subsequent learning instead of to its extinction. This can be noticed on a phonological level. Familiar patterns and items will be preferred to new different ones, and this preference constitutes the basis for mother tongue interference.

On the contrary, retroactive inhibition happens when an item has been learned and the experience of a subsequent item is observed to inhibit the learned item in the learner's performance.

It seems true that a second language learned later is not registered on a blank area but it has to be imposed on that which is already familiar, the mother tongue, which leads to proactive inhibition.

Interference from the mother tongue can occur in the following points: 1) when the foreign language may have one feature and the M T two or more. E. g. the preposition by in English can correspond to por, de and durante in Portuguese; 2) when the foreign language may have two or more features where the mother tongue has one. E.g. the preposition in, on and at in English can correspond to just one form em in Portuguese; 3) when the foreign language and the mother tongue may have features which are similar but not coincident. E.g. *I like of ice-cream' is evidence that the verbs gostar and like in both languages are not both followed by of. However, of broadly corresponds to de. Another example is when there is M T feature and no F L feature.

These errors are identified by comparing or contrasting

the two languages in question in order to see the patterns or points which cause difficulties. It seems that most cases of mother tongue interference involve a close translation of an L 1 item for L 2 and an assumption that the distribution of the items in contexts is identical in the two languages.

1.5.1.2 - Intralingual errors

These errors reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, cross-association, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn the conditions under which rules apply. These are derived from the structure of English itself.

Some of Selinker's processes in performance analysis can be related to intralingual errors. They are: transfer - of - training (which is induced hypothesis about the T L); Strategies of second language learning (when the fossilizable items, rules and subsystems are an identifiable approach by the learner to the material to be learned) and overgeneralization of the target language linguistic materials (when the learners generalize the rules and semantic features of the target language).

These processes are effective in determining the nature of the learner's interlanguage. By interlanguage he means "*the linguistic system that shows two sets of utterances are not identical when produced by a learner of a T L*"⁷. (Selinker, 1977: 35) It is the speech output in a second language since it differs from the target language. Of course, from these central processes we will find explanations for the different types of errors. When Selinker mentions "fossilization", he means "*the linguistic items, rules and subsystems which speakers of a particular N L will tend to keep in their interlanguage relative*

to a particular T L, no matter the age of the learner or the amount of instruction he receives in the T L"⁸. (Selinker, 1977: 36)

George also talks about overgeneralization, cross - association, errors due to redundancy and analogy which can be considered intralingual errors. The last one is more a strategy than a cause of error and it will be discussed further.

The first type of error - Overgeneralization - is defined by Jakobovits (1970: 116) as "the use of previously available strategies in a new situation"⁹. (Richards, 1974: 36)

It deals with the creation of ill - formed structures based on the speaker's knowledge of other structures in the second language. It is associated with redundancy reduction. Thus, when the learners say "I'm liking" this can be the effect of overgeneralization of structures learned in pattern drills. These generalizations seem to be encouraged sometimes by particular strategies or teaching materials, sometimes the learner fails to observe the restrictions on the co-occurrence of grammatical or lexical items within the sentence. For instance. From "say about", "speak about" and "write about" the learner seems to generalize and say "In this poem Wordsworth has described about nature". As the verbs "speak", "say" and "write" have some relation semantically and can be used with the preposition "describe about" by association as belonging to this same concept.

In addition, it is very common to notice the students overgeneralize the structures or items by over-association, i.e., the learners tend to overgeneralize some rules of use by association because of an item which often occurs in a particular context. For instance "The letter B comes from the letter C;" "The children have classes from 8:00 at 11:00" are typical

examples of errors of over-association of the literal meaning of the verb "to come" followed by "from" and the preposition at indicating time because these items are frequently used in this way in English. Another example of this type would be: "**I'll phone you at 2:00 and 3:00*".

Cross-association, according to H. V. George, "*is a phenomenon of mutual interference between partially learned items, neither being inhibited but one or both being affected by the other*"¹⁰. (George, 1972: 143) The simplest cases of cross-association happen when words with associated meaning are presented in succession. Thus when two constructions whose functional and formal characteristics are for the learner distinguished are taught too close together, that is, the second item being taught before the first is established, cross-association will likely occur. For example, when the learners are taught the prepositions in, on or at in succession indicating place, time or address, they will probably produce sentences such as: "**Mr. Smith lives on 248 Hercilio Luz Avenue; *He goes to Rio in Sunday morning; *I went on January and came back on July and so on*". This happens because different forms are taught together associated with the some functions place, time and address.

Another circumstance in which cross-association can occur is when one item is being used with the construction of another. For example, "comprise" with the construction of "consist of". Any degree of homophony and homography in the forms also leads to cross-association.

According to George, redundancy sometimes constitutes a straightforward inefficiency which is represented in the classroom by learning difficulty, slow progress and "errors". This happens because many features of English as a communication

system are redundant in communication terms without any compensating aspect. For instance, in English there are several forms which refer to the same concept or one concept can be represented by several different forms. This is the case of the prepositions in/on/at denoting time and place. In the same way the concept or aspect of time can be expressed by: in, on, at, for, during, after, before, since, over, by and until etc.

Moreover, some contexts allow the substitution of one preposition for another suggesting a change of meaning. E.g. Paul lives in Britain (place), Paul lives near Britain (proximity), Paul lives around Britain (approximately), etc. This indicates that there is redundancy in context and this depends on the semantic features the words carry.

In addition, one can also find subsystems within the English preposition system, that is, one preposition can have several meanings, some being literal, others non-literal. E.g. by 10:00 o'clock; by the post; by car; etc. These will be studied further in Ch 2.

Both types of redundancies - in the system and in context can and do lead the students to make errors.

1.5.1.3 - Developmental errors

This type of error reflects the attempts of the learner to build up hypotheses about the English language from his limited experience of it in the classroom or textbook. Here we can find errors such as false concepts hypothesized, ignorance of items (Richards) and strategies of L 2 communication (Selinker).

Strategies of Second language communication which Selinker mentions as one of the five central processes which determine the nature of the learner's interlanguage relates to

the fossilizable items, rules or subsystems as a result of an identifiable approach by the learner to communicate with native speakers. That means the learner tries to use what he/she knows and extends it to any situation when he talks to native speakers. E.g. When the learner is talking about a future action and produces sentences like: "*Tomorrow, I go to school*", he shows that he is using his limited knowledge and applying it in areas which he doesn't know yet.

When Richards mentions False Concepts Hypothesized, he means those errors which can be caused by faulty teaching materials or techniques. For instance, "*yesterday, I go to the university and I met my new teacher*"; "*What did he intended to say?*". These types of errors have some close relation to the effect of redundancy. These errors may derive from faulty comprehension of the distinction between rules in the target language. When the learners employ an adverb indicating past time they think it is not necessary to use the verb in the past. In addition, teachers' over-emphasis on adverbs with past tense markers may add or unnecessarily increase the perceived redundancy of inflection.

Ignorance of Items and Rules restrictions is indicated by the failure to observe the items or restrictions of existing structures, that is, the presence of items or the application of rules to contexts where they do not apply. For example, "*The man who I saw him*"; "*I made him to do it*". The first error violates the limitation on subjects in structures with "*who*" while the second ignores restrictions on the distribution of "make". Some linguists consider this type of error as overgeneralization or transfer because the learner is making use of an acquired rule in a new situation.

It's important to acknowledge that it's very hard to separate the various types of errors and their causes mentioned in this discussion. Sometimes the same error appears to occur under two or three headings. E.g. "*What did he intended?*" Can be classified as false concepts hypothesized, redundancy, etc. "*We discussed about it*" can occur under cross association, analogy, overgeneralization or even false concepts hypothesized.

1.5.2 - Learning Strategies

It is known that any learner adopts learning strategies when he is learning a new language in order to make it easier. Every learner tries to reduce speech to a simpler system and this reduction seems to be made through strategies such as: language transfer, oversimplification, analogy. etc.

The first one, oversimplification, derives from the fact that heavy communication demands may be made on the second language forcing the learner to mold what he has learned into a means of saying what he wants to communicate. Simplification is one way to make a new language easier to learn and use by speakers of different languages. Thus, in any situation where the second language has to be used outside the classroom in real situations, the learners find themselves having to cope with circumstances that the school syllabus has not covered yet. Here the learners extend the uses of partially known forms into other areas or omit some items in the sentences because they do not know them yet. For instance, "*She saying she would ask him*" is an example of simplification because the learner omitted the verb to be simplifying the target language since he considers the use of this form as unnecessary. This strategy is related to Selinker's strategies of L 2 communication.

Another learning strategy is analogy considered as one aspect of overgeneralization. It is sometimes used to refer to the errors due to restrictions such as prepositions in English. This happens when the learner taking a particular preposition with one type of verb, attempts by analogy to use the same preposition with similar verbs. For instance, "**He explained me the book*", because of "*He showed me book*"; "*He asked to me*" by analogy to "*He said to me*"; "*We discussed about it*"; "*by analogy to we talk about it*", etc.

According to George, analogy enables a learner to predict that certain already perceived relations will be paralleled by further relations"¹¹. (George: 1972: 143) Such predictions can result in the production of wanted or unwanted forms. Analogy underlies language production and language learning at all levels. It involves syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations.

Generally, the learners select a certain strategy and if a further task seems parallel to the previous one, the a similar strategy is likely to be used. Thus as Portuguese is an inflectional language, the learners tend to produce analogous errors with inflections which occur in English such as the "ed" inflection. The students tend to say "*goed*", "*thinked*" because of "*worked*", "*liked*".

By analogy to the simple past forms of regular verbs, the students also used ed with irregular verbs.

To George, there is no need to correct mistaken inflections of this kind, because these will disappear as the learners's familiarity with English increases.

1.5.3 - Problems Observable in Error Analysis

To consider an analysis as rigorous, some points, should be observed. Jacquelyn Schachter and Marianne Murcia in their paper, *"Some Reservations Concerning Error Analysis"* point out as one of these aspects the ascription of error to sources of systematic errors. These should be only analysed very cautiously because there are large numbers of learner's errors that are ambiguous as to whether they are interlingual or intralingual. They illustrate this point saying that some speakers of Chinese, Arabic and other languages delete the Obligatory copula. This is explained as interference because of structural differences between the target and the source languages. This error can also be described as developmental when produced by speakers of Spanish because there are no structural differences with English in this area. Thus the researcher must be extremely cautious when claiming to have identified the cause of any error type.

Second, the amount of errors should be representative so that we can assume that a certain error type was caused by a given factor.

Third, procedures should not be prejudiced by casual consideration, that is, lack of objectivity does not lead to a good analysis.

Moreover, as Abbot has claimed, the method of classification of errors should be restricted to a classification in which the linguists have most confidence and the analysis must make provision for inevitable cases of doubt, that is, an error may be the result of two or more causes.

Summary

To sum up what has been mentioned about the sources of errors, mother tongue interference is not the only interfering factor, but there is also interference between the forms of the language being learnt (intralingual errors). Moreover, in a study of a second language we can not ignore the learning strategies the learners adopt in learning a new language. These are part of the process of F L acquisition.

An important aspect to be mentioned in this work is that in the research of learner's errors of preposition, errors caused by two major factors will be considered: intralingual and interlingual interference. Developmental errors will not be taken into consideration because these go beyond the scope of this work. This researcher could only identify and explain the strategies employed by the learners if we had followed a complete course to observe the students' performance when they are learning the new language. However, in Ch 4 some strategies will be mentioned and their effects evaluated on the basis of the students' responses.

The distinction between performance and competence errors is not observed in this study, although the performance errors are related to psychological factors such as tiredness, memory limitations, lack of attention and strong emotion and these occasionally occur in the production of language.

Although I have tried to explain the causes of errors mentioned above, it is very difficult in many cases to determine the precise source of an error since an error can probably have more than one source.

1.6 - CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion to be drawn from this chapter is that:

- Both theories - Contrastive and Error Analyses - are helpful and can be used in the attempt to classify and explain preposition errors. These two types of analyses are complementary since they aim to reveal learner's difficulties in foreign language learning. Contrastive Analysis, although limited, is valid because it starts with a comparison of the native and foreign languages in order to predict such difficulties. Its limitation lies in the fact that it is only able to predict errors derived from mother tongue influence;

- However, students can also rephrase elements which do not belong to the mother tongue and these can not be predicted by Contrastive analysis. Thus C. A. will only be used as part of the explanatory stage in the Error Analysis;

- We have to keep in mind that both theories - Contrastive and Error analyses must be seen as of great importance from a practical and a theoretical point of view for the teachers of foreign languages because they need any information that can be revealed for the planning of courses and the construction of teaching materials in foreign languages. Besides this, these theories lead us to discover the processes of second language acquisition and the circumstances in which these processes are accomplished. In addition, it is a rare opportunity to study in depth students' performance in such a limited area of proficiency.

In the following chapters we shall characterize the nine most frequent English prepositions (in, on, at, of, from, for, to, by and with) according to Quirk et al, Leech, Swan,

Thompson and Martinet and others from the syntactic and semantic points of view. We also shall identify the main difficulties the informants have in learning the use of English prepositions. To achieve this, Contrastive and Error Analysis theories will be used. Finally this work will be concluded with pedagogical recommendations with the purpose of overcoming the difficulties faced by the students as well as to help to improve learning or teaching techniques.

CHAPTER TWO

PREPOSITIONS

2 - INTRODUCTION

In studying the class of words called prepositions, one of the first difficulties for the English grammarian is to find a definition for them. The other main problem is to classify them for descriptive and pedagogic purposes. Thus the aim of this chapter is to present: 1) the difficulties in using prepositions; 2) different approaches to both English and Portuguese preposition systems and 3) a count of the frequency of occurrence of various prepositions and their different uses in three different texts used for analysis.

2.1- DIFFICULTIES IN USING THE ENGLISH PREPOSITION SYSTEM

As we know, prepositions play a large part in the structure of the language and they are the cause of many difficulties for foreign students. Most grammarians recognize that it is difficult to systematize prepositions, so little guidance is given in grammar books as to which preposition is the right one to use because the reasons are complex. Moreover, it is very difficult to learn how to use prepositions correctly because most of them have several functions for the same form or different prepositions can have very similar uses. For this reason, it is easy to make mistakes. For instance, if we take the preposition "In" we see that it can be used to indicate several categories of meanings such as time (He died in 1945); Place (She lives in Bristol); Manner (He spoke in a silvery voice); occupation or fields of activity (He was in business

as a newsagent), etc.

We can also see that the prepositions in, on, at, for, since can be used in association with the same category: time as in the following examples:

John travelled in March;

He usually goes to the beach on Sunday morning

Mary usually goes to school at 7:00

She has lived in Florianopolis for two years

I haven't seen Paul since 1950.

As these examples show, we can notice different types of time reference within the same general category. So, Time can be seen "*as periods of time*"; "*a point of time*"; "*duration of time*"; "*date*" or as "*a continuous period of time extending from a definite point in the past to the present*".

In addition, within the preposition system we still have to consider the variety of distribution of forms such as: prepositional verbs, phrasal verbs and prepositional phrases.

Prepositional Verbs are a combination of a verb and a preposition. Their meanings are usually clear from the separate forms, i. e., very often the meaning is clear in the verb. For example, look after, comment on, refer to, care for, live on, run for, etc.

Phrasal Verbs, on the other hand, are a combination of a verb and an adverbial particle. Their meanings are often very different from the meanings of the two words taken separately. Sometimes the first word keeps its meaning and the second has a special intensifying sense. For example, give up (= surrender), "*sit down*" (= move from standing to sitting), "catch on" (= understand), "*blow up*" (= explode), "*turn up*"

(= appear), "get up" (= stand), etc.

Besides these, there are still the Phrasal - Prepositional Verbs which are a combination of a verb and an adverb plus a preposition. These also have different meanings than the parts have when taken separately. For example, "put up with" (= tolerate); "break in on" (= interrupt); "cut down with" (= reduce), etc.

The present work will not concentrate on the problems of phrasal and phrasal - prepositional verbs and will limit itself essentially to the study of the nine most frequent simple prepositions occurring in prepositional phrases.

Prepositional Phrases consist of a preposition followed by a prepositional complement which is usually a noun phrase, a wh - clause or a V - ing clause (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1978:143). For instance, "He was at school"; "the insisted on going to the club", "She was afraid of what he would do". The preposition is omitted when we use "that clauses" and "to - infinitive clauses". E.g. "He decided that he would go away", "They intend to buy a new car".

Usually, the preposition is followed by its complement although in certain cases (wh - questions and relative clauses) this may be optional, i. e., it can remain at the beginning or at the end of the sentence. It remains at the end of nominal wh - clauses, exclamations, passives and infinitive clauses.

Syntactically, prepositional phrases may occur in a variety of functions: noun post - modifiers; adverbials (conjunct, disjunct, adjunct), verb complements and complements of adjectives. Of these functions, adjuncts and noun post-modifiers occur with great frequency. Most prepositional phrases functioning as conjuncts are partly or wholly idiomatic phrases: of course, in

a word, in conclusion, in fact, etc. We can add that these prepositional phrases are finite in number. These functions will be discussed in detail in the following section. It is worth noting that prepositional phrases will account for many occurrences in the syntactic and semantic study of the nine most frequent prepositions in this chapter.

Just as there is a variety of syntactic distribution there is also a variety of meanings related to prepositions in English. For this reason there is perhaps more redundancy in the English system and it is easy to predict that the students will become confused in using them.

Redundancy concerning prepositions can be noticed both in contexts and in the system itself. Redundancy in the context depends on the semantic features the words carry. For example, certain verbs can mean "movement" and will require a particular type of preposition but sometimes there is no restriction in the context and more than one preposition can be used. E. g. "He comes from Bristol"; "He comes to Bristol". In the above sentences two different types of prepositions can be noticed in the same context, although they indicate different concepts. Redundancy in the system can be noticed in the functions of the various prepositions. For instance, the prepositions in, on, at, as we have seen before, can be used to denote time as well as place. So we have more than one form to carry the same semantic meaning or concept.

Moreover, in relation to the preposition system, subsystems can also be found. Thus a preposition can have several subsystems or subcategories of meanings. For example, the preposition "before" has five subclassifications:

before 1 meaning earlier than as in "My sister arrived

home before 10 o'clock";

before 2 meaning in front of as in "He stopped before the church";

before 3 meaning serial order as in "B comes before C";

before 4 meaning in the presence of, face to face with as in "He was brought before the judge";

before 5 meaning rather than, in preference to as in "Death before dishonour".

The first four uses are regarded as literal and the fifth one as non-literal.

Besides these subsystems we can also distinguish literal from non-literal uses. The literal use of a preposition according to the dictionary, means "corresponding exactly in meaning to the original sense, that is, words are used in their usual and obvious sense" (Hornby - Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 1974: 503). Non-literal use signifies that the meaning of a preposition is not taken literally or in its original meaning but figuratively or metaphorically. Idiomatic and complementary expressions containing a preposition are examples of non-literal use because the preposition is not taken in its original meaning. Its meaning is sometimes abstract.

The distinction between literal and non-literal uses is, in practice, based on Haas' concepts of substitutability and meaningfulness. Haas proposed a functional approach to find out if an item is meaningful or not. He sees meaning as "value in context". According to him, the basic requirement for meaningfulness is recurrent semantic value. In his words "a constituent form is significant, if substitution of some other form for it entails the same semantic contrast in different sentential

functions". (Allerton, D. J. et al. 1979. p. 13)

This approach presupposes a knowledge of the meanings of sentences, in other words, the replacement of one word by another will affect a change of meaning in the sentence. To illustrate the value of this test, we chose one sentence from one of the analysed texts "*the black community in Britain...*" and we made several substitutions. In examining this sentence, we see that the preposition "*in*" + "*Britain*" means a specific point or place but if we substitute of for in we have "*the black community of Britain*" denoting descriptive genitive", i. e., the whole expression indicates description. If we say "*the black community from Britain*" it indicates the "*source or origin*" of the black community. If we substitute near for from we have "*the black community near Britain*", the preposition near indicates proximity, i. e., that a certain distance exists between the black community and the place. If we say "*the black community about Britain*", the preposition about also signifies "*nearness*". If we say "*the black community under Britain*" signifies that the black community is subject to Britain, although there is no verb in this context. Thus we substitute the original preposition with five different prepositions in the same context. The meaning of each sentence varies because of the change in prepositions, and in all six sentences the prepositions are used literally because each one assumes a consistent and clear sense. This same context does not allow the use of the following prepositions: at, on, by, to, for, during, after, before, among, between, etc.

The difference in meaning is sometimes attributable to the change in prepositions, but sometimes it is due to other factors. However, when the preposition is used in certain

expressions and can not be substituted by another expression one can say that its use is "non-literal". For instance, "in fact", "on its own", "on the other hand", "at first", "at best", etc. The preposition loses its original meaning to become part of the total sense of the expression. In some cases, the meaning of the preposition does not change but it can not be substituted by another. E. g. "for example", "in a sense", "in its turn", "in the first place", "subject to heavy increases", "equivalent to the original teosinte", "familiar with teosinte", etc. Here some verbs, nouns and adjectives demand an obligatory use of a certain preposition which becomes part of the complement. These cases are called complementation expressions.

Thus, literal or non - literal uses can be tested by applying the concepts of substitutability and meaningfulness. In the latter cases the preposition is a fixed item in the expression because it can not be substituted for another. A dictionary may be helpful in giving some explanation of the different meanings expressed by prepositions. These non - literal uses are perhaps best learned by mechanical association, however.

2.2 - DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS

Some grammarians have tried to define prepositions by classifying them in the same category as conjunctions, adverbs and interjunctions (Otto Jespersen, 1949). Others are based on purely notional approaches. There are still others which are formal, but their classification adopts a notional approach which in many cases appears highly subjective and vague.

Otto Jespersen in his grammar - A Modern English Grammar (1949) does not introduce any definition of the

preposition. Like many grammarians, he puts prepositions in the same category as conjunctions, adverbs and interjunctions. He deals with prepositions in terms of their position in the sentences. He says, "*a preposition sometimes has end-position while what is, or should be, its regimen has front-position*"⁽¹³⁾. (Jespersen, Otto. *A. Modern English Grammar*, 1949 p. 219.)

He collected many examples in Elizabethan English showing the close relation between the verb and the preposition, such as: "notice of", "think of", "the length of those five days", "this house I no more show my face in", "certain interesting side questions I may glance at here", etc. He also discusses the idea that some words such as "but", "like", "than", being both prepositions and conjunctions, cause a great deal of confusion.

In relation to prepositional phrases, Jespersen states that "zero" article is frequent in many cases, especially proper nouns, river - names, double expressions. For instance, "write to Peter", "pray to God", "day by day", "from end to end". He notes that the prepositions most frequently followed by "zero" are those often used in a more abstract and non-local sense, such as "at" ("at length", at cards, at call), "by" (by day, by sea, by air), in (in time, in fact, in future, in secret), "on" (on land, on purpose, on business, on arrival) "of" (of barracks, out of window) and "to" ("go to pieces", "go to school, set to rights") etc.

One of the definitions based on a notional approach is that of R. A. Close who defines prepositions as "*words which express relationships in space between one thing and another and relationships in time between events*". (Close, R. A. 62 p. 141.) Although many usages of prepositions are very difficult to systematize, he states that prepositions may be

considered basically as applications of ideas related 1) to something having no dimension or an unspecified dimension; 2) to something having one dimension; 3) to something having two dimensions and 4) to something having three dimensions.

Thus, prepositions are seen in relation to the actual dimensions of things to which we are referring, or to the way in which we imagine them to be at the time of speaking. In this way, we can imagine a town as a point on the map, as a surface to go across, or as a space we live in or walk through.

Now let us see how Close distributes the uses or concepts of prepositions into several dimensions. We can perceive that one preposition can occur in more than one dimension, thus denoting a different concept. Here we have arranged several prepositions into dimensions in Tables in order to help the reader understand them more clearly. In summarizing these concepts or uses, we have:

NO OR UNSPECIFIED DIMENSION → A POINT

Preposition	CONCEPT / USE
TO	. movement in the direction of a point. E.g. Go <u>to</u> bed.
FROM	. movement in the opposite direction E.g. He's coming <u>from</u> London.
AT	. no movement E.g. He's standing <u>at</u> the door.
TOWARDS	. movement in the direction of point y without the idea of completion. E.g. Paul walks <u>towards</u> the square.
TILL/UNTIL	. length of time eventually reached or concluded. E.g. I'll be busy <u>till</u> five o'clock.
SINCE	. the progress of time from a specified point in the past to the speaker's point of primary concern. E.g. I haven't seen him <u>since</u> Tuesday.
AWAY FROM	. separation of the two positions of points X and Y. E.g. Keep <u>away from</u> the fire.
NEAR	. shortness of the distance between X and Y. E.g. Mary sat <u>near</u> Paul.
FOR	. Purpose. E.g. The train <u>for</u> Paris. . expected or completed length of the period during which an action takes place. E.g. We walked <u>for</u> two hours.
OF	. relationship between the part and the whole. E.g. some <u>of</u> you should be here tomorrow. . relationship between the member and the body to which that member belongs. E.g. The leg <u>of</u> a chair. . relationship between a quality and something possessing it. E.g. The beauty <u>of</u> the landscape.
	. relationship between a condition and something in that condition. E.g. The health <u>of</u> a nation . relationship between an aspect and the thing we are considering. E.g. a view <u>of</u> summit. . origin. E.g. She congratulated herself on coming <u>of</u> a good family.

Cont.

NO OR UNSPECIFIED DIMENSION → A POINT

Preposition	CONCEPT / USE
BY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . time. E.g. The concert will be over <u>by</u> ten. . space very near point y. E.g. He was sitting <u>by</u> the fire . means or agency. E.g. a book <u>by</u> Conan Doyle. . continuous movement passing Y. E.g. I always go <u>by</u> the post-office on my way to the station.
AROUND/ROUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . direction is an angle or a curve. E.g. A man walking <u>round</u> the corner. . Proximity, around. E.g. There was a man walking <u>about</u> the neighborhood.
ABOUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . subject matter. E.g. A lecture <u>about</u> nuclear energy . time. E.g. I'll be here <u>about</u> six o'clock.

ONE DIMENSION → A LINE

Preposition	CONCEPT / USE
TO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . reference to a line. E.g. This road leads <u>to</u> the river.
ON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . reference to a line. E.g. London is <u>on</u> the River Thames.
FROM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . reference to a line. E.g. Refugees fleeing <u>from</u> the frontier.
OFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . the place is seen as a line. E.g. Zanzibar is an island <u>off</u> the coast of Africa.
ALONG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . the idea of movement following the course before it. E.g. There are many trees <u>along</u> the Road to the village.
ACROSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . the idea of movement of a line over an area. E.g. They drove <u>across</u> the frontier.
BEHIND/IN FRONT OF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . both apply when the arrow represents the line of vision of a speaker at x, and when it represents a line of advance along with A and B are moving in the direction indicated. E.g. Susy stood <u>be hind</u> the teacher. <p style="text-align: center;">The students are <u>in front of</u> the school.</p>

TWO DIMENSIONS → A SURFACE OR AREA

Preposition	CONCEPT / USE
ON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . movement in the direction of a surface reaching it (or in contact with). E.g. Have you put the bread <u>on</u> the table? . something at rest, partially or wholly covering y. E.g. How can I sleep with this suitcase <u>on</u> the bed? . date of an event. E.g. <u>on</u> Monday, <u>on</u> the morning of the third day.
ONTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . movement towards, and then position on, the surface, or the effort required to complete this process. E.g. Can you help me lift it <u>on to</u> the bed?
OFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . opposite of "Onto"/negative of "on". E.g. Keep your feet <u>off</u> the chairs.
UPON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . occurs in certain fixed expressions. E.g. "<i>Upon my word</i>", "<i>upon my soul</i>". . movement . rest <p style="margin-left: 150px;">} in dignified or poetic language.</p>

THREE DIMENSIONS → A SPACE, HAVING VOLUME

Preposition	CONCEPT / USE
IN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Place E.g. Put these books <u>in</u> your suitcase. . a period of time. E.g. He was born <u>in</u> 1846 . space enclosed by certain limits. E.g.
INTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . emphasis comparable to that expressed by Onto E.g. People started <u>into</u> the building
INSIDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . emphasizes the idea of <u>in</u>. E.g. Wait <u>inside</u> the car till the rain stops.
OUTSIDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . negative of <u>in</u>. E.g. <u>Outside</u> the house, the crowd watched anxiously.
WITHIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . idea of in certain limits and not outside them E.g. Nobody came from <u>within</u> the house.

Cont.

THREE DIMENSIONS → A SPACE, HAVING VOLUME	
Preposition	CONCEPT / USE
DURING	. the continuance or the extent of an event or series of events, in relation to the period named. E.g. The examinations will be held <u>during</u> September
OUT OF	. The opposite of <u>into</u> . E.g. The man came <u>out of</u> the hotel.

OTHER RELATIONSHIPS	
Preposition	CONCEPT / USE
BETWEEN	. Stand or move between two objects or persons. E.g. I can divide this money <u>between</u> you two.
AMONG	. Stand or move among more than two objects. E.g. I can distribute it <u>among</u> you all.
LIKE	. a relationship between objects. E.g. John walks just <u>like</u> his father.
AS	. expresses comparison. E.g. He walks just <u>as</u> his father used to.

Some prepositions such as up, down, over, under underneath, above, below, beneath were not systematized within any of dimensions mentioned above, and are classified as "different levels" while the prepositions "with", "without" and "against" are classified as "relationships between forces".

According to R. A. Close not all usages can be systematized, many of them "can only be mastered by mechanical association, especially where the idea of movement or position

in space is very weak or absent altogether". For example, verbs, nouns and adjectives which demand an obligatory preposition such as "afraid of", "believe in", "suffer from", "grateful for", "familiar with", "admiration for" etc.

With respect to Close's distribution of prepositions we can address the following criticism. In classifying prepositions into dimensions, he leaves out several types of prepositions, which leads students to learn only limited uses of prepositions. For example, the preposition in can also be put into two dimensions; in as an area ("*I have a house in the city*") and also in seen as a volume (*the book is in the drawer*). However, in Close's classification, in is seen as having three dimensions. The same thing happens to the preposition across which can also be of two dimensions, one indicating passage (*we passed across the bridge*) and the other dimension indicating direction (*He walked across the street*) while Close only classifies it as having one dimension. The preposition through can be of two and three dimensions, through denoting motion (*the train sped through the tunnel*), orientation or viewpoint related to their passage or direction (*the house through the trees*) and pervasive meaning when preceded by all. (*The noise could be heard all through the building*), but he fails to mention this preposition in one of his dimensions.

Thus, this classification does not always seem helpful for students to follow and learn from, because it does not present all of the meanings of prepositions in a clear and meaningful way, i. e., they are sometimes vague.

In Michael Swan's grammar (1980: 483-493; 86-90) prepositions are presented in a set of rules and in a list of particular words and expressions. He presents only those expressions which cause problems for students of English because, according to him, it is very easy to make mistakes since most prepositions have several different functions, or different prepositions can have similar uses. He states that many nouns, verbs and adjectives are used with particular prepositions such as "congratulation on", "arrive at" "angry with somebody", "on a bus" and because there are not many rules to help students in choosing correctly in these cases, they must learn each expression separately. "There are also problems connected with the position of prepositions in sentences, the differences between prepositions and adverb particles and the use of prepositions with conjunctions". "Prepositions can also be followed by the -ing form of verbs." Swan deals with these problems in different parts of his grammar.

This author also speaks about prepositional and phrasal verbs showing the differences between them. He also identifies Phrasal - Prepositional Verbs as a source of difficulty.

In contrast to Close, Swan presents the several uses of prepositions in terms of rules and lists of words and expressions which combine with prepositions. This approach is perhaps helpful only for those students who already have some knowledge of how prepositions are used. He presents the rules in order to clear up the doubts as to the use of certain prepositions but as

these rules are sometimes subjective, they are not easy to learn. For example, he says that the prepositions at, in and on are used to indicate "position in space" but because "the differences between them are rather complicated, it is not always easy to know which of the three uses is correct". In general, at is used to refer to position at a point (e.g. *If you are at the North Pole, every direction is south*); on is used to refer to position on a line or on a surface (e.g. *We've got a nice little cottage on the river*) and in is used to talk about position in a place that has three dimensions (length, breadth and depth) (e.g. *I think I left my tennis racket in the bathroom*). (Swan's p. 88). It seems necessary to affirm that both Close and Swan's classifications of preposition are largely semantic.

Heaton's approach to prepositions is more complete. In his book *"Prepositions and Adverbial Particles (1980)"* he refers to "common prepositions, prepositional phrases, nouns preceded by prepositions, phrasal and prepositional verbs and certain words followed by prepositions".

According to him, a preposition "is a word which shows the relationship between a noun or a pronoun and another word in the sentence". (HEATON, J. B. - 1980, p. 1).

Prepositions are placed before the noun or pronoun which they govern. He introduces a list of 72 simple and complex prepositions with their chief meanings,

explanations and examples. "Some of the explanations may at first appear to be interchangeable in one or more of the examples given", but if we examine further, we will perceive that they are not interchangeable in every case. E.g. the preposition "under" means "lower than", "vertically below", "beneath". Under and beneath are often interchangeable in context, however, below is not always interchangeable because it's only meaning is "lower than". E.g. "*Just below the top of the wall there was a brick missing*". We obviously can not say "Just under the top of the wall there was a brick missing".

Heaton also introduces a list of nouns preceded by prepositions which are equivalent to an adverb, because they modify a verb, an adjective or an adverb. The equivalent form given to explain the meaning can sometimes be used to replace the phrase in the example given in similar contexts.

Most of the phrases formed of nouns are fixed: neither the preposition nor the noun may be substituted in any way at all. If an indefinite or definite article is included in the phrase, this must also remain unchanged. E.g. "by accident", "in advance", "after all", "at all", "on balance", etc.

Besides this, Heaton also introduces a list of the most common nouns, adjectives and adverbs which are followed by particular prepositions. E.g. "absent from", "accent on", "cause for", "clever at", "candidate for", "belief in", "good at", "fundamental to", "demand for", "afraid of", "affluent in". etc.

