

**THE ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS  
BY KIKUYU FIRST LANGUAGE SPEAKERS**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

### DECLARATION:

This is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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### RECOMMENDATION

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## **DEDICATION**

To my dear parents Charles Ndiritu and Virginia Nyaguthii whose grand vision and enduring passion for hard work have shaped me and constantly impelled me to dare the challenges of life.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the difficulties encountered by Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> speakers in the acquisition of L<sub>2</sub> English prepositions. This followed a high incidence of learners' errors in these language elements creating the need to seek an explanation. The Kenya National Examinations Council and the Kenya Institute of Education have singled out English prepositions as one of the most difficult parts of speech to learn in the English language. The study sought to identify the specific areas of difficulty in the grammar of English prepositions and the factors leading to the difficulties and subsequently, to recommend appropriate remedies to this situation. The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, Eckman's Markedness Differential Hypothesis and Krashen's Monitor Model were employed in explaining the learners' errors. The Creative Construction Hypothesis provided the theoretical basis on which the acquisition order of English prepositions among the learners was worked out. A written test on the correct use of prepositions was administered to students of English in upper primary schools in Nyeri District. Such schools were selected using the purposeful sampling procedure. Random sampling was applied in the selection of the pupils. The data collected was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools such as the t-test. The results will promote the teaching approaches and learning outcomes of English in Kenya and constitute additional knowledge in second language acquisition. The research found that English prepositions differ with respect to difficulty levels. The levels of preposition difficulty found manifested a positive correlation with the extent of variance between the learners' first language and English language. The study also found evidence of a general acquisition order of English prepositions for the L<sub>1</sub> Kikuyu speakers.



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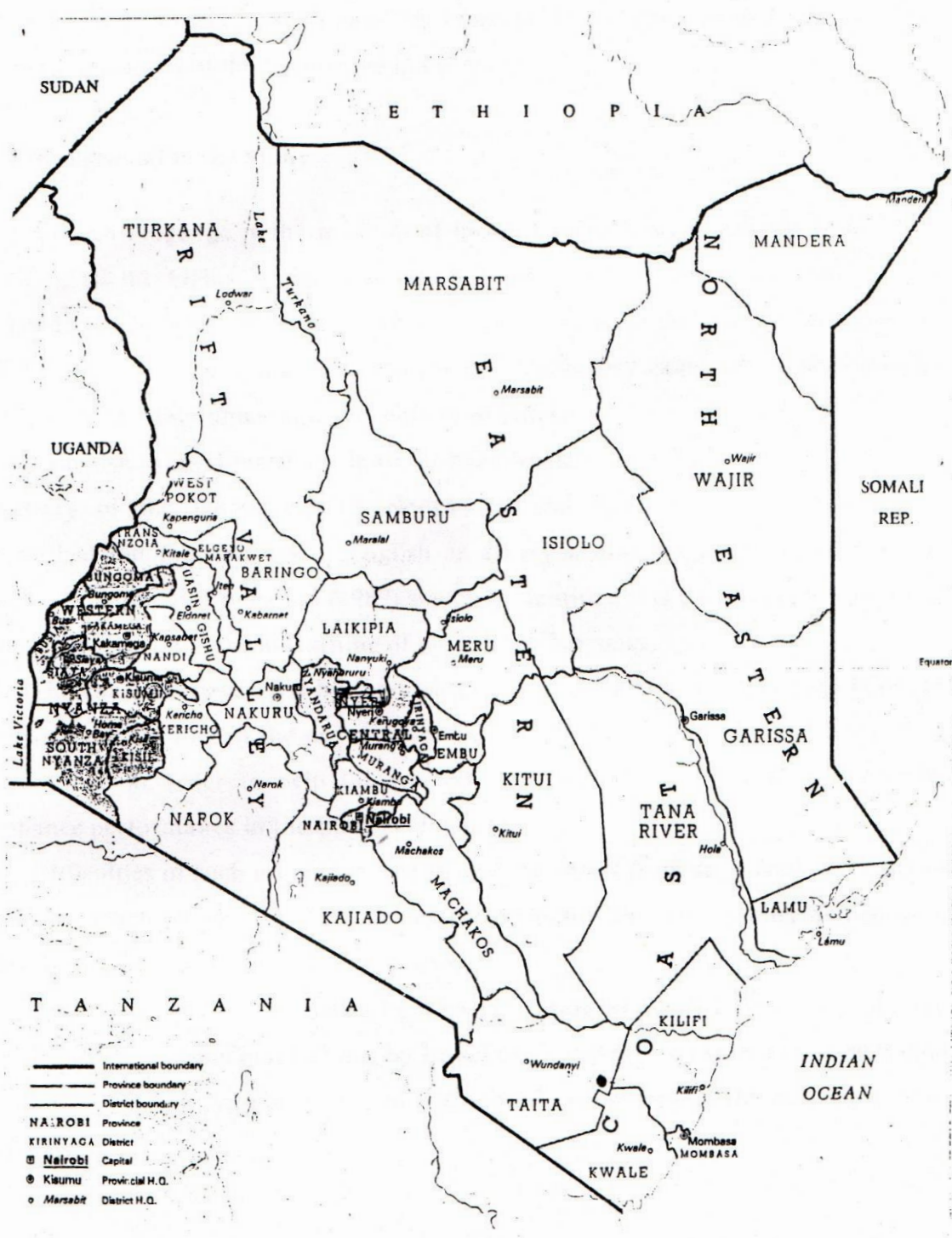
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# MAP OF KENYA





## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter features the issues under investigation. It outlines the basis for the research and the aims and scope of the research. It also gives an explanation of the conceptualization of the terms used in the study.

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

English language is the medium of instruction in Kenyan schools from grade four to all the higher levels. It is also a compulsory subject in the primary and secondary school cycles and has official language status in the country. The mastery of English language is therefore critical for satisfactory examination performance and effective communication, particularly in official circles.

English prepositions have however been singled out as a major challenge to the mastery of the language. The Kenya National Examinations Council (1991) described the prepositions in English as a very challenging part of speech. The Kenya Institute of Education (1989) similarly identified this part of speech as one of the most difficult areas in learning of the English language.

The concerns generated by these observations have warranted the study of the learners' difficulties in the use of prepositions. This is as an urgent and compelling imperative in order to help the learners surmount the difficulties and thereby enhance performance in the English language.

Difficulties of such a kind may be thought to result from such factors as lack of effective teaching, acquisition poor environments for learners, or interference from the first language ( $L_1$ ) among other factors.

This study undertook to shed light on the nature of the difficulties encountered in the learning of the prepositions by  $L_1$  Kikuyu speakers, to explain the errors, and outline a possible sequence in which English prepositions could be taught most effectively.



## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Prepositions which are used in sentences especially to express temporal, spatial and directional relationships between two entities such as nouns like people, things and places, pose a learning problem to primary school pupils. The problem appears to be particularly severe where there is incongruence between the meanings of the prepositions of the learners' first language and that of the English language.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. To identify the English preposition usages that are easy and the ones that are difficult to acquire among the Kikuyu first language speakers.
2. To find out whether the difficulty in the acquisition of English preposition usages by Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> speakers is as a result of the markedness relationships between Kikuyu and the English language.
3. To find out whether there is a regular acquisition order of English preposition usages for Kikuyu first language speakers.
4. To make recommendations on the way to address preposition difficulties.

## **1.4 Hypotheses of the Study**

1. Kikuyu first language speakers find some English preposition usages easy and others difficult to acquire.
2. The difficulty in acquiring English preposition usages by Kikuyu first language speakers is as a result of markedness differentials between the Kikuyu language and the English language.
3. There is a regular acquisition order of English preposition usages for Kikuyu first language speakers.

## 1.5 Justification of the Study

In using language, people often give descriptions in terms of the relationships contracted between one thing and another. They state the location of something in relation to a certain object or give the direction in which something is moving. They say when something is done, by whom it is done and even the intended goals of actions. In order to convey such information correctly in English, prepositions have to be used. Prepositions are therefore some of the most frequently applied syntactic items in English. Due to this crucial role of prepositions in language, communication may be hampered if they are omitted or misapplied.

