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Syntactic Study of "*For*" and "*Of*" among Selected L2 Learners of English in Taraba State University, Jalingo

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Abstract
This study titlesd "Syntactic Analysis of the Use of "For" and "Of" among Selected L2 Learners of English in Taraba State University, Jalingo" investigated the syntactic challenges second-language learners face when using the prepositions "for" and "of." The aim is to examine how learners use these prepositions, identify common errors associated with them and explore possible causes of misuse. Specifically, the study analysed students' writing for syntactic patterns, determine types of prepositional errors, and link these errors to L1 interference and developmental influences. The research is anchored on Error Analysis Theory (Corder, 1967) which is supported by Government and Binding Theory (Chomsky, 1981). This offerd a framework for analysing learner errors within syntactic structures. A descriptive research design was adopted with qualitative approach, involving 60 purposively selected 300-level students who wrote essays containing natural uses of "for" and "of." Data are analysed using content and syntactic analysis. Findings reveal frequent misuse of both prepositions due to interlingual and intralingual interference. The study concluded that the L2 learners in the study area struggle with prepositional syntax due to influence from their first language and insufficient grammatical exposure. It recommends that teachers provide focused grammar instruction, that students receive error-correction practice, and that the curriculum be streamlined to include preposition-focused syntactic lessons. These steps will enhance students' academic writing and overall English proficiency.
Keywords: Prepositions, Syntax, Interference, Learners, Errors.

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Introduction

Prepositions are essential components of English grammar, functioning to express relationships between nouns, pronouns, and other sentence elements. As Quirk et al. (2021) explain, prepositions serve as connectors that convey direction, time, cause, possession, and spatial relationships. The correct usage of common prepositions such as 'for' and 'of' is fundamental to maintaining grammatical accuracy and clarity in English communication. These prepositions are syntactically significant, often serving as heads of prepositional phrases that assign semantic roles to noun phrases. However, despite their grammatical importance, prepositions are widely recognized as a challenging aspect of English for learners of English as a Second Language (L2) (Huddleston & Pullum, 2022).

The complexity in mastering prepositional usage arises from their semantic ambiguity and cross-linguistic variability. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (2021) note that different languages conceptualize spatial and abstract relationships differently, making direct translation of prepositions problematic. Odlin (2020) emphasizes that negative transfer from learners' first languages (L1) often leads to errors, particularly where English prepositions lack direct equivalents. This is evident among L2 learners at Taraba State University, whose native languages such as Hausa, Fulfulde, and Jukun differ structurally from English, contributing to frequent misuse.

Swan (2021) identifies *for* and *of* as two of the most frequently misused prepositions due to their broad range of functions. While *for* typically indicates purpose, benefit, or duration, *of* is commonly used to express possession, attributes, or part-whole relationships. According to Murphy (2022), learners often confuse these prepositions in constructions like "reason for" versus "cause of" because of poor rule generalization. Ellis (2020) further suggests that L2 learners tend to overgeneralize or misunderstand collocational patterns, leading to recurring syntactic errors.

The significance of for and of extends beyond simple usage; they are central to nominalizations, abstract expressions, and post-modifying structures in formal writing (Tyler & Evans, 2021). Biber et al. (2021) underscore their high frequency in both spoken and written registers, especially in academic texts. Thus, accurate usage of these prepositions is essential for effective communication and academic performance.
Investigating the syntactic use and misuse of for and of among L2 learners of Taraba State University is, therefore, crucial. As Akande and Salami (2023) argue, understanding learners' specific challenges allows for more targeted instructional strategies. In a multilingual academic setting where English functions as a second language, such research is vital for improving language instruction and overall communicative competence.

Conceptual review

This section explores key concepts central to understanding L2 learners' syntactic use of *for* and *of* as thus:

Prepositions in English grammar

Prepositions are functional words that show the relationship between nouns (or pronouns) and other words in a sentence, often indicating direction, location, time, or abstract relations. In English, prepositions like for and of contribute to the overall syntax and meaning of expressions. According to Quirk et al. (2022), prepositions are vital for constructing meaning and grammatical correctness in both written and spoken English. For example, in "This gift is

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for you" and "The title of the book", for and of link the subject to the complement. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (2021) note that prepositions are challenging for L2 learners because many prepositional uses are idiomatic. Swan (2021) adds that their abstract meanings and interchangeable use in other languages often lead to errors in English. L2 learners may say "reason of coming" instead of "reason for coming", misplacing the preposition due to L1 interference. So, prepositions are essential components of English syntax and meaning, but their abstract and idiomatic nature makes them a challenge for L2 learners.