Its worth mentioning that Heaton's approach is strictly semantic. His concern is to give a practical guide to the use of prepositions and adverbial particles. He does so through simple examples of usage, brief explanations and grammatical rules, whenever necessary.

Further studies include those of the grammarians Quirk et al.: A Contemporary Grammar of English (1972), Leech & Svartvick: A Communicative Grammar of English (1980). Also Greenbaum: Studies in English Adverbial Usage (1969), which adopt a notional approach to prepositions, combining syntactic and semantic aspects. They discuss prepositional phrases, prepositional adverbs, phrasal and prepositional verbs and phrasal - prepositional verbs.

According to Quirk and Greenbaum, (1978 - 143) prepositional phrases consist of *"a preposition followed by a prepositional complement which is usually a noun - phrase, a wh - clause or a v - ing clause"*. For instance, *"She was at the club"*, *"She insisted on doing this work"*; *"She was afraid of what he said"*. The prepositional is omitted when we use *"that - clauses"* and *"to - infinitive clauses"*. E.g. *"He decided that they would go to Paris"*; *"They want to work in England"*.

As has already been said in the first part of this chapter, the preposition is usually followed by its complement, although in certain cases this may be optional i. e., it can remain at the beginning or at the end of wh - questions or relative clauses. E.g. *The man, of whom you spoke is at the club*; *With whom do you intend to travel?* or the preposition must remain at the end such as in nominal wh - clauses, exclamations, passives and infinitive clauses. E.g. *"What I'm worried about is that I have to write a thesis"*; *It's a comfortable house to live in*"; *"what a terrible subject he talked about"*; *"He was looked*

for by his friends", etc.

Prepositional Phrases can function as noun postmodifiers, adverbials (conjunct, disjunct and adjunct), verb complements, complements of adjectives. Occasionally they take the role of a noun phrase as subject or complement. Let us look briefly at each function.

a) PP as a noun postmodifier

Considering the syntactic functions of prepositional phrases, a noun post modifier can be recognized as an element which occurs after the head in a noun phrase. For example, "*Did you see the girl in the corner?*", "*The cup on the table is broken*", etc. The prepositional phrases underlined above describe or specify the preceding noun and often the determiner is definite. The prepositional phrase used as a noun postmodifier identifies a particular person or thing by some characteristic feature or position. E.g. "*Someone on the bus told me about the fire*"; "*That boy over there is American*"; "*The church beyond the square is the cathedral*"; "*The girl with a funny dress ran away*", etc.

b) PP as Adverbials

The function of adverbials comprises a sub classification: conjuncts, disjuncts and adjuncts. It is useful to distinguish these three terms one from the other, and to do so we will use Sidney Greenbaum and Randolph Quirk's system (1978: 208-250).

Let us examine the first type of adverbial: Conjuncts. These indicate the logical or organizational relationship between one sentence and another. For example, "*In the first place*

she asked whether they would travel"; "He had a terrible accident, in consequence he was injured".

Most conjuncts are prepositional phrases or adverbs (Cf. Greenbaum et al. 1980: 520) E.g. on the other hand, on the contrary, in contrast, by comparison, in the first place, firstly, finally, similarly, contrastively, etc.

○ Syntactically they have the following characteristics:

- Most conjuncts appear in initial position but some can also occur in medial and final positions, although this is rarer. E.g. *"In conclusion, that's all I have to say to you"; "He doesn't need any money from us, on the contrary we should be going to him for a loan"*. When conjuncts appear in the initial position, they are usually separated from what follows by a comma.

- Conjuncts can appear with questions. E.g. *By the way, could you lend me your book?*

- Conjuncts do not accept pre - modification or post-modification.

- Conjuncts can not be questioned or negated.

Adjuncts are those adverbs or prepositional phrases which are integrated to some extent into the structure of the clause. They have an adjunctive function i. e. they have some relation with verb and indicate time, place, manner, instrument, source, reason, purpose, etc. For instance *"He surely went to Paris"; "She was dancing at the club"; "He always writes in a carefree manner", etc. They differ from conjuncts and disjuncts in that they satisfy at least one of the four following criteria:*

1) They are unacceptable in an initial position in an independent tone unit with a falling intonation, or level nuclear tone when the clause is negated. E.g. **With great skill Peter was playing; *At a hotel we'll stay.*

2) Place and Time adjuncts sometimes co-occur in initial position E.g. *In 1981, he went to visit the United States of America; In London, old buildings and houses were demolished and replaced by new ones, etc.*

3) They are able to serve as the focus of clause interrogation when they can be contrasted with another focus in alternative interrogation. E.g. *"Does he go to School because he likes it (or does he go there because he wants to please his parents?)"*; *"Did you stay at the hotel or at your friend's home?"*

4) They are able to serve as the focus of clause negation when they can be contrasted with another focus in alternative negation. E.g. *"We didn't go to Florianopolis on Sunday, but we did go there on Tuesday", etc.*

Disjuncts express the speaker's conviction of the truth, his attitudes toward what he is saying, his evaluation of it, or shades of certainty or doubt about it. E.g. *"To my surprise he decided to travel to S. Paulo"; "To my regret they didn't leave for home".*

The main syntactic features of disjuncts are:

(Greenbaum, 1978 p. 208.)

1) They are acceptable in initial position even if the clause is negated (e.g. *"In all frankness, she is not very clever"*).

2) They can not be the focus of clause negation or of clause interrogation because of their inability to be contrasted in alternative negation and interrogation (e.g. *"*Did*

you see the moon actually or did you see the moon really?")

3) They can not be the focus of clause comparison (e.g. *"*They left more probably than she did"*).

4) They can not be the focus of restrictives ("only" "particularly") or additives ("also", "equally") allowing subject inversion when these precede them in initial position (E.g. *"*Not only certainly did he travel today; also annoyingly did she go to school"; "*Only to my surprise he arrived before six"*).

5) They do not allow verb - subject inversion when the clausal negative particles "not" precedes them in initial position (E.g. *"*Not surprisingly did Paul buy that car"*);

6) They can not be the only focus of a cleft sentence (E.g. *"*It was certainly that John sold his car"*).

Some prepositional phrases that function as disjuncts (especially attitudinal ones) incorporate an abstract noun that has the form "to" plus nominal in the possessive plus abstract noun. E. g. "to our relief", "to our happiness", "to my bewilderment", "to my surprise", "to my misfortune", etc. These disjuncts have the function of commenting on the content of the communication while style disjuncts reveal the speaker's comment on the form of what he is saying, defining under what conditions he is speaking. E.g. "In all frankness, I am tired", "to be precise, there are twelve people at the part".

Analysing three different texts in order to see the meanings and functions of prepositions we notice that adjuncts and noun postmodifiers can both occur with the value of an adverb of place, time, manner, instrument, etc. Adjuncts can follow the verb or precede the subject. E.g. *"The students were speaking in the classroom"; "I usually go to work by bus"; "He was crying in the kitchen whereas noun post modifiers come after*

they noun specifying or describing it". E.g. "A picture by Degas", "Did you see the man in the car", etc.

Adjuncts can be distinguished from noun post-modifier by a single test: "wh-question" (Greenbaum: 1978: 225) which shows that adjuncts have an adverbial and adjunctive function and noun post modifiers have an adjectival or modifying or describing function. Thus we can use the pronoun "which" to identify the modified noun and the pronouns "when", "where", "how" to indicate the place, time, manner, etc., of the main action of the clause. For instance, "That boy on the bus told one about the circus" (NPM), "The man was working at the cinema" (ADJ). If we apply the wh-test, we have: - Which boy told me about the circus?

- The one on the bus (NPM)
- Where was the man working?
- At the cinema (ADJ)

Thus, the prepositional phrase "on the bus" does not only indicate place but it also describes the preceding noun whereas "at the cinema" merely indicates the place where the man worked.

Conjuncts and Disjuncts are also distinguished by a single test: disjuncts can serve as a response to a "yes-no question" (Greenbaum: 1972: 424) although it is not necessary that disjuncts be accompanied by "yes" or "no". E.g. "Of course, they will be here" is a disjunct, since it can be a response: "Will they be here?" "yes, of course" while the sentence "In conclusion, that's all I have to say to you" can not be so used. In addition, most disjuncts are prepositional phrases or clauses. Most conjuncts are prepositional or adverbial phrases. Adjuncts are integrated within the clause while conjuncts and disjuncts are peripheral, since conjuncts have a connective function and disjuncts, a commentative function.

Now, let us examine other words which are followed by prepositions such as verbs, adjectives, nouns, adverbs, although these are not included in my study of prepositions.

c) Verb Complements / Complements of Adjectives

The functions labelled as verb complements and complements of adjectives are expressed by a particular preposition followed by a noun phrase which serves as complement of the verb or the adjective which precedes it. E.g. "*We depend on you*"; "*He told me about his adventures*", "*He looks at me*" (VC); "*I am sorry for you*" "*He's not bad at games*", "*John is keen on football*" (Adj. Compl).

We can talk about two criteria which distinguish adjuncts from verb complements. The reason for trying to show the difference is merely for teaching purposes since learners frequently confuse both functions because adjuncts can follow a verb and verb complements always follow the verb.

Thus the first criterion is related to the function of the prepositional phrase. As we have said, adjuncts have an adjunctive function while verb complements have the function of complementation of the verb. Adjuncts have the value of an adverb whereas verb complements do not. For instance, "*John was working at the university*". If we ask: *where was John working?* "At the university". The prepositional phrase "at the university" indicates the place where John was working, thus it is an adjunct. "*Paul is looking at the teacher*". If we ask: "*whom is Paul looking at?*" The answer will be the complementation of the verb: "*the teacher*".

The second criterion is related to the nature of the

preposition which comes before the noun phrase. The preposition in a verb complement is required by the verb. It is fixed and can not be substituted by any other preposition while the preposition in adjuncts is not required by the verb. E.g. "*Paul depends on his parents to survive*" (VC),

* Paul depends at his parents (not correct usage)

John is working at the factory (Adj)

on the beach

in Florianopolis

In a small suburb.

Thus, this test shows that in complementation the lexical item being complement determines the choice of preposition.

d) Prepositions after particular nouns

Many nouns are used together with a particular preposition. E.g. "*sympathy for*", "*belief in*", "*concern over*", "*admiration for*", "*difficulty with*", "*influence on*", etc. The prepositional phrase which follows the noun functions as a noun complement. The preposition once again is an obligatory item required by the noun and it can not be substituted by other prepositions so as to contrast the literal meaning of the two prepositions. This noun complementation is distinguished from noun post modifiers through the substitution test (see p.46). If the substitution is possible and the sentence remains meaningful, the only change of meaning being in the preposition, one can assume it to be a noun post modifier. For instance, if we substitute the prepositions in the following sentences, we have:

The teachers have influence on you.

- * from you.
- * with you.
- * under you.
- * in you.
- * about you.

She has a great admiration for Strauss.

- * by
- * on
- * at
- * in
- * over

The substitution test shows that these sentences are unacceptable and inappropriate in terms of language usage, but in:

The book on the table is mine.

- under
- out of
- above
- in

the preposition can be substituted for another. Although the sentence can sometimes be semantically unusual the prepositional phrase which follows the preceding noun continues to have the function of modifying or describing.

The "wh - question" can not be applied to distinguish between a noun complement and a noun post modifier because if someone uses the same pronoun "*which*" to ask about the head of

a noun phrase in both cases, the answers can always be a prepositional phrase as a noun post - modifier For instance:

1. "My sympathy for you is deep".

Which sympathy is deep?

- "My sympathy for you"

2. "The man on the bus is from China?"

Which man is from China?

- The man on the bus.

It's worth commenting that the question 1 is less normal than in 2.

Thus, we can say that prepositional complements can postmodify a noun while still maintaining a special status, as can be seen in the examples above.

e) Prepositional Adverbs

According to Greenbaum et al, prepositional adverbs consist of an adverb which acts as a preposition with the complement omitted. E.g. "A car drove past", "He is out", "She stayed in" and soon. Many words used as prepositions can also be used as adverbs such as: past, above, up, off, down, over, before, around, below, by, etc. They are able to function alone as an adjunct, post - modifier, etc. without the addition of a prepositional complement.

E.g. "The day before, I met him in the street". (post - modifier).

"Despite fine weather, we stayed in all day" (adjunct).

These adverbs commonly appear in idiomatic combinations with a verb forming a single unit (Phrasal Verbs). E.g. make up, make for, make up for, etc.

"Is Mary around?" (adjunct)

"I haven't seen her since"; (adjunct).

Although Quirk and Greenbaum's grammar is destined for university students, we can notice a problem with respect to their approach to prepositions, at least, for pedagogical purposes.

The problem is related to the syntactic functions of prepositions. Many times it is difficult for students to distinguish between a prepositional phrase which functions as a noun post-modifier and a prepositional phrase which is used as adjunct, and it is necessary sometimes to apply the test for differentiating the two. The same thing happens to conjuncts and disjuncts which are distinguished by a "yes - no question".

So far we have presented some approaches to the English preposition system of several grammarians and as can be noticed these do not really present a clear way of learning prepositions. Some of them try to systematize prepositions but it is very complex. However, among the several approaches presented here, that of Greenbaum et al seems to be most helpful, in spite of the problem mentioned above. Their approach to prepositions is made from the syntactic and semantic point of view - and for the purposes of this work, this approach will be followed in the analysis of texts and tests.

The following section tries to describe the Portuguese preposition system according to some grammars.

2.3 - DESCRIPTION OF PORTUGUESE PREPOSITION SYSTEM

In Portuguese, prepositions are also considered

palavras invariáveis que ligam duas palavras e cuja função é estabelecer entre elas relação de lugar, modo, tempo, posse, fim, causa, instrumento.

For example: Isabel mora em Niterói (lugar)
 O carro de Paulo (posse)
 Trabalhem com alegria (maneira)
 Falou sobre política (assunto)
 Morreu de fome (causa)
 Jantei com ele (companhia).

The word which comes before the preposition can be a noun pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb or interjection.

Analysing several Portuguese grammars, one can notice that some Portuguese prepositions can also correspond to more than one relationship or function or that the same "use" can be expressed by different prepositions. For instance, illustrating the first case, the preposition "a" can be used to indicate:

- place E.g. Eu vou à cidade.
 - time E.g. Eu vou para o colégio à noite/às 8 horas.
 - Finality E.g. Os pescadores saíram nos seus barcos a pescar no mar.
 - Price E.g. Ele vendeu o livro a cem cruzeiros
- and so on.

In the same way, the prepositions "em" can indicate:

- place E.g. Ele está em casa
- time E.g. Nós chegaremos em duas horas a Blumenau
- Manner E.g. Ele vive em paz
- Price E.g. A mesa foi avaliada em mil cruzeiros
- Finality E.g. Ele pediu a moça em casamento

- Cause E.g. Ela é feliz em não morrer.

Illustrating the second case, the prepositions "em", "a", "de" can denote time as in the following sentences: "*Se corremos chegaremos ao centro em 5 minutos*"; "*O garoto chegou às duas horas*"; "*A esposa de um mês para adquirir um livro não é interessante*". etc. These same prepositions can denote Place as in: "*Maria vai à Porto Alegre*"; "*Ele vem de S. Paulo*"; "*Eles estão em casa*". The prepositions com and "em" can express "Manner". E. g. "*Paulo trabalha com capricho*"; "*Ele vive em paz*", etc. The grammarians are not able to give a logical reason for this redundancy of uses.

Examining several Portuguese grammars* (Mattoso Câmara, Paschoal Cegalla, Hildebrando André e Celso Cunha) we can notice that they all deal with prepositions in the same way, i. e., in a notional approach. These grammarians merely define prepositions and try to describe the uses of them.

According to Celso Cunha and Hildebrando A. de André, preposition is "*a palavra invariável que liga dois termos entre si estabelecendo que o segundo, depende do primeiro, isto é, que o segundo (termo regido) é o complemento do primeiro (termo regente)*" (CUNHA, Celso 1978 p. 377).

In addition, the use of the word "*termo*" in the definitions of prepositions does not mean that the grammarian is referring to just a single word.

To Mattoso Câmara, a preposition is "*o elo subordinativo que delimita as condições de dependência*" (JR. CÂMARA, J. Mattoso. 1976 p. 235).

Domingos Paschoal Cegalla, however, defines the preposition as being "*uma palavra invariável que liga um termo dependente a um termo principal*" (CEGALLA, D. Paschoal. 1978 p. 175).

As can be noticed the definitions of prepositions are expressed in different ways but all of them have a point in common: the idea that prepositions state a relationship of dependency or subordination between two terms.

All grammarians classify Portuguese prepositions into three groups: essenciais (essential), acidentais (accidental) and locuções preposicionais (prepositional locutions). In English we have the following classification: Simple prepositions, which correspond to essential and accidental ones in Portuguese; and Complex prepositions, which correspond to prepositional locutions.

It is useful to distinguish between the three groups of Portuguese prepositions. Essential prepositions are those which function strictly as prepositions. E. g. a, ante, após, até, com, contra, de, desde, com, entre, para, perante, etc. Accidental prepositions are those grammatical class of words such as adjectives and adverbs which have become prepositions. E.g. conforme, como, consoante, mediante, segundo, etc. The accidental class reflects the origins of the word.

Prepositional locutions are certain expressions formed by a preposition and a noun or an adjective, plus a preposition, the completed phrase having the value of a preposition. E.g. abaixo de, em cima de, através de, à frente de, na conta de, de acordo com, por meio de,

em vez de, etc. (Cf. intead of, in front of, according to, because of), etc.

It is also necessary to state that the syntactic relation in the sentence is determined by a fixed preposition which is selected because of its basic meaning. Thus in "*Concordo com você*", the verb selects the preposition "com" because of the relationship that exists between the meaning of the verb and the idea of association contained in the preposition itself. Depending on the greater or lesser intensity of meaning of the preposition, the syntactic relationship can be fixed (fixa), necessary (necessária) and free (livre). (Celso Cunha 1978: 378).

The syntactic relation is called "fixed" when the preposition carries the meaning itself. The preposition is very important in the organization of the sentence as well as in its meaningful value. For instance, "*Ninguém pode com a vida deles*" (Érico Veríssimo); "*Custa crer que viviam no Rio de Janeiro*" (C. D. de Andrade). Fixed seems to mean necessary and unsubstitutable.

In a necessary relation the preposition links the principal word to a consequent word syntactically necessary. E.g. "*O futuro pertence a Deus*". "*O homem é um grande inventor de obstáculos*". In this relation the preposition seems to be unsubstitutable.

In a "free relation", the preposition is used but it is not absolutely necessary syntactically. Its absence does not change the meaning of the sentence. E.g. "*Encontrar com um amigo*" or "*Encontrar um amigo*"; "*Procurar por alguém*" or "*Procurar alguém*".

2.4 - COMPARISON BETWEEN PORTUGUESE AND ENGLISH PREPOSITION SYSTEMS

Comparing the English and Portuguese systems one can observe that the categories established by grammarians to determine the function of a preposition can sometimes find correspondence in both language in question. For example, the preposition "em" in Portuguese can be used to indicate place, time, manner, price, finality, cause, etc. The preposition can relate to several forms in English: at, on, in but among them we are going to find some of the same categories as the Portuguese form. E.g. "in" can indicate place, time, manner; at can also denote place, time, price, conditions, on can also denote place, time, manner, position, on the surface of, etc.

Thus we can say that there is an overlap of prepositions (forms & categories). One preposition in Portuguese can correspond to one or more forms in English. For instance, "com" corresponds to "with" (e. g. *He goes to the club with me*); "ao lado de" corresponds to "beside" (e. g. *The car is beside the bicycle*) and "para" corresponds to "for" and "to" as in the *a present for her son*"; the preposition "em" corresponds to at, in and on. E.g. *He is at home*; *She lives in Florianópolis* and *They are on the beach* and so on.

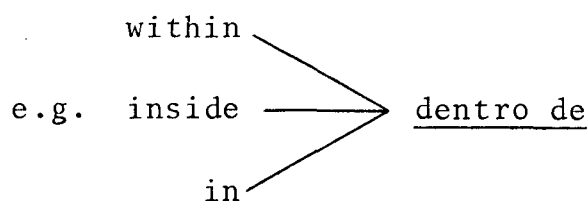
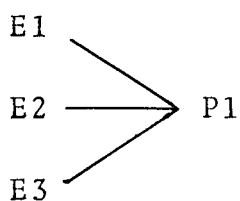
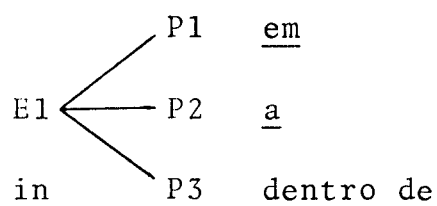
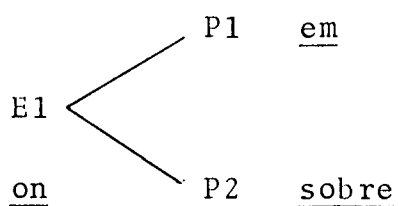
On the other hand, one English preposition can also correspond to only one form in Portuguese, or two English prepositions can correspond to only one in Portuguese, or one form in Portuguese can correspond to

more than two in English. For example:

E1	P1
<u>beside</u>	ao lado de
<u>during</u>	durante

The church is beside the square

He was Minister during the years 1910-1915.



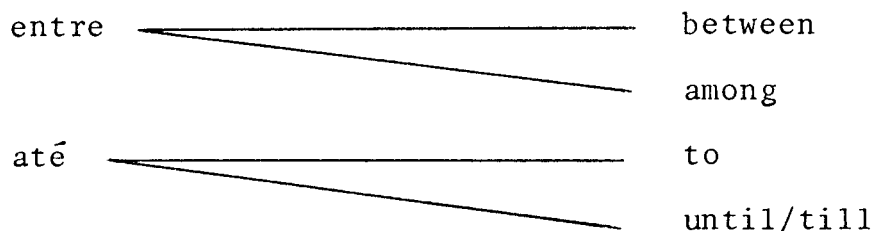
However, each preposition does not occur with the same frequency in all contexts. If one preposition has three different meanings, one meaning is likely to occur more frequently than the others.

In examining thirty prepositions of both languages one can see whether or not there is an overlap of forms and meanings. We can assume that there is no overlap in the following prepositions which function literally, since there is a one - to - one correspondence in both languages. E.g. with, beside, during, without against. But even in these cases, there may be differences of usage in idiomatic

(i.e. non-literal) expression. E.g. "*estar com calor*" = to feel hot.

On the other hand, we do notice an overlap of one or more forms in the use of prepositions which we could express in the following way:

em baixo de	_____	under
abaixo de	_____	below
em volta de	_____	around/round
por	_____	for
	_____	by
para	_____	to
a	_____	at
em	_____	in
	_____	on
dentro de	_____	inside
	_____	within
sobre	_____	about
	_____	over
acima de	_____	above
desde	_____	since
	_____	from
de	_____	of
após/depois	_____	after
	_____	according to
atrás de	_____	behind
antes de	_____	before
em frente de	_____	in front of
além de	_____	besides
	_____	beyond
através de	_____	through
	_____	across



To visualize more clearly these forms the reader can find examples of each equivalence in the appendix.

Thus, as we have seen above, because of this multiplicity of forms and meanings we can conclude that the languages and the relations of equivalence are very complex and, in consequence, the foreign student will have difficulty in learning their correct usage. This prediction is based on a comparative analysis and will be supported by evidence in the error analysis.

2.5 - ANALYSIS OF FREQUENCY OF USES OF PREPOSITIONS

In this section, we will present some statistical data concerning the frequency of occurrence of the nine most used prepositions, analysis of these prepositions from syntactic and semantic points of view and an account of the different meanings of prepositions which can be identified.

The scope of the analysis is limited. The chosen texts run to a total of 3.500 words each, and can in no way be considered to be an entirely representative sample of the English language. On the other hand, they are authentic texts of the type that a qualified undergraduate student might be expected to handle, and an analysis of frequency of forms and functions can give at least some idea of what a student can typically expect to have to handle.

The three chosen texts were: a short story - "The

Verger" by Somerset Maugham, a newspaper - "The Guardian" (April 19, 1981 - England) and a technical text - "The Ancestry of Corn" taken from the magazine "Scientific American" (Jan. 1980 pp 112-119).

The aim of the analysis is to count how many times a certain preposition is used in order to get some idea of the frequency of occurrence of prepositions as well to see the different meanings attributed to each one. After this, the meanings and functions will be arranged into categories. This information will be useful pedagogically to the teachers to know what items and functions occur very often in the language and so they can plan what items and functions to teach first.

Concerning the semantic and syntactic analysis of prepositions, criteria were adopted as follows: first of all only the meanings of simple prepositions were considered. Complex prepositions and phrasal verbs were ignored because, as prepositions are very complex, we decided to study only one aspect of the subject. Second, we looked at the meanings, in terms of use, i.e. literal or non-literal usage. To do this, the analysis was based on two aspects: 1) on the context itself in order to find out the different meanings of the prepositions and 2) on a substitution test in order to distinguish literal from non-literal meanings. As has been said before, the substitution test consists of substituting a preposition for another in a determined context in order to verify whether or not it carries a constant and clear meaning and also to decide whether the context allows the use of another preposition.

As to syntactic aspects, the analysis was based on Greenbaum and Quirk's classification of prepositional phrases as having the following functions: noun postmodifier, adjunct, conjunct, disjunct, verb complements, noun complements and complements of adjectives. The syntactic functions will be related to the semantic analysis.

Results

Analysing the texts, we found twenty-eight different prepositions being used with different meanings. Of these prepositions "of" was most frequently used.

The following Table presents the frequency rate of the use of each preposition which occurred in the texts.

TABLE I

Percentage of frequency of prepositions in the texts.

Preposition	%	Frequency
1. Of	31,8%	
2. In	17,5%	
3. To	7,1%	
4. For	5,9%	
5. By	5,6%	
6. On	4,8%	
7. With	6,8%	
8. From	4,8%	
9. At	3,9%	
10. Into	1,8%	
11. Between	1,4%	
12. After	1,1%	
13. About	1,1%	
14. Without	0,9%	
15. Among	0,7%	
16. Over	0,7%	
17. Since	0,5%	
18. Before	0,5%	

Cont. TABLE I

Preposition	%	Frequency
19. Under	0,4%	
20. Against	0,4%	
21. Through	0,4%	
22. During	0,4%	
23. Throughout	0,3%	
24. Withen	0,3%	
25. Belind	0,2%	
26. Near	0,3%	
27. Until	0,3%	
28. Around	0,3%	
29. Along	0,1%	
30. Towards	0,1%	
31. Beyond	0,1%	
T O T A L	99,9%	

Our aim in this dissertation is to concentrate on the analysis of the nine most frequently used prepositions which account for 85% of the occurrence of prepositions (of, in, by, for, to, on, at, from and with) in their literal meanings, and to try to systematize these into categories. Thus, as a particular preposition can be used in relation to different concepts, a subclassification was established for each one of the nine prepositions studied.

1. OF

The first preposition to be analysed was OF which occurred 424 times and, in most of the examples, the prepositional

phrases function as noun postmodifier i.e, they modify or describe the preceding noun. The preceding noun in a prepositional phrase is generally a concrete or countable noun ("the agriculturists of Central America"; "fields of the strange new plant") or an abstract and uncountable noun ("the growth of agriculture"; "the reputation of Brixton"; "the mood of the local residents", etc). or sometimes by a noun derived from a verb ("hopes of a cut"; "the conted of the country's fifth clearing bank..."). It would seem that the relationship between the word which comes before of and that which comes after it leads to a definition of the categories and subcategories.

The Table below shows the categories found in the texts with their respective percentage of frequency.

TABLE II

Category	Nº of Times	%	Major Function	Nº of Times	%
1. Possession					
. Descriptive Genitive	276	6,5%	Noun post modifiers	276	6,5%
. Objective Genitive	26	6,1%	Noun post modifier	26	6,1%
2. Partition					
. Part of a whole	32	7,5%	Noun post modifier	32	7,5%
. Quantity	69	16,2%	Noun post modifier	69	16,2%
3. Material substance	11	2,5%	VC/N post modifier	11	2,5%
4. Prep. Phrase as:			Verb. Compl.	5	1,1%
			Adj. Compl.	3	0,7%
T O T A L	424	99,1%		424	99,1%

The first category - Descriptive Genitive occurred more than the others in the three analysed texts (65%). This category was arranged into two subcategories. The first Subjective Genitive denotes a relationship between something and the people who possess or do something. This is easy to understand because the noun which follows the preposition is animate, especially human, and admits "- s genitive". E.g. "The conclusions of the Kerner Commission" is equivalent to "The Kerner Commission's conclusions". Other examples of this would be: "The refusal of senior policemen to analyse the problem"; "The large populations and impressive cultural achievements of the Aztecs, the Mayas and the Incas..."; "He argues with passionate, almost youthful vigor... puncturing the populist xenophobia of Mr. Chirac the next", etc. Within this subcategory we can find another group of of + Noun combinations which also denotes possession but these do not admit "- s genitive". Sometimes these sentences express characteristics of description or specification of the preceding and following noun of the preposition "of". E.g. "His men discovered on the island of Cuba great fields of the strange new plant..."; "The colors and patterns of the teosinte fruitcase camouflage them remarkably well...") and so on. Sometimes they describe or express several types of relationships such as: between the member and the body to which that member belongs (e.g. "During the sixteen years he had been verger of this church"); between a quality and something possessing it (e.g. "Maybe, it's the reputation of Brixton, I don't know but there's been no improvement there for years"); between the aspect and the thing we are considering (e.g. "The chromosomes paired normally during the formation of sex cells in the crossed plants"), etc.

The second subcategory did not have a significant percentage of frequency (6,1%). It is labelled as Objective Genitive because of a transitivity relation between the preceding noun and that which follows the preposition OF. This transitivity transforms the verb of the sentence into the head of a noun phrase by nominalizing it. E.g. "*appreciation of women generated gossip*" is equivalent to "*someone appreciated women*". Thus the verb "*appreciate*" is transformed into the head of the noun phrase by a nominalization transformation. Other examples of this subcategory would be: "*The development of corn by Indians remains man's most remarkable plant - breeding achievement*"; "*In the end they took the optimistic view, reviving hopes of a cut*", etc. All of the above underlined prepositional phrases are related to the head noun as an object to its verb. Syntactically the prepositional phrase denoting objective genitive is formed by the preceding noun which is a nominalized activity plus of, plus a following noun which is an object. The PP denoting subjective or descriptive genitive is formed by the preceding noun which in its turn is a nominalized verb + of, + the following noun which is the subject, and which sometimes implies a possessive relation.

Quirk & Greenbaum distinguish Subjective form Objective genitive by using the criterion of "*direction of predication*" (1978: 886). They state that when there is a right - to - left relationship between the head of a noun phrase and the NP which follows the preposition, we can speak of subjective genitive, whereas when there is a left - to - right predication relation it seems reasonable to speak of objective genitive, that is, the head of the noun phrase is a nominalized verb. Quoting Greenbaum's examples we have:

"The imprisonment of the murderer"

(Someone) imprisoned the murderer

"The funnel of the ship".

(The ship has a funnel)

The second category - Partition - includes two more sub-categories. The first one denoting Part of a whole (7,5% of occurrence) is determined by the preposition.

The second category - Partition - includes two more sub-categories. The first one denoting Part of a whole (7,5% of occurrence) is determined by the preposition of which express the relationship between the part and the whole. For example, *"part of an environment", "Profit-takers moved in at the end of the week..."; "... the 20 provinces of the empire were taking an annual total of 300.000 bushels of corn"; etc. The second one denotes "Quantity" and had a significant figure of frequency (16,2%). It is indicated a quantifier such as: "a lot of", "one of", "none of", "both of", "many of", etc. E.g. *"Some of the backcross progeny will be good corn showing marked hybrid vigor and increased yield", "None of the 18 chromosomes of *Tripsacum pairs*", etc.**

The category denoting Material, Substance describes which type of material or substance was used in making a certain object such as *"He kept his new gown, its folds as full and stiff as though it were made of alpaca, but of perennial bronze..."; "the reason is simply that the fruitcase of *Tripsacum*, in contrast to, that of teosinte...". This meaning is indicated not only by the preceding verb which describes a process (e. g. made) but also by the noun phrase denoting the kind of material to be used in a process (bronze, alpaca, tripsacum) which follows the preposition "of". In some cases the prepositional phrase functions as a*

complement of a verb, while in others it functions as a noun postmodifier.

The preposition "of" was also used as a complement of an adjective (0,7%) "*full of variety*"; "*this was a reaction which was typical of many of the youths who had involved*"; "*A single mutation is capable of transforming teosinte into a plant*"... etc, as well as complement of a verb (1,1%). Obviously in these cases it's not easy to identify a clear meaning. These adjectives demand a fixed type of preposition and perhaps they can only be learnt by mechanical associations.

The second most used preposition was "in" (18,1%). Its meanings were distributed into six categories. To define these categories the context was examined once more.

TABLE III

Category	Nº of Times	%	Major Functions	Nº of Times	%
1. Place					
. Space	103	44%	Noun postmodifier	45	19,2%
			Adjunct	57	24,3%
. Circunstances	19	8,1%	Noun postmodifier	16	6,8%
			Adjunct	3	1,2%
2. Time (date, period of time)	40	17%	Noun postmodifier	4	1,7%
			Adjunct	36	15,3%
3. Manner, shape, state	41	17,5%	Noun postmodifier	9	3,8%
			Adjunct	32	13,6%
4. Occupation	7	2,9%	Noun postmodifier	1	0,4%
			Adjunct	6	2,5%
5. Prep. Phrase as			Conjunct	5	2,1%
			Disjunct	6	2,5%
			Noun Complement	6	2,5%
			Verb Complement	3	1,2%
			Adjective Complement	1	0,4%
3 doubtful cases (1,2%) TOTAL	99,4%			234	99,4%

The first category labelled as Place had a high percentage of frequency (44%), including two sub-categories. The first one is in "denoting" "where or within the limits of the area stated". This meaning can be recognized by the noun phrase which follows the preposition "in". It is generally a proper noun of place as can be seen in the following examples: "The police build up was nothing new in Brixton"; "the disturbances which occurred in Bristol a year ago ought to have given the police a sense of what would be a wrong style of conduct"; "In another group in Railton Road a community leader suggested the riot had two phases...", etc. The second subcategory is in indicating "circumstances" or when something is surrounded on all sides". It is determined by the prepositional phrases "in + noun phrase" indicating "circumstances" as "Unthinkable in de Gaulle's day, the question rose in the 1978 general election"; "Giscard has held up well against his rivals in the opinion polls"; "They are much the same as the known changes in the evolution of cultivated wheat, rye, barley and oats from their wild ancestors". These prepositional phrases function both as Adjuncts and noun post-modifiers.