Shane and Murly (1963) emphasize the need for good language usage including grammar as opposed to communication that only gives importance to meaning. In the Kenyan situation, accuracy in the use of English is highly desired and perceived as a mark of good education. Consequently, people ardently seek to achieve impeccable competence in the use of English forms. Grammatical accuracy however, remains elusive to many people.

Difficulties in preposition usage have been highlighted severally. Hocking (1967) cited preposition usage as one of the two most common problems undermining competent use of English language in Kenya. The Kenya National Examinations Council in their Newsletter of 1990 likewise identified prepositions as one of the most difficult parts of grammar acquisition among primary school pupils of English in Kenya.

Linguistics scholars have also observed this fact. Phillipson *et al* (1991) say that the choice of the correct prepositions to use is a tremendous source of difficulty to learners of a second language. His view is shared by Mutiti (2000) who says that prepositions pose a learnability problem to most language speakers learning English as a second language. This is in line with the prediction of Fitikides (1963) as well as Gulluci and Goodluck (1986) who felt that prepositions constitute one of the main problems among foreign learners of English. It has therefore been necessary to investigate and understand the difficulties that obtain in preposition use. This entails a systematic study of the possible variables responsible for such difficulties.



This research set out to identify the actual areas of difficulties in preposition usage, check for an explanation of the difficulties in the learners' first language and outline the relative order in which the various prepositions are acquired by L<sub>1</sub> Kikuyu speakers as second language learners of English.

This has been warranted by the problems of prepositions usage encountered by the learners as explained above. It is also in harmony with the position taken by Corder (1967) in Ellis (1985) on discovering errors in language. He says that errors could be significant in two ways:

- (1) They provide the teacher with information about how much the learner has learnt.
- (2) They provide the researcher with evidence of how language was acquired.

Ellis (1987) likewise makes a case for prediction of errors that learners would make saying that we can use these predictions in deciding which items need to be given special treatment in the courses that we teach or the materials that we write. He adds that for these items in particular, we can use intensive techniques such as repetition or drills in order to overcome any interference and establish the desired new habits. Dulay *et al* (1982) on a related issue say that investigation of the problems of second language acquisition could shed light on the individual variability in the rate of acquisition of languages.

Identification of the easy and difficult prepositions and the acquisition order of the prepositions would provide information on the prepositions that the learners would most likely make mistakes in. Knowledge of acquisition orders should help teachers know what language items ought to be taught early and those that can only be effectively taught at a later stage.

## **1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The research was carried out in Nyeri District in a sample of five primary schools. This is one of the five districts in the country where Kikuyu language is spoken natively by virtually all the residents. Twenty pupils of classes 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 in each school were

chosen as respondents. The time frame of the research and resource constraints could not permit coverage of the entire population.

The study examined the usage of eighteen prepositions namely **in, on, to, at, with, into, off, between, among, from, beside, under, over, above, by, in front of, away from, and of**. The prepositions were examined in use in one to four different meanings in certain grammatical structures. Most of the prepositions featured, however, have more than four meanings.

The scores of the learners in preposition tasks were interpreted as indicating ease or difficulty of the prepositions and not reflecting the level of effectiveness of teaching.

The Creative Construction Hypothesis (CCH), which embodies the concept of learners' acquisition sequence, has limitations as used here. This is because it interprets the order of difficulty obtained through performance of given tasks as reflecting the order of acquisition of the morphemes under study. Performance is however not always synonymous with the level of acquisition.

This study is also cross-sectional and hence interprets the performance of the learners who were at different grades in school as representing the performance that would be depicted by a group of individual learners if they were to be subjected to the research tasks at each of the grades. A longitudinal study would have tested the same group of learners as they graduated from one grade to the next in a period of about four years. This study however could not run for a period of more than one year.

Learning and acquisition have been used interchangeably in this study although in some studies, a distinction has been drawn between the two words.



## 1.7 Definition of Terms

Acquisition sequence - A consistent order, in which the learner acquires the L<sub>2</sub> items (Cook V. 1991). In this study, prepositions are the L<sub>2</sub> items.

Complement- Something that is necessary to complete a grammatical construction (Leech and Svartvik 1994)

Consciousness raising - Deliberate and explicit teaching of the rules and structures of a language to learners.

Developmental errors – Incorrect language forms that occur due to the learners' stage of acquisition of the target language. They are overcome when the learners reach the stage where they can competently handle them.

Direct equivalent - A word in L<sub>1</sub> whose meaning corresponds to a word in L<sub>2</sub>.

Error- Deviation from correct language usage made by learners who have not mastered the rules of the language (Corder 1967 in Ellis R. 1985).

First language (L<sub>1</sub>) - A language that a person acquires as their mother tongue. It is also known as one's native language.

Grammatical morphemes - A word or part of a word whose role in a sentence is more in the structure of the sentence than in the content. A preposition is an example of such a word.

Interlingual errors - Errors in using a language which result from the influence of another language.

Internal syllabus- A mental sequence of acquisition of language items. It predisposes the learner to acquire language items in a certain sequence.

Markedness - Features in L<sub>2</sub> (e.g prepositions) being unlike those of L<sub>1</sub> (Zobl 1984 in Ellis 1985). It has also been defined as the deviation from the language universal principles that is shown by some language features. This study has used the first definition.

Metalinguistic awareness-Conscious knowledge of the rules of a language.

Monitor model- A language performance descriptive system that views learning a language as taking place through conscious processing while acquisition



is through subconscious processes.

Morpheme- The smallest unit of grammar consisting of either a word or part of a word such as 's' in 'John's'(Cook 1991)

Obligatory occasion - A situation which is often a linguistic context that makes it mandatory for a certain linguistic feature to be used.

Patterns- Utterances that are partly unanalysed by the learner but the learner uses them correctly.

Postmodifier- A word or words that qualify the sense of other words and comes after the word(s).

Prepositions- Words used to show locative, temporal and directional relationships between things, people and events. They are such as the word 'on' in the sentence: 'They stood **on** their feet'.

Routines- Whole sentences that are usually error-free and are learned as wholes without analysis. They could be learnt through rote memorization even if their syntactic structure is far beyond the ability of the learner to learn them at a particular stage (Dulay *et al* 1982). This kind of learning is attributed to high frequency of exposure of the learner to the sentences.

School-grade/class- A level in the school hierarchy. These are like grades 1, 2, 3 e.t.c. Learners progress from one level to another in the school hierarchy every year.

School syllabus - A statement of the items to be taught presented in the order in which they are to be taught.

Second language (L<sub>2</sub>) - A language acquired by a person in addition to his/her mother tongue (Cook 1991).

Semantic loading- The number of meanings attached to a given word.

Usage- A particular use of a word such as a preposition in a grammatical structure, with one meaning.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, a survey of the written works that bear relevance to this study is given. The chapter also presents an explanation of the theories that underpin the research. The chapter is divided into two main parts.

The first part contains a review of the literature that is related to the issues under investigation. It defines prepositions and their functions and looks at various ways in which prepositions have been classified and the sequence in which grammatical morphemes such as English prepositions are acquired. The effect of markedness on the acquisition of prepositions is also assessed. Finally, a brief comparison is made between English prepositions and some African languages.

The second part centers on the theories that have guided this research. It looks at the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and the Markedness Differential Hypothesis which trace possible constraints in  $L_2$  learning to the  $L_1$ . The Creative Constructive Hypothesis describes the commonalities in the learning progression between speakers of the same  $L_1$  learning the same  $L_2$ . The Monitor Model helps to account for the learners' language output by considering some linguistic and nonlinguistic factors that influence their language processing.

### **2.1 Literature on Classification and Functions of Prepositions**

Prepositions are structural words in English that usually precede the noun phrases of sentences. The noun phrase (NP) and the verb phrase (VP) are the two basic constituents of a sentence. In the sentence 'Robert is in a suit' one of the NPs is 'Robert' and 'a suit' is the other NP, while the VP is 'is in a suit'. The prepositional phrase (PP), is 'in a suit'

Prepositions express relations between things, people and events (Quirk and Greenbaum 1973). For example, in the sentence, 'The book is on the table' 'on' is a preposition expressing the relationship between the book and the table. This preposition expresses a relationship of place for it indicates where the book lies.