Second language acquisition (SLA)

Second Language Acquisition refers to the process through which people learn a language other than their native tongue. Prepositional misuse is common in SLA due to interlanguage development, a learner's evolving language system. Odlin (2020) states that language transfer from the mother tongue to the target language can cause syntactic errors. For instance, Hausa speakers might misuse of where *for* is required due to structural differences. Gass and Selinker (2021) argue that learners go through predictable stages and may fossilize incorrect forms if not corrected. Ellis (2020) emphasizes the importance of input and feedback in helping learners acquire correct syntactic structures. An example is the misuse: "*The benefit for going early*" vs. the correct "*The benefit of going early*" here, no error exists, but confusion arises when other nouns demand *for*, like "*reason for delay*". Understanding these distinctions is crucial in SLA. In a nutshell, SLA involves gradual learning of target language structures. Misuse of prepositions like *for* and *of* often results from mother tongue influence and developmental stages.

Error analysis in syntax

Error analysis focuses on identifying, describing, and understanding language errors made by L2 learners. Corder (2021) notes that errors are systematic and reflect the learner's internal understanding. In syntactic terms, misuse of *for* and *of* often reflects interlanguage interference. James (2020) classifies prepositional errors as substitution (e.g., "*need of help*" instead of "*need for help*"), omission (e.g., "*the cause the problem*"), or addition. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (2022) argue that such errors are valuable indicators of learning progress and areas needing instruction. At Taraba State University, common prepositional errors are found in students' essays and formal writing. A clear understanding of syntactic errors helps educators tailor interventions and feedback, correcting misconceptions. Tools like syntactic trees and clause analysis further clarify error patterns. So, syntactic error analysis helps identify patterns in L2 learners' misuse of prepositions, enabling targeted teaching and learning improvements.

Syntactic function of "*for*"

The preposition "*for*" plays various syntactic roles such as indicating purpose, benefit, duration, or intended recipient. Huddleston and Pullum (2021) explain that for introduces prepositional phrases serving as adverbials or complements. Examples include: "*I bought this gift for my mother*" (beneficiary) and "*Time for departure has come*" (purpose). Carter and McCarthy (2020) highlight how for often introduces non-finite clauses, e.g., "It is important for students to study." Swan (2021) adds that L2 learners often confuse for with *to*, e.g., "*She gave it to him*" vs. "*She bought it for him*". Errors arise due to overlap in semantic functions across languages. At Taraba State University, students may write "*It is hard to students to pass*" instead of "*for students to pass.*" Correct usage requires syntactic awareness of how for operates in complex sentence structures. So, the preposition *for* has diverse syntactic functions, and its misuse among L2 learners stems from structural and semantic complexities.

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Syntactic function of "*of*"

The preposition "*of*" primarily expresses possession, part-whole relationships, and noun modification. Greenbaum and Quirk (2022) state that of forms part of complex noun phrases, e.g., "*the name of the book*," "*the colour of the car*." Biber et al. (2021) add that of often appears in abstract expressions: "*fear of failure"*, "*concept of freedom*". Halliday and Matthiessen (2023) highlight that *of* serves as a relational marker linking nouns syntactically. L2 learners struggle with *of* because it's overgeneralized or confused with possessive *'s* or *for*, e.g., "*the book for the teacher*" instead of "*the book of the teacher.*" The role of *of* in partitive structures such as ("*a piece of cake*") and its abstract uses require explicit instruction. Errors in usage affect clarity and coherence in student writing. To sum it all, *Of* serves crucial syntactic functions in possession and modification, yet L2 learners frequently misuse it due to abstract meanings and structural complexity.

Uses of "*for*" in modern grammar:

Example:	**reason**	**explanation**
1. This gift is *for* you.	shows *purpose* or *intended recipient*	(Indicates the intended recipient of the gift.)
2. She has lived here *for* ten years.	expresses *duration*	(Shows the length of time.)
3. He was punished *for* being late.	indicates *reason* or *cause*	(Explains the reason behind the punishment.)
4.They voted *for* the new policy.	expresses *support* or *favour*	(Shows support for something.)
5. This medicine is good *for* headaches.	indicates *benefit*	(Indicates the benefit or usefulness.)
6. I'll give you N500 *for* the book.	shows *exchange* or *substitution*	(Indicates an exchange of items.)
7. A spoon is *for* eating soup.	describe a specific *function* or *use*	(Shows the function of an object.)
8. He left *for* Lagos this morning.	shows *destination* or *direction*	(with motion verbs).