The second category TIME also had a significant frequency of occurrence (17 %). It includes two subgroups: "in" as used when we speak of "date" (year). E.g. "In 1980 the Spanish plant explorer Francisco Hernandez described teosinte as a plant that looks like corn but has a triangular seed"; "Such was the state of the field in 1928, when I began graduate work at Cornell University with R.A. Emerson...", etc. This meaning is determined by the prepositional phrase which functions as an adverb, that is, "in + date" (year). The second meaning denotes periods of times as when we speak of days, weeks, month, etc. It is

determined by "in + designations of time". E.g. "It sounded like the U.S. in the 1960's again"; "I concluded that in a day an energetic person motivated by sufficient hunger could separate enough partially teosinte meal from the ground shell-kernel..." etc. These prepositional phrases function as adjuncts and as noun post-modifiers.

The third category had a similar rate of occurrence (17,5%). This category indicates manner, form, shape. Here the meaning can occur as adjunct or noun postmodifier. Its meaning is indicated by in + an adverbial phrase denoting position, manner, condition, shape. E.g. "A clergyman of the old school who preached leisurely sermons in a silvery voice..."; "In teosinte each cupule in a vertical row alternates with an interspace..."; "That teosinte could have been prepared in this way by preceramic man seems likely"; "The system is in deep crisis", etc.

The fourth category which occurred only seven times (2,9%) has the meaning of Occupation or Fields of Activity. This meaning can be identified by the preposition "in" used in combination with a noun which refers to an activity or "in + gerund", whose forms merely express the going on of (on of) an activity conveyed by the present participle. For instance, "... racialists in politics will find it very easy to harass not only the coloured communities but also any government in power...", "Albert Foreman set up in business as a tobacconist and newsagent"; "Corn is the most efficient of all cereals in converting solar energy, carbon dioxide... into foodstuff", etc. They occurred as noun postmodifiers (0,4%) and as adjuncts (2,5%).

Besides these categories we find a group of sentences

containing "in" whose meaning is very difficult to explain because in most cases it is abstract. This is hard to justify pedagogically but we can identify their several syntactic functions as: 1) prepositional phrases as disjunct or a commentative function (e.g. in fact); 2) conjunct or a linking function (e.g. in the first place); 3) a verb complement (e.g. *The previous highest bid, worth L 420 million was that which resulted in BP taking over the selection Trust...*); 4) a noun complement (e.g. *The main cause was a rise in the underlying trend of bank lending in contrast with the falling trend of recent months*); "*hopes of a cut in Minimum Lending Rate fairly soon...*" etc.) or as an adjective complement (e.g. "*inherent in the Algerian situation*"). As we have said, this is difficult to justify pedagogically because it is not easy to identify these meanings. Moreover, in some cases the preposition "in" is required by the verb, noun or adjective as well as being fixed in other expressions such as "in fact", "in the first place", etc. This means that the preposition is not interchangeable. The uses are therefore non-literal.

3. ON

Analysing the preposition "on" we noticed that it had 4,8% of occurrence and its various meanings were distributed into six categories. The most frequent meaning denotes Time and Place.

TABLE IV

Category	Nº of Times	%	Major Functions	Nº of Times	%
1. Place	20	29,8%	Adjunct	11	16,4%
			Noun post modifier	9	13,4%
2. Time	13	19,4%	Adjunct	10	14,9%
			Noun post modifier	3	4,4%
3. In contact with	6	8,9%	Adjunct	5	7,4%
			Noun post modifier	1	1,4%
4. Manner	10	14,9%	Adjunct	8	11,9%
			Noun post modifier	2	2,9%
5. Expressing the basis	5	7,4%	Noun post modifier	3	4,4%
			Verb. Compl.	2	2,9%
6. Subject matter	5	7,4%	Verb. Complement	2	2,9%
			Noun Complement	3	4,4%
7. Position	2	2,9%	Noun post modifier	2	2,9%
8. -			Verb Complement	2	2,9%
9. -			Conjunct	1	1,4%
10. -			Disjunct	1	1,4%
T O T A L	65	99,3%		65	99,3%
*2 doubtful cases		2,9%			

The category of Place occurred more frequently than any other for this preposition (29,8%). This is indicated by "on" + any noun which indicates "place" such as *"In spite of all the problems, there is racism on the streets like there is in those areas"*, *"His men discovered on the island of Cuba great fields of the strange new plant..."*; *"The verger busied himself quietly, replacing the painted wooden cover on the marble front..."* etc. Here the preposition "on" indicates place

viewed as a position on a line. These prepositional phrases occurred as adjuncts (16,4%) and noun postmodifier (13,4%).

The above category is distinguished from "on" meaning in contact with in that it denotes position on a line (E.g. "*There's a good restaurant on the Beira-Mar road*") whereas on meaning "contact" denotes position on a surface. (E.g. "*There is a picture on the wall*" "or *There is a dark mark on the ceiling*".)

The category of Time had a significant percentage of frequency in the use of the preposition on (19,4%). It can be identified by the preposition plus an expression of time. E.g. "*I was at the neighborhood project on Friday night*"; "*A group of black local councillors meeting in London on Sunday called on the Home Secretary to act...*"; "... the same thing happened in Brixton on Saturday night", etc. The prepositional phrases denoting time function syntactically as adjuncts.

The preposition on denoting Time is distinguished from in in the following aspect: on is used to speak of particular days, while in is used to speak of parts of days, weeks, months, seasons, years and centuries, i.e. limited periods. E.g. "*Come back on Thursday morning*"; "*John is coming to lunch on Christmas day*"; "*I was born in March*"; "*we usually go to the U.S.A. in the summer*"; "*He was born in 1962*", etc.

The third category on the surface of (8,9%) implies that something is in contact with a surface, that something is at rest partially or wholly covering Y. This meaning is determined by noun phrases which precede and follow the preposition attached to the idea of position as well as of the verb which can be static or dynamic. For instance, "*kernels placed on hot rocks, on glowing embers or on heated sand pop very well*"; "*on the vicar's red face*

was a look of resolute benignity..." etc. These prepositional phrases here also have the value of adjuncts and sometimes they occur as noun post modifiers.

The next category expresses the basis or the ground of something and had 7,4% of occurrence. As can be seen in the examples, this reference is indicated by "on" + the basis of "or" "the ground of". E.g. "The laws under which police can gain a conviction solely on the grounds of a reasonable suspicion that a person may be about to commit an offence"; "Galinat has found that the cobs can be placed in an evolutionary continuum from teosinte to modern corn on the basis of progressive modifications of the cupule", etc. These expressions are not - literal but idiomatic usage and we can not substitute the preposition on with another preposition.

The category of manner, state, condition (14,9%) is indicated by "on" plus a noun which denotes manner, a state a condition. E.g. "This was Giscard who arrived on foot to take possession of the Elysee"; "If an car of corn is left on its own under conditions favorable for germination", etc. These prepositional phrases function as adjuncts (adverbs of manner) or as noun post modifiers.

Besides these categories already mentioned, on occurred in a few examples signifying SUBJECT MATTER . e.g. "Instructions on what Mr. Barre should do next, how and when". Here the prepositional phrase functions as a noun complement. "On" also occurred as indicating an ideological position. E.g. E.g. "On the left the Communists make a much more awkward internal opposition than the Gaulists on the Right". These two prepositional phrases suggest not a physical position but an ideological one since it refers to politics.

In addition, the preposition on also occurred in certain expressions functioning as conjuncts (or linking expressions) such as "*on the other hand*", "*on the whole*", etc. These are non literal uses since the preposition can not be changed to another. Among the several examples of on which occurred in the three texts, there were two doubtful cases whose meanings were not identifiable.

4. TO

The next word to be analysed is the preposition to, which was perhaps the most difficult one in which to determine the exact meanings. Its meanings were arranged into three categories listed below.

TABLE V

Category	Nº of Times	%	Major Functions	Nº of Times	%
1. Direction	68	71,5%	Verb Complement	68	71,5%
2. Duration	7	7,3%	Noun Complement	7	7,3%
3. Ratio	5	5,2%	Verb Complement	5	5,2%
4. -	2	2,1%	Disjunct	2	2,1%
5. -	8	8,4%	Adj. Complement	8	8,4%
6. -	5	5,2%	Noun Complement	5	5,2%
T O T A L	95	99,7%		95	99,7%

To begin with, the first category indicates Direction. This concept is determined generally by a verb of motion such as go, come, take, walk, etc. Thus, the prepositional phrases in

the following examples indicate that what is denoted by the complement is the direction, or recipient of the action expressed by the verb. For instance, "*The verger said to himself*"; "*and one of the MSC men was around there talking to some kids...*"; "*a youth on the street to go back to scotland*"; "*It occurred to him now that one would confort him...*" etc. With the verb complements "to - phrases" usually express the actual recipient. The preposition to indicates that the goal is attained or achieved (Greenbaum, 1978: 322).

The second category, Duration of Action had a 7,3% rate of occurrence. This signifies duration from one point to another. Such a meaning is identified by the use of the pairs "*from... to*" which denotes the starting and final point of the action. E.g. "*Galinat has examined a series of archaeological cobs from New Mexico dating from 1400 B.C. to A.D. 1400...*"; "*He had risen by due degrees from the position of fourth to first footman*", etc. Syntactically they can function as noun complement.

The third category labelled as Ratio also had a fair percentage of frequency, (5,2%). It expresses limit in degree, condition or amount, or in other words, the relation between two amounts in respect to the number of times the first contains the second. E.g. "*The oldest cobs are only about an inch long and they bore about 50 to 60 kernels*"; "*We grew corn-teosinte crosses in Mexico that were 12 to 15 feet high and had as many as 4.000 kernels on one plant*", etc. These prepositional phrases function as verb complement.

Besides these categories, the preposition to also occurred in the following functions: as disjunct (2,1%) expressing a comment or an opinion about something (e.g. "*I*

discovered to my astonishment that you could neither read nor write") and as adjective complement (e.g. "Actually there is good evidence that teosinte growing adjacent to fields of corn improves the vigor of the crop"; "Hybrid corns, which represent most of the corn grown to day, tend to be susceptible to disease".).

5. FOR

With respect to the preposition "for" the most frequent categories denote purpose (30,3%) and time (22,7%).

TABLE VI

Category	Nº of Times	%	Major Functions	Nº of Times	%
1. Purpose	24	30,3%	Noun post modifier	18	22,7%
			Adjunct	6	7,5%
2. Time	18	22,7%	Noun post modifier	8	10,1%
			Adjunct	10	12,6%
3. Intended Recipient	13	16,4%	Noun post modifier	5	6,3%
			Adjunct	8	10,1%
4. Support	5	6,3%	Noun post modifier	4	5,06%
			Adjunct	1	1,2%
5. Prep. Phrase as	6	7,5%	Conjunct	6	7,5%
6. -	3	3,7%	Disjunct	3	3,7%
7. -	2	2,5%	Verb. Compl.	2	2,5%
8. -	2	2,5%	Noun Compl.	2	2,5%
9. -	3	3,7%	Adj. Complement	3	3,7%
T O T A L	79	99,3%		79	99,3%

* 3 doubtful cases (3,7%)

The meaning of Purpose or determination can be identified by the use of "for" after certain verbs expressing "*purposes intended for something*" as in "*such precautions were observed with drill cores taken primarily for construction purposes*"; "*If in the early stages of human cultivation a tunicate mutant of teosinte had arisen and had been selected for planting*". The notion of Purpose can be seen from the possibility of paraphrase by a clause "in order to" (cf. Greenbaum - p. 158) e.g. "*The financial news as two banks vied for control of the country's fifth largest clearing bank*" (= in order to control the country's...) The Nigerian family put their house up for sale (in order to sell it), etc. These prepositional phrases can answer the questions why? what... for? who... for? It seems that the preposition "for" in these examples carries the subordinate idea of "*intention*" in contrast with the preposition to which carries the idea of accomplishment. E.g. "*We had a great new plant for housing in 1978*"; "... I felt it my duty to impart it to the church wardens". These prepositional phrases function as adjuncts as well as noun postmodifiers.

The category of time was used to indicate Duration of action. This function is determined by the use of "for + complement" denoting duration or a period of time expressing the concept "*how long*". According to Swan "for" denoting Time is used to indicate how long an action or a situation lasts. For instance, "... it is difficult to believe they could have remained as completely infertile as the evidence shows they have been for thousand of years"; "He did not fancy the notion of going back to domestic service after being his own master for so many years"; "... there's no improvement there for years", etc. Thus, for expressions contain a subordinate idea that the period

of time is part of course or extent . These same expressions may be used without "for" but they presuppose that the designation of time immediately follows the verb (e.g. She paused a moment / she paused for a moment, etc.) the prepositional phrases in this category have the syntactic function of adjunct or noun postmodifier.

The category of Support showed a 6,3% of frequency. It expresses the idea of support, in favour of. This category is generally indicated by the noun phrase which precedes the preposition. E.g. "*What is the evidence for this alternative?*" "*Recent work by my colleagues and me, however, has provided new and impressive support for the teosinte hypothesis*", etc. They occur as adjuncts or noun-postmodifiers.

For was also used denoting Intended Recipient (16,4%). That means the "for phrase" is used to denote a recipient of something. It expresses "*in someone's interest*", "*to someone's advantage*" (Schibsbye: 1973 p. 345). This value may approximate closely that of the indirect object. E.g. "*She writes it for me*"; "*The verger busied himself quietly replacing the painted wooden cover on the marble front, taking away a chair that had been brought for an infirm lady*", etc.

In some cases the prepositional phrases functioned as conjunct (7,5%). E.g. "*for one thing*", "*for example*", etc. and as disjunct (3,7%). E.g. "*for all that*", etc.

It was not possible to identify the meaning or define the categories of some contexts, but the prepositional phrases with "for" appeared as complementizer of certain adjectives or nouns in "... *by the fact that the gene responsible for the tunicate trait is dominant rather than recessive*"; "*there was also much less tendency for the modified teosinte spikes to*

shatter on ripening", etc.

6. AT

Examining the preposition "at", its occurrences were arranged into three categories.

TABLE VII

Category	Nº of Times	%	Major Functions	Nº of Times	%
1. Place	26	50%	Noun posmodifier	15	28,9%
			Adjunct	11	21,1%
2. Time	14	26,9%	Noun posmodifier	2	3,8%
			Adjunct	12	23,1%
3. Manner	2	3,8%	Noun posmodifier	1	1,9%
			Adjunct	1	1,9%
4. Prep. Phrase as	2	3,8%	Conjunct	2	3,8%
5.	8	15,3%	Disjunct	8	15,3%
T O T A L	52	99,8%		52	99,8%

The first category labelled as Place occurred most frequently (50%) and refers to a point in space without considering any real size (e.g. "at the end of the line", "at the corner of the street"). This may happen because the size of the place is not important. We often use at with the name of a place when we are interested in the activity that happens there E.g. "On my retirement from academic administration at the University of Chicago". "This school is led by Paul C. Mangelsdorf, emeritus professor at Harvard University and now at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill..."; "At the

Caribbean meat market run by Mr. Ghulan Raza, a Pakistani - a Nigerian woman was talking to the proprietor", etc. Thus, the noun phrase which follows the preposition "at" is a name of town or of some place. It is worth mentioning that both at and in express respectively place regarded "as a point with a distinctive association, address or locality"; "at" and place regarded "as an area with association of its appearance". E. g. "Official guests at the palace reported that Giscard had himself served first and kept the place opposite him vacant..."; "Paul is working in Bristol"; "He has spent two years in a builder's office". The at-phrases function as adjuncts or noun post modifiers.

The second category - time - also had a significant percentage of occurrence (26,9%). It denotes "at the stated period or moment" or "points of time" such as at the end of week, "at night", "at 2 o'clock", etc. This category is determined by "at + complements" denoting "point of time" "He shook hands with a prisoner who was widely reported to be out on the town at night"; "Profit-takers moved in at the end of the weekend..."; "at this eleventh hour", etc.

The prepositions in and by are also used to denote time but there is a difference. By denotes "up to the time stated" (e.g. "by the end of next week") and In denotes "a period of time" (e.g. "something strange happened in that instant"; "in the end he wrote a special note", etc.). The expressions like at the moment / at that moment appear to occur with verbs referring to states. E.g. "At the moment there are 18.000 people on the waiting list", etc. Whereas "in that period" demands a verb which relates to an event. E.g. "in that period I visited him several times". (Leech p. 161). This category occurred as

adjuncts and nounpostmodifiers.

The third category denotes manner, state, condition (3,8%). For example, "*In these populations corn and teosinte genes are exchanged regularly at a low frequency, there by maintaining hybrid vigor*". This category can occur as adjuncts or noun postmodifiers.

In addition, "at" also occurred in prepositional phrases functioning as conjuncts (at first, at most, etc.) and as disjuncts (e.g. at least, at best, etc). Both of them are considered as non - literal usages.

7. BY

In relation to the preposition "*by*" five categories were stated based on the contexts analysed.

TABLE VIII

Category	Nº of Times	%	Major Functions	Nº of Times	%
1. Agency	36	48%	Adjunct	36	48%
2. Means, manner					
. Method	21	28%	NP Modifer	9	12%
			Adjunct	12	16%
. Instrument	10	13,3%	NP Modifer	8	10,6%
			Adjunct	2	2,6%
3. Time	3	4%	Adjunct	3	4%
4. Proximity	1	1,3%	Adjunct	1	1,3%
5. To the extent of	1	1,3%			
6. Prep. Phrase as	1	1,3%	Conjunct	1	1,3%
T O T A L	75	99,8%		75	99,8%

2 doubtful cases (2,6%)

The first category occurred more frequently than others (48%). It includes the meaning of Agentive expressed when the verb (transitive) is in the passive and the concept of action is prominent. For instance, "*This school, is led by Paul C. Mangelsdorf...*"; "*The hypothesis has been advocated by its proposers*"; "*The mood of the local residents and spectators out walking in the area devastated by Saturday night riots*", etc. There is a close similarity between the prepositions by and with in the passive: "by" expressing "the agent" and with expressing "means" but the meaning is slightly different: the relation expressed when with is used can be regarded as something static and when by is use it can be considered as something dynamic. E.g. "*Kernels... can be retrieved with sticks or tongs*"; "*This school is led by Paul C. Mangelsdorf...*"). In sentences where the past participle can only be referred to as describing a state and no resultative association can be assumed, the two prepositions are used alternately (Schibsbye: 1973: 339). E.g. "*Her face was covered by / with a sheet*". The prepositional phrases which denote "agent" function syntactically as adjuncts. They come after the verb (passive voice) functioning as an adverb of means.

The second category also had a significant percentage of occurrence (41,3%) which suggests method , means , "technique" and it is determined by the preposition by plus complement which describes method, technique by which something is done. The complement is generally indefinite and not limited. For example, "*teosinte appears to be governed by genes*"; "*... that teosinte arose from this wild corn by mutation*"; "*... the large drill core pollen arose from a teosinte with four sets of chromosomes whose pollen had not yet been reduced by natural selection*", etc. Within this category we find another meaning -

that which denotes Instrument which is indicated by complements denoting an instrument. It is sometimes expressed by gerund forms or sometimes a noun regarded as instrument such as knife, ball, telephone. E.g. "*Whole mature teosinte seeds can be eaten directly by first soaking them in water*"; "*He travelled by bus*". Here the prepositional phrases function as adjuncts or noun post-modifiers.

The third category labelled as time had only a 4% rate of occurrence. Here by means "as soon as", "not later than". It comprises the point of time stated in the complement, i.e., it denotes "up to and including". For instance, "By the time of Columbus between 200 and 300 varieties of corn were already in cultivation"; "By the second half the company was making no profit on its operations"; "By the end of this week...". "By - phrases" presuppose that the complement marks the end of a complement. In this category by signifies "before the time stated" to distinguish from at and in which indicate a period and a point of time respectively. Again, "by - phrases" denoting time syntactically function as adjuncts or adverbs of time.

The fourth meaning indicates proximity, nearness, i.e., someone or something which is near, at or to the side of". It is determined by the preposition by plus complement which denotes merely "where in the place", "proximity". "By" contains a concept of dependence, attachment, etc. E.g. "*Householders stood by their frontdoors*". In this category, the prepositional phrases function as adjuncts and noun postmodifiers (e.g. "*The man by the river is French*").

Finally, "by" was also used as meaning to the extent of, quantity. It is determined by the preposition by plus its complement which denotes amount, quantity. E.g. "*This outbid by*

more than E 170 million the offer already made for Royal Bank - which owns the English clearing bank...". This category functions as an adverbial adjunct. There was also a case in which by functioned as conjunct.

8. WITH

The preposition with did not occur with great frequency but the examples still show evidence that it can be used in a variety of meanings.

TABLE VII

Category	Nº of Times	%	Major Functions	Nº of Times	%
1. Comitative	42	46,1%	Noun post modifier	31	34%
			Adjunct	11	12%
2. Instrument	5	5,4%	Adjunct	5	5,4%
3. Manner	20	21,9%	Noun post modifier	11	12%
			Adjunct	9	9,8%
4. Having, carrying	18	19,7%	Noun post modifier	18	19,7%
5. Prep. Phrase as:			Verb. Complement	3	3,2%
6.			Compl. of an adjective	2	2,1%
TOTAL	91	99,5%		91	99,5%

1 doubtful case (1.1%)

The first and most frequent category (46,1%) indicates accompanement or relationship. This was labelled as Comitative. It seems that the meaning of with in this category is indicated, not by the words which precede or follow the preposition, but by the preposition itself. For instance, "I've talked the matter

over with these gentlemen"; "I began graduate work at Cornell University with R. A. Emerson"; "Albert Edward who dined out a great deal with his more aristocratic parishioners", etc. These sentences are equivalent to "Albert Edward who dined out a great deal in the company of his more aristocratic parishioners"; "I began graduate work at Cornell University in the company of R. A. Emerson", etc. The preposition with has the value of "in the company of". These prepositional phrases function as adjuncts and as noun postmodifiers.

The second category indicates Possession, Having, Characterized by had 19,7% of occurrence. Again this meaning is indicated by the preposition itself which carries the meaning of "having". There is a relation of paraphrase with "have" That means the preposition with can be substituted by "have". For example, "teosinte with its many attributes"; "teosinte with four sets of chromosomes" is similar "teosinte having its many attributes"; "teosinte having four sets of chromosomes"; "It was a long street with all sorts of shops in it..." is equivalent to "It was a long street having all sorts of shops in it..." etc. With + complement is used to show possession or certain characteristics of something. It is used in relation to people to show physical features and to denote that which is carried. The prepositional phrases function as noun post modifiers characterizing the preceding noun.

The third category - Means , Instrument did not have a significant percentage of occurrence (Cf. Table 8 p. 99). This category is indicated by with + complement denoting Instrument by which something can be done. Generally, the complement of the preposition in the corpus is something concrete. E.g. "I was able to produce many additional strains

by backcrossing them with teosinte"; "Kernels placed in a fire, on glowing embers, on hot rocks or on heated sand pop very well and either pop free of the fire or can be retrieved with sticks or tongs". This meaning differs from that denoting Ingredient, material in which the preposition with is used after verbs of making, indicating an ingredient. E.g. "You make a cake with eggs" (e.g. "eggs are one of the ingredients"). "The terminal bus was constructed with reinforced concrete". Expressions such as "paved with brick"; "filled with water"; "loaded with hay" also indicate the presence of ingredients. The prepositional phrase expressing instrumental meaning functions as an adjunct. It modifies the verb and has the value of an adverb of instrument.

The fourth category - Manner (21,9%) is determined by with + complement which describes the way in which something is done. These function as adjuncts (adverbs of manner) and noun-post modifiers. E.g. "When Albert Edward, with his usual politeness, had closed the church door behind the vicar and the two church wardens, he could not sustain the air of unruffled dignity..."; "Albert Edward faced them, the table between him and them and wondered with slight uneasiness what was the matter"; "He was a non-smoker and a total abstainer, but with a certain latitude", etc.

The preposition "with" also occurs as a complement of a verb and of an adjective. In this case, the preposition with is required by the verb or adjective. E.g. "... and the hardfruitcase of teosinte provides significant protection to the enclosed kernels of corn"; "Long before Columbus the peoples of Mexico and Guatemala were also familiar with teosinte"; "He did not know what he should do with himself"; "We don't want to be harsh with you, Foreman, said the vicar", etc.

9. FROM

The ninth most frequently used preposition in these texts was "From". Its meanings were distributed in three different categories indicating 1) Source , Origin ; 2) starting point and 3) distinction , separation .

TABLE IX

Category	Nº of Times	%	Major Functions	Nº of Times	%			
1. Source, Origin	45	69,2%	Verb Complement	34	52,3%			
			Noun Post modifier	11	16,9%			
2. Starting Point	6	9,2%	Verb Complement	3	4,6%			
				Noun Post modifier	3	4,6%		
			. of a place	2	3,07%	Verb Complement	2	3,07%
							. of time	3
. Scale	9	13,8%	Verb Complement	5	7,6%			
				3. Distinction/Separation	4	6,1%	Adjective Compl.	4
TOTAL	65	99,8%						65

The most frequent category was Source , Origin which presented a 69,2% of occurrence, indicating the source of the place from which something comes. In the majority of cases, this category is indicated by the verb which precedes the preposition in the context. For example, "... the large pollen grains must have come from an ancient wild corn that had originated separately from teosinte"; "One possible explanation is that the large drill - core pollen arose from a teosinte with four set of chromosomes"; "... a series of archaeological cobs from New

Mexico", etc. In this latter example the verb does not appear, but it is implicit (come, originate, etc). Many times "from" and "of" cause confusion in use for Brazilian students because these prepositions may approximate one another in meaning when used before complements which denote the material of which something is made. E.g. "*the table is made from (or of) wood*". "From" expressing origin (and change) and "of" the existing nature, or the existing condition. The prepositional phrase denoting source, origin functions as verb complement and noun postmodifiers.

The second category is composed of three subcategories: 1) Starting point of a place which had a 9,2% of frequency; 2) starting point of time (3,07%) and 3) starting point of scale (4,6%). All these three subcategories indicate the time when an action is initiated. The first category is determined by the preposition from + complement denoting place + preposition "to". E.g. "*the ancient Indian agriculturists have carried the plant from its place of origin, ... and adapted it to a wide variety of temperature and tropical climates ranging from the mouth of the St. Lawrence River to what is now central Chile*"; "*Mangelsdorf and his associates persist in believing of the change was from a primitive wild corn to teosinte*", etc. The second subcategory is determined by from + complement indicating time + preposition to. E.g. "*Galinat has examined a series of archaeological cobs from New Mexico dating from 1400 BC to AD 1400...*" etc. The third subcategory can be identified by from + complement denoting "measure", "color", "degree" + preposition "to". E.g. "*The fruitcases vary from gray to brown to blank...*"; "*Ford's share of the British car market rose last year from 28,3 per cent to 30,7 per cent...*", etc. As was shown above, "from" indicates that the complement is the starting

point of the movement in question. Here, these prepositional phrases function as adjuncts because they are equivalent to adverbs of time, place and degree.

The third category expressing "distinction", "separation" difference had a 13,8% rate of occurrence. This category is indicated by the verb or adjective which comes before the preposition such as "to differ", "to distinguish", "to separate", which demands that the preposition "from" follow it. For instance, "*Teosinte differs from corn in that it has several stalks growing from the base of the plant where modern corn usually has only one*"; "*The popped kernels are indistinguishable from popped corn*". These prepositional phrases function as complementations of the verb and as complements of the adjective.

Summary

After this systematization we are led to conclude that:

1) Within the classification stated for each preposition, there is one concept or meaning which is more frequently used than others. For example, "of" was used most frequently to indicate Descriptive genitive and quantity. The preposition in occurred most frequently as denoting place and manner; on also occurred frequently as denoting place and time; for, meaning purpose and time, to, signifying direction; "at" denoting place and time, "by" meaning agency and means, method; "with" meaning comitative and manner and finally from denoting source, origin and distinction, separation, all showed a high percentage of usage. For this count, 69,8% of preposition occurrences were accounted for by the two most frequent functions of each preposition. The other uses were relatively unimportant.

2) Among those prepositions which are regarded as the most difficult to be learned were "at", "on", "in" which were most frequently used to denote the same categories: Place and Time.

3) Syntactically, most of the prepositions which occurred in the three texts analysed function as adjuncts and noun postmodifiers i.e., they appear functioning as adverbs of place, time, manner, instrument and so on and also a noun modifying it.

4) In addition to these, literal uses of prepositions occurred more frequently than non-literal uses (84.5%). It is important to state that non-literal uses which occurred in the texts were examples of prepositional phrases functioning as disjuncts, conjuncts, noun complement, adjective or verb complement. These non-literal uses are very difficult to learn since their meanings are abstract.

2.6 - CONCLUSIONS

To conclude this chapter we can affirm that:

1) The different approaches to English prepositions by the use of grammar texts do not really help the student to learn and use prepositions correctly, because their concern is to present a linguistic approach in which they try to describe a set of rules which do not facilitate the learning of practical usage.

2) As can be seen in this work, the network of correspondences between English and Portuguese system is very complex. Few prepositions have a one-to-one equivalence between English and Portuguese. Most of them overlap. Two or

three forms in English can correspond to only one in Portuguese or vice-versa. In addition, Portuguese has a smaller number of prepositions than English. The complexity of both systems, especially the English, can often lead the students to make errors. English has several forms which refer to the same concept or use, as well as several uses that can be expressed by only one form. This redundancy constitutes an inefficiency which can be noticed in the classroom by the presence of learning difficulty and errors. Redundancy, according to George, exists when two or more words represent the same "*designatum*", i. e., the same meaning. Thus, the English preposition system includes obvious forms whose meanings are the same such as: at, in, on, of and from; for and to and whose use is redundant. This makes English seem very complicated and hard for students to learn.

3) In analysing the three texts mentioned in this research, in which the number of words and frequency of prepositions were counted, we observe that of the total running words which occurred in the texts (12.351), prepositions represented 10,8% of these words, that is, one word in every ten was a preposition. This suggests that they are likely to have considerable importance in comprehension and production of English.

4) Considering the two most frequent meanings of each preposition (69,8% of occurrences) we can also conclude that the most frequently used prepositions as well as definite meanings are:

- "of" meaning descriptive genitive and quantity
- "in" meaning place and manner
- "to" indicating direction and functioning as adjective complement
- "with" denoting comitative and manner

- "by" denoting agency and means
- "from" meaning source origin and distinction separation
- "on" signifying place and time
- "for" denoting purpose and time
- "at" meaning place and time

Thus, the prepositions which refer to the same concept, in, on, at occurred a large number of times in the same category: "place". This suggests that pedagogically there are fairly clear priorities.

5) In addition, most of the prepositional phrases occurred as adjuncts (with the value of adverbs) and noun postmodifiers. Noun postmodifiers were less frequent, but almost obligatorily for certain functions.

In the teaching of English prepositions to foreign language learners we believe that this study can provide a valuable basis for the selection of prepositions to be introduced as well as for the order in which they may be combined and presented, i. e, those dealing with place and position, those dealing with direction and motion, those dealing with time etc. This will obviously depend on the students' needs and also on the objectives of the course.

Considering the results of the analysis presented in this chapter, we can state that in the teaching of English prepositions, teachers can not ignore the most frequent types of prepositions as well the occurrence of meanings in contexts. These results can serve as a basis to help the teachers to select what forms and what meanings should be taught first. As non - literal uses occurred very rarely in the corpus, and as there are no specific rules to learn them, they definitely should not be taught first. They are more easily acquired later

when the students' knowledge of English has increased.

It is worth mentioning that this research is not a fully scientific study of prepositions, but rather an attempt to see in a speculative way what are the most frequent types of prepositions used in the English language and what are the most frequent meanings attached to them which occur in the language. Therefore these results can not be seen as unique and definitive. They are only a beginning of research in this complex area.

After having tried to systematize the nine most frequent uses of prepositions, we now try to discover Brazilian students' difficulties in the use of prepositions. Chapters Three and Four deal with the research carried out with twenty-five undergraduate students of UFSC. Statistical results of the tests will be presented and Contrastive and Error Analyses theories will be applied in order to analyse which factors might have caused the errors. Suggestions will be made for overcoming the students' problems.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RESEARCH

3 - Introduction

After having analysed the nine most frequent prepositions in English the present chapter will try to show statistical results of the study of English prepositional usage by Brazilian undergraduate students, especially those prepositions which are considered as the most difficult for the students to learn and use in communication.

Considering that prepositional usage is an important area of research in the field of second language acquisition and that it constitutes a problem for foreign learners, the data allow us to show the types of difficulties the students have in using English prepositions as well as to show the possible sources of errors through Error and Contrastive Analysis theories which will be the subject of the Chapter 4. The data will also permit us to show some sequence in the acquisition of English prepositions, i.e., what meanings of each tested preposition were acquired better by the students.

In this research we will examine and try to describe the types of difficulties both in speech and writing by the two groups of Brazilian students and the results will be compared to native speakers' responses.

We hope that the result of this research will prove useful to students of linguistics as well to teachers from a methodological point of view so that they can help their students to minimize the difficulties in English prepositions.

3.1 - The Field of Study

3.1.1 - Preparation of the tests

The data of the present research were obtained from three types of tests: two written and one oral.