Prepositions ought to be distinguished from adverb particles. Such words as ‘**on**’ and ‘**in**’ can function as prepositions or adverb particles depending on how they are used in a sentence. The following two sentences illustrate this distinction using **in**:

- (i) The manager sits **in** the office. (preposition)
- (ii) The manager was **in** when I called. (adverb particle)

Prepositions are set apart from the adverb particles by the fact that as in the examples above, the preposition governs the NP **the office** but the adverb particle ‘**in**’ as used in sentence (ii) does not govern any NP.

In a sentence, a preposition occurs in a prepositional phrase. The prepositional phrase consists of a preposition followed by a prepositional complement. The complement is usually an NP or a Wh- clause or a Verb +-ing phrase. Leech and Svartvick(1994) give a fourth complement as an Adverb. These four types of prepositional structures are illustrated in the sentences below:

- (i) He dived into the water.
- (ii) You were shocked by what you saw.
- (iii) She was rebuked for talking loudly.
- (iv) We can see our college from here.

The prepositional phrases in the four sentences above are underlined. They are analysed below:

<u>Preposition</u>	<u>Prepositional Complement</u>	<u>Type of Complement</u>
into	the water	NP
by	what you saw	Wh-
for	talking loudly	V-ing
from	here	Adverb

According to Close (1975), a preposition normally precedes a noun phrase (NP).

The following examples illustrate this:

- (i) I live **in** this house.

The preposition **in** precedes the NP **this house**.

It is also possible to separate a preposition from its NP as the sentences below illustrate.

- (ii) Which house do you live **in**?
- (iii) The house that you live **in** is splendid.

In sentences 2 and 3 the preposition **in** is separated from its NP **which house** and **the house** respectively by the words that come between the NP and the preposition. Even where the preposition is separated from its NP, the association between the two is never lost.

Kierzek and Gibson (1960) classify prepositions into single and group prepositions. The single prepositions are the ones that are single words while group prepositions are made up of more than one word.

Leech and Svartvik (1975 and 1994) call the single and group prepositions simple and complex prepositions. They identify simple prepositions as: **in, on, at, to, by, after, with, along, behind, between** etc. The complex ones are such as: **in front of, on account of, in place of, with respect to, due to, along with, out of, on top of** etc.

Wood (1967) on his part terms these two categories of prepositions proper and compound prepositions respectively. He adds a third type of prepositions which he calls pseudo-prepositions. These include words which are not actually prepositions but they have prepositional force when they occur in sentences. An example of a pseudo-preposition is the word '**astride**' which is an adverb as used in 'He is **astride**' but when used in a sentence such as 'He sat **astride** the horse' the word functions as a preposition.

Wood (ibid) also highlights the existence of prepositional idioms. These are prepositions whose use cannot be explained in terms of the ordinary meanings of the prepositions. An example is the use of the preposition '**under**' in the phrase '**under** the circumstances'. The word 'circumstances' means 'things around one' it is therefore common to say '**in** the circumstances' using the literal meaning of the preposition '**in**'. When we say '**under** the circumstances', however, the meaning of '**under**' can only be understood as idiomatic. The use of '**in**' in '**in** a spot' is another example of a prepositional idiom since a spot is a point and in the literal meaning of the preposition, we would say '**at** a spot' (Quirk & Greenbaum 1973).

Quirk and Greenbaum (ibid) suggest a classification on the basis of the relational meaning that the prepositions express. They say the most prominent prepositions are of place and time with some other meanings being of instrument and cause. However, they acknowledge that such classification would be fraught with difficulties due to the overlap that would occur as many prepositions would fall in numerous categories. An illustration



could be a preposition like 'in.' The preposition can be used in 'He is **in** class' as a preposition of place and 'He came **in** the afternoon' as a preposition of time

Close (1975) classifies preposition phrases (PPs) by function and gives the following five types:

(a) An adverbial of place(position ) as in :

The tree was **on** *a marshy land*.

(b) An adverbial of time as in:

Kahindi went to Eldoret **in** 1998.

(c)Other adverbial phrases as in:

The news was received **with** *doubts*.

(d)Post modifier in an NP as in:

The building **at** *the entrance* is the oldest.

(e)Complementation of an adjective as in:

Charles was good **at** *football*.

Leech (ibid) sub-classify prepositions expressing place relations depending on the nature of the place they refer to. The classification is as follows:

a) **At-type prepositions** – They indicate a point as in:

We are **at** home

We came **from** the bus stop

b) **On-type prepositions** – They designate a line or surface as used in the sentences below:

The ball rolled **onto** the goal line.

We turned **off** the main road.

b) **In-type prepositions** – They refer to an area usually of ground or territory enclosed by boundaries as used in the following:

I have a house **in** the city.

We went for a walk **through** the park.

c) **Inside and outside Prepositions** – They depict the location as a volume that is thought of in terms of length width and height (or depth). This is exemplified in:

He went **into** the house.

The wind blew **through** the woods.



Close (ibid) identifies the classes cited by Leech (ibid) above using different terms to describe them. He also gives the following additional ones

(a) Prepositions that indicate **to** and **at higher** or **lower levels**.

They are such as

Go **up** the hill.

Go **down** the hill.

(c) Prepositions that indicate **at the front, at the back, at the side** or **facing** something

They are as

John is running **in front of** Faith.

Mary is standing **beside** Tom.

(c) Prepositions that show that something is **on more than one side**

Examples are

We are going **(a)round** the building.

The belt is **(a)round** his waist.

(d) Prepositions that show that **there are other things on two or more sides**.

Examples are

Edward is **between** Lucy and Tonny.

We are **amongst** friends.

(e) Prepositions that indicate that something is **accompanying** or **not accompanying**

They are

Bernard is walking **with** Martin.

Norman is fighting **with/against** Juma.

(f) Prepositions that show that something is **at a short or long distance from** another.

Examples are

Ronald is sitting **next to** Sarah.

We are far **(away) from** Nairobi.

Prepositions usually encode more than one meaning depending on the variety of contexts in which they are applied. The number of meanings attached to a preposition is its semantic load. Different languages assign different semantic loads to their prepositions and such differences between the loadings of prepositions across languages may impinge

on the learning of the languages, especially when the learner already possesses knowledge of one of the languages.

English prepositions for example, are used to express a wide range of meanings. Wood (ibid) says that many English prepositions are used in so many different ways that they often do not have clearly defined meanings apart from the phrase or construction in which they occur. For instance, he lists the following nineteen meanings as attaching to the preposition **on**:

1. To indicate position of one object in relation to another e.g  
A mirror hung **on** the wall.
2. To present a place or part of the body as recipient of an activity e.g  
The stone hit him **on** the head.
3. To indicate locality, that is the place where something stands or is situated .e.g  
Kampala stands **on** a hill.
4. To indicate a means of support from beneath .e.g  
A roof supported **on** pillars.
5. To indicate a means of supporting life, an organization, business e.t.c e.g  
He finds it difficult to live **on** his salary.
6. To indicate the means by which something is enabled to work or perform its function e.g  
John's car runs **on** petrol.
7. To express direction in relation to some person or object e.g  
Take the first turn **on** your right.
8. To express membership of a group or body e.g  
He is **on** the school committee.
9. To express a passive idea for a transitive verb and an active one for an intransitive one e.g  
He is **on** trial.
10. To express the idea of 'engaged in doing something' (colloquial) e.g  
I am **on** a rather difficult work.
11. To express ground, reason or condition e.g  
**On** doctor's advice he took a month's holiday.

12. To indicate time e.g

He comes **on** Sundays.

13. To indicate the subject of a book, article, lecture, talk e.t.c. An example is

I have a book **on** space travel.

14. To suggest the idea of one thing or action following immediately after another or being simultaneous with it e.g

**On** hearing the crash, he rushed out of the house.

15. To suggest the basis of an arrangement or transaction e.g

He does not wish to buy **on** credit.

16. To indicate an objective relationship between the noun or pronoun that follows 'on' and the word that precedes it (usually a noun or an adjective) e.g

I am not keen **on** mutton.