Uses of "*of*" in modern grammar:

Example:	**Reason**	**explanation**
1. The legs *of* the table are broken.	indicates *possession* or *relationship*	(Shows that the legs belong to the table.)
2. A cup *of* water is enough.	indicates *quantity* or *measurement*	(Shows a measured amount.)
3. He is a member *of* the committee.	describes a *part of a whole*	(Indicates part of a larger group.)
4. He is a member *of* the committee.	shows *origin* or *source*	(Shows the place of origin.)
5. A bottle *of* milk.	indicates *content* or *material*	(Describes what is inside the container.)
6. She died *of* malaria.	shows *cause* or *reason* (formal use)	(Shows the cause of death.)
7. A woman of great courage.	shows *description* or *characteristic*	(Describes the attribute of the woman.)

In lieu of the above, the review reveals the following: in modern grammar that, "*for*" primarily functions as a:

1. *Benefactive Preposition* – when it shows benefit or who receives something, example: This gift is *for* you.

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2. *Temporal Marker* – when it indicates duration, example: He stayed *for* two hours.
3. *Causal Marker* – when it explains reason or cause, example: She was praised *for* her honesty.
4. *Purpose Marker* – when it indicates purpose or intended use, example: A pen is *for* writing.
5. *Directional Preposition* – when it expresses movement toward a destination, example: They left *for* Abuja at noon.

Whereas "*of*" functions as a:

1. *Possessive Preposition* – when it indicates belonging, example: The roof *of* the house collapsed.
2. *Partitive Marker* – when it shows a part of a whole, example: A piece *of* cake.
3. *Relational Marker* – when it indicates association or relationship, example: A friend of mine.
4. *Source Marker* – when it shows origin or cause, example: A man *of* integrity.
5. *Material Content Marker* – when it indicates what something is made of, example: A bottle *of* water.

In a nutshell, in modern grammar, *for* is used mainly to show purpose, benefit, reason, or direction, functioning as a benefactive, temporal, or purpose marker. In contrast, *of* indicates possession, relationship, origin, or composition, acting as a possessive, relational, or partitive marker. Understanding these grammatical distinctions helps L2 learners avoid syntactic errors and use prepositions more accurately in English sentences.

Therefore, prepositions like *for* and *of* are essential yet challenging for L2 learners due to their abstract and idiomatic uses. SLA theory explains how learners acquire these structures and often transfer patterns from their first language. Error analysis identifies patterns of misuse, helping improve instruction. The prepositions *for* and *of* serve different syntactic functions such as indicating purpose, possession, and relationships. Understanding these concepts is crucial for improving learners' syntactic accuracy.

Syntax of '*for*' and '*of*' in modern English

The syntax of *for* and *of* in Standard English highlights their roles as key grammatical tools in sentence construction. According to Huddleston and Pullum (2005), for typically serves as a prepositional complement linking verbs to noun phrases, as in *He arranged a meeting **for** the students*. In contrast, *of* functions as a *possessive or relational marker, as in *The book **of** poems was published last year.*

Prepositions like for and of form preposition for noun phrase (NP) constructions, which are vital in expressing logical relations. As Biber et al. (2021) observe, constructions such as request for help or lack of interest are frequent collocations in academic and formal English. Carter and McCarthy (2017) also stress their modifying function, particularly in noun phrases like a sense of pride and a reason for concern. So, the prepositions *for* and *of* fulfill syntactic roles as complements and modifiers, and frequently occur in stable collocations.

Second language acquisition and interference

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) involves the gradual mastery of a non-native language, often influenced by learners' first language (L1). According to Ortega (2018), L1 interference refers to the transfer of linguistic patterns from the native language into the target language,

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resulting in errors such as "*the book **of** my friend*" instead of "*my friend's book."* This interference often affects preposition use, particularly with *of* and *for*.
Lightbown and Spada (2020) highlight developmental errors, which arise naturally as learners form rules based on their internal understanding rather than direct L1 transfer. For instance, an L2 learner might say "*She explained me the story*" (incorrect) instead of "*She explained the story **to** me*". Similarly, Ellis (2015) emphasizes intralingual influence, where confusion within the target language itself—such as overgeneralizing rules for prepositions—causes syntactic errors. This entails that, L1 interference, developmental errors, and intralingual confusion significantly impact how L2 learners acquire and use English prepositions.