The first written test to be applied for both groups of students consists of a written composition in order to see the errors in English prepositions made when they write spontaneously, i.e., when they create their own contexts. These compositions were written on a topic suggested by this researcher. A sheet with some topics was given to the students such as: a) Write about an unforgettable day or trip in their life; b) Write an account of a play, film or Tv programme they have seen recently; c) comparison between Florianopolis and another city they have been to and d) Write a story based on a sequence of pictures. The pictures were added to the sheet. The students were asked to choose one of these topics and write a composition based on it. They were advised to write three or four paragraphs, i.e., between 150 and 200 words (cf. appendix). They had 40 minutes to do the task.

The second written test, "the gap test" or "the blank-filling test" consists of 74 sentences in which the students should fill in the blank spaces with an appropriate preposition. The sentences were taken from grammars, dictionaries and also from the three texts analysed in the first part of the study (a short-story; a technical text and an article from a newspaper). Although the test contains 15 different types of prepositions, the study is mainly concentrated on the nine most frequent ones which are also likely to be considered as the most important and difficult for Brazilian students to learn. Fifteen prepositions

were tested in five different uses or meanings. For example, the preposition "on" was tested with the meaning of "place", "time", "in contact with", "means" and "position". The test required a total of 75 responses for each preposition and 1875 responses for all prepositions.

The third test was "the oral one". To elicit the oral production, the students were given a picture with the words cut off and allowed to look at it for a few minutes and then asked to speak into a tape recorder what they could see on it. They were tested in a group in the language laboratory for 15 minutes. Here we are testing their use of English prepositions in spontaneous speech.

3.1.2 - The aim of the tests

These three tests primarily aimed at testing the students' knowledge of prepositions, especially the nine most frequent ones (of, from, in, on, at, by, to, for and with) in their literal and non-literal uses. As I have already said, although "*the gap test*" consisted of fifteen different types of prepositions our interest is mainly in the nine most frequent ones. The six less frequent prepositions were included to see whether there is any difference of performance which may correlate with the figures of frequency of prepositions. The analysis of the three texts showed that the prepositions - about, among, between, over, before and after occurred less frequently than those nine we are testing. Thus, in testing them, we will see whether they also constitute problems for the students to learn.

It should also be said that native speakers were asked to do the test answering which preposition seems for them most

likely to be used in the given contexts in the test. The purpose of giving the test to native speakers was to establish what (if any) alternatives were likely to be accepted as correct. These alternatives could then be admitted for the student test. The native speaker answers would show whether frequency of use by them differed from Brazilians.

3.1.3 - Method of Collection of Data

Besides collecting the test data, we also applied a questionnaire in Portuguese with the students in order to have a general idea about the language background of each one. The aim of applying this questionnaire is just to obtain information about the students' instruction in a foreign language as well to see their own auto-evaluation of their level of English knowledge. (cf. appendix p.232)

We took the two written test samples at the beginning of the semester and the students were tested in the classroom. As I have said before, they had 40 minutes to do the task. The oral sample was taken at the end of the semester and the students were tested in a language laboratory. They received a picture description and spoke freely for 15 minutes. Before speaking they had five minutes to examine the picture in detail. Their performance was recorded on tape. All of them took the tests at the same time and under the same conditions.

These tests were applied at different times in order to see whether the same frequency of use of prepositions occurred in the three tests or whether the same errors occurred at different periods.

3.1.4 - The Informants

The informants of this research were twenty-five Brazilian students of both 4^a and 7^a phases of the undergraduate course of Letras at Federal University of Santa Catarina enrolled in the first semester of 1982. The nine native speakers (four American and five British) were professors of English Language and Literature. It's worth saying that native speakers only answered "*the gap test*" and of the students who participated in the research, 25 answered "*the gap test*", 21 did the compositions and 14 participated in "*the oral test*".

Of the students who participated in the research, 15 of 7^a phase and 10 of 4^a phase had already studied English from 3 to 4 years before entering the university. Their knowledge of English was acquired either in public or private schools where they had about four hours of English per week with Brazilian teachers. The courses of English they took only emphasized the skills of reading, writing and translation but at present their major interest was speaking. Most of them said they chose to study English because they liked it.

3.1.5 - Method of Analysis

With respect to the correction and analysis of the tests the following criteria were adopted:

1. In correcting the composition and oral test only preposition errors were considered. Syntactic or lexical mistakes were not corrected because sometimes these corrections will require a different syntactic structure or a totally rewritten sentence.

2. In transcribing the oral reports false starts,

repetitions and incomprehensible pieces of language were not considered. Where the students corrected themselves, the corrected version of the sentence was the one used.

3. As to "*the gap test*" which consisted of isolated sentences and in which most of the sentences permitted the use of more than one preposition it was necessary to determine what a prepositional error is. The native speaker test served this purpose. We are thus using "*error*" to indicate any divergence from native speaker patterns of usage, notably in prepositions chosen, or in frequency of certain choices.

4. We classified separately those answers which I was testing for, i.e., the preposition in the original example, but as some sentences allow the use of more than one type of preposition, the other possible answers as defined by native informants were also considered as correct. However they would be distinguished as C1 (for the preposition which I was testing) and C2 (for other possible answers). The native test was a guide for this.

5. Whenever the students omitted a preposition in a sentence, this would be counted as an error, since all sentences should be filled in with a preposition and omission can be seen as a deviation from standard English as defined by the native speaker responses.

6. In the three tests we judged preposition usage in each context as being either literal or non-literal. The judgments we arrive at were based on "*the substitution test*" which indicates the literalness of prepositions. (See Ch. 2, p. 46).

7. The prepositions to be examined were classified according to the senses they expressed in the three tests. We can thus have an idea of which prepositions and which senses

the students acquire first.

8. Finally, we compared the results of written and oral production to see if different kinds of errors were being made as well as identifying in what senses the prepositions are most easily acquired.

3.2 - Results and Discussions

3.2.1 - Native speakers' responses

To start with, the first test to be examined will be "*the gap test*" because this was answered by native speakers and Brazilian students. Thus, let's comment first on the native speakers' responses in this test. As I have already said, "*the gap test*" was applied to nine native speakers of English (four Americans and five British). Although their answers were a guide for us to correct the students' answers they also made mistakes. Of course, they made few mistakes (one or two in each test) and their errors were of omissions or use of a preposition which doesn't fit the context. The percentage of correct answers, wrong answers and other possible forms of each informant are presented in Table I.

TABLE I

Native speakers' responses for the fifteen tested prepositions

INFORMANTS N = 9	%C	%W	%C2
1.	85.3%	2.6%	12%
2.	81.3%	-	18.6%
3.	85.3%	2.6%	12%
4.	74.6%	5.3%	20%
5.	85.3%	-	14.6%
6.	74.6%	1.3%	24%
7.	78.6%	1.3%	20%
8.	65.3%	4%	30.6%
9.	77.3%	5.3%	16%
TOTAL	78.6%	3.2%	17.5%

Analysing the figures above, most of their answers coincided with the prepositions we were testing (78.6% of correct responses). All of them made a significant number of other alternatives (18.6%) which was already expected since the test allowed the use of more than one type of preposition. The number of wrong answers was not very significant (just 3.2%).

It seemed that their wrong answers may be due to lack of understanding of the context or lack of attention, once the test consists of isolated sentences. For instance, sometimes they put a wrong form or omitted the preposition. E.g. *"An umbrella is ? / our portection from the rain" (s.58); *"The dollar is worth Cr\$ 157 cruzeiros" (s.17); *"The system is for deep crisis" (s.55), etc. There are some sentences which require the use of just one type of preposition because of the content***

(meaning) of the sentence. For instance, "*Santa Catarina is between Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul*" (s.61); "*The letter B comes before the letter C*" (s.33); "*Paul said to John that Tuesday comes after Monday*" (s.36). As we can see these sentences allow the use of only the prepositions between, before, and after. Nevertheless, some native speakers used in, from, and on respectively in these sentences. These answers were considered as wrong because it does not make sense to use them in these sentences. These errors are explained as due to lack of consideration of the contexts and as such, they indicate marginal limitations of the test.

It's worth mentioning that in some sentences they put a word which is not a preposition. Possibly they did this because they make sense in the contexts. E.g. "*An umbrella is our/good protection from the rain*" (s.58); "*The host moved about all his guests*" (s.49); "*I was at the neighborhood project last Friday night*" (s.35), etc. Grammatically, these responses are correct but as the test required to use an appropriate prepositions in the gap, these answers were considered as irrelevant to our purposes.

Now, let's examine the percentage of native speakers' responses for each tested preposition.

TABLE II

Percentage of Responses for the nine most frequent prepositions

TYPE OF PREPOSITION N = 9	%C	%W	%C2
1. OF	88.8%	-	11.1%
2. IN	86.6%	2.2%	11.1%
3. ON	73.3%	-	26.6%
4. AT	73.3%	6.6%	20%
5. FROM	93.3%	-	6.6%
6. FOR	88.8%	4.4%	6.6%
7. TO	93.3%	-	6.6%
8. BY	82.2%	2.2%	15.5%
9. WITH	97.7%	-	2.2%
TOTAL	86.3%	1.7%	11.8%

In Table II we have an idea of the figures of correct, wrong and other possible forms of each preposition used in the test. It can be seen that most of their answers coincided with the prepositions which were being tested but they also gave possible alternatives for all of them. The figures show that of the nine most frequent prepositions from, to, and with had a high percentage of correct uses. Probably, the contexts which required the use of these prepositions were easier and more limited. The prepositions on, at, and by had a significant number of acceptable forms.

Among the less frequent prepositions, the figures reveal that among (53.3%) had the highest percentage of acceptable forms in relation to the others. These results are evidence that various prepositions may be used in certain contexts, i.e., the

items presumably left greater choice. (See the figures for the six less frequent in the appendix). Also native speakers used around in the sentence "*white people were walking about the neighborhood yesterday*"; they used "between" in "*Divide this cake among all the boys here*" and they used to in the sentence "*the accused man was brought before the magistrate*".

As to native speakers' wrong answers, the figures show that the preposition about had the highest percentage of wrong forms. This is probably due to the contexts which seemed to be unclear as to which appropriate form should be used, specially the sentence 9 "*He looked about him for a shop where he could buy a packet of Gold Flakes*" which had only one correct answer. Of the nine most frequent prepositions, the preposition at was the one which had a significant percentage (6.6%) of wrong answers especially the sentence 17 "*The dollar is at Cr\$ 157 cruzeiros*" which had three incorrect responses. They used worth instead of at.

The next Table gives us an idea of the possible forms the native speakers gave for each preposition.

TABLE III

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES	FREQUENCY N = 9
1. Of s.18	about	1
	over	1
s.69	from	3
2. In s.44	during	2
s.65	within	2

Cont. TABLE III

TYPE OF PREPOSITION		POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES	FREQUENCY N = 9
3. On	s.35	until	1
		last	1
	s.68	in	9
4. At	s.17	about	1
		up to	1
	s.26/28	in	8
5. From	s.23	along	1
	s.64	in	2
6. For	s.53	about	1
7. To	s.40	until	3
8. By	s.15	before	2
	s.62	past	4
	s.73	after	1
9. With		-	-
10. After	s.12	because of	6
		for	3
	s.60	to	8
11. Before	s.12	until	4
		by	1
	s.52	prior to	1
	s.66	to	2
12. Between	s.11	by	1
		before	1
	s.29	at	1
	s.39	of	2

Cont. TABLE III

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES	FREQUENCY N = 9	
13. Among	s.16	for	1
	s.16/75	between	8
	s.16/59/75	with	6
	s.59	in	2
14. About	s.9/38	around	3
	s.38	through	5
		in	1
	s.20	with	1
	s.20/30	of	2
	s.67	after	3
		past	1
		before	1
15. Over	s.27	for	3
		during	2
		within	1
	s.34	down	1
	s.72	at	2

Looking at Table III, only the preposition with was not given an alternative. The other prepositions had a variety of acceptable responses. Some sentences had two or more types of prepositions as a second answer. For example, "*The headmaster would not grant a holiday because of/for their bad behaviour*" (s.12) when the tested preposition was after. Sentence 38 "*White people were walking through/around/in the neighborhood last night*" had three different types of prepositions to be used instead of

about. For sentence 27, they answered "For/within/during a period of a few millenniums pre-Colombian peoples bred most of the major varieties of corn that exist today". The preposition to be tested was over and so on.

In those sentences in which for and to had to be used, they gave only one alternative. They used about in sentence 53 "We walked about three miles" (for is the preposition to be tested) and until in the sentence 40 "The children have classes from 8:00 until 11:00" (instead of to).

The other prepositions had a variety of responses. Of course, this variation predominated in certain contexts more than others. For example, the prepositions about, up to were used instead of at in sentence 17 "The dollar is at Cr\$ 157 cruzeiros." The prepositions about and over were used instead of of in sentence 18 "He had made an agonising reappraisal of his prospects and his role." So, if the students used one of these alternatives listed in Table III, their answers could be also considered as correct.

In addition, native speakers also give unacceptable alternatives, although few in number. For example, they used on instead of by in the sentence "Could you bring me this book by next Tuesday at the latest?"; they used for in "The system is in deep crisis"; they used from in "The letter B comes before the letter C", etc.

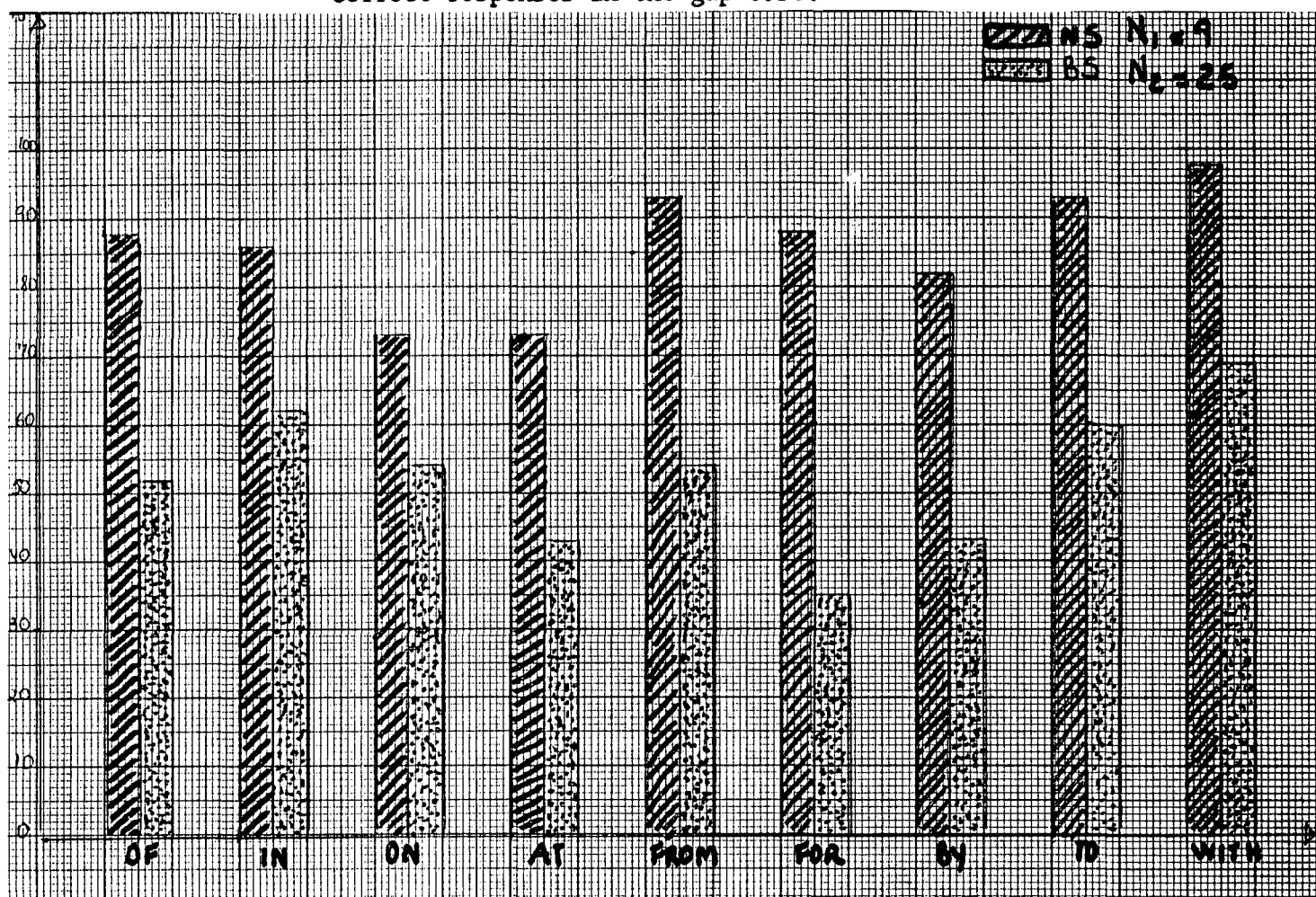
Summing up this section, it can be noticed that native speakers' responses vary in notions of correctness. This can be confirmed by the variation of responses they gave for each preposition. Another thing to be said is that the test allowed variations of responses since it consists of isolated sentences. The contexts do not limit the type of preposition to be used.

3.2.1.1 - Comparison between Native speakers and Students' Responses

The purpose of this section is to show the native speaker's profile of responses in the graph below and compare it with the students.

The reason for comparing these two groups of informants is to see through the percentage of correct, wrong and possible responses, if the students' ability of using the tested prepositions is very weak in relation to the native speakers.

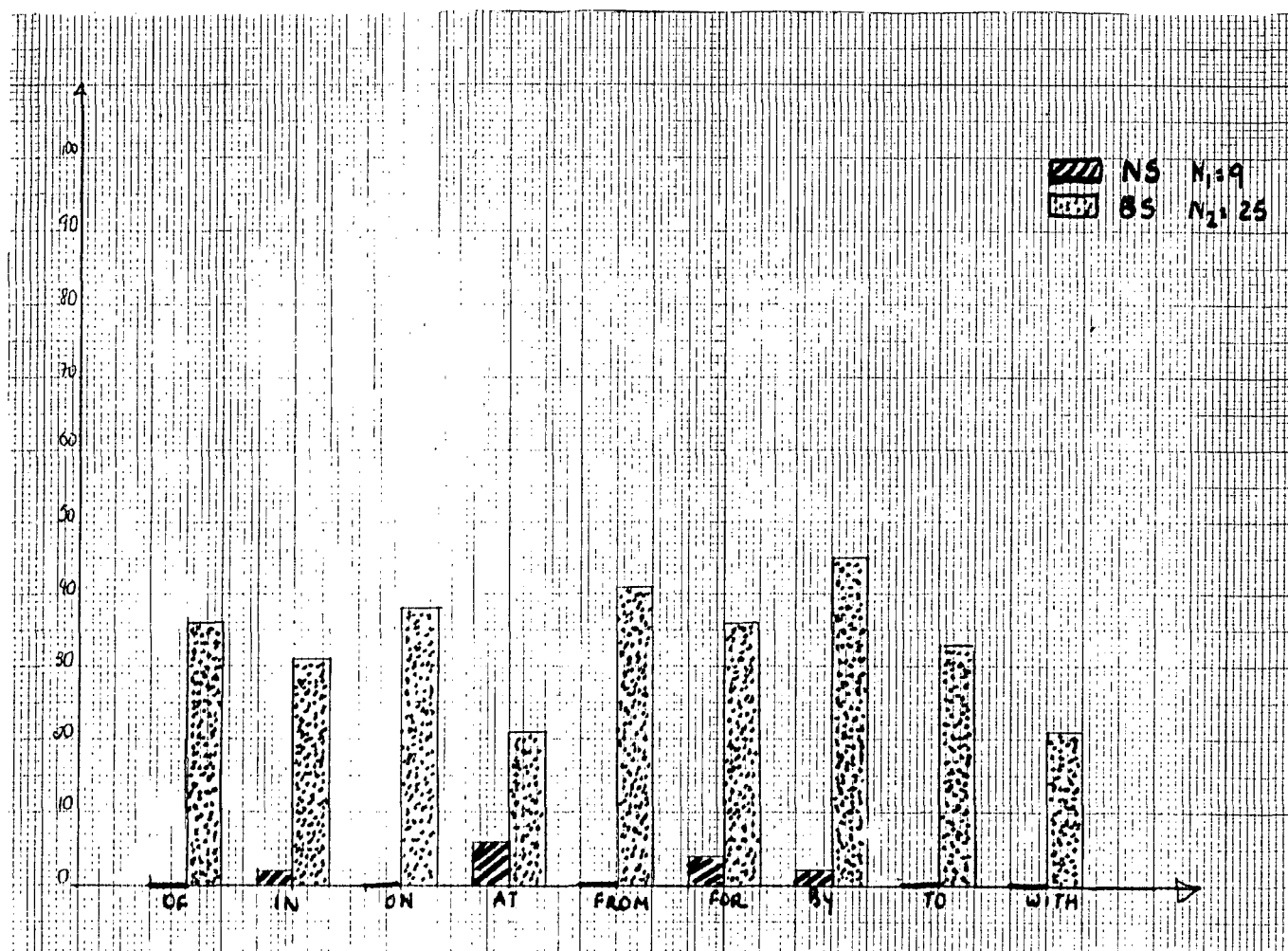
Figure 1 - Comparison between native speakers and Brazilian students' correct responses in the gap test.



In comparing the native speakers' performance with Brazilian students in using the nine most frequent prepositions it can be seen that the percentage of correctness by Brazilian students was below the native speakers. The average of correctness of Brazilians varied from 35.2% to 69.2% whereas native speakers' responses varied from 82.2% to 97.7% as can be seen in Figure 1.

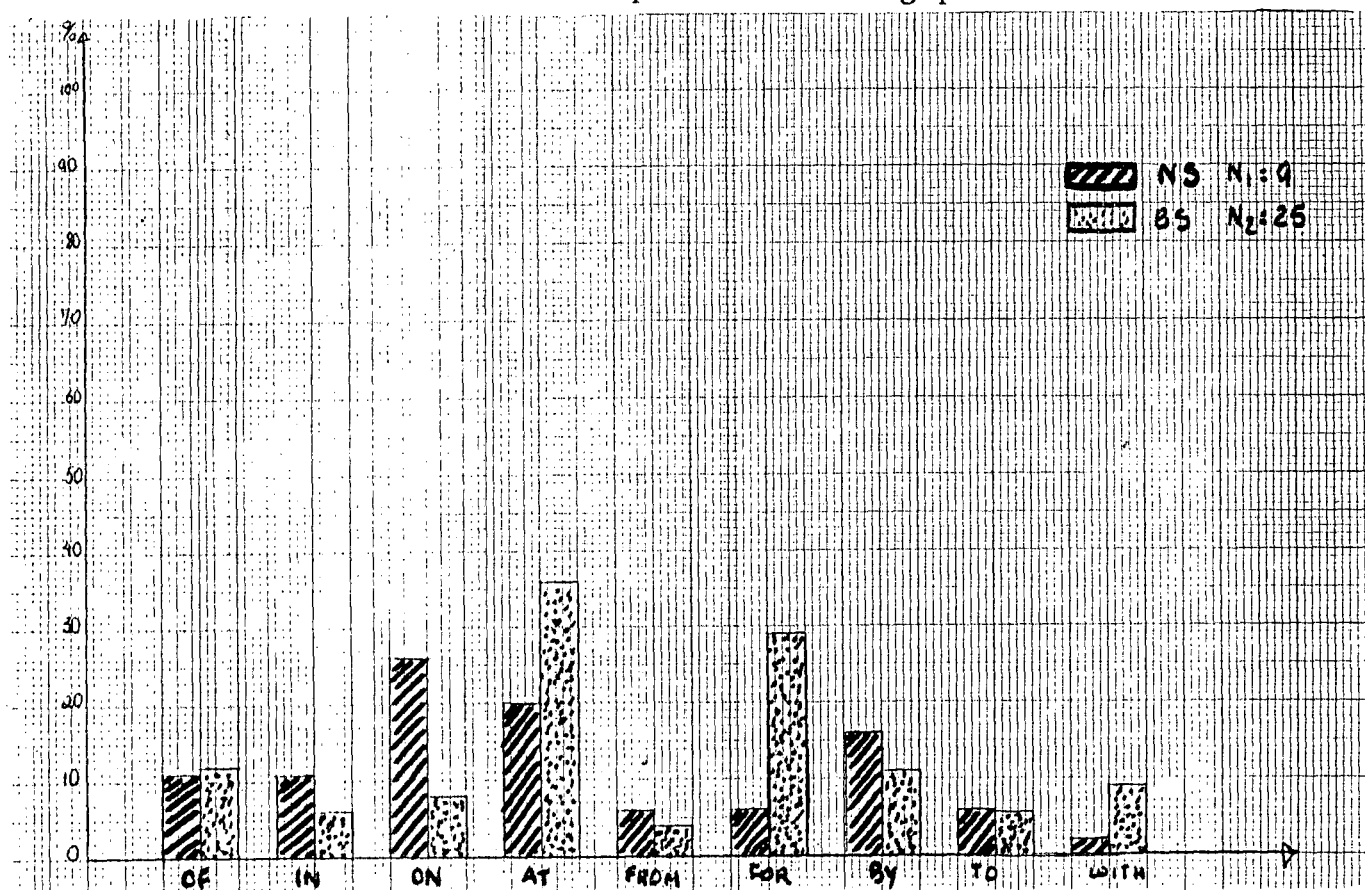
There was thus a gap between the performances especially with respect to correct and wrong responses.

Figure 2 - Comparison between native speakers and Brazilian students' wrong answers in the gap test



The average of wrongness of native speakers varied from 2.2% to 6.6% but only in four prepositions (in, at, for, and by). The others had no mistakes while Brazilians' responses varied from 20% to 44%. However, the average of C2 responses by both groups of informants did not vary much (see figure 3 p. 128). The students performance can not be considered as very weak if we take into account that they are not proficient in English as well as English not being a second language in Brazil, but a foreign language. Their knowledge of English is restricted to school lessons while native speakers have the obvious advantage of speaking English as their first language.

Figure 3 - Comparison between native speakers and Brazilian students' C2 responses in the gap test.



Observing the Figure above, we can see that Brazilian students used more C2 responses for the prepositions of, at, for and with while native speakers used more C2 for the prepositions in, on and by. The percentage of C2 for the prepositions from and to was almost similar for both groups of informants.

If we compare native speakers' with Brazilians' performance for the six less frequent prepositions (cf. appendix) we can perceive once more that there is a gap between the two results. The degree of correctness of native speakers varied between 44.6% to 84.4% whereas the students varied between 11.2% to 36%. The students did not reach 50% of correctness. This indicates that these prepositions either really constitute a learning problem or it is simply an area which has been neglected by teachers.

All the fifteen prepositions had other possible alternatives by both groups - native speakers and Brazilian

students, but the percentage of C2 made by native speakers was higher than the students for most prepositions and the former made a very small number of errors.

3.2.2.- Students' Errors

In this section the students' errors will be examined. Before discussing the results of each test separately, we are going to present the overall figures for all three tests applied with Brazilian students.

3.2.2.1 - Comparison of the results of the three test: GT, CT and OT.

TABLE IV

Overall figures for oral, composition and gap test

	%C	%W	%C2	TOTAL OF USE
1. Gap Test = NS = 25	52.7%	33.6%	13.6%	405
2. Composition Test NS = 21	90.9%	9.1%	-	309
3. Oral Test NS = 14	81.4%	18.5%	-	199

Comparing the overall figures for the three tests applied to Brazilian students, "the gap test" was that which had a higher percentage of errors (33.6%) and a smaller percentage of correct uses (52.7%). However, these results confirm the fact that the more prepositions they have to use, the more errors they will make. In the other tests - oral and composition - which consists of spontaneous production - they used a smaller number of prepositions. We have to consider that the smaller number of students accounts almost entirely for the lower number of prepositions occurring. Thus 14 students who participated in the

oral test produced 199 prepositions while 21 students who participated in the composition produced 309.

It's worth mentioning that the percentage of correct forms in the oral test was lower (81.4%) than in writing (90.9%) Here we can say that the time was one point of advantage for them, since they had 40 minutes to write a composition against to 15 minutes to report orally. In writing they had time to think about what to communicate, thus it was expected that they would produce more incorrect forms in the oral test.

3.2.2.2 - Comparison of the nine most frequent preposition in the three tests.

The next Table will show the figures of each preposition in the three tests.

TABLE V

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	N = 25			N = 21			N = 14			RANK ORDER-ING		
	GAP TEST			COMPOSITION TEST			ORAL TEST					
	C	W	C2	ING	C	W	C2	ING	C		W	C2
1. OF	52%	36.8%	11.2%	5 th	94%	5.6%	-	3 rd	91.6	8.3%	-	3 rd
2. IN	62.4%	31.4%	6.4%	2 nd	89.3%	10.6%	-	6 th	66.3%	33.6%	-	4 th
3. ON	54.4%	37.6%	8%	4 th	76.7%	18.2%	-	8 th	47.1%	52.8%	-	6 th
4. AT	43.2%	20.8%	36%	6 th	78.4%	21.5%	-	7 th	57.1%	42.9%	-	5 th
5. FROM	54.4%	41.6%	4%	4 th	90%	10%	-	5 th	100%	-	-	1 st
6. FOR	35.2%	35.2%	29.6%	7 th	100%	-	-	1 st	91.6%	8.3%	-	3 rd
7. TO	60%	33.6%	6.4%	3 rd	91.9%	8.01%	-	4 th	100%	-	-	1 st
8. BY	43.2%	45.6%	11.2%	6 th	100%	-	-	1 st	-	-	-	-
9. WITH	69.6%	20.8%	9.6%	1 st	98.1%	1.9%	-	2 nd	97.5%	2.5%	-	2 nd
TOTAL	52.7%	33.6%	13.6%		90.9%	9.1%	-		81.4%	18.5%	-	

A brief look at this Table shows us that the highest percentage of errors for the nine most frequent prepositions was made in the gap test, with the prepositions "on, in, and at" which had a higher percentage of errors in the oral test. The preposition by did not occur in the oral test. Apart from these cases, the prepositions from, for, of, to, by and with had the highest percentage of errors (of 30% to 40%) in the gap test.

This high percentage of errors in the gap test probably occurred because the test covered a wide range of prepositions and their uses were controlled while in the composition and oral tests, which tested spontaneous production, the range of production was more limited. Students could avoid certain uses and in other cases, specific prepositions would not be necessary. Consequently, fewer prepositions were used and fewer possibilities of errors occurred. Some prepositions were used in a small quantity and these either were used 100% correctly or 100% wrongly. That is the case of For and By which had no error in the written test and by which was not used in the oral test. For these reasons there is little point in showing a combined Table over the three tests.

As can be seen, except for the preposition by, the rate of wrongness in the other prepositions did not reach 50%. This indicates that the students' knowledge of English prepositions is not as poor as it was thought.

With respect to C2, these can not be compared because the students produced this type of information only in the gap test.

3.2.2.3 - Comparison of performance between both phases in the Three Tests

Table VI will present the overall figures for both phases in the three tests.

TABLE VI

TYPE OF TEST	4 ^a Phase = 10			7 ^a Phase N = 15		
	C	W	C2	C	W	C2
1. Gap Test	51.3%	36.8%	11.7%	55.7%	29.4%	14.6%
2. Composition Test	98.5%	11.5%	-	88.9%	9.8%	-
3. Oral Test	94.1%	5.9%	-	80.4%	19.5%	-

Comparing the overall figures for the nine most frequent prepositions in the three tests by 4^a and 7^a phases, we can see that the students of 4^a phase performed slightly better than 7^a in the oral and composition tests. However, it's worth saying that their spontaneous production contained fewer words and prepositions than 7^a phase.

In addition, the Mann-Whitney U Test was applied to the three tests to evaluate the performance of each student in each test and the conclusion we can take from this analysis is that there was no great difference between the two groups of students in the three tests. The analysed sample does not provide enough evidence to state that the students of 7^a phrase are significant better than 4^a considering that the P should be 5%. Moreover, the omission of some students in the oral and composition tests affected the expected results. Thus, we can not generalize the whole Brazilian students on the basis of these results. It should be said that the number of students of 7^a phase who participated

in the three tests was greater than 4^a phase.

Having presented the overall figures for all three tests, we are going to discuss the results of each test separately to have an idea of the students' difficulties.

3.3 - The Gap Test

The task we gave the students "*the completion*" or "*the gap test*" seems to have been harder than the others. Many of the sentences especially those taken from texts analysed for prepositions caused more problems perhaps to understand and certainly to use the appropriate form in the gap. So, they often omitted the correct form or sometimes they guessed the preposition.

The percentage of errors for the nine most frequent and for the six less frequent prepositions are listed in Table VII (cf. appendix p. 240).

The percentage of correct answers (C), wrong answers (W) and other possible forms (C2) were calculated from the responses for each item.

3.3.1 - Overall figures for the 9 prepositions in the Gap Test

TABLE VII

Percentage of errors for the nine most frequent prepositions

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	N = 25	%C	%W	%C2
1. OF		52%	36.8%	11.2%
2. IN		62.4%	31.2%	6.4%
3. ON		54.4%	37.6%	8%
4. AT		43.2%	20.8%	36%
5. FROM		54.4%	41.6%	4%
6. TO		60%	33.6%	6.4%
7. FOR		35.2%	35.2%	29.6%
8. BY		43.2%	45.6%	11.2%
9. WITH		69.6%	20.8%	9.6%
TOTAL		52.7%	33.6%	13.6%

Examining Table VII, it can be noticed that the average of success in using the nine most frequent prepositions was higher (52.7%) than failure (33.6%). Of the nine most frequent prepositions, the students performed best with the prepositions with, in, to and they made the largest number of errors in using by, for, from and on. Perhaps, the students' level of ability in using English prepositions had contributed to this rate of wrongness.