17. To convey the sense 'at the expense of' e.g

The next round of drinks is **on** me.

18. To suggest an idea akin to that expressed by the present participle. In this use, the preposition is usually followed by 'the' and a verb used as a noun e.g

Keep the enemy **on** the run.

19. To make phrases that are expressive of an adverbial sense. The preposition in such structures is followed by 'the' and an adjective e.g

He moved house **on** the quiet.

The fact that prepositions express more than one meaning is of interest to this research. The L<sub>1</sub> and the L<sub>2</sub> may differ in the range of application of their prepositions. The study set out to find out how that phenomenon affects learning of the L<sub>2</sub>English.

The present study looked at learners' acquisition of simple and complex prepositions. It focused on the prepositions in different specific usages with different functions and checked whether differences in the range of application of English L<sub>2</sub> and the Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> hampered the acquisition process of English L<sub>2</sub> prepositions.



## 2.2 Literature on English Morpheme Acquisition Order

Studies in language acquisition divide words and morphemes into two: content words, which include nouns, adverbs, verbs, and adjectives and structural words and morphemes of structure. The structural words and morphemes of structural function are termed as grammatical morphemes. The grammatical morphemes are a closed class of words such as prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, interjections and inflections like the ones that express number and tense.

Littlewood (1984) says that learners of L<sub>1</sub> begin language use with telegraphic speech which comprises one or two word utterances, and it lacks grammatical morphemes. He gives examples of rudimentary forms as:

\* Allgone sticky (may be uttered after the child has washed his hand probably to say that the dirt has been removed).

\*Sweater chair (indicating where the sweater is).

Normally, learners will depict acquisition of grammatical morphemes later.

The focus of the present study is prepositions, one of the grammatical morphemes.

Brown (1973) quoted by Littlewood (1984) studied how three children acquired fourteen grammatical morphemes in English. He found that there was an acquisition sequence which was remarkably similar for the three children he used.

The average order he found was as follows:

- 1) Present progressive **-ing** ( as in “She is **running**”)
- 2) Preposition **on** ( as in “ He sat **on** the chair”)
- 3) Preposition **in** ( as in “ A fly is **in** the cup”)
- 4) Plural **-s** ( as in “ Books”)
- 5) Irregular past forms ( as in “She **went**.”)
- 6) Possessive ‘s’ ( as in “Daddy’s shoes”).
- 7) Uncontractible copular (as in “Yes she **is**”).
- 8) Articles **the** and **a** (“**a** radio”, “**the** news”).
- 9) Regular past **-ed** (as in “She **walked**”).
- 10) Regular third person singular (as in “She **runs**”)
- 11) Irregular third person singular (as in “She **has** come” )



12) Uncontractible auxiliary **be** (as in “She **was** cunning”)

13) Contractible auxiliary **be** (as in “He’s coming”).

Dulay and Burt (1973) investigated the acquisition sequence of some of the English grammatical morphemes by L<sub>2</sub> English learners. They studied how often Spanish L<sub>1</sub> children supplied eight grammatical morphemes correctly in English sentences. They found the order hereunder:

- 1) Plural “s”
- 2) Progressive –“ing”
- 3) Copula forms of “be”
- 4) Auxiliary form of “be”
- 5) Definite and indefinite articles **the, an, a**
- 6) Irregular past tense as in **hurt, broke**
- 7) Third person “s”
- 8) Possessive “s”

Similar orders have been found for Japanese children and for Korean adults and their L<sub>1</sub> did not appear to make a difference. The study by Dulay and Burt though among L<sub>2</sub> learners did not investigate the acquisition of prepositions. The present study undertook to find out whether there is an acquisition order of English prepositions which form part of the grammatical morphemes. It had Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> speakers for its research subjects.

Clark (1973) in Fletcher and Garman (1986) examined the acquisition of locatives (prepositions of place). She hypothesized that they would be acquired in the order **in, on**, and then **under**. Clark (ibid) found that the prepositions **top** and **bottom** were acquired before **front** and **back** while Kuczaj and Maratsos (1975a) in Fletcher and Garman (1986) showed that the pair front and **back** emerge at the same time and initially, are only understood as opposites. The present study examined more prepositions to shed light on the dynamics of preposition acquisition and expand knowledge on preposition acquisition sequence.

Knowledge of the acquisition order has a beneficial effect on the teachers and on the teaching-learning process. Littlewood (1984) says that if there are natural conditions for second language learning, the conditions form part of the learner’s psychological

make-up in every learning situation including the classroom. The teacher can therefore benefit by knowing about these processes and trying to work with them rather than against them. He feels that the knowledge of natural sequences and strategies may help us to devise more appropriate teaching sequences, more successful methods of presentation or more beneficial approaches to correcting errors.

### 2.3 Literature on Kikuyu and other African Languages in Preposition Usage

Fitikides (1963) carried out a research among speakers of African L<sub>1</sub> languages. He identified the frequently confused prepositions as **to** and **at**, and **till**, **at** and **in**, **beside** and **besides**, etc. He also found some being used unnecessarily such as

\*“He answered **to** a question.”

\*“He approached **to** an issue.”

\*“He asked **to** another” etc.

African L<sub>1</sub> speakers therefore tend to be uncertain about the English structures that require prepositions and they tend to overuse some prepositions.

Hocking (1967) says that some of the common problems evident among Kenyan English users are in preposition use. He lists such examples of wrong constructions as:

#### Erroneous structure

\*“Dictate somebody”

\*“Reply a letter”

\*“**To** my opinion”

\*“Substitute **with**”

#### Correct structure

Dictate **to** somebody

Reply **to** a letter

**In** my opinion

Substitute **for**

As in the findings of Fitikides above, confusion among learners as to which structures of English require prepositions is manifested in this data through omissions of prepositions in \*“Dictate somebody” and \*“Reply a letter”. There is also evidence of misapplication of prepositions in \*“**To** my opinion” and \*“Substitute **with**”.

A number of African languages have agglutinating tendencies just like Finish, Turkish and Japanese. This means that they bring together into one word several morphemes. Crystal (1987) gives the example of agglutination in Kiswahili as below; ‘*ninakupenda*’



*Ni -na -ku -penda.*

I (present) you love.

Agglutination involves prepositions as well where the prepositions are agglutinated to the root word. The examples below illustrate this fact drawing from Kiswahili, Kamba and Kikuyu languages.

*Samaki ameingia majini* (Kiswahili) Fish has gone **into** the water

*Mwana e kitandani* (Kamba) The child is **in** bed.

*John niathire kanithaini* (Kikuyu) John went **to** church.

(The prepositions are in bold and underlined)

Barlow (1914) says that a number of Kikuyu prepositions are usually agglutinated to the verb. Macgregor (1905) expresses a similar view. He says that Kikuyu verbs with the formative ending *-ira* express many English prepositions.

The above illustrations show evidence of agglutination in some African languages. English is however synthetic. As a result of being accustomed to an agglutinating language, learners of English with a background of one of the above  $L_1$  languages may find it difficult to identify prepositions in their languages and even in English since English prepositions are not agglutinated to the root word as is done in their  $L_1$ . This might negatively affect their use of the English prepositions.

Barlow (ibid) says that Kikuyu has both simple and compound prepositions. He identifies some simple prepositions as

*a* as in *murango wa nyumba* (the door of the house)

*iguru* as in *Iga cai metha iguru*. (Place the tea **on** ( the top of) the table).

*Kuri* as in *Twara kuri we* .(Take it **to** him).

He identifies some of the compound prepositions as

*Gatagati ka – between* as in *Arugamite gatagati ka miti io iiri*. ( He is standing **between** those two trees).

*Thutha wa- behind,after* as in *Coka na thutha wa Kamau*. ( Go **behind** Kamau).

He adds that the simple prepositions are few. Macgregor (ibid) emphasizes this point saying that Kikuyu has only four true prepositions namely *ni*, *na*, *kwa* and *-a*. He says that the language makes other prepositions freely by means of *na* and *-a*.