Empirical review
Jach's study (2018) investigated German and Chinese L2 English learners' preferences for preposition placement using a judgment task. The aim was to explore how language background influenced syntactic variation in prepositional usage. Rooted in usage-based theory, the study revealed that German learners were more tolerant of preposition fronting than Chinese learners, likely due to structural similarities with German. The methodology included acceptability judgments from 60 university students and syntactic categorization of responses. The findings highlighted the role of L1 transfer in shaping syntactic expectations. The study concluded that typological closeness to English affects L2 syntactic preferences. However, the research focused narrowly on fronting and omitted semantic analysis of prepositions like "for" and "of." Additionally, the participants were university students only, limiting generalizability. The current study expands on this by analysing syntactic and semantic dimensions of specific prepositions in a broader Nigerian L2 context.

Saravanan (2015) explored prepositional errors among Tamil-speaking high school students in Malaysia, focusing on locative and directional prepositions. The study's objective was to identify the impact of Tamil on learners' use of English prepositions. Employing Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis Theory, data were collected from written essays of 50 learners. Results revealed consistent misuse of prepositions such as "at," "on," and "to," largely due to differences between Tamil and English prepositional structures. Saravanan concluded that many learners translated directly from Tamil, resulting in structural errors. Though insightful, the study concentrated solely on spatial prepositions and did not assess abstract prepositions like "for" and "of." It also lacked a theoretical link to syntactic roles like modifiers or complements. This study builds on Saravanan's work by including a syntactic function analysis of "for" and "of," using data from L2 learners at the tertiary level, a population largely ignored in previous research.

Masoudi (2020) analysed the use of prepositional verbs by Saudi Arabian EFL students in academic writing. The study aimed to assess frequency and accuracy in collocational use of prepositions, with "for," "to," and "with" as focal points. Using corpus analysis and writing samples from 40 undergraduate students, the study revealed that learners frequently misused prepositions due to L1 interference and limited exposure to native-like input. Drawing from collocational theory, Masoudi emphasized that most errors were developmental but became fossilized over time. The research concluded with a recommendation for collocation-based teaching strategies. Despite these contributions, the study lacked syntactic focus on how prepositions function within sentence structures as modifiers or complements. It also did not delve into context-specific usage. The present research addresses this gap by offering

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syntactic analysis of "for" and "of," using both structural and functional grammar to interpret L2 learners' written outputs at Taraba State University.

Tahaineh (2010) research centered on Jordanian Arab university students' difficulties with English prepositions. The goal was to identify types and causes of errors in prepositional usage. Using Error Analysis Theory, the study examined over 100 essays and categorized mistakes into interlingual and intralingual errors. It found that prepositions without direct Arabic equivalents such as "of," "by," and "at" were often misused. Tahaineh concluded that both transfer and generalization caused persistent errors, and suggested increased exposure to native use. Although comprehensive in error types, the study was limited by its lack of focus on specific syntactic functions of prepositions and failed to offer examples of use in phrasal constructs. Furthermore, the role of modifiers, complements, and collocations in structuring meaning was not explored. This current study extends the scope by not only investigating errors among Nigerian L2 learners but also analysing the functional syntax of "for" and "of" to understand their practical deployment in learner compositions.

Damayanti (2022) conducted a systematic literature review of 25 peer-reviewed studies on preposition use in ESL/EFL contexts, aiming to consolidate findings on common error types, causes, and teaching approaches. The review revealed that across Asian and African countries, L2 learners struggled with choosing appropriate prepositions, particularly abstract ones like "for" and "of." Most errors were attributed to interlingual transfer, overgeneralization, and inadequate contextual understanding. The studies reviewed varied in methods but predominantly employed Error Analysis and contrastive techniques. Damayanti advocated task-based and context-driven instruction. However, the review noted a significant gap in examining the syntactic functions of prepositions whether as heads in prepositional phrases or as part of collocations with noun phrases. It also lacked empirical depth, being a secondary source. This present research fills that void by engaging primary data through syntactic and functional analysis of "for" and "of" in student writings from Taraba State University, thus offering practical insights for pedagogical reforms.