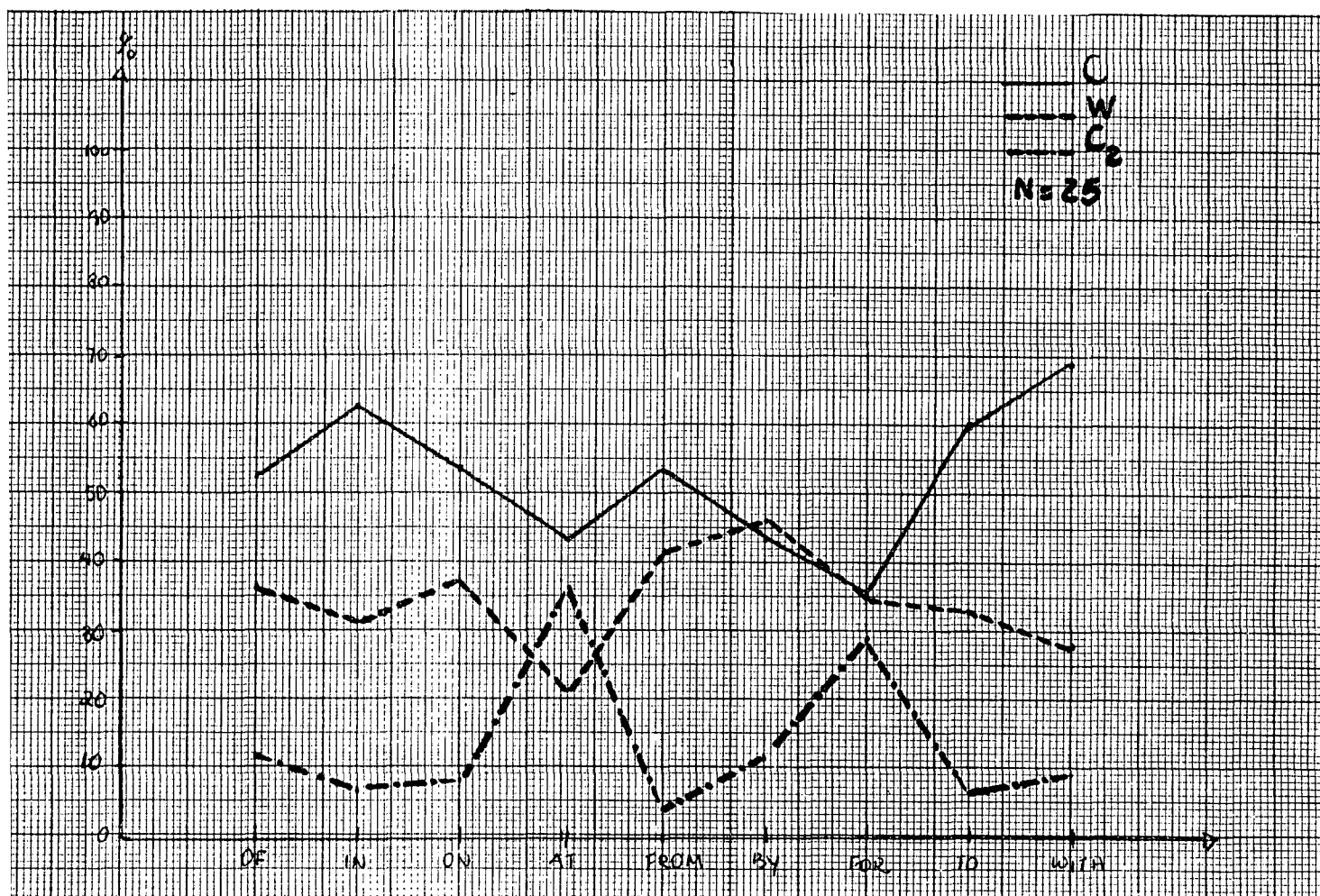
It's interesting to say that they gave a lot of second alternatives for the prepositions for (29.6%), at (36%), by and of (11.2%). It seems that this occurred because the contexts in which these prepositions were to be used allowed the use of in (instead of at) to (instead of for). For example, "*Paul C. Mangelsdorf is currently an emeritus professor at the University*

of North Carolina in Chapel Hill"; "Everything is made by atoms"; "The dollar is about Cr\$ 157 cruzeiros", etc.

As we have seen in Chapter 2, the prepositions which occurred most frequently in the corpus were: of, in, on, at, from, for, to, by and with. This fact leads us to conclude that possibly the more frequent the preposition is, the more probability they have to use these forms correctly. And Table VII confirmed this. (cf. Table VII - p. 135). These same results can be seen in Figure 4 below.

In addition, one thing that can be observed in relation to the Table VII and Figure 4 is that C2 increases concerning some prepositions such as of, at, by and for in proportion as correct responses decrease. However, wrong answers remain fairly constant for both native speakers and Brazilian students. (cf. Figure 2 p. 127).

Figure 4 - Students' profile of responses in the gap test



3.3.2 - Level of Mastery of uses of each preposition

The next Table VIII shows how each preposition was used giving the percentage of total errors per usage in each sentence and contrasting literal from non - literal uses.

TABLE VIII

TYPE OF PREPOSITION		USAGE	%C	%W	%C2
1. OF	s.3 (material)	L	44%	16%	40%
	s.18 (obj. genitive)	L	8%	80%	12%
	s.31 (quantity)	L	84%	16%	-
	s.37 (subj. genitive)	L	92%	8%	-
	s.69 (descrip. genitive)	L	32%	64%	4%
TOTAL		-	52%	36.8%	11.2%
2. IN	s.13 (place)	L	96%	-	4%
	s.24 (occupation)	NL	12%	68%	20%
	s.44 (time)	L	80%	20%	-
	s.55 (manner)	L	48%	52%	-
	s.65 (time)	L	76%	16%	8%
TOTAL		-	62.4%	31.2%	6.4%
3. ON	s.6 (in contact with)	L	92%	8%	-
	s.14 (manner)	NL	48%	52%	-
	s.28 (place)	L	24%	64%	12%
	s.35 (time)	L	84%	16%	-
	s.65 (position)	L	24%	48%	28%
TOTAL		-	54.4%	37.6%	8%

Cont. TABLE VIII

TYPE OF PREPOSITION		USAGE	%C	%W	%C2
4. AT	s.26 (place)	L	60%	4%	36%
	s.26 (place)	L	4%	20%	76%
	s.17 (ratio)	L	-	32%	68%
	s.42 (time)	L	92%	8%	-
	s.70 (address)	NL	60%	40%	-
TOTAL		-	43.2%	20.8%	36%
5. FROM	s.5 (source)	L	92%	-	8%
	s.23 (distance)	L	52%	44%	4%
	s.51 (scale)	NL	28%	72%	-
	s.56 (distinction)	NL	60%	36%	4%
	s.64 (source)	L	40%	56%	4%
TOTAL		-	54.4%	41.6%	4%
6. TO	s.1 (dative)	NL	36%	64%	-
	s.22 (ratio)	NL	32%	68%	-
	s.32 (direction)	NL	96%	4%	-
	s.40 (duration of time)	L	64%	4%	32%
	s.50 (dative)	NL	72%	28%	-
TOTAL		-	60%	33.6%	6.4%
7. FOR	s.7 (benefactive)	L	76%	4%	20%
	s.19 (support)	L	44%	48%	8%
	s.41 (duration of time)	L	12%	64%	24%
	s.53 (extent in space)	L	20%	24%	56%
	s.58 (purpose)	L	24%	36%	40%
TOTAL		-	35.2%	35.2%	29.6%

Cont. TABLE VIII

TYPE OF PREPOSITION		USAGE	%C	%W	%C2
8. BY	s.2 (agentive)	L	88%	12%	-
	s.15 (time)	L	-	68%	32%
	s.47 (instrument)	L	96%	4%	-
	s.62 (proximity)	L	28%	48%	24%
	s.73 (means)	NL	4%	96%	-
TOTAL		-	43.2%	45.6%	11.2%
9. WITH	s.4 (manner)	L	60%	40%	-
	s.43 (instrument)	L	92%	8%	-
	s.57 (ingredient)	L	28%	24%	48%
	s.63 (comitative)	L	96%	4%	-
	s.74 (having)	NL	72%	28%	-
TOTAL		-	69.6%	20.8%	9.6%

Looking at each preposition, it can be noticed that there are differences in the total number of correct and wrong answers among several meanings tested for each preposition.

1. OF

Of the five different uses for the preposition "of", those meaning Quantity (84%) and Subjective Genitive (92%) had a significant degree of correctness. These appear to have been more easily acquired.

The significant figures of errors occurred with the sentences meaning Objective Genitive (80%) and descriptive genitive (64%). One plausible explanation for this was the context. Some of the sentences in which this preposition should

be used were taken from original literary or technical texts whose vocabulary was not very familiar to the students. So, the lack of familiarity with the expression or even lack of understanding of the sentence may have led them to err the sentences *"He had made an agonising reappraisal of his prospects and his role"* (s.18); *"He looked, if not like a duke, at least, like an actor of the old school"* (s.69).

In relation to C2, the significant degree of possible alternatives was with sentence 3 meaning "material". Most of them used from instead of of (40%). Here native speakers didn't give any possible alternative for this sentence.

2. IN

Examining the preposition in we can say that those sentences containing in meaning "place" (96%) and "time" (80% and 76%) seemed to have been easier for them. The students had probably acquired these meanings first especially "place" which nobody mistook.

The most difficult uses of in were those ones denoting "occupation" (68%) and "manner" (52%). Their errors are explainable on the basis of the context. Both sentences besides having non-literal uses of in contain unusual words "business, tobacconist, newsagent". Thus, the students made various substitutions in the sentences *"The system is in deep crisis"* (s.55) such as under, the, into, on, as and in in the sentence *"Albert Foreman was in business as a tobacconist and newsagent"* (s.24), they used at, to, for, as, now, a instead of in.

The percentage of C2 was not very significant. Only the sentence meaning "Occupation" had 20% for other possible alternatives. They used on instead of in. One native speaker

also gave this same answer.

3. ON

Of the five different uses for the preposition on, those meaning "in contact with" and "time" seem to have been more easily acquired perhaps because these meanings are taught early in study of the language. The larger percentage of errors with the preposition "on" was in contexts meaning Place (64%), manner (52%) and position (48%). In sentence 28, "*His men discovered on the island of Cuba great fields of the strange new plant which was later found to be cultivated throughout the Western Hemisphere*". They used at, to and because instead of on. In sentence 14, "*The priest went down on his knees*", they substituted on, by, of, to, by and with. The sentence meaning "position" - "*Those people are standing on a line*", the preposition on was substituted by at and for but it is not easy to say why they did so.

With respect to C2, the students gave possible alternatives for the sentences meaning Place (12%) and Position (28%). Both native speaker and students used in a line instead of on a line in that sentence meaning position.

4. AT

The preposition at had a significant degree of correctness meaning Time (92%), place (60%) which was tested twice and address (60%). These results were already expected because at is one of the most frequent prepositions in textbooks mainly denoting place and time.

The most common errors of at occurred with the sentences meaning ratio and place (40%). It's interesting to state that nobody answered correctly the sentence 17 which denotes ratio. It seems that the infrequency of appearance of this function in normal language use is responsible for the errors the students made. As to the sentence 70, "*Mr. Smith lives at 248 Hercilio Luz Avenue*", the students used on instead of at. It appears they have confused on and at because on is used before names of streets and avenues while at is used before full address, i.e., before numbers of houses. The students also used in in this context.

This same preposition had striking figures of C2 in those sentences meaning ratio (68%) and one of the uses meaning place (76%). They used about, over as possible alternatives for at in the sentence meaning ratio and they used in and of instead of at meaning place.

Here we can state that two uses of at (ratio, place) can bring down the overall percentage of a preposition. This indicates that prepositional uses are far more important than the simple single figure of all uses of a given preposition.

5. FROM

The preposition from had a large percentage of correct responses in those sentences meaning SOURCE (92%) and Distinction (60%). These seem to have been first acquired mainly with the meaning of SOURCE which is very frequent in normal language use.

The largest percentage of erroneous responses can be noticed in the sentence meaning SCALE (72%). This possibly

happened because the sentence "*The fruitcases vary from gray to brown*" contains a non-literal use of from. Most of the students used of instead of from.

With respect to significant figures for possible alternatives in using from, only sentence 64 of the test whose meaning was SOURCE had 20%. The students used in instead of from in "*The old vicar had brought a table many years before from Italy*".

6. TO

The preposition "To" was tested meaning direction, dativ (twice), ratio and time. Of these meanings, those denoting direction and dativ and duration of action seem to have been adequately acquired by the students since they had 96%, 72% and 64% of correct responses respectively. Moreover, in one of the sentences meaning dativ, the students made only 36% of correct answers. This happened because sentence 1 contains a non-literal case of to, that is, the verb "to happen" can only be followed by to. However, sentence 50 which carries the same meaning and is a non-literal case of to had a larger percentage of correctness perhaps because the association of the verb "to say" with to occurs very often in English.

From an inspection of the figures of errors with respect to the preposition TO, one would be led to suspect that Brazilian students had far more difficulty in using to denoting "RATIO" (68%) and as I have said before, one of the sentence meaning dativ (64%). The students used by, against, at, from or sometimes omitted the preposition in sentence 22 and used with, by or omitted the preposition in sentence 1.

In relation to C2, the students gave other possible alternatives for the sentence referring to TIME. Most (12%) used until instead of to in "*They have classes from 8:00 to 11:00*". Comparing their answers to native speakers', of the nine who answered the test, three of them (32%) also used until. It's surprising that the students didn't give any other possible form in those sentences meaning ratio, direction and dative because they seem already to have fully acquired these uses.

7. FOR

The preposition for seems to have been most easily acquired in the sentence meaning BENEFACTIVE (76%) which is one of the most frequent uses in the language.

The larger percentage of errors occurred in the sentences meaning DURATION OF TIME (64%) and SUPPORT (48%). IT seems that the students are not familiar yet with these uses and for this reason they gave a variety of incorrect forms for "*The verger of ST. Peter's, like the Popes of Rome, was there for life*" and "*Are you for or against the plan?*".

The sentence "*We walked for three miles*" meaning "EXTENT IN SPACE" had 56% of other possible responses. The reason for this was the context itself which allows the use of more than one type of preposition. Most of them used about instead of for. Only one native speaker did the same thing.

8. BY

Of the five different meanings of the preposition, by,

those which seem to have been easily acquired were "by" denoting instrument (96% of correct answers) and agentive (88%). Maybe this happened because these meanings occur most frequently in normal language use.

The most common errors in using by were those meaning Proximity (48%), Means (96%) and time (68%). The students gave a variety of responses such as: on, at, in, with and for for the context whose meaning was MEANS "*Emerson was able to grow teosinte at the Cornell latitude by artificially shortening the summer day*". It seems that they are not familiarized with the words teosinte, shortening (as a verb), Cornell latitude.

It's interesting to say that there was a low percentage of alternative responses for all tested meanings of by. Just sentence 15 denoting Time had 36% of possible responses. They used before in the sentence "*Could you bring me this book by next Tuesday at the latest?*".

9. WITH

The preposition WITH can not be considered as a difficult one. The figures show that among the several tested uses, those sentences meaning Comitative (96%), INSTRUMENT (92%), HAVING (72%) and MANNER (60%) had a high degree of correctness. The reason for this may be the similarity of this preposition in meaning and categories in both languages. Thus, they had a large percentage of correct responses in almost every use. Only the meaning of INGREDIENT had 28% of correct answers because the sentence which required the use of with allows also to use by meaning AGENTIVE. So, the confusion between the two forms led the students to use more by than with in this

sentence.

The students made few errors using this preposition but the major percentage of errors was the sentence 4 meaning MANNER (40%). Here, the students gave a variety of wrong responses such as: in, by, to, for or omitted the preposition in the sentence.

Of these meanings, the one denoting Ingredient had 48% of possible alternatives. They used by in "*The hills were covered with snow*". Perhaps they did so, because they associated the use of by in passive sentences.

With respect to literal and non - literal uses of the nine prepositions, it's worth saying that the major percentage of errors were in those sentences which contained a non - literal use of preposition. This happened because these uses are not frequent in the language, so the students do not know what appropriate prepositions should be used.

3.3.3 - Comparison of performance between 4^a and 7^a phases in the gap test.

TABLE IX

Percentage of overall total of errors of the nine most frequent prepositions in the gap test.

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	N = 10 4 ^a phase			N = 15 7 ^a phase		
	%C	%W	%C2	%C	%W	%C2
1. OF	40%	52%	8%	60%	26.6%	12%
2. IN	56%	34%	10%	66.6%	29.3%	4%
3. ON	48%	46%	6%	58.6%	32%	9.3%
4. AT	46%	18%	36%	41.3%	22.6%	35%
5. FROM	46%	52%	2%	60%	32%	8%
6. TO	62%	32%	6%	65.3%	34.6%	-
7. FOR	46%	32%	22%	28%	37.3%	34.6%
8. BY	44%	44%	12%	42.6%	46.6%	10.6%
9. WITH	74%	22%	4%	66.6%	20%	13.3%
TOTAL	51.3%	36.8%	11.7%	54.3%	31.2%	14.1%

Considering the overall figures for the fifteen different types of prepositions used in the test (see also appendix), it can be noticed that the students of 7^a phase performed better than 4^a phase for 5 prepositions.

Comparing their performance in using English prepositions we can draw some conclusions:

- Both phases felt more difficulty with the six less frequent prepositions (cf. appendix p. 240).

- Of the nine most frequent prepositions, the students of 4^a phase performed better than 7^a phase with the prepositions with, at, for and by while 7^a phase were better with the other five prepositions.

With respect to wrong answers, the students of 4^a phase made a higher percentage of errors in using the prepositions of, in, on, from and with while 7^a phase made a large percentage of errors in using at, to, for and by.

The most difficult preposition for 4^a phase was of whereas for 7^a phase it was the preposition for.

The most significant figures for C2, i.e., other possible alternatives for the students of 4^a phase were at (36%), for (22%) and by (12%) while for the students of 7^a phase they were at (35%), for (34.6%), of (12%) and with (13.3%). Thus, both phases gave a large percentage of other possible alternatives with the prepositions at and for.

The students of 7^a phase gave no other possible alternatives for the preposition FOR.

In general, the students of 7^a phase had a slight improvement in relation to C1 and C2 and fewer wrong responses than the students of 4^a phase, but interestingly the difference is not very significant.

The reasons for these errors will be discussed in the next chapter which will be concentrated on error analysis of Brazilian students of English prepositions.

3.3.4 - Conclusions

To conclude this section we can say that:

- The Tables showed that of the nine most frequent prepositions, "of" is the most difficult to use, especially referring to Objective Genitive (80% of wrongness). The next hardest is by meaning means (97%), from meaning scale (72%) and on denoting Place (64%). With was considered as the easiest of

the nine. The figures showed the students made few errors.

- The less frequent the context of use, the harder it is for the students. This can be noticed in the sentences 4 which tested with meaning manner, 9 (about denoting nearness), 26 (at denoting place), 28 (on denoting place), 49 (among denoting position), 54 (after denoting later than), 71 (after meaning following), 72 (over denoting contact), 73 (by meaning means) in which they had a high percentage of errors because they were not familiarized with the context. The non-literal cases also caused problems for them and led them to make errors (sentences 1, 10, 51 and 74 of the gap test) since they don't know the restrictions of English.

- Examining just the nine most frequent prepositions, the major successes of 4^a phase were the prepositions at, to and for since they made fewer errors than 7^a phase whereas the students of 7^a phase succeeded in using of, in, on, from, by, and with.

- It seems that of the five uses of each preposition, some of them were fully acquired earlier than others, considering that they caused fewer errors. Here we established above 70% of correctness of the native speaker model as a criterion to assume that a certain use or meaning was learned now at this stage while others do not. The figures show that there was "*sufficient acquisition*" According to the results presented in Table VIII (p.137-39) these were the following:

- In meaning Time and Place (80% and 96%)
- On meaning In contact with and Time (92% and 84%)
- At denoting Time and Place (92%)
- Of denoting Possession and Quantity (92% and 84%)
- From denoting Source (92%)

- To denoting direction, Dative (96% and 72%)
- For denoting Benefactive (76%)
- By denoting agentive and instrument (88% 96%)
- With denoting Instrument, comitative and Having (92%, 96% and 72%)
- With respect to specific problems, it is felt that the students don't dominate the following uses yet:
 - Of denoting Objective Genitive (8% of correctness)
 - In denoting Occupation (12%)
 - On denoting Place and position (24%)
 - At denoting Ratio (0%)
 - From denoting Scale (28%)
 - To denoting Ratio (32%)
 - By denoting means, time proximity (4%, 0% and 28%)
 - For meaning duration of time, extent purpose (12%, 20% and 24%)
 - With meaning ingredient (28%)

Most of these uses occurred in unfamiliar contexts or were non-literal uses of these prepositions.

- The main specific differences we can identify between 4^a and 7^a phases are:

- The students of 4^a phase still need some remedial teaching with six of the nine most frequent preposition: of, in, on, from, to and by while 7^a phase still need special teaching in relation to the prepositions at, for and with.

However, the differences between both phases were not very great in general although they were not uniform.

- If we examine only the specific problems, we will observe that 7^a phase had most problems in dealing with the following meanings:

- * Of denoting objective genitive
- * In denoting occupation
- * To denoting ratio
- * For meaning duration of Time
- * By meaning means
- * With meaning manner

However, the students of 4^a phase showed more difficulty than 7^a in using:

- Of meaning descriptive genitive
- On meaning place
- At meaning address
- From meaning scale
- To meaning dative

Perhaps they still are not familiarized with these rules.

Both groups of students showed intermediate success with the following prepositional uses:

- At indicating place
- From denoting distance
- With denoting manner
- Of indicating material
- In/On indicating manner
- For meaning support

It's worth mentioning that our criterion for successful learning is when the students attains 70% of native speakers C1 responses. Calculating Brazilian students' average as a percentage of the native speakers average, we got 60% as a percentage of the model, indicating thus that some of the forms can be considered reasonably learnt and some still to learn in relation to the native speaker model. Based on this average, the data show that the prepositions in, to and with are generally

learned (Table VIII); that of, on and from are not far off in general (Table VIII); and that by, for and at look specially problematic to the students (Table VIII).

But if we apply this criterion of 70% the standard model to each use of each preposition, the data show that use is more complex than it first appears and that two uses of each preposition, at least, are easily learnt as a proportion of the standard.

3.4 - The Composition Test

The various topics we gave the students had the aim of eliciting from them as much information as they could give but the students of 7^a phase produced a larger number of errors (17.2%) than 4^a phase.

In addition, only 21 students participated in the composition tests 15 students belonged to 7^a phase and 6 to 4^a phase. For this reason we got more data from one phase than another.

The students produced 28 different prepositions in their compositions including four complex ones but they only mistook eleven of them. Within these eleven are the nine types of prepositions we are testing.

From the given topics, most of the students wrote about "an unforgettable day or trip in their life" and some of them "compared Florianopolis with another city they had been to".

The percentage of errors for the nine most frequent are presented in Table X below, and for the other less frequent prepositions are shown in the appendix. The purpose of this Table is to give a general idea of the performance of the 21

students with respect to the nine most frequent prepositions.

TABLE X

Percentage of Correct and Wrong Responses for the nine most frequent prepositions in the composition test.

TYPE OF PREPOSITION N = 21	%C	%W	TOTAL OF USE
1. OF	94%	5.6%	50
2. IN	89.3%	10.6%	88
3. ON	76.7%	18.2%	18
4. AT	78.4%	21.5%	26
5. FROM	90%	10%	10
6. FOR	100%	-	23
7. TO	91.9%	8.1%	58
8. BY	100%	-	10
9. WITH	98.1%	1.9%	26
TOTAL	90.9%	9.1%	309

A brief look at this Table shows us that the rate of correctness for the nine most frequent prepositions was higher (90.0%) than that of errors (9.1%) as well as being much higher than for the gap test. Of the nine most frequent prepositions, the 21 students who participated in the test performed better on the following prepositions: of, from, for, by, with, to and in. The others, on and at had a larger percentage of errors.

For the other less frequent prepositions (19) (cf. Table X - appendix p. 242) in contrast to the gap test, they did not seem to constitute a higher degree of difficulty than the nine most frequent ones. As the figures show they had 100% of correct

uses in almost all prepositions with the exception of the prepositions through, around, among and because of.

One reason for this was the low total use of the prepositions. Some of them were used more than others contributing to errors, but the prepositions which occurred less frequently had less possibility to be used erroneously. This is the case of the less frequent prepositions. In addition, it seems that the less frequent the preposition in the corpus, the less they tend to use them in free writing.

Below let's see the percentage of errors for the nine most frequent prepositions by both phases separately and compare their performance.

3.4.1 - Comparison of performance between 4^a and 7^a phase for the 9 most frequent prepositions

TABLE XI

Percentage of Correct and Wrong Responses by both phases for the nine most frequent prepositions in the composition test.

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	4 ^a Phase ... N = 6			7 ^a Phase ... N = 15		
	%C	%W	TOTAL	%C	%W	TOTAL OF USE
1. OF	100%	-	9	90.2%	9.8%	41
2. IN	86.9%	13.1%	23	87.6%	12.3%	65
3. ON	57.1%	42.9%	7	63.6%	36.3%	11
4. AT	81.8%	18.9%	11	80%	20%	15
5. FROM	85.7%	14.3%	7	100%	-	3
6. FOR	100%	-	9	100%	-	14
7. TO	85%	15%	20	84.2%	15.8%	38
8. BY	100%	-	4	100%	-	6
9. WITH	100%	-	5	95.2%	4.7%	21
TOTAL	88.5%	11.5%	95	88.9%	9.8%	214

Examining Table XI, we can perceive that the students of 7^a phase performed better than 4^a in using the nine most frequent prepositions considering that they produced more prepositions than 4^a. This leads us to conclude that the fewer prepositions they produce, the less possibility they have to make mistakes. However, if we calculate the average number of prepositions per student, we would get 15.8% for a 4^a phase student and 14.2% of a 7^a phase student revealing that the number of prepositions per student is almost identical.

In comparing their performance in using English prepositions we can say that:

- Both phases showed more difficulty with the six less frequent prepositions.

- Of the nine most frequent prepositions, the most difficult ones for both phases were: on, at and to since they made a considerably larger percentage of errors.

- The students of 4^a phase performed marginally better with of, for, by, in and with while 7^a phase performed slightly better with OF, FROM, FOR, BY and IN.

- Considering 90% of correctness as a criterion for a well - learned preposition, the students of 4^a phase seem to have fully acquired the forms: of, for, by, with since they had 100% of correctness while the students of 7^a phase seem to have fully acquired the prepositions from, for, by, with and of because they had above 90% of correct responses (Table XI).

Looking at the total performance for each preposition, we can notice that the prepositions in, to and of were those which occurred more frequently in their compositions.

The next Table will show the percentage of correct and wrong answers for the nine most frequent prepositions in

each meaning used in the compositions for both phases.

3.4.2 - Level of Mastery of Uses for the 9 prepositions in the CT

MEANING TYPE OF PREPOSITION	%C	%W	TOTAL OF USE
1. OF . descriptive meaning	88%	11.1%	36
. quantity	100%	-	14
Total	94%	5.6%	50
2. IN . place	90.7%	9.2%	65
. time	66.6%	33.3%	15
. manner	100%	-	5
. disjunct	100%	-	3
Total	89.3%	10.6%	88
3. ON . place	50%	50%	8
. time	57.1%	42.8%	7
. manner / condition	100%	-	1
. disjunct	100%	-	2
Total	76.7%	18.2%	18
4. AT . place	81.8%	18.1%	22
. time	75%	25%	4
Total	78.4%	21.5%	26
5. FROM . source	90%	10%	10
Total	90%	10%	10
6. FOR . purpose	100%	-	2
. time	100%	-	5
. benefactive	100%	-	7
. disjunct	100%	-	9
Total	100%	-	23

Cont.

MEANING		%C	%W	TOTAL OF USE
TYPE OF PREPOSITION				
7. TO	. direction	83.9%	16.1%	56
	. disjunct	100%	-	2
TOTAL		91.9%	8.05%	58
8. BY	. means	100%	-	7
	. agentive	100%	-	3
TOTAL		100%	-	10
9. WITH	. comitative	94.4%	5.5%	18
	. manner	100%	-	4
	. laving	100%	-	4
TOTAL		98.1%	1.9%	26

1. OF

The preposition "OF" was more frequently used indicating descriptive genitive (88% of correct responses) followed by quantity (100%). This preposition was not regarded as difficult since they made only 5.6% of errors. It's interesting to say that the errors that occurred were due to the addition of an unnecessary preposition in the context. E.g. "*I like very much of horses*"; "*We stayed at a nice hotel very near of Copaoabana*"; "*While he was inside of the hotel we quickly got off*", etc. There was no case of substitution of the preposition of for another.

2. IN

The preposition "IN" occurred in a variety of uses. Of

these, place, manner and as disjunct were the ones which had a significant degree of correctness (90.7% and 100%). It seems that these meanings were already acquired since they occur with greater frequency. In spite of dealing with literal cases of prepositions, it's worth mentioning that they made 100% of correct non-literal uses of in. The following erroneous sentences show the students should use in but they substitute this preposition for another: * *I went on January and came back on July*"; * *My brother Darcy was studying on Switzerland*", etc.

3. ON

The preposition on was used denoting place, time and condition. Of these uses, time and place occurred with greater frequency and had 57.1% and 50% of correct responses. The preposition on meaning place had 50% of incorrect responses. Most of their errors were of substitution of the correct form for a wrong one. E. g. " * *We went at a nice restaurant at Atlantic Avenue*"; " * *We were happy because we were in holidays*"; "*In our way back home he died*", etc.

4. AT

With respect to the preposition at, this was only used denoting Time and Place. Of these uses, that one referring to Place occurred very often and had a significant degree of correctness (81.8%). But comparing the percentage of errors of these two uses, as they used more place, they also had a significant figure of errors in using at denoting time (25%).

E.g. * *When I was visiting my friend we went to her father's farmer in the beginning of the day*". Other examples of erroneous sentences using at indicating place were: * *We were so late for our test in Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina*"; * *When we arrived in the bus station my aunt was to pick us up*", etc.

5. FROM

The preposition From was only used indicating Source, Origin and they had a high degree of correctness (90%). This indicates that of the several uses of from that one meaning Source seems to have been first acquired.

6. FOR

The preposition For occurred in a variety of uses Purpose, Time and Benefactive and they made 100% of correct uses. Nevertheless, for also occurred in non - literal uses which also had a significant rate of correctness (100%). Thus this preposition was considered easy for them.

7. TO

The preposition To occurred very often denoting Direction and had 83.9% of correct uses. This is not surprising because this meaning is one of the most frequent in the language they also used to as disjunct, i.e. in non - literal uses and they made 100% of correct uses.

8. BY

With respect to the preposition By, this occurred very often meaning means, instrument as well as agentive (100% of correct responses) which was used only three times.

9. WITH

The preposition With was used meaning Comitative-Manner and Having. Of these uses, that one denoting Comitative occurred very often and had 94.4% of correct responses, but this preposition was used 100% correctly meaning manner and having.

As we have said before, the other less frequent prepositions didn't cause problems for the students because they were used in a small number and correctly except for through (33.3%) and around (33.3%).

Summing up this section, the prepositions of, from, for, to, by and with had a percentage of correct uses above 90% and the prepositions on had the highest percentage of errors 18.9%. Thus, the results of this test show a high percentage of correctness as well as a wide variety of uses.

3.5 - The Oral Test

This section will attempt to report the students' errors of prepositions in spontaneous oral reproduction.

The given task - picture description - required them to produce a lot of language. They tried to describe in detail the picture and in consequence although they did not use a large

number of prepositions (in relation to the number of words of their reports) they used a variety of them. Of the twenty-five students who participated in the research only fourteen were present in the laboratory (4 students of 4^a phase and 10 of 7^a phase) when they were required to take the test.

In Table XIII are the type and number of errors for the nine most frequent prepositions.

3.5.1 - Overall Figures for 9 nine prepositions

TABLE XIII

Percentage of errors for the nine most frequent preposition in the Oral test.

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	N = 14	%C	%W	TOTAL OF USE
1. OF		91.6%	8.3%	47
2. IN		66.3%	33.6%	46
3. ON		47.1%	52.8%	58
4. AT		58.3%	41.6%	7
5. FROM		100%	-	4
6. FOR		91.6%	8.3%	12
7. TO		100%	-	5
8. BY		-	-	-
9. WITH		97.5%	2.5%	20
TOTAL		81.5%	18.4%	199

As can be seen in Table XIII (cf. appendix p. 243), students of both phases used 23 different types of prepositions including four complex prepositions which will not be considered in this study. Of the nine most frequent prepositions, on and

at had the highest percentage of errors. The preposition by was not used. The prepositions from (100%) and to (100%), with (97.5%) and of and for (91.6%) were the easiest of the nine since they had a high percentage of correct uses. Of the nine most frequent prepositions of, in, on and with were most often used.

Examining the other less frequent prepositions they used 14 other prepositions but in a small number, so their probability of making errors was low. Of these less frequent prepositions near was most frequently used. However, it had 20% of errors. Most of the errors were due to the addition of the preposition OF following near.

The other prepositions were used from one to five times but all correct.

The next Table will show the percentage of errors the students made for each preposition by each phase separately in order to compare their performance.

3.5.2 - Comparison of performance between 4^a and 7^a phases in the oral test.

TABLE XIV

Percentage for the nine most frequent prepositions by each phase in the oral test.

TABLE XIV

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	4 ^a Phase N = 4			7 ^a Phase N = 10		
	%C	%W	TOTAL	%C	%W	TOTAL OF USE
1. OF	100%	-	9	86.8%	13.1%	38
2. IN	83.3%	16.6%	12	82.3%	17.7%	34
3. ON	75%	25%	2	60%	40%	50
4. AT	100%	-	2	40%	60%	5
5. FROM	-	-	-	100%	-	4
6. FOR	100%	-	2	80%	20%	10
7. TO	100%	-	1	100%	-	4
8. BY	-	-	-	-	-	-
9. WITH	100%	-	3	94.1%	5.8%	17
TOTAL	94.1%	5.9%	37	80.4%	19.5%	162

We can see that the students of 7^a phase performed slightly better than 4^a phase, considering that they used a far greater number and variety of prepositions in their oral reports. Maybe this occurred because they talked a lot or they used more words than the students of 4^a phase who may have a more limited vocabulary. The number of students of 7^a was greater than 4^a phase. The average of prepositions per students was 9.2% for a 4^a phase student and 16.2% for a 7^a.