Barlow (ibid) further says that certain verbs which require prepositions in English are used without prepositions in Kikuyu. He gives the examples below:

<u>Kikuyu</u>	<u>English</u>
<i>he</i>	give, give <b>to</b>
<i>rora</i>	look, look <b>at</b>
<i>hoya</i>	ask <b>for</b>
<i>kinya</i>	step <b>upon</b>

According to Barlow (ibid) nouns defining the point of incidence of an action are put in the objective case without a preposition. Examples are

<u>Kikuyu</u>	<u>English</u>
<i>Nindetema kuguru.</i>	I have cut myself <b>in</b> the leg.
<i>Anyitire nguo.</i>	He got hold of me <b>by</b> the cloth.

He says that *-ini* serves as a preposition expressing locative meanings of the English prepositions **at, near, among, into** etc as in the following examples:

<u>Kikuyu</u>	<u>English</u>
<i>E kihingoini.</i>	He is at the gate.
<i>Oima nyumbaini.</i>	He was <b>near</b> the house.
<i>Twara mahuti maya muti-ini uria.</i>	Take this rubbish <b>to</b> that tree.
<i>E mbembeini.</i>	He is <b>amongst</b> the maize.

#### 2.4 Literature on Markedness and Contrasts across Languages

From the point of view of typology, features that are present in most languages are unmarked while those specific to a particular language or found in only a few languages are marked.

Drawing on typological markedness (Zobl 1984 in Ellis 1985), gives three senses in which rules can be marked. The first is typological indeterminacy where a structure predicted to be present in a language on the basis of its overall typology is not found in the language. English as a SVO (Subject Verb Object) language which would be expected to manifest a Noun + Adjective ordering does not show that ordering. Thus English can be termed marked in that respect.



A second typological definition of markedness is inconsistency. German and Dutch are found to permit two different word orders, one occurring in the main clause and the other in the subordinate clause. Compared to English which displays more consistency, German and Dutch can be considered marked.

The third way of looking at markedness and which has been adopted in this study, compares the features of one language with the features of another. In this definition, a phenomenon in one language may be marked vis-à-vis another language if it is present in one language but absent in the other language (Zobl 1984 in Ellis R 1985). For example, French may be said to be marked in relation to English in respect of the use of the extractible or the non-extractible 'how' in 'how + adjective' phrases. English avoids extractible 'how' as in the sentence:

I didn't realise how comfortable I was.

French on the other hand allows for extraction of 'how' (*combien*) in equivalent sentences as in:

\* I didn't realize how I was comfortable.

Numerous studies have explored dissimilarities between languages. The focus has been on how the differences impact on the process of learning one of the languages for those with L<sub>1</sub> knowledge of another language. Some of these studies have drawn their motivation from the predictions made by the proponents of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) and the Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH). The studies have investigated the concept of transfer in both its positive and negative roles in language learning. Some of those studies are reviewed below:

Briere (1960's) in Philipson *et al* (1991) carried out a phonetic and phonological study. He observed the actual behaviour of L<sub>2</sub> learners doing phonological tasks on selected experimental language material. He came to the conclusion that sounds which existed in the native language whether of phonemic or allophonic status were significantly easier to learn than the sounds that are not in the native language. He however noted that transfer was applied selectively so that some language items were transferred while others were not.

English and French contrast in their introducer form or presentational form (words used to introduce) 'There is...' as used in the sentence; 'There is a car outside the house'.

The French equivalent is *ilya* which literally translates into 'It has here...'. French students learning English may therefore say something like: 'Over here you have ...' which approximates the French *ilya*. Such a form may at times be correct in English but may be constrained by contexts and style so that it cannot fit in all the contexts that the 'There is..' form functions. In general, the form '...you have' dominates in French while the 'There is...' form dominates in English.

Lightbown (1984 b; 1987 a), reports after a research in Quebec, Canada, that many students coming from a French L<sub>1</sub> background tended to use the structure 'You have...' in English, rather than the commonly used English form 'There is...' They would therefore say 'You have a boy seated on a desk' rather than, 'There is a boy seated on a desk.'

The prevalence of the error was 30% for grade 7 pupils and the grades above it. For the learners in the lower grades who had not yet encountered the word 'have', and equated it to the French *ilya*, the incidence of the error was as low as 2% of the total learners' errors. However, when the learners were exposed to the word 'have' the error rose in prevalence to 21%. This demonstrates that the awareness of possible or plausible L<sub>1</sub>-L<sub>2</sub> translation equivalents increases transfer incidence.

Ringbom in Phillipson (ed) (1991) says that one factor which pervades all language learning is the desire to reduce the burden of language learning. He argues that the exploitation of perceived typological closeness is one of the strategies employed.

Hammerly (1991) says that if structures and distinctions in L<sub>2</sub> lack equivalents in L<sub>1</sub>, there occurs inhibitive interference which causes learners to omit from their L<sub>2</sub> output such specific features. He says for languages that lack prepositions, their L<sub>1</sub> speakers have more difficulties learning a language that has prepositions than those whose L<sub>1</sub> have prepositions. The former tend to omit many prepositions whilst the latter at times use incorrect ones.

Gullucci and Goodluck in Fletcher and Garman (1986) studied the ability of English-speaking children to understand the use of preposition-initial and preposition-final relative clauses. These were as "This is the man **to whom** I spoke" (where the preposition initial phrase is **to whom**). The preposition- final one can be as "This is the man **whom** I wrote **to**" (the focus of this analysis are the words **whom ...to**). Generally,



the preposition-initial form (**to whom**) is considered to be unmarked and the preposition-final one to be marked. Many languages admit only the preposition-initial form while modern English favours the preposition-final order which presents difficulties for L<sub>2</sub> English learners.

In Gullucci and Goodluck's (1986), study learners who had been exposed to the generally marked form exclusively, the preposition-final order, found it more difficult to comprehend preposition-initial forms than the preposition-final forms which are generally characterized as unmarked. This shows that markedness depends on what the learner has experienced in language and is therefore relative.

Pienemann (1995) in Chaudron (1988) argues that underlying psycholinguistic principles constrain learners' movement through developmental sequences. He says that for those structures of languages that are constrained by language universals (such as markedness), learners must go through a developmental sequence. He tested this notion in an experiment with 10 Italian children learning L<sub>2</sub> German. Two groups identified as being at successive stages (2 and 3) in German language word – order development were provided with two weeks of instruction in the fourth stage. Only the third stage learners appeared to progress.

Zobl (1984-1985) in Chaudron (1988) in an analogous manner to that of Pienemann (ibid) investigated 76 L<sub>1</sub> French learners' developmental acquisition of L<sub>2</sub> English possessive pronouns 'his' and 'her' according a markedness analysis of the primary feature (+ HUMAN) of the object of the pronoun. His detailed findings suggest that even limited instructional input on the marked +HUMAN domain ('her arm' versus 'her book') led to improved production of both + HUMAN and – HUMAN possessive noun phrases while the group given instructions on the – HUMAN domain did not progress. This suggests that marked features generally require more attention in teaching than the unmarked ones.

Markedness may also reside in the differences between languages in the degree of rigidity of word order. Granfors and Palmberg in Terence (1989) found that differences in L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> rigidity of word order had an influence on the learning of the second language. In their study, they used a guided composition written by Finish speakers, a flexible SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) language. The Finish speakers were learning English. They found



transfers of the flexible word order into English which has a fixed SVO word order .They for example encountered the erroneous sentence: \*‘This weekend got F. no fish’ (This weekend F. got no fish). In the same study, speakers of Swedish, a more rigid SVO language which therefore approximates English, made far less mistakes.

Eckman (1971),after analyzing an area of syntax of the English relative clause shows that the predicted orders of difficulty derived from the Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH) for Chinese, Japanese and Arabic speakers held true when tested against the actual learners’ errors. He concludes that both the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) and typological markedness are valid predictors of difficulty.

The present study focussed on the differences between English and Kikuyu prepositions. As found in the previous section, Kikuyu language fails to employ prepositions in some contexts which have prepositions in English. There are also differences in the range of meanings that the prepositions in the two languages carry..

The number of meanings that a word carries is its semantic loading. Kikuyu prepositions have a greater semantic load than English prepositions. An example may be seen in the preposition **na** which translates into English as **with** and **along with**, according to Macgregor, (ibid).