Therefore, the reviewed studies collectively highlight that L1 interference significantly affects L2 learners' use of English prepositions, leading to frequent errors. While these studies provide valuable insights, they often focus on specific learner populations (e.g., German, Chinese, Tamil-speaking, Saudi, Arab learners) and do not extensively examine the syntactic roles of particular prepositions like for and of. Additionally, there is a lack of research combining quantitative and qualitative methods in analysing these issues comprehensively. There is a need for a comprehensive study that focuses specifically on the syntactic analysis of the prepositions *for* and *of* among L2 English learners, considering both L1 interference and intralingual factors. Such a study should employ a mixed-methods approach to provide a more nuanced understanding of the challenges learners face and inform more effective teaching strategies.

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on two major linguistic theories: Error Analysis (EA) and the Government and Binding Theory (GBT). Error Analysis, propounded by Stephen Pit Corder in 1967, is essential in understanding the systematic errors made by L2 learners, distinguishing between developmental and interference-induced errors. Corder argued that learners' errors are not random but reveal their underlying language acquisition process, making it a powerful tool for identifying areas of difficulty in the use of prepositions like

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"for" and "of." This theory helps in isolating, describing, and explaining syntactic errors in the learners' constructions. Government and Binding Theory, introduced by Noam Chomsky in 1981, focuses on the syntactic relationships within sentence structure. In the context of prepositions, GBT explains how prepositions function as heads that govern noun phrases and how they relate to complements and modifiers. This theory is relevant as it underpins the syntactic patterns of preposition–NP constructions in learners' usage. Researchers like Radford (2004), Cook (2007), and Carnie (2013) have applied GBT to analyse syntactic structures in L2 acquisition. Together, EA and GBT provide a dual framework for understanding both the cognitive and structural dimensions of L2 learners' prepositional errors, offering insights into learning difficulties and instructional needs.

Methodology

The study employs a descriptive research design and qualitative approach to examine the syntactic use of the prepositions "*for*" and "*of*" among L2 learners. The population comprises 300-level students of the Department of English, Taraba State University who had previously been taught 'Use of English' in their 200-level, while a sample size of 60 students is purposively selected. Using a purposive random sampling technique, only students with relevant prior exposure are randomly selected to reduce bias and ensure relevance. The primary instrument for data collection is a written essay prompt that encouraged authentic use of the target prepositions in academic contexts and life observation. The method of data analysis involves both content and syntactic analysis, which allows the researcher to examine context, and grammatical structure, while identifying errors and collocations. Ethical considerations include obtaining informed consent, protecting participant anonymity, and ensuring academic integrity. The methodology is designed to provide reliable and valid insights into L2 learners' syntactic competence and challenges with English prepositions.

Results and discussion

Table 1. presents data for the preposition "*for*"

Learner sentence	**Corrected version**	**Error type**
She bought a gift ***of*** her friend.	She bought a gift ***for*** her friend.	Substitution (interlingual)
She cooked rice ***to*** her quests.	She cooked rice ***for*** her quests.	Semantic misuse
This bag is ***of*** keeping books.	This bag is ***for*** keeping books.	Verb form error
I have been waiting ***of*** her.	I have been waiting ***for*** her.	Tense and aspect error
This book is ***to*** reading.	This book is ***for*** reading.	Non-finite clause misuse

Content Analysis shows students often substitute or confuse "*for*" with similar prepositions (e.g., "of"or "to") due to L1 transfer or literal translation. Syntactically, learners show limited grasp of infinitival and gerund constructions after "*for*," violating selectional restrictions. These errors align with the Error Analysis theory which show interlingual (L1) and intralingual (developmental) influences. The seconded theories such as Government and Binding framework explain improper government of verb complements and PP structures, leading to deviant constructions.

Table 2. presents data for the preposition "o*f*"

Learner sentence	**Corrected version**	**Error type**
I saw the photo ***for*** the	I saw the photo ***of*** the	Substitution (interlingual)

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president.	president.	
The man ***for*** God is strong.	The man ***of*** God is strong.	Prepositional error
The road ***of*** Taraba State is bad.	The road ***to*** Taraba State is bad.	Semantic error
She was full ***for*** joy.	She was full ***of*** joy.	Collocational error
The colour ***for*** the sky is blue.	The colour ***of*** the sky is blue.	Prepositional error