Examining the nine most frequent prepositions, it can be noticed that in relation to some prepositions the students of 4^a phase made fewer errors than 7^a phase for all prepositions they used; whereas the students of 7^a phase performed better with the prepositions FROM, TO and WITH. From and By were not used by the students of 4^a phase. Some prepositions seem to have

been easier for both groups of students to use such as To. They made no errors in using it. The preposition By seems not to have been elicited by the context since they did not use it at all.

Looking at the less frequent prepositions once more the students of 7^a phase performed better than 4^a phase. Some prepositions such as over, above, towards, beside, infront of, in the direction of were only used by the students of 7^a phase although in a small number.

Some prepositions like behind, beside, besides and after seem to have been easily acquired because both phases made 100% of correct uses. The preposition over was used 100% correctly only by the students of 4^a phase while about, above, towards by 7^a phase.

Table XV describes the percentage of uses of each preposition in a particular meaning by each group of students.

3.5.3 - Level of Mastery of uses of each preposition in Oral test

TABLE XV

Percentage of errors for the nine most frequent prepositions and its meanings in the oral test.

TYPE	MEANING	%C	%W	TOTAL OF USE
1. OF	. descriptive meaning	83.3%	16.6%	30
	. quantity	100%	-	17
Total		91.6%	8.3%	47

Cont. TABLE XV

TYPE	MEANING	%C	%W	TOTAL OF USE
2. IN	. place	89.1%	10.8%	37
	. time	60%	40%	5
	. manner	50%	50%	4
Total		63.3%	33.6%	46
3. ON	. place	61.5%	38.4%	52
	. in contact with	80%	20%	5
	. time	-	100%	1
Total		47.1%	52.8%	58
4. AT	. place	50%	50%	4
	. time	66.6%	33.3%	3
Total		58.3%	41.6%	7
5. FROM	. source	100%	-	4
	Total	100%	-	4
6. FOR	. purpose	83.3%	16.6%	12
	. disjunct	100%	-	2
Total		91.6%	8.3%	14
7. TO	. direction	100%	-	5
	Total	100%	-	5
8. BY	. means	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-
9. WITH	. comitative	100%	-	2
	. instrument	87.5%	12.5%	8
	. manner	100%	-	5
	. ingredient	100%	-	3
	. having	100%	-	2
Total		97.5%	2.5%	20

1. OF

The preposition "of" was produced denoting descriptive genitive and quantity. Both meanings had a high percentage of correct uses.

2. IN

Of the several uses of "In", those meaning Place and Time occurred very often but they had a large percentage of errors in using in denoting Time and Manner (40% and 50%) Most of their errors were of substitution of one preposition for another. E.g. "*She's into the water*"; "*There's some people who are swimming on the water*"..., etc.

3. ON

The preposition "on" was used denoting Place, In contact with and time. Of these uses, the one referring to in contact with was the easiest since they had 80% of correct responses and the one meaning time was the hardest. They had 100% of errors. However, on meaning Place occurred most often of all uses and had 38.4% of errors.

4. AT

The preposition "AT" was only used denoting Place and Time. It seems that these uses were first acquired in the language since they occur very often. The students made 50% of errors in using at meaning Place. The concept of Time was easiest.

They had 66.6% of correct uses.

5. FROM

In relation to the preposition From, this was only used indicating source, origin and had 100% of correct uses. Perhaps because the students seem to have fully acquired it considering this use is very frequent in the language.

6. FOR

The preposition For had a significant degree of correctness for both uses: Purpose and for functioning as Disjunct (83.3% and 100%). But of these uses, the one referring to Purpose occurred very often.

7. TO

The preposition To was only used denoting Direction and had 100% of correct uses. This is already expected because this meaning is one of the most frequent in the language.

8. BY

However, the preposition By was not used by both groups of students.

9. WITH

From an inspection of the several uses of With, this

preposition seems to have been the easiest of all because it was used correctly (100%) denoting COMITATIVE, MANNER, HAVING, except the meaning of INSTRUMENT which had 87.5%. This tendency appeared in all three test. As we have already said before, the reason for the high rate of correctness was the similarity between Portuguese and English forms com translates with in English.

Thus, the most difficult preposition was on and the easiest were of, for, to, from and with which had almost or 100% of correct uses.

In view of these remarks, we can draw some conclusions:

1) The small number of prepositions which appeared in the students' oral report may have been because they do not master all the items yet as well as to the small number of students who participated in the test.

2) That the prepositions in, on, of, for and with were the most frequently used of all. This indicates that these prepositions were probably acquired before others or that the picture used for description allowed to use them several times.

3) The most difficult prepositions to be used were in, on, at (of the nine most frequent ones) and near (of the less frequent) since they made a significant number of errors with these prepositions.

4) The easiest prepositions to be used were: from, to and with (100% of correct uses), of (91.6%), for (91.6%) of the nine most frequent ones and behind, about, beside, besides, above, over, after, to wards and the complex prepositions which had 100% of correctness in relation to the total of uses.

In general the students of 7^a phase performed better quantitatively rather than qualitatively than 4^a phase since

they used a larger number of prepositions and a greater variety of them in their oral reports. But in relation to some prepositions, the students of 4^a phase did better, with prepositions such as: in, at and to while with the other prepositions the students of 7^a performed better than 4^a. Some prepositions were not used by the students of 4^a phase like as: from, about, to wards, above and complex prepositions and over and in the direction of were not used by 7^a phase. Probably these prepositions were not fully acquired by both groups of students.

3.6 - General Conclusions

The conclusions to be drawn from these statistical data are:

1) Although the students of 7^a phase performed better than 4^a phase in using the prepositions in the gap test and 4^a phase performed more accurately in the oral and composition tests, in general, there was no great difference in performance between the two groups of informants. The number of students who participated in these three tests varied and this may have influenced the results. Thus the sample does not provide evidence to say that one group was significantly better than the other.

2) In comparing the responses given by the students of 4^a and 7^a phases in using the nine most frequent prepositions in the gap test it can be noticed through the curves that the percentages of correct, wrong and C2 responses are very similar. The average of correctness of 7^a phase varied from 28% to 66.6% whereas 4^a phase varied from 40% to 74% as can be seen in Figure 5. The percentage of wrong answers of 7^a phase varied

from 20% to 46.6% while 4^a phase varied from 18% to 52%. However, the average of C2 responses by 7^a phase varied from 4% to 35% and 4^a phase varied from 2% to 36%, thus, there was no great difference between the two groups of informants. The graph below shows the curves are almost similar. For some prepositions where the students answered correctly the line increases, for others where they answered wrongly, it decreases.

Figure 5

3) Of the nine most frequent prepositions, the hardest ones for both groups in all three tests are: on, at, in, from and by considering the highest percentage of errors presented in Table VIII whereas the easiest were of, for and with maybe because of the similarity of these forms with Portuguese ones.

4) In general, the students of 4^a phase succeeded in using in, to, at, with and for while 7^a phase in using of, from, by, and on.

5) The less frequent prepositions which were tested had a higher percentage of errors in the gap test. However, in the other tests the students avoided using them supporting the hypothesis that they had not perhaps actually mastered them.

6) In relation to "the gap test", the less frequent the context of use is, the harder it was for the students to understand and use the appropriate form. Therefore some sentences in the test had a high percentage of errors (4, 9, 26, 28, 49, 54, 71, 72 and 73). The non-literal uses also caused problems for them leading them to make errors (s. 1, 10, 51, 74) since they don't know the restrictions of use of certain prepositions in English.

7) With respect to the less frequent prepositions, the figures in the gap test show that they had problems with the prepositions "about" meaning near a place and concerning; "among" meaning position and time and "over" meaning passage and authority. However, the fact that they showed trouble in dealing with these prepositions does not mean that they started to master them yet.

8) In relation to several meanings of the prepositions used in the three tests, they suggested by their high frequency of uses and correctness (80%) that some meanings seem to have been acquired better or more reliably at this stage than others, for example:

- In, at meaning Place and Time
- On meaning Time and In contact with
- Of denoting Quantity and Subjective genitive
- With denoting Instrument and Comitative
- For meaning Benefactive
- To denoting Direction
- From meaning Source/origin

- By meaning Agentive and Instrument

This is probably due to the frequency or regularity of use; literalness in normal language; or teaching emphasis of the preposition in a particular meaning in classrooms.

Although the results presented here are of limited reliability or validity at this stage, the figures are intuitively convincing because they show: 1) the type of regularity in distribution or occurrence of the tested prepositions; 2) the regularity of distribution of errors across tests and different groups of students and 3) predictable types of difference of performance between 4^a and 7^a phases. Thus, these results should be taken into account when we are constructing the syllabus and when we are selecting what type of preposition and what type of uses should be first taught for foreign students.

In the following chapters, we attempt to identify the several sources of errors made by Brazilian students in all three tests as well to suggest pedagogical strategies to overcome the problems in classroom.

CHAPTER FOUR

ERROR ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ERRORS OF ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS

4.0 - Introduction

In Chapter III we identified which prepositions and which meanings caused problems for Brazilian students to learn. Here we are going to discuss the possible sources of errors through Error and Contrastive Analyses.

In recent years, there has been a considerable interest in the analysis of errors made while learning a second language with the aim of revealing the systematicity of errors and understanding the process of second language learning.

Besides this, errors have been seen as indicators of the students stages of learning. (Richards. 1974 p. 19). Through them teachers can help the students by determining the sequence and emphasis of instruction in the classroom based on what the students know and what difficulties they face in certain stages of their learning.

The reason for using Contrastive and Error Analysis theories in this study is that Contrastive Analysis only predicts some of the learning problems, i.e., it assumes that the learner uses element which belong to his native language in the foreign language. But we know that the learner may use elements which do not belong to either language and these can not be predicted by Contrastive Analysis. Thus Error Analysis will be used as a complementary stage of C. A. since it aims at systematically describing and explaining the errors which C. A. can not predict.

Therefore, this chapter attempts not only to explain

Brazilian students, criterion number 1 was applied, especially for the composition and oral tests in which the students created their own linguistic contexts. In those cases in which the sentences weren't well - formed according to the grammar of the target language, then they were considered erroneous. For the gap test, native speakers also answered the test to see if the students' responses could be considered as acceptable or not.

3. As the students were not available for consultation, then this researcher tried to make a plausible interpretation of the sentence in the context.

4. Before making the plausible reconstruction of the sentence in the target language, we first translated the sentence literally into the first language. Thus, applying these criteria to identify the several types of errors, we compared the use of items and structures of the two languages: Portuguese and English. If these structures were partly equivalent in meaning or function, i.e., if we identify a literal equivalent of L 1 item for L 2 and if we assume that the two languages in question use the two items with an equivalent function, then we can say that there is no problem. Interference is then identified where equivalence is not basic or non - literal.

To identify cross - association errors, we can look for similar environments for the confused elements and then look for possible conceptual confusion between such elements in the TL. We can say that they may have been cross associated.

Overgeneralization errors were identified by looking at the erroneous sentence and observing if there is a high frequency of use or occurrence of the items in similar contexts that may have led the students to overgeneralize a rule or an item into inappropriate contexts.

the several causes of errors of prepositions made by Brazilian students through the theories already mentioned but also to determine what strategies the students followed for using the prepositions and what effects these strategies caused on the learning.

4.1 - Method of Analysis

To begin with, the errors identified in the three tests applied to Brazilian students were grouped or classified according to interlingual and intralingual interference.

For the gap test "in which the students had a lot of individual sentences to complete with an appropriate preposition, we identified four groups of errors: 1) mother tongue interference; 2) target language (including cross association and overgeneralization); 3) error due to both sources (for cases which could have two or more explanations) and 4) "uninterpretable errors" (for those cases in which the students omitted or guessed the required preposition and whose source could not be interpreted.)

The same categories were also adopted for composition and oral tests.

The errors mentioned above were identified following Pit Corder's model of recognizing and identifying errors:

1. The researcher should examine if the utterance or sentence is superficially well - formed in terms of the grammar of the target language. If the answer is no, then the sentence is overtly erroneous. If the answer is yes, then the researcher should ask if a normal interpretation according to the rules of the target language makes sense in the context. If the answers are no, then the sentence is covertly erroneous.

2. With respect to the three tests applied to

As we have already said, for those cases of omission, guessing or even where the error could not be interpreted these were grouped as "uninterpretable errors".

4.2 - Source of Errors in the Gap, Oral and Composition Tests

The next section will examine the figures for each source of errors in all three tests. It's worth mentioning that the figures presented in Table below take into account only the errors of the nine most frequent prepositions

TABLE I

SOURCE OF ERROR	COMP. TEST	GAP TEST	ORAL TEST	TOTAL
1. Mother Tongue	23.3%	19.6%	11.6%	19.1%
2. Target Language	28.8%	11.7%	6.9%	15.8%
. Cross Association	23.6%	4.9%	4.6%	
. Overgeneralization	5.2%	6.8%	2.3%	
3. Errors Having Two Sources	28.9%	16.7%	69.7%	38.4%
4. Uninterpretable Errors	15.7%	51.8%	11.6%	26.3%

Looking at the Table above, we can say that mother tongue interference alone is not the most significant factor which led the students to make errors. On the contrary, the figures reveal that many of the errors can be attributable to both sources, that is, partly influenced by mother tongue and partly by the English system. These had a significant number in the three tests - 38.4% overall.

Many of the errors - 26.3% can not be interpreted

These include omissions and guessing the preposition in certain contexts. These were over 50% of the errors in the gap test.

The percentage of errors caused only by the target language was not very high, in spite of the English system which is sometimes very complex and can lead the learners to confuse forms and use the wrong one.

Of the three tests, the composition test, was the one which had the highest percentage of errors caused by mother tongue interference (26.3%) and the target language (28.8%).

We can add that the percentage of uninterpretable errors was also higher than might be expected in all three tests.

The next section will discuss each source of errors separately.

4.2.1 - Mother Tongue Interference

The first group of errors to be examined is the one caused by mother tongue interference, since the students used or transferred an element of the mother tongue into the target language thinking that they are similar either semantically or syntactically. For example,

"1. **I think that this beach is near of a great city*". 5.8%

"2. **Everyone has a story which happened either with themselves or a relative or a friend*" 28%

"3. **It's interesting the man who is sleeping is dresses with a trouser*". 5.8%

These erroneous sentences are typical cases of mother tongue influence because the students used the preposition near followed by OF (s.1) which the English system does not allow. As in Portuguese there is the preposition perto de which corresponds to one word near in English, the learners can be

assumed to have transferred the Portuguese form to English using near of. In the sentences 2 and 3 the learners have used with instead of TO and in respectively because in Portuguese the verb acontecer and vestir are followed by com which translates with in English. Thus it seems that Portuguese in the present study was plainly used in errors in which they add or substitute one preposition for another (although not all errors of this type are accounted for by this factor). But it is evident from the amount of errors that where some similarity or equivalence between the two languages is perceived, then they tend to transfer the use of the item into the target language. Other examples caused by negative transfer of mother tongue are the following:

"1. *While he was inside of the hotel we quickly got off"; (4.7%)

"2. *I told her if we could go there because I like very much of horses". (4.7%)

"3. *The hills were covered of snow"; (12%)

"4. *I always walk for that house on my way to work", etc. (8%)

4.2.2 - Target Language Errors

The lowest number of errors seem to have little, if any connection, with the mother tongue. They are intralingual errors (17.1%) and were often caused by cross association and over generalization.

4.2.2.1 - Cross Association Errors

With respect to cross association errors, it can be perceived that the students confused two or several elements in the English system itself, either because they are similar in meaning or because they are presented in similar contexts expressing the same function. For instance, "*Mr. Smith lives on

248 *Hercilio Luz Avenue*"; (24%) *"I went on January and come back on July"*. (9.5%). In the first sentence, the learners confused on and at because these forms can be used in English to denote Address. The difference between them is that on is used with names of streets, avenues, etc and at before numbers of houses. The second example is also evidence of cross association because the learners confused in and on because both indicate Time. Both prepositions are used in similar contexts such as *"He was born in July"*; *"He travelled on July 19th"*. These contexts can lead the students to confuse both forms and use on if the meanings and uses are not automated correctly in different periods. Other examples which are evidence of cross association are:

"1. We went at a nice restaurant at Atlantic Avenue"; (on) (4.7%)

"2. She's into the water" (instead of in) (7.1%)

"3. She leaves her work on two o'clock"; (at) (4%)

"4. White people were walking at the neighborhood last night" (about)"; etc. (19%).

4.2.2.2 - Overgeneralization Errors

Of the several factors which contributed to the students to make errors, overgeneralization had the lowest percentage of occurrence in all three tests. The errors are again caused by interference from other terms of the English systems i. e., the high frequency of an item in a certain context or overteaching or overemphasis of an item in a particular context can lead the students to learn it by association without sometimes paying attention to the meaning of the context. For instance *"1. The children have classes form 8:00 at 11:00" (4%)*
"2. Paul said to John that Tuesday comes from Monday"; (4%)

"*3. The letter B comes from the letter C". (16%)

In the first sentence the learner learned the rule that at is used to indicate Time and it seems they have generalized it by association and use it in contexts like this. The sentences 2 and 3 are evidence that the students associated the preposition From with the verb come because this a pattern which occurs very often in English in contexts like "He comes from Brazil" and which is very often extensively drilled as well.

As examples of overassociation errors we may still cite:

"*4. They will compete by themselves for water and soil nutrients" (4%)

"*5. There are also three persons I thint that is looking the colour on the sea or the people on the beach". (5,8%)

"*6. I'll phone you from 2:00 and 4:00", etc. (4%)

Again the students used the prepositions by, on, and From in these contexts by over association with the expressions "by oneself"; "from 2:00 to 3:00" and on indicating Place which occur very frequently in English.

4.2.3 - Errors Having Both Sources: MT and TL

The largest number of errors was explained as having more than one source (38.4%). These errors seem to be partly influenced by the mother tongue and partly by interference between items in the target language itself. Let's examine some pairs of erroneous sentences having both sources.

"1. *I can see a photographer taking photos from seven people" (7.1%)

"2. *This picture is from beach" (14.2%).

These errors can be explained by mother tongue interference. In Portuguese we can say "tirar fotos de sete pessoas", "Este qua-

dro é de uma praia" and the learners translated de as from. But as there are in English two prepositions of and from which correlate with de in Portuguese, the students confused which form would be most correct in these contexts. However, from is distinguished from OF in the following aspect: From means "Source", "Origin" while OF means "Possession", "genitive". Thus these errors may be due to cross association as well as MT interference.

- "1. *When we arrived in the bus station my aunt was to pick us up". (4.7%)
- "2. *We were so late for our test in Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina" (4.7%)
- "3. *There are boats in the sea" (36.4%)
- "4. *At night we went in the Copacabana's bars" etc. (4.7%)
- "5. *I was at the neighborhood projet in/at Friday night" (8%)

Again all these errors are evidence of MT interference because the prepositions in and at can find a corresponding form in Portuguese em as well as cross association since the learners confused in, at and on indicating place (s. 1, 2, 3, 4) and time (s. 5). In the last sentence, as the learners did not automate the differences between on, in, at denoting time e.g. "in the morning", "at night" and "on Friday", they used in and at in this context.

- "1. *Everyone has a story which happened either for themselves or a relative or a friend" (8%)
- "2. *Foreman, we've got something rather unpleasant to say for you". (20%)

In the sentences above, the students also confused for and to because both forms correspond to para in Portuguese.

This way they are a case of MT influence. But they are also a case of cross association because the verbs happen and say in the contexts

can only be followed by To and they used for due to similarity of meaning of these forms.

Other examples which can be included in this group of errors are: *The distinction among right and wrong was not stated yet"; (4%) *How could you distinguish an Englisman of an American?" (24%), etc.

4.2.4 - Uninterpretable Errors

Besides these several sources in all three tests, a further group of 26.3% of errors were labelled as "uninterpretable errors". Here the students seeming not to know the meaning of a given word in the sentence or simply not knowing what preposition should be used, omitted the appropriate form or use a wrong preposition or a non-preposition word. This happened mostly to unusual or non-literal uses of prepositions. For example,

1 *Sentence	Correct Form	%
1 *He looked ? him for a shop where he could buy a packet of Gold Flakes"	About	28%
2 *Albert Foreman faced them, the table ? him and them"	between	28%
3 *The headmaster would not grant the class a holiday <u>because/but/in</u> order of their bad behaviour".	after	32%
4 *They will compete? themselves for water and soil nutrients"	among	36%
5 *Albert Foreman was <u>a/as/nor</u> / ? business as a tobacconist and newsagent".	in	32%
6 *The fruitcases vary ? gray to brown"	from	28%
7 *The system is <u>a/the</u> / ? deep crisis"	in	40%

cont.

1 *Sentence	Correct Form	%
8 *Emerson was able to grow teosinte at the Cornell latitude ? <u>artificially</u> shortening the summer day"	by	36%
9 *Are you <u>to</u> or against the plan?"	for	4%
10 *The priest went down <u>with</u> his knees"	on	16%
11 *The novel was written <u>in</u> Tolstoy"	by	8%

In the last case, the choice of preposition seems scarcely worth analysing because it does not make sense but perhaps the students misinterpreted the context by identifying the word Tolstoy perhaps as a name of town. As was stated above, these errors only occurred in the gap test.

In addition, it's worth mentioning that within this category a number of errors occurred in all three tests whose source was not interpretable. These are "uninterpretable errors". In the composition and oral tests, these errors refer to those sentences in which the students did not know how to express themselves and used a wrong preposition in an ill - formed structure. E.g.

1 *The beach is not ? Brazil because it's different in Rio" 7.1%

2 *The woman put their maiôs and in the man their shorts" 7.1%

3 *My friends decided to go to camping by trip" 4.7%

4 *I can see many houses in the corner of the beach", etc. 7.1%

In most of these cases, it was not possible to reconstruct the correct version because we can never know completely what is going on in the students' mind.

In the gap test, they made uninterpretable errors such as:

- 1 *The day on yesterday, I went to the movies" (8%)
- 2 *The host moved about of his guests" (16%)
- 3 *West Germany is now the world's third great industrial power of/in/towards the U.S. and The soviet Union" (16%)
- 4 *The papers you are looking for must be for those magazines" (8%)

Summing up this section, the majority of the errors which we have encountered are caused by both sources: MT and TL (38.4%). However, uninterpretable errors also had a significant percentage (26.3%). Mother tongue interference although it had not been the most important factor to lead the learners to err, also had a significant percentage of errors (29.1%).

Having discussed the several sources of errors made by Brazilian students, the next section will present the tested prepositional uses in the three tests which had a high degree of errors.

4.3 - Degree of Errors of the tested Prepositional Uses

The prepositional Uses tested in the three tests are presented in a summarized way in the appendix of this dissertation taking into consideration only the nine most frequent prepositions.

In this section we attempt to give a general picture of the degree of difficulty of the tested prepositional uses.

Each preposition was tested in five different sentences and uses. Some of them had one meaning tested twice. These are: in (time), at (place), to (dative) on (place), from (source). Below the most erroneous uses or meanings are presented in percentages based on the results of the three tests.

Prep.	Uses or Meanings	% Gap	% Oral	%Comp
OF	- objective genitive	80%	x	x
	- descriptive genitive	64%	16.6%	11.1%
IN	- manner	52%	50%	x
	- occupation	68%	x	x
	- time	20%	40%	33.3%
ON	- manner	52%	x	x
	- position	48%	x	x
	- place	64%	38.4%	50%
AT	- address	40%	x	x
	- ratio	32%	x	x
	- place	20%	50%	18.1%
FROM	- scale	72%	x	x
	- distinction	36%	x	x
BY	- means	96%	x	x
	- time	68%	x	x
TO	- proximity	48%	x	x
	- dative	64%	x	x
	- ratio	68%	x	x
FOR	- duration of time	64%	x	x
	- benefactive	x	x	x
	- support	48%	x	x
WITH	- having	28%	x	x
	- manner	40%	x	x
	- ingredient	24%	x	x

It's worth remembering that the selection of these uses

to be tested was based on the frequency of prepositional uses which occurred in the analysis of the English texts.

The next section will analyse the strategies followed by the students to use prepositions along with influencing factors which may have led them to use these strategies.

4.4 - General Strategies

The several types of errors the students made reveal that they follow general strategies which sometimes show that a certain rule dominates and sometimes does not.

It is known that when the learners use certain strategies, they do so in order to predict correct forms and overcome various individual difficulties. Sometimes they are successful and sometimes not. When they are not successful they commit errors.

Some factors contributed to the students' forming certain strategies. Here we present a list of these factors which determined the most frequent strategies used by the learners and which were noticed during the error analysis.

1) The use of a preposition which correlates with Portuguese forms (MT strategy)

2) Tendency to use one form more than others (MT and L 2 strategy)

3) Tendency to rule association for redundant cases (L 2 strategy)

4) Tendency to guess any form for special contexts of literal and non - literal uses of prepositions (guessing strategy).

Examining the first factor it can be seen here that there was a tendency of transferring one form from the mother

tongue to English often in cases where this is allowable in English. This can be noticed in the three tests in the following situations:

- "To" meaning "*ratio*" (48%) NL use
 "*dative*" (28%) NL use
- "By" denoting "*time*" (28%) Lit use
- "On" denoting "*position*" (24%) Lit use
- "With" meaning "*manner*" (20%) Lit use
 "*having*" (20%) NL use
 "*ingredient*" (20%) Lit use
- "Of" denoting "*objective genitive*" (16%) Lit use
- "For" denoting "*support*" (16%) NL use
- "From" denoting "*distinction*" (28%) NL use
- "In" denoting "*occupation*" (8%) Lit use

It seems that many times the students not knowing what correct form to use, they transferred a mother tongue form to English. The overall figure here was 19.1% revealing that this strategy deserves consideration in language learning. Besides the situations presented above there were others in which the students used MT strategy, but these had a low frequency of occurrence (4% to 8%).

The second factor is related to the students tendency of using one form more than others for redundant cases. They did so perhaps as a way of simplifying the language considering that they did not get to distinguish and learn specific rules or uses. This factor led the students to make errors. This is apparent when they exhibited a tendency towards one preposition more than others overgeneralizing a certain item such as:

- "Of" meaning "*descriptive genitive*" (40%) Lit use
- "From" meaning "*source*" (16%) Lit use

The students used in, on or at in those contexts which required of, to, from and with because the contexts contained a time or place adverbial expression leading to overgeneralize that before place or time expressions, one should use in, on or at. The other tested uses had about from 4% to 8% (cf. appendix)

Redundant uses of prepositions (in, on, at used to indicate place and time) were also responsible for the rule association where two rules or uses considered similar are presented together for purposes of memorization. This happened to the following situations:

- "At" denoting "address" (24%) Lit use
- "In" denoting "Time 1" (16%) Lit use
- "To" denoting "duration of action" (16%) NL use
- "In" denoting "Time 2" (12%) Lit use

Here the students tend to use one preposition more frequently when two items had similar meaning or uses in English - the other tested uses had 8% of occurrence.

Another factor which affected the learning of prepositions was that for some contexts the students not knowing what preposition to use, they guessed them, that is, they gave different types of prepositions showing that they are not accustomed to use the tested rules. If the preposition is learnt, it is not necessarily learnt for all contexts. They did so with the following prepositions:

- "Of" meaning "objective genitive" (44%) Lit use
- "On" denoting "manner" (40%) Lit use
- "In" denoting "occupation" (28%) NL use
- "In" denoting "manner" (20%) Lit use
- "From" denoting "distance" (16%) Lit use
- "By" denoting "means" (16%) NL use

- "For" denoting "time" (12%) Lit use
- "With" denoting "manner" (12%) NL use
- "For" denoting "purpose" (12%) Lit use
- "To" denoting "ratio" (12%) NL use
- "On" denoting "place" (12%) Lit use
- "From" denoting "source 2" Lit use

The other uses had from 4% to 8% of occurrence.

Some tested uses had a significant percentage of both MT and TL strategy. These were:

- "From" denoting "scale" (40%) NL use
- "By" denoting "Means" and "Time" (36%) NL use
- "From" denoting "Distance" (20%) Lit use
- "To" denoting "dative 2" (20%) NL use
- "To" denoting "dative 1" (16%) NL use
- "In" denoting "occupation" (12%) NL use

It is worth mentioning that there were some cases of omissions, especially for contexts which tested a non-literal use of prepositions such as:

- "By" meaning "means" (36%) NL use
- "For" denoting "time" (32%) Lit use
- "From" denoting "scale" (28%) NL use
- "In" denoting "manner" (28%) L use
- "For" denoting "purpose" (24%) L use
- "On" denoting "position" (20%) L use
- "By" denoting "proximity" (16%) L use
- "For" denoting "support" (16%) L use
- "Of" denoting "descriptive genitive" (16%) Lit use
- "From" denoting "source 2" (16%) Lit use
- "To" denoting "dative" (12%) NL use
- "By" denoting "time" (12%) Lit use

The other tested uses had about 4% and 8% of omissions. We can not talk about "*an omission strategy*" but such behaviour reveals how the students go about learning or using the language.

Summing up this section so far, we can say that of the several factors mentioned in this study as being influencing factors in English prepositions, the one which refers to the use of a preposition which correlates to Portuguese forms and uses, or the one which refers to the use of different types of prepositions instead of one form seem to be most striking for them.

The other factors also had a considerable influence in helping the students to form strategies considering that these are related to non-literal uses or to unusual contexts.

In the next section, we will consider the strategies and how they affected the learning and application of prepositions tested in this error analysis.

4.5 - Effect of Strategies on the Learning of Prepositions

According to the remarks made above, the strategies followed by Brazilian students of English seem not to have been applied consistently as learnt uses. They seem to be presuppositions or indicators that the learning of a certain preposition and its respective meaning is easier or harder, and they are applied instead of a particular use when that use has not been completely learned. The uses and rules tested are presented below taking into account the strategies mentioned in the last section. As this study concentrated on the most frequent prepositions, only these will be mentioned in this section. The rules or uses tested will be presented for each preposition.

4.5.1 - Mother Tongue Strategy

As was said before, among the several strategies the students employed, mother tongue strategy may have been used to predict the correct forms in those cases in which the Portuguese and English system has coincident forms or uses as well as for those in which the languages differed and the students did not know the correct form in the L 2 system. Some of these strategies were successful, that is, they resulted in positive transfer, but others did not, resulting in errors. Now let us examine the uses in which the students used mother tongue strategy. These will be presented according to the order of importance.

1. To denoting ratio was tested in the gap test through the sentence "*Flamengo won the game by three goals to one*". This is a non-literal use of To. For this context, the students gave a variety of responses and these seem to have some connection with Portuguese patterns in using against (32%), per (4%) and by (12%). They they had 48% of MT strategy.

2. From meaning distinction, separation. This is a non-literal use of From. This factor led them to give a variety of responses, but among them OF predominated for the context "*How would you distinguish an Englishman from an American?*". Thus it is again a MT strategy and at the same time rule association strategy because they associated Of with de extending it to other situations in which from should be used (28%).

3. To meaning dative. This meaning was tested twice and one of the contexts "*Everyone has a story which happened either to themselves or a relative or a friend*" reveals that there was a MT strategy (28%). In this context the students used with following happen because in Portuguese we say "*acontecer com*".

The other tested context meaning dative was "Albert Foreman, I've got something rather unpleasant to say to you" had 16% of MT and L 2 strategy The students gave the preposition For as response to this context. Both are non - literal uses of To.

4. On denoting "Position" in "The man was standing on a line" (24%) in which the students used at correlating at with em.

5. The preposition with meaning "Ingredient". The students gave one type of response: OF (20%) to the context "The hills were covered with snow" because in Portuguese we can say "cobrir de neve", so of was considered a MT strategy: Only two informants confused this form with on and at which does not make sense in this context (8%).

6. With denoting Having. This non - literal use was most affected by using OF in the tested sentence. "The girl with blue eyes entered the school" (20%). The students did this because the corresponding form in Portuguese use was transferred to English.

7. With denoting manner in the sentence "I've noticed they very often do", said the vicar, with a little smile." This use was most affected by using In and for

8. To denoting direction had 20% of MT strategy in the composition test in which the students used in in the context "At night we went to the Copacabana's bars".

9. Of denoting objective genitive 16% of responses for the context "He had made an agonising reappraisal of his prospects and his role". The students used with and on showing that mother tongue influenced their responses.

10. By meaning proximity was tested in the sentence "I always walk by that house on my way to work" which had 16% of

MT strategy. The students used for, on and in as responses for this context.

11. For denoting Support in the sentence "*Are you for or against the plan?*" had the following prepositions as responses: with, in, in favor revealing MT influence (16%).

Beside these contexts, others also revealed MT knowledge but in a lower percentage of occurrence.

4.5.2 - Simplification Strategy

It is noticeable that the learner reveals a tendency towards simplification of the rules of the target language they are learning. By "*simplification*" is meant increasing the generality of rules through extending their range of application, and through dropping rules of limited applicability" (Richards: 1975: 116).

In simplifying, the target language learner begins by constructing general rules which do not account for redundant and unnecessary parts of the grammar, and in doing so the learners may be said to be trying to make the language easier than it is.

In considering the effect of simplification on the use of English prepositions by our Brazilian subjects it is interesting to see that where there are redundant rules, the students tend to either generalize one form or to associate two or more rules when they are presented together and considered equivalent for purposes of memorization as a form of simplifying the English system. This can be noticed with some tested uses.

4.5.2.1 - Rule Association strategy

13. At denoting Address (24%) in the sentence "*Mr. Smith lives at 248 Hercílio Luz Avenue*". Here the students used

MT strategy. The students used for, on and in as responses for this context.

11. For denoting Support in the sentence "*Are you for or against the plan?*" had the following prepositions as responses: with, in, in favor revealing MT influence (16%).

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4.5.2.1 - Rule Association strategy

13. At denoting Address (24%) in the sentence "*Mr. Smith lives at 248 Hercílio Luz Avenue*". Here the students used

on because of the similarity of use between at and on which led them to rule association and in choosing on make the system simpler than it is.

14. In denoting Time (16%) in the sentences "*Paul studies in the morning*" and "*Paul answered all questions in ten minutes*" (12%). Here the redundancy of rules or uses led the students associate them and give the prepositions at (20%) and on (8%) as responses. In the oral test, they used on (20%) denoting Time where they should use in.