The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (1995) gives 16 meanings of the preposition **with**. Of those meanings, 8 are shared by the Kikuyu preposition **na** as seen below:

<u>Meaning</u>	<u>English example</u>	<u>Kikuyu example</u>
1.in the company of	Folonzi is <b>with</b> Jane.	<i>Folonzi mena Jane.</i>
2.having or carrying	Maina is coming <b>with</b> a matchete.	<i>Maina niaroka na ruhiu.</i>
3.the instrument used	He hit her <b>with</b> a stick.	<i>Aramuringire na Kamuti.</i>
4.in opposition to	Sammy fought <b>with</b> Tom.	<i>Sammy nimaruaga na Tom.</i>
5.and also something; including	They sell TVs <b>with</b> aerials.	<i>Mendagia TV na minyugi.</i>
6.manner.circumstances, or condition in which something is done.	She addressed them <b>with</b> respect.	<i>Amariirie na gitio.</i>

7. considering the

fact in relation to another Susan was unable to read *Susan niaremiruo ni guthoma na*  
**with** the noise in the room. *inegene riria riari rumu io.*

8. indicating to part with something.

Karanja is unwilling to part *Karanja ndarenda gutigana na*  
**with** his money. *mbece ciake.*

The preposition **na** has at least 15 other meanings which in English are expressed by various prepositions such as **by, on, in, over, at, for** and **from** as shown below:

**by**

<u>Meaning</u>	<u>English example</u>	<u>Kikuyu example</u>
1. with the action of doing something	Let me conclude by thanking you.	<i>Reke ndikie na kumucokeria ngatho.</i>
2. means of travel or route taken	He travelled <b>by</b> car.	Arathire <b>na</b> ngari.
3. in the name of somebody or something	He swore <b>by</b> what he held dear.	<i>Ehitire na kiria ekiriire.</i>

**on**

<u>Meaning</u>	<u>English examples</u>	<u>Kikuyu examples</u>
1. supported by or attached to	He stood <b>on</b> his feet.	<i>Arugamire na maguru make.</i>
2. by means of something using something	We talked <b>on</b> the telephone.	<i>Twaririe na thimu.</i>
3. indicating a telephone number by which a person may be contacted	Call me <b>on</b> 0745353611	<i>Hurira thimu na namba 0745353611.</i>

**in**

<u>Meaning</u>	<u>English example</u>	<u>Kikuyu example</u>
1.wearing something	She is <b>in</b> a long dress today.	<i>Ena nguo ndaihu umuthi.</i>
2.indicating the medium, Means.material used	He is speaking <b>in</b> English.	<i>Araria na Githungu.</i>
3.Indicates state or condition of something or somebody	She is <b>in</b> a hurry.	<i>Ena ihenya.</i>

**over**

<u>Meaning</u>	<u>English example</u>	<u>Kikuyu example</u>
1.transmitted by something; on something	She heard the information <b>over</b> the radio.	<i>Araiguire uhoru ucio na radio.</i>

**at**

<u>Meaning</u>	<u>English example</u>	<u>Kikuyu example</u>
1.indicating rate, price, speed etc	He drove <b>at</b> a high speed.	<i>Aratwaraga ngari na ihenya inene.</i>
2.to indicate the age at which one does something	She retired <b>at</b> the age of 65.	<i>Ahurukire wira ari na. miaka 65.</i>

**for**

<u>Meaning</u>	<u>English example</u>	<u>Kikuyu example</u>
1.as a replacement	He exchanged a pen <b>for</b> a book.	<i>Akuranirie karamu na ihuku.</i>

**from**

<u>Meaning</u>	<u>English example</u>	<u>Kikuyu example</u>
1.indicating who communicated something	We heard the rumour <b>from</b> John.	<i>Turaiguire muhuhu ucio na John.</i>
2.indicating separation or removal	She was separated <b>from</b> her siblings in her childhood.	<i>Nieheraniirio na ciana ciao hindi iria ari mwana.</i>



Therefore the Kikuyu preposition *na* considered the translation equivalent of with has at least 23 meanings while its English counterpart, *with*, has 16 meanings.

In the contexts above, the Kikuyu preposition *na* is used singly to express all the meanings that are expressed by the eight different English prepositions.

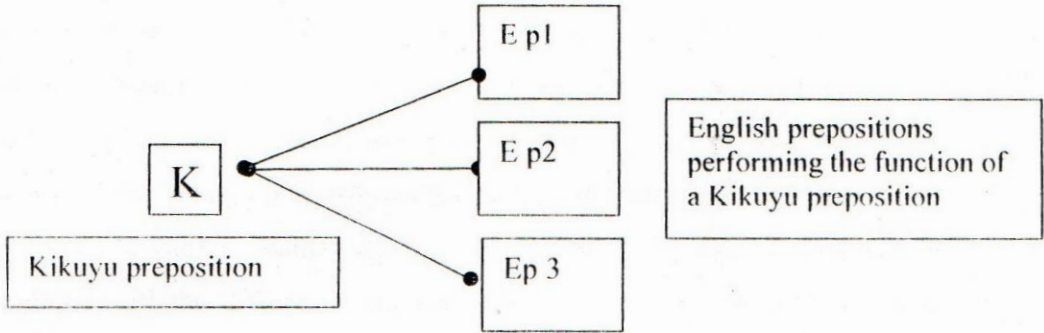
This indicates a mismatch in the range of application of individual prepositions between the two languages. In this study, this discrepancy was termed markedness between the prepositions of the two languages in terms of number of functions.

A Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> speaker will therefore expect one English preposition to express all the meanings that his L<sub>1</sub> preposition expresses. Since this is not acceptable in English, the Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> speaker will experience difficulties in correctly choosing a preposition from the eight English prepositions when he is required to use one in such contexts as the ones in the above sentences. This results from the feeling that from his Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> point of view, all the English prepositions above, have the same meaning.

Markedness of English prepositions for L<sub>1</sub> Kikuyu speakers can therefore be seen in terms of specialisation in L<sub>2</sub> (English) versus generalisation in L<sub>1</sub> (Kikuyu). This is consistent with the view adopted by Stockwell *et al* (1965) as quoted by Ellis (1985) who produced a hierarchy of difficulty in L<sub>2</sub> learning and showed that difficulty is greatest when there is a split in L<sub>2</sub>. That is, when the L<sub>1</sub> feature has one item to serve a particular function or express a certain meaning but in L<sub>2</sub> the corresponding features call for selection from various options available to perform the same function or express the same meaning. They give an example of the English L<sub>1</sub> and Spanish L<sub>2</sub> acquisition of the preposition 'for' where in English (L<sub>1</sub>) only 'for' can be used to convey a meaning which in Spanish L<sub>2</sub>, is expressed by '*por*' in a certain context and '*para*' in another context and not interchangeably.

A similar situation appears to obtain between Kikuyu and English prepositions. Generally, the meanings that are expressed by one Kikuyu preposition require more than one English preposition. The diagram below represents the Kikuyu-English preposition relationship, in terms of semantic loading.

**Figure 1: General Comparison between English and Kikuyu Preposition Functions**



In the diagram above, K represents a single Kikuyu preposition. On the right, the Kikuyu preposition is shown as expressing the meanings of three different English prepositions Ep1, Ep 2 and Ep3 in given contexts.

Stockwell *et al* (ibid) say there is least difficulty when in L<sub>1</sub> there a choice, but only one item for the function in L<sub>2</sub>. There is no difficulty at all when there is complete correspondence between L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> so that there is one item for a given meaning in both L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub>. Therefore, in contexts where there is correspondence between the Kikuyu and English prepositions in terms of the range of meanings, the learners ought to find the English prepositions easy to learn.