Content Analysis reveals that learners frequently misuse "*of*" in collocations and in expressing relationships, often influenced by direct L1 transfer or overgeneralization. Syntactically, "*of*" should function as a relational marker connecting head nouns to complements. Learners struggle with its function as a possessive or compositional preposition, confirming Error Analysis theory through semantic and collocational errors. According to Government and Binding Theory, such misuse results from poor control over head–complement structures, indicating gaps in L2 syntactic development.
This analysis incorporates both content and syntactic analysis, drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Error Analysis and Government and Binding Theory, as outlined below:

i. How do L2 learners of Taraba State University use the prepositions "for" and "of" in their writing?
L2 learners at Taraba State University often use "for" and "of" in structurally familiar contexts but with noticeable inaccuracies. For "for," students correctly apply it to show benefit or purpose, such as in "This bag is for keeping books," but often make errors in verb complementation and tense structure. Similarly, "of" is frequently used to express possession or composition, as in "The handle of the bag," yet learners sometimes misapply it in place of other prepositions, like "for" or "to." These patterns reveal an emerging but incomplete understanding of prepositional roles. Content analysis confirms an awareness of the prepositions' general functions, while syntactic analysis reveals errors in clause structuring and noun phrase complementation, validating the Government and Binding theory's emphasis on structural relationships in sentence formation.

ii. What common errors do learners make when using "for" and "of"?
Learners frequently exhibit substitution, collocational errors, and verb form mismatches when using "for" and "of." With "for," common errors include phrases like "for keep books" instead of "for keeping books," reflecting improper non-finite clause construction. They also confuse "for" with "of," leading to substitutions like "gift of her friend." Conversely, "of" is often misused in place of prepositions like "to" or "for," as in "The road of Taraba." Such errors align with Error Analysis Theory, which categorizes them as both interlingual (influenced by the learners' first language) and intralingual (arising from the complexity of English prepositional systems). Syntactic analysis shows incorrect head–complement relationships and violations in Preposition–NP structures, further demonstrating learners' struggles with accurate phrase structuring as explained in Government and Binding Theory.

iii. What are the possible causes of these errors in the learners' use of "for" and "of"?
Life observation shows that the errors in learners' use of "for" and "of" stem from several causes, primarily first language (L1) interference, overgeneralization, and limited syntactic competence. Many of the students translate expressions directly from their native languages, leading to inappropriate preposition choices like "photo for the president" instead of "of." Others apply English grammar rules inconsistently, for example, misuse "for" in contexts

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requiring different prepositions. According to Error Analysis Theory, such mistakes are developmental and expected in L2 acquisition. Government and Binding Theory highlights the learners' difficulty in correctly mapping the governing heads and their complements within prepositional phrases, indicating gaps in internalizing rules that govern syntactic structures. These findings suggest the need for more focused instruction on prepositional usage and contextual appropriateness in English, particularly in academic writing settings. These recurring issues, observed in both writing and speech, show a need for targeted instruction on prepositional use in context.

Summary

This study investigates the syntactic use of the prepositions "for" and "of" among L2 learners at Taraba State University. It finds that while learners show a basic understanding of these prepositions, they frequently misuse them due to first language (L1) interference, overgeneralization, and limited syntactic mastery. Common errors include incorrect collocations, misplacements, and omissions. On the positive side, the study reveals that learners are developing awareness of English structure, which can be strengthened through targeted instruction. However, the negative implications are that without focused teaching, these prepositional errors may persist and negatively impact learners' academic writing and overall language proficiency.

Implications of the Findings:

Positive:

The study highlights learners' basic awareness of prepositions, which provides a foundation for targeted instruction.

It offers insight into specific error patterns, helping educators design more effective teaching strategies to improve academic writing.

Negative:

Persistent misuse of "for" and "of" indicates gaps in syntactic competence and a strong influence of L1 interference.

These errors can hinder clear communication and reduce the quality of learners' academic work if not addressed through focused intervention.

Conclusion

The study was selected based on the frequent and recurring misuse of the prepositions "for" and "of" observed among L2 learners of English in Taraba State University. These errors, commonly seen in students' academic writing and spoken English, suggest persistent challenges in mastering English syntactic structures. Given the importance of accurate prepositional use in conveying meaning and maintaining grammatical correctness, this area was chosen to identify specific patterns of misuse and their underlying causes. The study also provided pedagogical insights that could support more effective instruction and improve learners' overall language proficiency.

Recommendations:

i. Teachers should provide more focused instruction on the correct use of "*for*" and "*of*" in context.

ii. Students should be guided to practice identifying and correcting common errors in using these prepositions.

iii. Curriculum designers should include lessons that address L1 interference and strengthen syntactic understanding of prepositions.

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