15. On denoting Place had 14.2% of rule association strategy in the composition test. The students used at in "*We went at a nice restaurant on Atlantic Avenue*".

The other uses had from 4% to 8% of rule association strategy.

4.5.2.2 - Overgeneralization Strategy

16. Of meaning Descriptive genitive (40%) in the sentence "*He looked, if not like a duke, at least, like an actor of the old school*". The students gave a variety of responses: in, on, at but one predominated in (32%). Here, perhaps the students implied the system by overgeneralizing in before names of places or adverb of place and as the context contains the expression "*the old school*" which is usually associated with place in classroom lessons, they used in instead of OF.

17. From denoting source (16%) in the sentence "*The old vicar had brought a table many years before from Italy*" in which the students used in because they overgeneralized in before an adverb of place.

4.6 - MT and TL Strategy

It's worth mentioning that there was a group of items in which the students revealed both MT and Target language strategies. These are:

18. On denoting Time (100%) in the oral test. The students used in in the sentence "On holidays beaches are full of people" indicating that they translated in as em in MT and they cross associated the forms "on holiday" and "in the holidays" in English and produced the wrong form "in the holiday". They had 28.5% of errors in the composition test with the same type of context.

19. By denoting Time (44%) in "Could you bring me this book by next Tuesday at the latest?" The students used on in this context revealing both MT and FL knowledge. They used on because they translated em in Portuguese and because they associated on before days of week in English.

20. From meaning Scale (40%). This non-literal use was tested in the context "The fruitcases vary from gray to brown". The students used OF indicating partly MT strategy and partly TL knowledge because the students overgeneralize one item considering that from and of correspond to de in Portuguese.

21. By meaning Means (36%) in the tested sentence "Emerson was able to grow teosinte at the Cornell latitude by artificially shortening the summer day". In this context the students used for, on and in due to MT knowledge and also due to target language because the students overgeneralized the prepositions in and on followed by a verb in gerund form meaning "means".

22. On denoting Place (34.6%) in the oral test in sentences such as "There are boats on the sea" or "We can see

many boats on the sea". The students used in in these sentences revealing both MT and TL strategies.

23. From denoting distance (20%) in "*The village is ten miles from the highway*". In this non-literal use of From, the students used of and away revealing that the use of OF and Away has something to do with MT strategy because these items translates de and distante in Portuguese and also because they confused the use of of and From.

24. On denoting In contact with (20%) in the oral test in the sentence "*On these rocks there are two little boys*". The students used in revealing both MT and TL strategies because both forms translate em in Portuguese and because these items can be used to indicate Place.

25. To denoting dative (16%). Both contexts which tested the meaning of dative had 16% of responses revealing MT and TL knowledge. E.g. "*Foreman, we've got something rather unpleasant to say to you*" and "*Everyone has a story which happened either to themselves or a relative or a friend*". In both contexts they used for indicating that partly this answer is due to MT strategy because for correspond to para and partly because they confused for and to as well as they did not perceive the restrictions in English which allow to use to after "*to say*" and "*to happen*".

26. At denoting Place (13.6%) in the composition test in sentences such as: "*When we arrived at the bus station my aunt was to pick us up*" or "*We were so late for our test at the University Federal of Santa Catarina*". The students used in revealing both MT and TL strategies. It translates em in Portuguese and in is also used in English to indicate Place.

27. To denoting direction (12.5%) in the composition

test in sentences such as: "I took my coat, my bag and then I walking to the school"; "At night we went to the Copacabana's bars". Most of students used at and in because in MT people say em before place adverb and in the TL both types of prepositions can be used to indicate place.

28. In denoting occupation is another non - literal use of in and this concept was tested in the following sentence "Albert Foreman was in business as a newsagent and tobacconist" (12%) and here the students used at because they translate at as em in Portuguese and it may also be TL knowledge by analogy to "at work", "at play" in which these expressions denotes occupation in the same way as business.

4.7 - Guessing Strategy

Besides MT and simplification Strategies, the informants also showed that when they don't internalize one use or rule or when some new word hindered the understanding of the given contexts, they guess the preposition in the attempt to use the correct form. This happened to a group of rules which will be examined below. We can say that they guessed some items or uses because in certain sentences there was no regular type of response showing thus that they do not know the rule in use.

29. OF denoting objective genitive (44%). The student gave a variety of responses such as between, to, by and for for the sentence "He had made an agonising reappraisal of his prospect and his role" showing that they haven't internalized any rule and strategy to cope with it.

30. On denoting manner, attitude (40%) in "the priest went down on his knees". The students also guessed the preposition

by using with and in in the attempt to ascertain the correct form.

31. In denoting occupation seems to have been one of the most difficult rules (28%). The tested sentence revealed that the students haven't learned the use yet since they gave a variety of responses such as: at, for, to, a, as, etc for the sentence "*Albert Foreman was in business as a tobacconist and newsagent*".

32. In denoting manner (20%) in the sentence "*The system is in deep crisis*". The informants gave a variety of responses such as: a, as, the, under, into revealing that they are not accustomed to using this rule or have not learned it yet.

33. From denoting distance (16%) in "*The village is ten miles from the highway*" had the following responses before, at, for showing that they guessed at the form trying to make sure.

34. By denoting Means, technique (16%) in "*Emerson was able to grow teosinte at Cornell latitude by artificially shortening the summerday*". The students gave a variety of responses such as: on, in, with, and to guessing at the correct form.

35. From denoting source (16%) in "*The old vicar had brought a table many years before from Italy*". The students used for in this context showing they guessed the correct form.

36. For denoting Time (12%) in "*The vergers of St Peter's like the Popes of Rome, were there for life*" had the following responses: Without, all, the, etc showing that they also guessed at the correct item.

37. By meaning Proximity (12%) in "*I always walk by that house on my way to work*". The students used in in this context revealing that they did not internalize this use yet.

Beside these uses, others had from 4% to 12% of guessing strategy.

Although we can not talk about omission strategy it was noticed that the learners avoided using the correct preposition in all sentences presented to them in the gap test but some context had a higher degree of omission than others. We are not sure but it seems that these contexts seemed to be unfamiliar to them or the task difficulty in responding all test has not been made clear for them. This can be noticed mainly in the following rules:

- By denoting Means (36%) in "Emerson was able to grow teosinte at Cornell latitude by artificially shortening the summer day"
- For denoting Time (32%) in "The vergers of St. Peter's like the Popes of Rome were there for life".
- For denoting Purpose (24%) in "An umbrella is for protection from the rain".
- In denoting manner (28%) in "The system is in deep crisis".
- From denoting "Scale" (28%) in "The fruitcases vary from gray to brown".
- On denoting "position" (20%) in "The man was standing on a line".
- Of denoting descriptive genitive (16%) in "He looked, if not like a duke, at least, like an actor of the old school".
- From denoting source (16%) in "The old vicar had brought a table many years before from Italy".
- By meaning proximity (16%) in "I always walk by that house on my way to work".
- For denoting support (16%) in "Are you for or against

the plan?".

- To denoting dative (12%) in *"Everyone has a story which happened either to parents or a relative or a friend"*.

- By meaning Time (12%) in *"Could you bring me this book by next Tuesday at the latest?"*.

Other uses had a low percentage of omissions (between 4% and 8%).

4.8. Conclusions

Considering the sources of errors discussed in the first part of this chapter, the general strategies employed by the students in using the prepositions and the effect of the several uses or rules on the learning of them, we can draw some general conclusions:

1. It is not always possible to identify the source of errors that a learner of a foreign language makes. As was shown in this chapter, for many of the errors the students made it was not possible to identify their sources.

2. Interference from the MT is not the only source of error. Many errors were also due to interference from the target language (15.8% and 38.4% for errors having two sources)

3. Transfer - of - training is always operative in the target language itself. This can be seen between items that are structurally or semantically related, i.e., in the case of redundant forms in English, the students showed that they confused the forms and tended to cross associate them or to overgeneralize one of them which is most similar to the Portuguese one.

4. It's worth mentioning that the question of error

analysis is very complex. The fact that both L 1 and L 2 influence errors and that sometimes we can not identify the sources of errors reveals that E. A. also has its weaknesses.

5. Of the several factors mentioned in this research as influencing English preposition learning, the one which seems to be of least importance concerns those uses caused by the target language. The others mother tongue and a combination of native and target language transfer seem to have contributed and influenced them in adopting certain strategies.

6. Of the strategies employed by the students, that one whose responses were partly influenced by MT and partly by the target language was the most used, especially for redundant cases in which the students confused the forms. This can be noticed in the following uses: 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. (see pp. 196).

7. Simplification strategy also occurred but in a low percentage. For redundant cases, they tended to simplify the forms of English by overgeneralizing just one form where there were two or more or by rule associating two items where there were several similar uses for purposes of memorization such as: 13, 15, 16, 17. (See pp. 194).

8. Guessing strategies were adopted by the learners for both literal and non - literal uses of prepositions when they are faced with a context in which they not accustomed to using the preposition. This led them to guess at the correct form. This happened to the uses: 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37 and others (see pp. 197).

9. Besides the strategies mentioned above, it was noticed that the informants omitted the preposition in all sentences in the gap test. Some contexts had a higher degree of

omission than others this shows how the learners go about learning the language. (cf. pp. 200).

10. Where there is difficulty in using a certain rule, we can assume that a problem exists, although these results are not totally reliable taking into account the length of the sample. The fact is that some uses of the contexts presented to the learners were difficult to understand. However some rules scored higher, i.e. had above 85% of correct answers perhaps due to the application of these general strategies. For example, we are not sure if the preposition FROM meaning SOURCE, which had 92% of correct responses was because they had really learned the rule or because they overgeneralized FROM, although this strategy would also predict OF. Thus we are not sure if for all cases with a high percentage of correctness, it can be assumed that these uses were well - learned:

The results presented here have some implications for the methodological recommendations which will be made in Chapter 5. We should not ignore them in the teaching of English prepositions for foreign learners but it is not easy to say what we should do to avoid both native and target language interference. In the next chapter possible solutions to the problems mentioned in this research will be suggested with the purpose of helping the teachers and students to avoid them in communication situations.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 - INTRODUCTION

It is known that one of the greatest problems facing the student of English as a second language is the correct usage of English prepositions and this study has tried to confirm this.

The reasons for this difficulty are not made clear but perhaps we can attribute them as being due to the complexity of the English system or to the approach that teachers make use of when teaching a certain grammatical items in the classroom. If this second reason is true, perhaps we can help teachers by offering some suggestions which can be examined and applied to overcome the students' problems.

Considering the results presented in Chapter 2, (frequency of prepositions), Chapter 3 (the degree of students' errors) as well as Chapter 4 (Error Analysis), the present chapter attempts to comment on the most important prepositions based on the frequency of occurrence and make a correlation of this frequency with the degree of students' errors. Finally some suggestions are given so that the teachers can help overcoming the students' specific problems of English prepositions in classrooms.

5.1 - Commentary on the most important prepositions

As we have already discussed in Chapter 2, a study was made in three authentic English texts in which we counted the frequency of occurrence of words which belong to the class

traditionally called prepositions observing their syntactic functions and their semantic meanings. These little words constitute over 10% of the words in the corpus we have used for the investigation in the present study (total number of words: 12.351; total number of prepositions 1.320). The results of the analysis showed that of the several prepositional forms which occurred within the different texts, the most frequent ones were:

Preposition	% Frequency
1. Of	31.8%
2. In	17.5%
3. To	7.1%
4. With	6.8%
5. For	5.9%
6. By	5.6%
7. On	4.8%
8. From	4.8%
9. At	3.9%

Each preposition cited above occurred in a variety of meanings. These meanings are not inherent in the prepositions themselves but lie in the contexts in which they occurred. Of these forms, Of, In and For are the most common prepositions; it is very difficult to see any text without them.

Below we can see the number of senses and syntactic functions in which these nine prepositions occurred.

Prepositions	Senses	Synt. Function
1. Of	5	3
2. In	5	7
3. To	3	4
4. With	4	4
5. For	4	7
6. By	6	3
7. On	7	6
8. From	3	3
9. At	3	4

Of the several meanings which occurred with each preposition listed above, one occurred in a higher frequency more than others. These are the following:

Preposition	Sense	%
1. Of	Possession, genitive	71%
2. In	Place	52.1%
3. To	Direction	71.5%
4. With	Comitative	46.1%
5. For	Purpose	30.3%
6. By	Agency	48%
7. On	Place	29.8%
8. From	Source, Origin	69.2%
9. At	Place	50%

The most frequent syntactic functions in which these prepositions occurred were: adjunct (with the value of adverb) and nounpostmodifier (see Ch 2 for other figures).

In addition, literal uses of prepositions occurred more frequently than non-literal uses (84.5%).

The prepositions which refer to the same concept: in, on, at occurred a large number of times in the same category: "Place".

5.2 - Correlation of Frequency of Occurrence with Brazilian's degree of Error.

In this section we will present a correlation of the frequency of occurrence of the nine most frequent prepositions with the Brazilian's percentage of errors.

Preposition	Frequency of Occurrence	Brazilians C	Range of errors W	Rank Ordering
1. Of	31.8%	82.4%	16.9%	6 th
2. In	17.5%	74.8%	25.2%	3 rd
3. To	7.1%	86.1%	13.8%	8 th
4. With	6.8%	91.6%	8.4%	9 th
5. For	5.9%	85.4%	14.5%	7 th
6. By	5.6%	77.2%	22.8%	4 th
7. On	4.8%	62%	36.2%	1 st
8. From	4.8%	82.8%	17.2%	5 th
9. At	3.9%	71.5%	28.4%	2 nd

The average of errors made by the Brazilians were taken from the percentage of erroneous responses in the three tests and the total was then divided by three. Thus we obtained the Brazilian's average of errors for the nine most frequent prepositions in this study.

Looking at the Table, one can see that the prepositions, which caused most errors, on and at, were not the most frequent

prepositions which occurred in the tests: Of and In. The most frequent preposition - OF - was classified in the sixth position in the rank ordering of erroneous responses. The second most frequent preposition - IN - was classified as the third most frequently used incorrectly.

The preposition with, considered as one of the easiest to use, occurred in the last position in the rank order of errors. It was the fourth most frequent item.

This Table presented above leads us to conclude that:

1) The degree of errors made by Brazilian students did not correlate with the frequency of occurrence of the nine most frequent prepositions.

2) The three prepositions in which the most errors occurred were on, at and in confirming that these actually cause problems for the students because of their redundant rules or uses.

3) The prepositions which had a higher percentage of correct usage were: with, for, from, of and to. This perhaps happened because: 1) There are equivalent forms in Portuguese and 2) the most common meanings of these prepositions are already familiar to the students through "*formal instruction*" (rules) and *school lessons* (study of texts and exercises).

4) The more frequent the preposition is used in a text, the less it will be used incorrectly because sometimes the frequency of occurrence of these items in textbooks helps the students to become familiar with them or to keep them in mind.

In the next section, the strengths and weaknesses of the nine most frequent prepositions will be discussed.

5.3 - Commentary on Strengths and Weaknesses of the Students' Use of the nine most frequent prepositions and their meanings

In view of the remarks made in Chapters 3 and 4, we can state that of the nine most frequent prepositions, the most difficult ones for both groups in all three tests considering the highest percentage of errors presented in Tables (below 50%) were: on, at, in, from, and by and the easiest were: with, for, to and of.

With respect to several meanings of the prepositions used in the three tests, the results suggested by the high frequency of uses and correctness of usage (above 70%) that some meanings seem to have been acquired better than others such as:

Preposition	Meaning(s)	%
1. On	In contact with, time	86% / 70.5%
2. In	Time and Place	70% / 91.6%
3. At	Time	77.6%
4. Of	Subjective genitive/Quantity	92% / 94%
5. From	Source	94%
6. To	Direction/Dative	93% / 72%
7. For	Benefactive	88%
8. By	Agentive/Instrument	94% / 96%
9. With	Instrument/Comitative/Having	82%/96%/90%

Both groups of students showed intermediate success with the following prepositional uses:

Preposition	Meaning(s)	%
1. At	Place/Address	63.6%
2. Of	Material	44%
3. In	Manner	66%
4. On	Manner	74%
5. For	Support	44%
6. To	Duration of Action	64%
7. From	Distance	52%

In relation to the learners' weaknesses, we can point out that they have problems in dealing with the following uses:

Preposition	Meaning(s)	%
1. Of	Objective genitive	80%
2. In	Occupation	68%
3. On	Position	48%
4. At	Ratio	32%
5. From	Scale	72%
6. To	Ratio	68%
7. For	Time	64%
8. By	Means, Time	96%/68%
9. With	Manner	40%

These results should be taken into consideration when teachers try to teach English prepositions to Brazilian learners.

5.4 - Methodological Suggestions

5.4.1 - The order of Presentation of Prepositions

This section will attempt to suggest the order of presentation for the nine most frequently used prepositions.

In order to present the nine most frequently used prepositions, two criteria should be taken into account: frequency of occurrence of the items and the degree of learnability of the prepositions.

Although we cannot confidently assume that the same frequency of prepositions which occurred in the texts will also occur in every text or textbook, the analysis of texts made in this study showed that the nine most frequently used prepositions were: of, in, to, with, for, by, on, from and at.

However, according to the degree of learnability of prepositions, the results of research showed that the students have already learned some items more easily than others and that they still have problems in dealing with some. The order of learnability was: with, to, for, from, of, by, in, at and on.

As the frequency of prepositions did not correlate with the degree of wrongness, it was concluded that the order of presentation of prepositions should be based on the frequency of occurrence of these items in the students' textbooks plus the degree of error in usage presented by the learners. If the degree of occurrence of the items coincide with the analysis presented in this work, then we would suggest the following order of presentation:

Order	Prepositions	Uses Presented
1 st	Of	Objective genitive descriptive genitive
2 nd	In	Occupation Manner
3 rd	By	Time Means
4 th	On	Manner
5 th	With	Having
6 th	At	Address Ratio
7 th	To	Ratio Dative
8 th	From	Scale Distinction
9 th	For	Duration of Time Support

In addition, it was decided that because of the low level of learnability (i.e. degree of error) the nine most frequently used prepositions should be introduced from the easier uses to the more difficult ones for both phases.

The first preposition to be introduced would be OF denoting objective genitive and descriptive genitive which were the most difficult ones for the students to use. These should be introduced at different times in order to avoid interference.

As in, on and at have redundant rules and as they correlate with em in Portuguese, it is useful to introduce first IN denoting Occupation and Manner and in the middle of the course

one can present on denoting manner and position and later at denoting address and ratio. Each use should be introduced separately after each one has already been internalized.

The third preposition to be introduced would be By meaning time and means which occur very frequently in the language and whose degree of wrongness was of 36% and 40% respectively.

Although with is not a difficult preposition for Brazilian students, one of its uses, that which denotes Having seems not being very familiar to them. Thus, it is better to introduce it in the middle of the course when the need is apparent.

Because of the similarity or equivalence of meaning to Portuguese form, For and To should be introduced separately. As to had a lower degree of errors than For, it's more useful to introduce it first, especially denoting ratio and later dative which are non - literal uses of To.

In order to avoid interference such as cross-association between For and To, For should be the last preposition to be introduced especially denoting Support.

Of the nine most frequent, From should be the penultimate item to be presented so that it does not interfere with OF. Here the most difficult uses were: Scale and Distinction which are both non - literal uses of From. These uses should be presented in contexts emphasizing that it is interchangeable with OF.

The other uses which were considered to be the easiest are also important and deserve attention from teachers. These would be practiced briefly without making the use explicit, for example, in drills as a grammatical review.

In proportion as each new use is presented, the others already taught should be reviewed or restudied so that the students

can assimilate a particular use well.

In addition the suggested order of presentation should not be seen as an ideal model for any teaching program, but it should be flexible and adaptable to the needs of the learners of any Brazilian institution.

5.4.2 - Suggestions For helping Students use prepositions

After discussing the order of presentation of the prepositions, this section gives suggestions to the teachers for helping intermediate and advanced students use prepositions.

Considering that each linguistic form can be presented in several different meanings, it is more appropriate that the teacher introduces the meanings separately from the easiest to the most difficult ones in order to avoid cross-association or overgeneralization of one form.

Thus one preposition should be introduced related to just one meaning in a situational context, that is, teachers should contextualize the language and ask learners to practice responses which would be realistic ways of performing useful communicative acts in situations they may find outside classroom (Littlewood: 1981: 10).

Teachers should always keep in mind that to teach grammatical rules in isolated sentences does not help to eliminate the students' errors but these should be taught in meaningful contexts taking into account the particular use which occur in the context and the learners' degree of difficulty.

Considering that in this work we have detected the students' problems in using the nine most frequently used prepositions, we suggest remedial work for both groups of students using those meanings in which they showed a high

percentage of errors.

According to Mckeating (1981: 236), remedial work should be done "*incidentally*" and only when there is need for this in the form of frequent revision of problematic areas. This can be done in the early stages of a course when the problems are few and clearly defined because when the time goes by they become impossible to revise frequently everything for everyone. But in our case, if the problematic areas are well defined, it can be done through a conscious work and by providing sufficient practice to eliminate the errors.

Remedial work means "*reteaching*" of an item which is concentrated and regularly revised and the topic of remedial work should be made explicit to the students, i.e., teachers should explain the reasons why they are going to reteach a certain item again.

In reteaching a preposition item, the teachers should give the students clear examples of appropriate correct substitutes in order to correct the wrong item they have used and give enough practice in some meaningful contexts.

If possible teachers should choose or construct remedial material for the specific errors and the method to be used should not be the repetition of the initial teaching to the same group of students. For this purpose, they should provide the students exercises associated with communicative approaches to teaching.

With advanced students teachers can discuss the causes of the errors, especially those caused by confusion within English (intra - lingual errors) in the attempt to clear up the misconceptions and confusions. But this discussion should be supported by sufficient practice.

Considering the frequency of error made by both groups of students - intermediate and advanced students, we recommend remedial work when it is necessary in the teaching program for the following prepositions and uses:

- Of denoting Objective Genitive (80%)
- By denoting Means, Time Proximity (96%, 68%, 48%)
- From denoting Scale (72%)
- In denoting occupation (68%)
- On denoting place and position (64%, and 48%)
- At denoting ratio (32%)
- To denoting ratio (68%)
- For denoting Time, purpose (64, and 36%)
- With denoting manner (40%)

These items and meanings can be practiced through several activities such as: communication games, information gap, matching exercises, etc., which are an excellent way of practising the correct usage. The other uses which had a low degree of errors can also be revised but without emphasizing the point.

As we know, one semester is little time for eliminating errors in the use of prepositions but teachers can develop remedial work by presenting the rules or uses on a conscious way for a longer time and where MT and TL problems exist these can be pointed out.

For cross-association uses - In, On, At, For and To, OF and FROM, these should be introduced separately in a regular teaching situation but in a remedial work each item should be presented and drilled completely, then contrasted one with the other and drilled together.

If there are several uses for the same preposition to be retaught, the better way to help students to assimilate

the uses is to alternate the easiest rules with the more difficult ones.

5.4.3 - Avoiding the Interference of Students' Strategies

Whenever teachers decide what items and uses to teach, they should take into consideration the strategies the students employed in using the prepositions.

The first preposition strategy includes the uses 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 (see Ch 4) in which the learners simplified the language by overgeneralizing or by rule associating redundant uses, as well as the uses 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 in which they used both MT and TL knowledge. This strategy can be avoided if teachers introduce the distinguished rules at different times and practice them systematically. The presentation of these rules should be done in the first semesters when they begin to occur in the textbooks and continue up to the end of the course. Teachers should always be revising the items already taught in meaningful exercises. In case of cross-association errors which are favored by the common presentation situation of the two items together can be avoided if the teachers only introduce one item after the other has been well learned.

The strategy of the mother tongue can be controlled by first presenting the rules in which the Portuguese cognates correlate and the teachers can introduce the items or uses in which they are different, i.e., where the English language functions in a different way. That's the case of rules 1, 3, 6 and 7 (see Ch. 4). Here teachers can provide a quantity of exercises for practice by emphasizing the difference between the items.

The strategy of guessing the item can be avoided if teachers explain the meaning of new or unfamiliar vocabulary.

Perhaps this can help the students considering that they did so because they did not understand the meaning of the tested sentences. As most of guessing cases was non-literal uses of prepositions another suggestion would be to give enough exercises where they can practice these items.

Finally, for those cases in which the students omitted the preposition, they can be controlled if the teacher explains what is required in the task helping the learners to control it. Perhaps the students learned the item, but they are not accustomed to use it for all contexts, thus we can recommend a systematic presentation of these prepositions and uses (29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37) (see Ch. 4) followed by drills.

If the students persist in using any of the strategies mentioned above, then teachers should point out the problem and explain what correct use is reinforcing the teaching through constant drills.

5.5 - Conclusions

In this chapter it was shown that English prepositions, is no doubt, one of the greatest problems for Brazilian students to use considering the differences between MT and TL as well as students have no help in grammars or even in classroom which can help them to clear up the doubts.

A commentary on most important prepositions was made showing the order of frequency and number of uses of prepositions which occurred in the three texts analysed. A correlation of frequency of occurrence with Brazilian degree of errors showed that the rate of difficult did not correlate with the frequency and these results helped to suggest the order of presentation

of prepositions for Brazilian intermediate and advanced students.

Next, some suggestions for helping students using prepositions were presented in which the following are most important: 1) select the prepositions and uses to be taught; 2) present uses in the simplest form possible to help the students to learn them efficiently; 3) drill the items and uses in order to automate them in meaningful contexts and 4) where there are redundant prepositions and uses these should be given separately in order to avoid interference.

Finally, remedial work was suggested only for those uses in which the students did not get to manage them and these should be done with a different approach from the regular teaching and done in a conscious way in order to avoid wasting of time.

CONCLUSION

As has already been said, this dissertation attempted to present some findings concerning the nine prepositions most frequently used by Brazilian intermediate and advanced students.

It is worth mentioning that the conclusion reached in this study refers to a limited group of informants and that these can not be taken as universal truths for all students learning a foreign language, in view of the limitations of this work.

Initially some linguistic support of aspects concerning second and foreign language learning was presented emphasizing that Error and Contrastive Analysis would be of great help to explain the students' errors. These two types of analyses are complementary considering that they aim to reveal learner's difficulties in foreign language learning. Although Contrastive Analysis is limited, it is valid because it begins with a comparison of the native and foreign languages in order to predict such difficulties. C. A. only predicts errors derived from mother tongue influence and because of this limitation it was used as part of the explanatory stage of Error Analysis.

However, as the students made errors which did not arise from the mother tongue, these were explained by Error Analysis, whose aim is to analyse the learner's errors to give evidence of his competence in the foreign language and to detect the learner's difficulties at different stages.

The second point to be considered was a study of English preposition forms in some grammars in attempt to find out how grammarians deal with these forms and whether these approaches help the students to learn prepositions. The

conclusion was that such approaches are of little help, especially for beginners, since they do not offer no guidance and no logical explanation to distinguish between redundant uses or items. Besides this, an analysis was made in three authentic texts to see the frequency of occurrence of English prepositions, The results revealed that among the most frequent items are: of, in, on, at, for, to, by and with. These items occurred in a variety of meanings but one occurred more frequently than others. These are:

Of denoting descriptive genitive and quantity

In denoting place and manner

To denoting direction

With denoting comitative and manner

By denoting agency and means

From denoting source and distinction

On denoting place and time

For denoting purpose and time

At denoting place and time

These items and meanings are presented according to the order of frequency in the texts.

Syntactically, most of the prepositional phrases occurred as adjuncts (with the value of adverbs) and noun post modifiers. Noun post modifiers were less frequent, but almost obligatorily for certain prepositions.

Literal uses of prepositions occurred more frequently than non - literal uses (84.5%). The non - literal uses which appeared in the texts were examples of prepositional phrases functioning as disjuncts, conjuncts, noun complements, adjective or verb complements. These are considered very difficult to learn since their meanings are abstract.

With respect to the tests applied to a group of students of Santa Catarina Federal University on the use of English prepositions, we come to the conclusion that the students have trouble in dealing with the nine most frequent prepositions and that a greater number of errors were caused by interference of English language internal uses. For example, sentences such as "I went on January and came back on July"; "She's into the water;" "Mr. Smith lives on 284 Hercilio Luz Avenue", are evidence that the learners tended to overgeneralize or cross associate in/on/at; in/into in an attempt to simplify the language. This strategy may be due to complexity within the foreign language.

However, the students' responses also revealed that mother tongue interference is also present although it was not striking. E.g. The sentences "The hills are covered of now" and "Everyone has a story which happened either with themselves or a relative or a friend" are typical examples of transferring Portuguese forms because in M T people say "As colinas estão cobertas de neve" and "Todos tem uma estória que aconteceu ou com eles ou com um parente ou amigo".

Perhaps one reason for these kinds of interference is connected with the way the teachers introduce and explain these forms in classrooms leaving to emphasize the restrictions of use of the forms in English.

The students also had a high percentage of guessing and omissions especially in the gap test. This leads us to conclude that when they do not know what correct item to use or when some new word hindered comprehension of the sentences, they guessed the tested item or avoided using the preposition in the gap. But this does not necessarily mean that they have not learnt the tested uses yet.

With respect to the performance of the two groups of informants who answered the tests, the students of 7^a phase performed better than 4^a phase in using the prepositions in the gap test and 4^a phase performed more accurately in the oral and composition tests, but in general, there was no great difference in performance between 4^a and 7^a phases. The number of students who answered these three tests varied and this may have influenced the results. Thus the sample do not provide evidence to say that one group was significant better than the other.

Of the nine most frequent prepositions, the hardest ones for both groups in all three tests are: in, on, at, from and by considering the highest percentage of errors (see Ch 3) whereas the easiest were of, for and with maybe because of the similarity of these forms with Portuguese ones.

In general, the students of 4^a phase succeeded in dealing with in, at, to, with and for while 7^a phase in using of, from, by and on.

With respect to the several meanings of the prepositions used in the three tests, they results revealed by their high frequency of uses and correctness (80%) that some meanings seem to have been acquired better or more reliably at this stage than others. These were:

- In/At meaning Place and Time
- On denoting Time and In contact with
- Of denoting Quantity and sybjective genitive
- With denoting Instrument and Comitative
- For denoting Benefactive
- To denoting Direction
- From denoting Source/origin
- By denoting Agentive and Instrument

This probably happened because of the frequency or regularity of use literalness in normal or teaching emphasis of the preposition in a particular meaning in classrooms.

Finally, a correlation of frequency of occurrence with Brazilian degree of errors was made in Ch. 5 showing that the rate of difficulty did not correlate with the frequency and these results should not be ignored when teaching English prepositions for foreign learners.

The main suggestions made for helping students using prepositions were: 1) select the prepositions and uses to be taught or retaught; 2) presenting uses in the simplest form possible to help the students to learn them efficiently; 3) drill the items and uses in order to automate them in meaningful contexts and 4) for redundant uses of prepositions teachers should introduce them separately in order to avoid interference.

Remedial work was suggested for those prepositions and uses in which the students had a high percentage of errors and the approach to them should be made different from the regular teaching and made in a conscious way in order to avoid wasting of time.

The results of this research reveal that the learner's knowledge of prepositions are not as poor as we supposed but that they could be more successful, if sufficient explanations and practice of these forms in meaningful contexts was provided.

It is necessary to make clear that these comments cannot be taken as universal and definite. This study is only the beginning of a long series of researches and much research is still necessary in this particular teaching area. However, we hope that the information presented here will be useful in helping teachers when constructing the syllabus and when

selecting the types and uses of prepositions to teach Brazilian students.

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QUESTIONÁRIO

Caro Aluno,

O objetivo deste questionário é fazer um levantamento do grau de conhecimento da Língua Inglesa dos alunos da 3^a e 6^a fases do Curso de Letras desta Universidade. Os dados obtidos por meio deste questionário farão parte da pesquisa onde tentar-se-á avaliar melhor as dificuldades dos informantes na referida língua.

Por favor, responda todo o questionário pois a sua opinião é muito válida para a obtenção dos dados requeridos. Desde já, muito obrigada por sua atenção.

Leia cuidadosamente as questões abaixo e marque com um X dentro do parêntese o que melhor convier à sua resposta:

1. Tem experiência de estudo em línguas estrangeiras:
 - a. Sim ()
 - b. Não ()
2. Estuda Inglês atualmente:
 - a. Porque gosta ()
 - b. Porque é imposto pelo curso ()
 - c. Porque necessita para estudos posteriores ()
3. Seus estudos básicos em Inglês foram realizados:
 - a. Em escolas públicas ()
 - b. Em escolas particulares ()
 - c. Em país de língua estrangeira ()
 - d. Outros () especificar _____
4. Se sua resposta anterior foi (a) o método empregado enfatizava:
 - va: conversação ()
 - leitura ()

escrita ()

tradução ()

. Se sua resposta anterior foi (b) o método empregado enfatiza

va: conversação ()

leitura ()

escrita ()

tradução ()

. Se sua resposta anterior foi (c) o método usado enfatizava:

conversação ()

leitura ()

escrita ()

tradução ()

5. O(s) seu(s) professores era(m):

Brasileiro ()

Americano ou Inglês ()

Outra nacionalidade ()

6. A sua turma variava

a. Em escolas públicas:

Entre 10 a 20 alunos ()

Entre 21 a 30 alunos ()

Entre 31 a 50 alunos ()

b. Em escolas particulares:

Entre 10 a 20 alunos ()

Entre 21 a 30 alunos ()

Entre 31 a 50 alunos ()

7. As aulas eram dadas:

a. Em escolas públicas

totalmente em Inglês ()

parcialmente em Inglês ()

principalmente em Português ()

- b. Em Cursos particulares
 totalmente em Inglês ()
 parcialmente em Inglês ()
 principalmente em Português ()

8. As aulas eram distribuídas:

a. Em escolas Públicas

(1) Número

- uma vez por semana ()
 duas vezes por semana ()
 três ou mais vezes por semana ()

(2) Horas

- 1 hora () 3 horas ()
 2 horas () 4 horas ou mais ()

b. Em cursos particulares

(1) Número

- uma vez por semana ()
 duas vezes por semana ()
 três ou mais por semana ()

(2) Horas

- 1 hora () 3 horas ()
 2 horas () 4 horas ou mais ()

9. O Curso prolongou-se por:

a. em escolas públicas

dias ----- semanas _____ meses _____ anos _____

b. em cursos particulares

dias ----- semanas _____ meses _____ anos _____

c. em país de língua estrangeira

dias ----- semanas _____ meses _____ anos _____

10. Como foi o seu aproveitamento nos cursos efetuados:

- fraco ()
 regular ()

bom ()

muito bom ()

11. Atualmente seu maior interesse no estudo de Inglês se refere:

a. À conversação ()

b. À leitura ()

c. À escrita ()

12. As suas maiores dificuldades na Língua Inglesa são:

a. Para entender a língua falada ()

b. Para entender a língua escrita ()

c. Para falar a língua ()

d. Para escrever estruturas da língua ()

13. Atualmente você classifica seu nível de Inglês como sendo:

fraco ()

regular ()

bom ()

muito bom ()

Muito Obrigada!