Similarly, Shaughnessy (1977) says that the learners' linguistic background influences the choice of prepositions in their use of English as L<sub>2</sub>. This she says is particularly so where the influencing language depends on fewer prepositions than the L<sub>2</sub>. The L<sub>1</sub> in such situations motivates the learner to reduce the large vocabulary of prepositions in English or to choose uncertainly from them. She cites the example of Spanish L<sub>1</sub>speakers learning English as L<sub>2</sub>. In their case, they tend to substitute 'of' for other prepositions. They therefore make structures such as:

<u>Erroncus Form</u>	<u>Correct Preposition</u>
*A good opportunity <b>of</b> work	<b>to</b>
*To dispense <b>of</b>	<b>with</b>
*Students that graduate <b>of</b> school	<b>from</b>
*Their education depends <b>of</b>	<b>on</b>



In this study, markedness of prepositions was measured on the basis of the inconsistency of semantic loading between L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> as explained in chapter two.

The variance between the ranges of functions of the prepositions in these two languages can be compared in contexts as the Table I below shows. In the table, a Kikuyu preposition is featured in the left column and the contexts in which it is used are also given. The right column shows the prepositions in English that are the translation equivalents of the Kikuyu prepositions featured on the left. The English prepositions vary greatly as the contexts change while at times only one Kikuyu preposition may be functioning in all the different contexts. Where more than one Kikuyu preposition is given, in the table it means that the Kikuyu prepositions used there are variants of the same preposition, which are not different in meanings.

**Table I Comparison of Range of Functions Between Kikuyu and English Prepositions.**

KIKUYU PREPOSITIONS	ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS
<p>1. <i>Ini/ira</i></p> <p>(i) <i>Niaikarira giti/Aikaire gitiini</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>A varutira murata wake wira</i></p> <p>(iii) <i>Mai me gikombeini</i></p> <p>(iv) <i>Marungii kihingoini</i></p>	<p><b>On, for, in, at</b></p> <p>(i) He has sat <b>on</b> a chair/He is seated <b>on</b> a chair.</p> <p>(ii) He is working <b>for</b> his friend.</p> <p>(iii) The water is <b>in</b> the cup.</p> <p>(iv) They are standing <b>at</b> the gate.</p>
<p>2. <i>Rungu rwa</i></p> <p>(i) <i>Hena ithanduku rungu rwa metha.</i></p>	<p><b>Under</b></p> <p>(i) There is a box <b>under</b> the table.</p>
<p>3. <math>\phi</math></p> <p>(i) <i>Athii cukuru(<math>\phi</math>)</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>E muciii(<math>\phi</math>)</i></p> <p>(iii) <i>Athii mucii(<math>\phi</math>)</i></p>	<p><b>To,at,X</b></p> <p>(i) She is going <b>to</b> school.</p> <p>(ii) He is <b>at</b> home.</p> <p>(iii) He went home (<b>X</b>).</p>
<p>4. <i>Uma kuma</i></p> <p>(i) <i>Auma mucii.</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>Kamau atubirite kuma kiroko.</i></p>	<p><b>From,since</b></p> <p>(i) She has come <b>from</b> home.</p> <p>(ii) Kamau has swum <b>since</b> morning.</p>
<p>5. <i>-na</i></p> <p>(i) <i>Ena nguo ndaihu</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>Ndironire John mena Tom.</i></p> <p>(iii) <i>Arathii na nginyangi.</i></p>	<p><b>In,with,on</b></p> <p>(i) She is <b>in</b> a long dress.</p> <p>(ii) I saw John <b>with</b> Tom.</p> <p>(iii) He walked <b>on</b> stilts.</p>



6. <i>na</i> (i) <i>Ndironire John mena Tom.</i>	<b>With</b> (i) I saw John <b>with</b> Tom.
7. <i>-ini</i> (i) <i>Me kihingoini</i> (ii) <i>Mai me gikombeini</i> (iii) <i>Aikaire gitiini</i>	<b>At, in, on</b> (i) They are <b>at</b> the gate. (ii) The water is <b>in</b> the cup. (iii) He is seated <b>on</b> a chair.
8. <i>Ira/-ini</i> (i) <i>Akuingirira kihingo/ini</i> (ii) <i>Maraiguire mohoro reduini.</i> (iii) <i>Ararutira murata wake wira.</i> (iv) <i>Mai me gikombeini.</i>	<b>By, on, for, in.</b> (i) He is to enter <b>by</b> the gate (ii) They heard the news <b>on</b> the radio. (iii) He is working <b>for</b> his friend. (iv) The water is <b>in</b> the cup.
9. <i>-iria</i> (i) <i>Araikiria muiritu B mubira.</i> (ii) <i>Mumbunge aragiriria andu a gwake.</i> (iii) <i>Araikiria ngui ihiga.</i>	<b>To, for, at</b> (i) She is throwing the ball <b>to</b> girl B. (ii) An MP speaks <b>for</b> his people. (iii) He is throwing stones <b>at</b> the dog.
10. <i>ni</i> (i) <i>Mibira ukwamukirwo ni muiritu B.</i>	<b>By</b> (i) The ball is to be received <b>by</b> girl B.
11. <i>na</i> (i) <i>Andu acio marathii na mbathi.</i> (ii) <i>Ndironire John na Tom.</i> (iii) <i>Ngari irathire na ihenya inene.</i>	<b>In, with, at</b> (i) The people traveled <b>in</b> a bus. (ii) I saw John <b>with</b> Tom. (iii) The vehicle traveled <b>at</b> a high speed.
12. <i>nja-a/uma</i> (i) <i>Ngari niyauma nja ya barabara.</i> (ii) <i>Niaumire nyumba.</i>	<b>Off, outside</b> (i) A vehicle has got <b>off</b> the road. (ii) He got <b>outside</b> the house.
13. <i>na</i> (i) <i>Ngari yathire hau na mahitia.</i> (ii) <i>Ndironire John na Tom.</i> (iii) <i>Maraiguire mohoro na rediu.</i>	<b>By, with, on</b> (i) The vehicle got there <b>by</b> accident. (ii) I saw John <b>with</b> Tom. (iii) They heard news <b>on</b> the radio.
14. <i>na</i> (i) <i>Ngari irathiaga na ihenya inene.</i> (ii) <i>Ndironore John na Tom.</i> (iii) <i>Aranginyire twara na mahitia.</i> (iv) <i>Arathiaga na nginyangi.</i> (v) <i>Uhoru ucio uraniriirwo na rediu.</i>	<b>At, with, by, on, over</b> (i) The vehicle was traveling <b>at</b> a high speed. (ii) I saw John <b>with</b> Tom. (iii) He stepped on my toes <b>by</b> mistake. He was walking <b>on</b> stilts. (v) That news was announced <b>over</b> the radio.
15. <i>Gatagati-a</i> (i) <i>Mundu B arungii gatagati ka A na C.</i>	<b>Between</b> (i) Person B is standing <b>between</b> person A and C.
16. <i>Mwena wa</i>	<b>Beside</b>