NOME: _____ FASE: _____ DATA _____

Preposition	Portuguese	English
1. Em volta de	Ele viajou <u>em volta do</u> mundo em 1960	He traveled <u>round/around</u> the world in 1960
2. Por	Ele anda <u>pela</u> praça O bolo foi feito <u>por</u> Jane Ele trabalhou <u>por</u> duas horas	He walks <u>around</u> the square The cake was made <u>by</u> Jane He was worked <u>for</u> two hours
3. Para	Este livro é <u>para</u> você Ela vai <u>para</u> a igreja	This book is <u>for</u> you She goes <u>to</u> church.
4. A	Ele vai <u>à</u> cidade Paulo estuda <u>à</u> noite Ele chegou <u>a</u> tempo Ponha aquele livro <u>lado a</u> lado Ele estava <u>a</u> negócios	He goes <u>to</u> the city Paul studies <u>at</u> night He arrived <u>on</u> time Put that book <u>side by</u> side He was <u>in</u> business
5. Em	Ele está <u>em</u> casa Maria está <u>em</u> São Paulo O copo está <u>na</u> mesa	He is <u>at</u> home Mary is <u>in</u> São Paulo The glass is <u>on</u> the table
6. Dentro de	O café está <u>dentro da</u> xícara Voce deve me pagar <u>dentro de</u> um mês	The coffee is <u>inside</u> the cup You should pay me <u>within</u> one month
7. Sobre	O quadro está <u>sobre</u> a parede Eles conversam <u>sobre</u> leis Elas pularam <u>sobre</u> o muro	The picture is <u>on</u> the wall They talk <u>about</u> laws They climbed <u>over</u> the wall

Preposition	Portuguese	English
7. Sobre	O avião voou <u>sobre</u> a casa	The plane flew <u>above</u> the house
8. Acima de	O quadro está acima do console de lareira O carro custou acima Cr\$ 2.000.000,00	The picture is <u>above</u> the mantelpiece The car cost <u>above</u> Cr\$ 2.000.000,00
9. Desde	Ele viajou <u>desde</u> quinta-feira Ela viajou <u>desde</u> São Paulo até Curitiba	He travelled <u>since</u> Thursday He travelled <u>from</u> S. Paulo to Curitiba
10. De	Esta caixa é feita <u>de</u> madeira Paulo é <u>do</u> Rio de Janeiro	This box is made <u>of</u> wood Paulo is <u>from</u> Rio de Janeiro
11. Embaixo de SOB	O livro está <u>embaixo/sob</u> a carteira Assine seu nome <u>embaixo</u> do meu	The book is <u>under</u> the desk Sign your name <u>below</u> mine
12. Abaixo de	A temperatura está <u>abaixo</u> de zero	The temperature is <u>below</u> zero to day
13. Após, Depois	Eu verei você <u>após/depois</u> do jantar Após/Depois do que ele disse, saiu	I'll see you <u>after</u> dinner <u>According to</u> what he said, he left
14. Antes de	Eu estarei que <u>antes</u> das 5	I'll be here <u>before</u> five o'clock
15. Em frente de	William permanece <u>diante</u> do fogo O carro está <u>em frente</u> da escola	William stood <u>before</u> the fire The car is <u>in front of</u> the school
16. Além de	<u>Além</u> de Português, eu falo também Inglês As árvores estão <u>além</u> do rio	<u>Besides</u> Portuguese, I also speak English The trees are <u>beyond</u> the river

Preposition	Portuguese	English
17. Atrás de	O carro está <u>atrás do</u> ônibus Alguém correu <u>atrás do</u> homem	The car is <u>behind</u> the bus Someone ran <u>after</u> the man
18. Através de	A espaçonave viajou <u>através do</u> espaço Nós caminhamos <u>através dos</u> campos	The spaceship travelled <u>through</u> the space We walked <u>across</u> the fields
19. Entre	Ele está <u>entre</u> o Paulo e o João Maria está <u>entre</u> as suas amigas	He is <u>between</u> Paulo and João Maria is <u>among</u> her friends
20. Até	Eu estarei ocupado <u>até</u> às 5 Nós viajamos das 3 <u>até</u> às 5	I'll be busy <u>until/till</u> five o'clock We travelled from 3:00 <u>to</u> 5:00

Preposition	Portuguese	English
ONE-TO-ONE CORRESPONDENCE		
1. Com	Eu fui ao cinema <u>com</u> Henrique	I went to the cinema <u>with</u> Henry
2. Sem	Eu quero café <u>sem</u> açúcar	I want coffee <u>without</u> sugar
3. Durante	Ele viajou <u>durante</u> a noite	He traveled <u>during</u> the night
4. Ao lado de	Sente-se <u>ao lado de</u> Paulo	Sit down <u>beside</u> Paul
5. Contra	<u>Fumar é</u> contra as regras da escola	Smoking is <u>against</u> the school rules.

APPENDIX

THE GAP TEST

TABLE VII

Percentage of errors for the six less frequent prepositions in the gap test

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	%C	%W	%C2
10. Before	36%	46.4%	17.6%
11. After	32.8%	48%	19.2%
12. Between	45.6%	45.6%	8.8%
13. Among	4.8%	56%	39.2%
14. About	26.4%	52.8%	20.8%
15. Over	23.2%	69.6%	7.2%
Total	28.1%	53.1%	18.8%

TABLE VIII

Percentage of errors for each meaning for the six less frequent prepositions in the gap test.

TYPE / MEANING	USAGE	%C	%W	%C2	
10. Before	s.8 (sequence)	NL	76%	24%	-
	s.21 (time)	L	-	40%	60%
	s.33 (seq. position)	L	76%	24%	-
	s.52 (earlier than)	L	28%	64%	8%
	s.66 (in front of)	L	-	80%	20%
Total	-	36%	46.4%	17.6%	
11. After	s.12 (as a consequence)	L	-	68%	32%
	s.36 (time sequence)	L	84%	16%	-
	s.54 (later than)	L	36%	56%	8%
	s.60 (seq. position)	L	8%	64%	28%
	s.71 (following)	L	36%	36%	28%
Total	-	32.8%	48%	19.2%	

Cont. TABLE VIII

TYPE / MEANING		USAGE	%C	%W	%C2
12. Between	s.11 (position)	L	16%	76%	8%
	s.29 (time)	L	12%	52%	36%
	s.39 (position)	L	52%	48%	-
	s.46 (relation)	L	60%	40%	-
	s.61 (position)	L	88%	12%	-
Total		-	45.6%	45.6%	8.8%
13. Among	s.16 (relationship)	L	4%	80%	16%
	s.25 (division)	L	8%	44%	48%
	s.49 (position)	L	-	92%	8%
	s.59 (position)	L	-	48%	52%
	s.75 (division)	L	12%	16%	72%
Total		-	4.8%	56%	39.2%
14. Over	s.10 (authority)	NL	8%	92%	-
	s.34 (passage)	L	-	84%	16%
	s.45 (position)	L	-	100%	-
	s.72 (contact)	L	48%	36%	16%
	s.27 (throughout)	L	60%	36%	4%
Total		-	23.2%	69.6%	7.2%
15. About	s.9 (nearly a place)	L	-	84%	16%
	s.20 (concerning)	L	4%	64%	32%
	s.30 (subject matter)	L	64%	36%	-
	s.38 (around)	L	4%	56%	40%
	s.67 (nearly a time)	L	60%	24%	16%
Total		-	26.4%	52.8%	20.8%

TABLE IX

Percentage of errors for the six less frequent prepositions by both phases in the gap test.

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	4 ^a phase			7 ^a phase		
	%C	%W	%C2	%C	%W	%C2
10. Before	42%	44%	14%	31.9%	47.9%	19.9%
11. After	40%	40%	20%	27.9%	53.2%	18.6%
12. Between	38%	62%	-	50.6%	34.6%	14.6%
13. Among	-	66%	34%	7.9%	49.2%	43.6%
14. Over	16%	82%	2%	27.9%	61.3%	10.6%
15. About	28%	54%	18%	25.3%	51.9%	22.6%
TOTAL	27.3%	58%	14.6%	28.5%	49.6%	21.6%

The Composition Test

TABLE X

TYPE OF PREPOSITION / MEANING	%C	%W	TOTAL OF USE
10. Between (position)	100%	-	1
11. Until (duration)	100%	-	2
12. Into (movement onward)	100%	-	1
13. during (duration of time)	100%	-	6
14. through (showing means)	66.6%	33.3%	3
15. about (subject matter)	100%	-	9
16. around (on every side)	66.6%	33.3%	3
17. near (proximity)	100%	-	2
18. Under (position)	100%	-	1
19. After (later than)	100%	-	1

Cont. TABLE X

TYPE OF PREPOSITION / MEANING	%C	%W	TOTAL OF USE
20. beside (position)	100%	-	1
21. inside (position)	-	100%	1
22. Without (lacking)	100%	-	2
23. among (position)	-	100%	1
24. against (opposition)	100%	-	2
25. Because of (reason)	100%	-	5
26. next to (proximity)	100%	-	1
27. at the beginning of	-	100%	1
28. in front of (position)	100%	-	2
29. in the middle of (position)	100%	-	2
Total	81.6%	18.3%	47

The Oral Test

TABLE XIII

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	%C	%W	TOTAL OF USE
10. After (later than)	100%	-	3
11. about (subject matter)	100%	-	4
12. over (Above)	100%	-	1
13. Into (movement onward)	100%	-	3
14. Above (higher than)	100%	-	1
15. Behind (position)	100%	-	6
16. beside (position)	100%	-	2
17. besides (in addition to)	100%	-	2
18. near (proximity)	80%	20%	10

Cont. TABLE XIII

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	%C	%W	TOTAL OF USE
19. towards (direction)	100%	-	1
20. in front of (position)	100%	-	1
21. in the middle of (position)	100%	-	3
22. because of (reason)	100%	-	2
23. in the direction of (direction)	100%	-	1
Total	98.5%	1.5%	40

TABLE XIV

Percentage of errors for the less frequent prepositions by both phases in the oral test.

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	4 ^a phase			7 ^a phase		
	%C	%W	TOTAL	%C	%W	TOTAL
10. After	100%	-	1	100%	-	2
11. About	-	-	-	100%	-	4
12. over	100%	-	1	-	-	-
13. Into	100%	-	1	100%	-	3
14. Above	-	-	-	100%	-	1
15. behind	100%	-	1	100%	-	5
16. beside	100%	-	1	100%	-	1
17. besides	100%	-	1	100%	-	1
18. near	100%	-	2	25%	75%	8
19. towards	-	-	-	100%	-	1
20. in front of	-	-	-	100%	-	1
21. in the middle of	-	-	-	100%	-	3

Cont. TABLE IV

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	4 ^a phase			7 ^a phase		
	%C	%W	TOTAL	%C	%W	TOTAL
22. because of	-	-	-	100%	-	2
23. in the direction of	100%	-	1	-	-	-
Total	100%	-	9	93.7%	6.3%	2

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA

CURSO DE LETRAS

NOME: _____ BASE _____ DATA _____

Read the sentences carefully and write an appropriate preposition in the blank spaces. Be sure every space should be filled in.

- 1) Everyone has a story which happened either _____ themselves or a relative or a friend.
- 2) The novel was written _____ Tolstoy.
- 3) Everything is made _____ atoms.
- 4) "I've noticed they very often do", said the vicar, _____ a little smile.
- 5) He comes _____ Austria.
- 6) There are two posters _____ the wall.
- 7) "My wife's quite a scholar and if I want to write a letter she writes it _____ me."
- 8) The day _____ yesterday, I went to the movies.
- 9) He looked _____ him for a shop where he could buy a packet of Gold Flakes
- 10) The king had absolute power _____ his subjects.
- 11) Albert Edward faced them, the table _____ him and them.
- 12) The headmaster would not grant the class a holiday _____ their bad behaviour.
- 13) They live _____ a large house.
- 14) The priest went down _____ his knees.
- 15) Could you bring me this book _____ next Tuesday at the latest?.
- 16) They will compete _____ themselves for water and soil nutrients.

- 17) The dollar is _____ Cr\$ 157 cruzeiros.
- 18) He had made an agonising reappraisal _____ his prospectus and his role.
- 19) Are you _____ or against the plan?
- 20) He is careless _____ his personal appearance.
- 21) I had asked for some book _____, and was told that I could expect none _____ 1983.
- 22) Flamengo won the game by three goals _____ one.
- 23) The village is ten miles _____ the highway.
- 24) Albert Foreman was _____ business as a tobaconist and newsagent.
- 25) Divide this cake _____ all the boys here.
- 26) Paul C. Mangelsdorf is currently an emeritus professor _____ the University of North Carolina _____ Chapel Hill.
- 27) _____ a period of a few milleniums pre-Colombian peoples bred most of the major varieties of corn that exist today.
- 28) His men discovered _____ the island of Cuba great fields of the strange new plant, which was later found to be cultivated throughout the Western Hemisphere."
- 29) I'll phone you _____ 2:00 and 3:00.
- 30) He told we _____ his adventures.
- 31) At Scotland Yard, some _____ the same reporters who had been in Brixton hear a different story."
- 32) Paul often goes _____ the cinema with his girl friend.
- 33) The letter "B" comes _____ the letter "C".
- 34) The boys quickly climbed _____ the wall into the garden.
- 35) I was at the neighborhood project _____ Friday night.
- 36) Paul said to John that "Tuesday" comes _____ "Monday".
- 37) She was the daughter _____ my friend.

- 38) White people were walking _____ the neighborhood yesterday at night.
- 39) "The fertility of the cross indicated that the genitic relation _____ teosinte and corn was much closer than had been assumed."
- 40) The children have classes from 8:00 _____ 11:00.
- 41) "The verger of St. Peter's, like the Popes of Rome, were there _____ life".
- 42) She leaves her work _____ two o'clock.
- 43) That man killed himself _____ a knife.
- 44) Paul studies English _____ the morning.
- 45) The sky is _____ our head.
- 46) The distinction _____ right and wrong was not stated yet.
- 47) He travelled to São Paulo _____ bus.
- 48) The host moved about _____ his guests.
- 49) "Foreman, we've got something rather unpleasant to say _____ you".
- 50) The fruitcases vary _____ gray to brown.
- 51) _____ the war between England and Argentina nobody heard of the Falkland Islands.
- 52) We walked _____ three miles.
- 53) West Germany is now the world's third great industrial Power, _____ the United States and The Soviet Union".
- 54) The system is _____ deep crisis.
- 55) How would you distinguish an Englisman _____ an American?.
- 56) The hills were covered _____ snow.
- 57) An umbrella is _____ protection from the rain.
- 58) The papers you are looking for must be _____ those magazines.

- 59) Go _____ him quickly and give him his umbrella.
- 60) Santa Catarina is _____ Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul.
- 61) I always walk _____ that house on my way to work.
- 62) She went to the theater _____ a friend.
- 63) "The old vicar had brought a table many years before _____ Italy."
- 64) Paul answered all questions _____ ten minutes.
- 65) The accused man was brought _____ the magistrate.
- 66) It was _____ two o'clock when he left.
- 67) Those people were standing _____ a line.
- 68) "He looked, if not like a duke, at least, like an octor _____ the old school,".
- 69) Mr. Smith lives _____ 248 Hercílio Luz Avenue.
- 70) " _____ ten years in office, the Conservatives took stock of the nationalized industries in 1961".
- 71) The head of the department normally presides _____ meetings.
- 72) "Emerson was able to grow teosinte at the Cornell latitude _____ artificially shortening the summer day".
- 73) The girl _____ blue yes entered the school.
- 74) He divided his property _____ his sons.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA

CURSO DE LETRAS

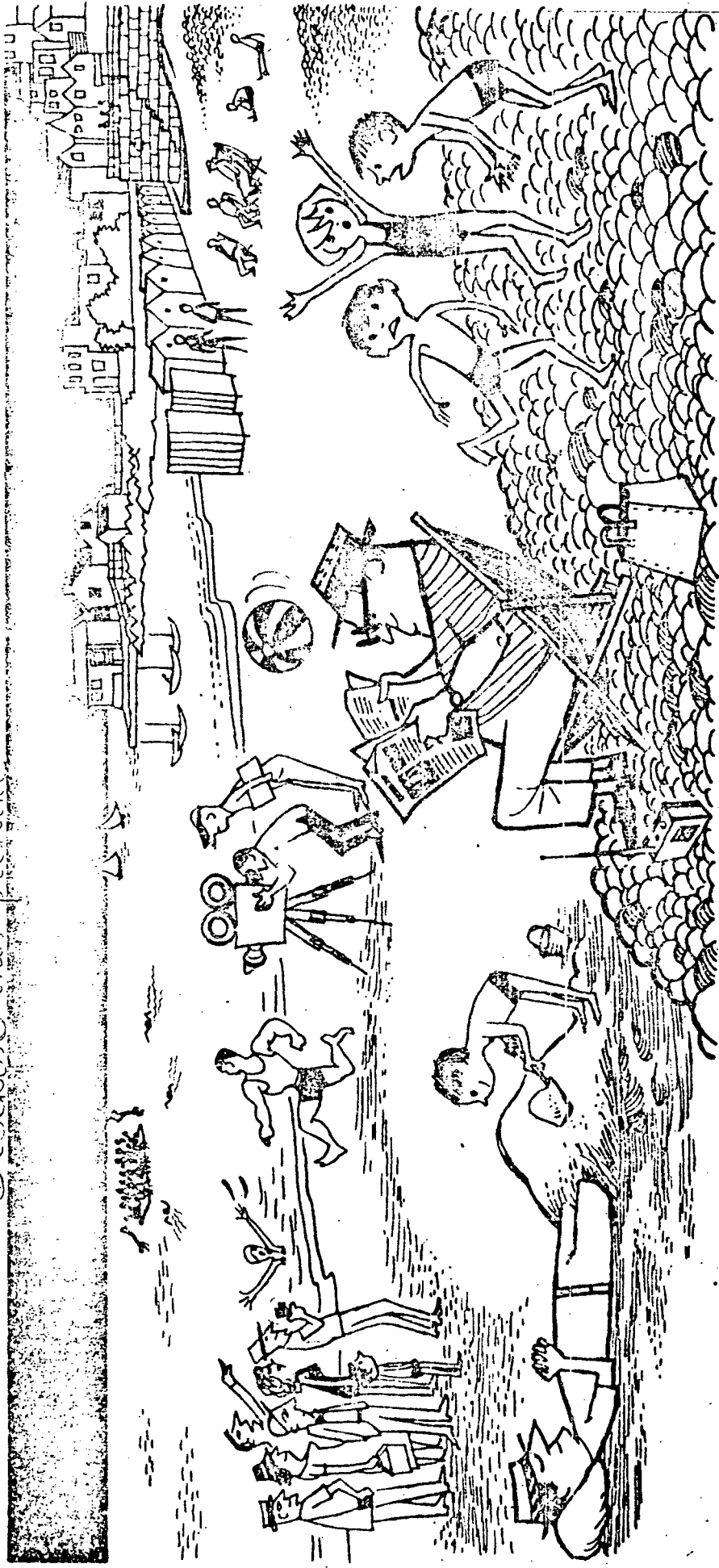
NOME: _____ FASE: _____ DATA: _____

ORAL EXERCISE

- Look at each detail of the picture carefully for five minutes
- Then describe everything you have seen in the picture. You have fifteen minutes to do it
- Please, don't forget to say your name before you begin speaking
- After you have said your name, turn your tape back and listen to it to make sure it was recorded. Push the button to record again and begin talking about the picture. Don't stop the tape again until you finish.

Thank you very much!

Describe this picture



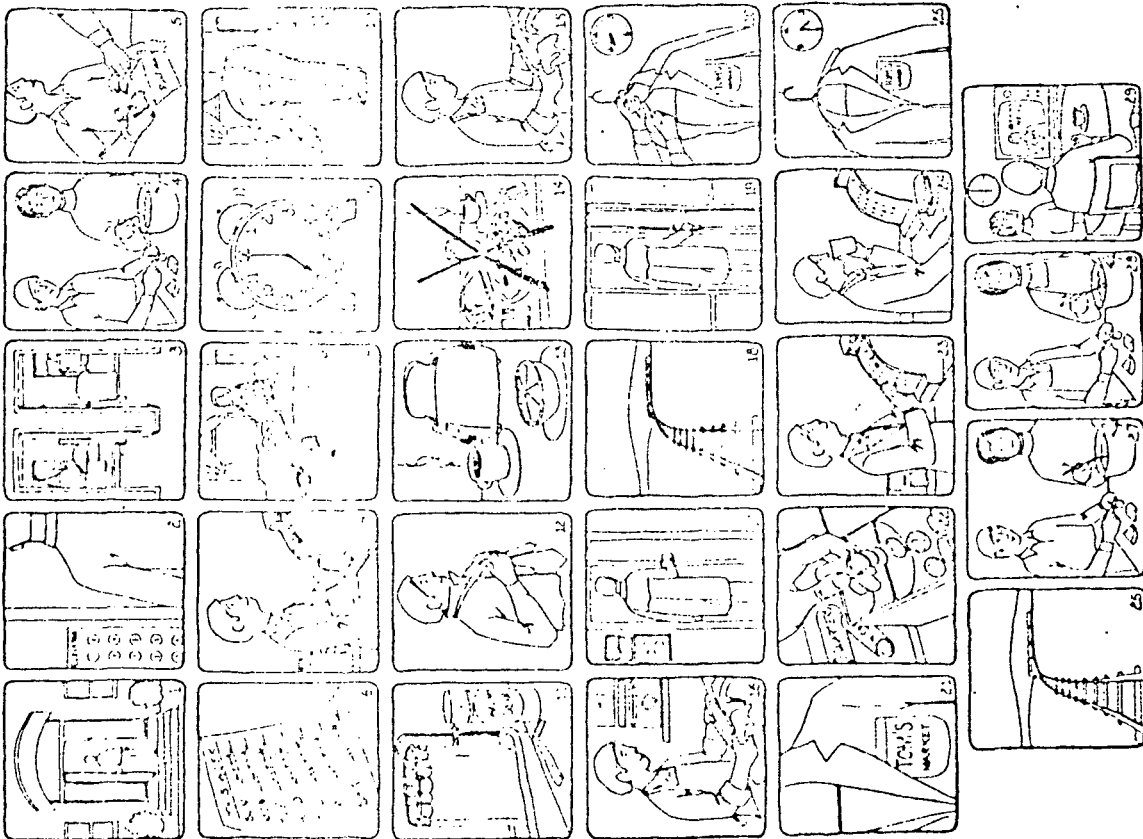
UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA

CURSO DE LETRAS

NOME: _____ FASE: _____ DATA: _____

Choose one of the following topics below that you like best and write a composition based on it. You are advised to write three or four paragraphs (between 150 and 200 words).

- 1) Write about an unforgettable day or trip in your life.
- 2) Write an account of a play, film or TV programme you have seen recently.
- 3) Compare this city-Florianopolis-with another you have been to or want to go to.
- 4) Write a story based on the sequence of pictures.



APPENDIX

PREPOSITIONAL USES TESTED IN THE GAP TEST

Preposition	Use or Meaning	Tested Sentence
OF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Objective Genitive 2. Subjective Genitive 3. Descriptive Genitive 4. Material 5. Quantity 	<p>He made an agonizing reappraisal <u>of</u> his prospects and his role</p> <p>She was the daughter <u>of</u> my friend</p> <p>He looked, if not like a duke, at least, like an actor <u>of</u> the old school</p> <p>Everything is made <u>of</u> atoms</p> <p>At Scotland Yard, some <u>of</u> the same reporters who had been in Brixton have heard the same story</p>
IN	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place 2. Time (2) 3. Occupation 4. Manner, condition 	<p>They live <u>in</u> a big house</p> <p>Paul answered all questions <u>in</u> ten minutes</p> <p>Paul studies <u>in</u> the morning</p> <p>Albert Foreman was <u>in</u> business as a tobacconist and newsagent</p> <p>The system is <u>in</u> deep crisis</p>
ON	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place (2) 	<p>His man discovered <u>on</u> the island of Cuba great fields of the strange new plant. Mr. Smith lives <u>on</u> Herculio Luz Avenue.</p>

Cont.

Preposition	Use or Meaning	Tested Sentence
ON	2. Time 3. Manner, state, condition 4. Position	I was at the neighborhood <u>on</u> Friday night The priest went down <u>on</u> his knees The man was standing <u>on</u> line
AT	1. Place (2) 2. Time 3. Ratio 4. Address	Paul Mangelsdorf is currently an emeritus professor <u>at</u> University of North Carolina <u>at</u> Chapel Hill She leaves her work <u>at</u> two o'clock The dollar is <u>at</u> Cr\$ 157 cruzeiros Mr. Smith lives <u>at</u> 248 Hercílio Luz Avenue
FROM	1. Source (2) 2. Distinction 3. Scale 4. Distance	He comes <u>from</u> Austria. The old vicar had brought a table many years before <u>from</u> Italy How would you distinguish an Englishman <u>from</u> an American? The fruitcases vary <u>from</u> gray to brown. The village is ten miles <u>from</u> the highway
BY	1. Instrument 2. Agentive	He travelled <u>by</u> bus The novel was written <u>by</u> Tolstoy

Cont.

Preposition	Use or Meaning	Tested Sentence
BY	3. Time 4. Proximity 5. Means	Could you bring me this book <u>by</u> next tuesday at the latest? I always walk <u>by</u> that house. Emerson was able to grow teosinte at Cornell latitude <u>by</u> artificially shortening the summer day
FOR	1. Purpose 2. Support 3. Benefactive 4. Extent in Space 5. Duration of Time	An umbrella is <u>for</u> protection from the rain Are you <u>for</u> or against the plan? My wife's quite a scholar and if I want to write a letter she writes it <u>for</u> me. We walked <u>for</u> three miles. The vergers of St Peter's, like the Popes of Rome, were there <u>for</u> life.
TO	1. Direction 2. Ratio 3. Dative (2) 4. Duration of Action	Paul often goes <u>to</u> the cinema with his girlfriend Flamengo won the game by three goals <u>to</u> one Everyone has a story which happened either <u>to</u> themselves ora relative or a friend Foreman, we've got something rather umpleasant to say <u>to</u> you the children have classes from <u>10:00 to</u> 11:00.

Cont.

Preposition	Use or Meaning	Tested Sentence
WITH	1. Comitative 2. Having 3. Manner 4. Instrument 6. Ingredient	She went to the theater <u>with</u> a friend The girl <u>with</u> blue eyes entered the school I've noticed they very often do, said the vicar <u>with</u> a little smile She killed herself <u>with</u> a knife The hills were covered <u>with</u> snow.

GAP TEST = 25 informants

Prep.	Meaning	Use	Cor. Resp.	Strategies			Guessing	Omission	Both Sources	N Interp.	C 2
				M Tongue	Overgen.	Rule Association					
OF	Objective Genitive	L	92%	-	-	-	4%	-	4%	-	-
	Descriptive Genitive	L	32%	-	40%	-	8%	16%	-	-	4%
	Objective Genitive	L	8%	16%	4%	-	44%	8%	-	4%	12%
	Material	L	44%	4%	-	-	4%	8%	-	-	40%
	Quantity	L	84%	-	-	-	8%	8%	-	-	-
IN	Place	L	96%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4%
	Time 1	L	80%	-	-	16%	-	-	-	4%	-
	Time 2	L	76%	-	-	12%	-	4%	8%	-	8%
	Occupation	NL	12%	8%	-	-	28%	8%	12%	4%	20%
	Manner	L	48%	-	-	-	20%	28%	-	4%	-
ON	Place	L	24%	-	-	8%	12%	4%	4%	-	48%
	Time	L	84%	-	-	8%	4%	4%	-	-	-
	Manner	L	48%	-	8%	-	40%	4%	-	-	-
	Position	L	24%	24%	-	-	4%	20%	-	-	28%

Cont.

Prep.	Meaning	Use	Cor. Resp.	Strategies			Guessing	Omission	Both Sources	N Interp.	C 2
				MTongue	Overgen.	Rule Association					
ON	In contact with	L	92%	-	-	8%	-	-	-	-	-
AT	Place 1	L	60%	-	-	-	4%	-	-	-	36%
	Place 2	L	4%	-	-	-	8%	4%	-	-	76%
	Time	L	92%	-	-	8%	-	-	-	-	-
	Address	L	60%	-	-	24%	-	8%	8%	-	-
	Price	L	-	-	4%	-	8%	8%	8%	-	64%
FROM	Source 1	L	92%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36%
	Source 2	L	40%	-	16%	-	16%	8%	16%	-	4%
	Distinction	NL	60%	28%	-	-	8%	-	-	-	4%
	Scale	NL	28%	-	-	-	4%	40%	28%	-	-
	Distance	L	52%	8%	-	-	16%	20%	-	-	4%
TO	Direction	NL	96%	4%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Ratio	NL	32%	48%	-	-	12%	-	8%	-	-
	Duration	NL	64%	-	4%	-	-	-	-	-	32%

Cont.

Prep.	Meaning	Use	Cor. Resp.	Strategies			Guessing	Omission	Both Sources	N Interp.	C 2
				M Tongue	Overgen.	Rule Association					
TO	Dative 1	NL	36%	28%	4%	-	4%	12%	16%	-	-
	Dative 2	NL	72	-	-	-	4%	8%	16%	-	-
BY	Agentive	L	88%	-	4%	-	8%	-	-	-	-
	Instrument	L	96%	-	-	-	-	4%	-	-	-
	Means	L	4%	4%	-	4%	16%	16%	36%	-	-
	Time	L	-	8%	-	-	4%	12%	44%	-	32%
	Proximity	L	28%	16%	4%	-	12%	16%	-	-	24%
FOR	Purpose	L	24%	-	-	-	12%	24%	-	-	40%
	Benefactive	L	76%	4%	-	-	-	-	-	-	20%
	Time	L	12%	12%	-	-	12%	32%	-	8%	24%
	Extent	L	20%	4%	-	8%	4%	8%	-	-	56%
	Support	L	44%	16%	-	-	8%	16%	8%	-	8%
WITH	Comitative	L	96%	-	-	-	-	4%	-	-	-
	Instrument	L	92%	-	-	-	4%	4%	-	-	-

Cont.

Prep.	Meaning	Use	Cor. Resp.	Strategies			Guessing	Omission	Both Sources	N Interp.	C 2
				M Tongue	Overgen.	Rule Association					
WITH	Manner	L	60%	20%	-	-	12%	8%	-	-	-
	Having	NL	72%	20%	-	-	-	4%	-	4%	-
	Ingredient	L	28%	20%	-	-	-	4%	-	-	48%

COMPOSITION TEST = 21 Informants

Prep.	Meaning	Use	Strategies			Both Sources	Correct Responses
			M Tongue	Overgeneral	Rule Association		
TO	dative	NL	-	-	-	-	100%
	direction	NL	3.5%	-	-	12.5%	83.9%
IN-	place	L	4.6%	-	4.6%	-	90.7%
	time	L	-	-	33.3%	-	66.6%
	manner	L	-	-	-	-	100%
AT	place	L	-	-	4.5%	13.6%	81.8%
	time	L	-	-	25%	-	75%
ON	place	L	-	-	50%	-	50%
	time	L	-	-	14.2%	28.5%	57.1%
	manner	L	-	-	-	-	100%
	disjunct	NL	-	-	-	-	100%
FROM	distinction	NL	-	10%	-	-	90%
OF	descriptive genitive	L	11.1%	-	-	-	88.8%

Cont.

Prep.	Meaning	Use	Strategies			Both Sources	Correct Responses
			M Tongue	Overgeneral	Rule Association		
OF	quantity	L	-	-	-	100%	
WITH	comitative	L	5.5%	-	-	94.4%	
	manner	L	-	-	-	-	
	having	NL	-	-	-	-	

ORAL TEST = 14 Informants

Prep.	Meaning	Use	Cor. Resp.	Strategies			Both Sources	Non-Interp. Errors
				M Tongue	Overgeneral	Rule Association		
OF	Descriptive	L	83.3%	-	6.6%	-	10%	-
	genitive	L	100%	-	-	-	-	-
ON	Place	L	61.5%	1.9%	-	-	34%	-
	Time	L	-	-	-	-	100%	-
	Incontact with	L	80%	-	-	-	20%	-
AT	Place	L	50%	-	-	-	50%	-
	Time	L	66.6%	-	-	-	33.3%	-
IN	Place	L	89.2%	-	-	2.7%	6.1%	-
	Time	L	60%	-	-	-	20%	20%
	Manner	L	-	-	-	50%	50%	-
FOR	Purpose	L	83.3%	-	-	-	16.6%	-
	Disjunct	NL	100%	-	-	-	-	-

Cont.

Prep.	Meaning	Use	Cor. Resp.	Strategies			Both Sources	Non-Interp. Errors
				M Tongue	Overgeneral	Rule Association		
TO	Direction	NL	100%	-	-	-	-	-
WITH	Comitative	L	100%	-	-	-	-	-
	Instrument	L	87.5%	-	-	12.5%	-	-
	Manner	L	100%	-	-	-	-	-
	Ingredient	L	100%	-	-	-	-	-
	Having	NL	100%	-	-	-	-	-