(i) <i>Muti uria urungii mwena wa gikingi</i>	(i) That tree is standing <b>beside</b> a post.
17. <i>na/lira-ini</i> (i) <i>Maraigua mohoro na rediu/Maiguira uhoru ucio rediuni</i> (ii) <i>Ararutira murata wake wira.</i> (iii) <i>Maraka nyumba na mahiga.</i> (iv) <i>Araria na Githungu.</i>	<b>Over, for, with, in</b> (i) They can hear news <b>over</b> the radio. (ii) He is working <b>for</b> his friend. (iii) They are building a house <b>with</b> stones. (iv) He is speaking <b>in</b> English.
18 <i>mbere ya</i> (i) <i>Kairitu kari mbere ya mutumia.</i>	<b>In front of</b> (i) The girl is <b>in front of</b> the woman.
19. <i>na</i> (i) <i>Niarakombire ithanduku(ϕ). Oya ithanduku riu na thiiri.</i> (ii) <i>Aratumire marua macio na bothita.</i> (iii) <i>Agurire mugunda ucio na mbeba cia muru wa nyina..</i> (iv) <i>Aragurire karamu kau shiringi ikumi(ϕ)</i> (v) <i>Arendirie ibuku riake shiringi magana meri(ϕ)</i>	<b>On, by, with, for, at</b> (i) She bought the box <b>on</b> credit. (ii) She sent the letter <b>by</b> post. (iii) He bought that land <b>with</b> his brother's money. (iv) She bought the pen <b>for</b> ten shillings. (v) He sold the book <b>at</b> 200 shillings.
20. <i>na</i> (i) <i>Kairitu karathii na makinya manini.</i> (ii) <i>Arathire na mbathi.</i>	<b>With, by</b> (i) The girl is walking <b>with</b> short steps. (ii) He traveled <b>by</b> bus.
21. <i>-ire/iguru -a</i> (i) <i>Muti B uinamiriire muti C.</i> (ii) <i>Ararutiire murata wake wira.</i> (iii) <i>Tawa uri iguru wa kabondi.</i> (iv) <i>Kanyau kari iguru wa metha.</i>	<b>Over, for, on the top of, on</b> (i) Tree B is leaning <b>over</b> tree C. (ii) He worked <b>for</b> his friend. (iii) The lamp is <b>on the top of</b> the cupboard. (iv) The cat is <b>on</b> the table.
22. <i>iguru- a/ainamiriire</i> (i) <i>Mahuti ma muti B mari iguru wa muti A.</i> (ii) <i>Muti B uinamiriire muti C.</i> (iii) <i>Tawa uri iguru wa kabondi.</i> (iv) <i>Kanyau kari iguru wa metha.</i>	<b>Above, over, on the top of, on</b> (i) The shoot of tree B is <b>above</b> that of tree A. (ii) Tree B is leaning <b>over</b> tree A. (iii) The lamp is <b>on the top of</b> the cupboard. (iv) The cat is <b>on</b> the table.
23. <i>ϕ/kanga/na</i> (i) <i>Ngirathi yaunikanga icunji./Auna kamuti icunji igiri(ϕ)./Kamuti kaunika maita meri(ϕ).</i> (ii) <i>Arathire muico wa tauni(ϕ).</i>	<b>Into, to, by, until</b> (i) The glass has broken <b>into</b> pieces. He has broken the stick <b>into</b> two/The stick has broken <b>into</b> two. (ii) He walked <b>to</b> the end of the road. (iii) He classified them <b>by</b> tribe.



(iii) <i>Aramagayanirie na kabira.</i> (iv) <i>Arathomire arakinyia utuku(ϕ).</i>	(iv) He read <b>into</b> the night/He read <b>until</b> the night.
24. <b>-niriirie/na</b> (i) <i>Maikaire mundu hakuhi na uria ungi/Maikaire makuhaniriirie.</i> (ii) <i>Aikaire hakuhi na mwaki.</i> (iii) <i>Mararia o umwe na uria ungi.</i> (iv) <i>John maikaire thi na Susan.</i>	<b>To, by, among, with</b> (i) They are seated close <b>to</b> one another. (ii) He is seated <b>by</b> the fire. (iii) They are talking <b>among</b> themselves. (iv) John is seated <b>with</b> Susan.
25. <b>ingiral-ini/ingia-ini/(ϕ)</b> (i) <i>Mwarimu araingira kirathi/ Athii kirathi(ϕini.</i> (ii) <i>Mai me gikombeini.</i> (iii) <i>Athii kihingoini.</i> (iv) <i>Marungii kihingoini.</i> (v) <i>Aikaire thi gitiini.</i>	<b>Into, in, to, at, on, X ,</b> (i) The teacher has got <b>into</b> class. He went <b>into</b> class. (ii) The water is <b>in</b> the glass. (iii) She has gone <b>to</b> the gate. (iv) They are standing <b>at</b> the gate. (v) He is seated <b>on</b> a chair.
26. <b>ϕ</b> (i) <i>Cati yake iranunga maguta ma tawa(ϕ).</i>	<b>Of, for</b> (i) His shirt smells <b>of</b> paraffin. Love <b>of /for</b> one's country is patriotism.
27. <b>-iria</b> (i) <i>Kahii karaikiria ngui mahiga.</i> (ii) <i>Muiritu niakiria uria ungi mubira.</i> (iii) <i>Mumbunge aragiriria andu a gwake.</i>	<b>At, to, for</b> (i) The boy is throwing stones <b>at</b> the dog. (ii) The girl has thrown the ball <b>to</b> her partner. (iii) A parliamentarian speaks <b>for</b> his people.
28. <b>iguru-al-ini</b> (i) <i>Ngui yarugira iguru wa rugiri/rugirini.</i> (ii) <i>Mahuti ma muti B mari iguru wa muti A.</i> (iii) <i>Mai me gikombeini.</i> (iv) <i>Tawa wi iguru wa kabondi.</i>	<b>Over, above, in, on the top of</b> (i) The dog has jumped <b>over</b> the fence. (ii) The shoot of tree B is <b>above</b> tree A. (iii) The water is <b>in</b> the cup. (iv) The lamp is <b>on the top of</b> the cupboard.
29. <b>-raihu na</b> (i) <i>Ngui irora kuraihu na kahii.</i> (ii) <i>Mwangi aikaraga haraihu na ngucanio cia andu ao.</i>	<b>Away from, out of</b> (i) The dog is running <b>away from</b> the boy. (ii) Mwangi stays <b>out of</b> his relatives quarrels.
30 <b>ϕ</b> (i) <i>Okire kiroko. (ϕ)</i> (ii) <i>Okire Wairi. (ϕ)</i> (iii) <i>Okire hindi ya mucemanio. (ϕ)</i> (iv) <i>Okire hindi ya rutha. (ϕ)</i>	<b>X, in, on ,during, over, for</b> (i) He came <b>in</b> the morning. (ii) He came <b>on</b> Tuesday. (iii) He came <b>during</b> the meeting. (iv) He came <b>over</b> the holiday. (v) He came <b>for</b> holiday.



(v)Okire rutha. (ϕ)	
31. <b>maranagiria/-mararagia/ϕ</b> (i)Nimararagia o umwe na uria ungi. (ii)Nimararanagiria. Nimararagia. (iii)Nimararagia o ene.	<b>Among ,to,X,between</b> (i)They were talking <b>among</b> themselves. (ii)They were talking <b>to</b> each other/one another/ <b>with</b> each other/They were talking (X) (iii)They were talking <b>between/among</b> themselves.
32. <b>ϕ</b> (i)Okire kiroko.(ϕ) (ii)Okire Wairi (ϕ) (iii)Okire hindi ya mucemano.(ϕ) (iv)Okire hindi ya rutha. (ϕ) (v)Okire rutha. (ϕ)	<b>X, in, on, during, over, for</b> (i)He came <b>in</b> the morning. (ii)He came <b>on</b> Tuesday. (iii)He came <b>during</b> the meeting. (iv)He came <b>over</b> the holiday. (v)He came <b>for</b> holiday.
33. <b>-a</b> (i)Arathiaga murangoini wa nyumba. (ii)Nituronire minista wa mahiu.	<b>Of, for</b> (i)He was walking to the door <b>of</b> the house/We saw the minister <b>for</b> livestock.
34. <b>na/ini</b> (i)Aramuhuruire thimu <b>na</b> namba 0733534952 (ii)Arathire rugendo <b>na</b> mthathi. (iii)Aramuringire <b>na</b> muti. (iv)Aramutumiire marua ithandukuini riake. (v)Mai me gikombeini.	<b>On, by, with, at, in</b> (i)She called him <b>on</b> number 0722534952 (ii) He traveled <b>by</b> bus. (iii) He hit him <b>with</b> a stick. (iv) She sent him a letter <b>at</b> his address. (v) The water is <b>in</b> the cup.
35. <b>na/ϕ</b> (i)Aratauirire ciugo icio <b>na</b> githungu. (ii)Aragia <b>na</b> marakara. (iii)Ngari yathire hau <b>na</b> mahitia. (iv)Arathire miuoco wa tauni.(ϕ) (v)Arathomire arakinyia utuku.(ϕ)	<b>Into, with, by, to, until</b> (i). He translated the words <b>into</b> English. (ii) He spoke <b>with</b> bitterness (iii) The vehicle went there <b>by</b> accident. (iv) She went <b>to</b> the end of the town. (v) She read <b>into</b> the night/She read <b>until</b> the night.
36. <b>- iria /iria-ini/-ini</b> (i)Ariirie maikoroboniini. (ii)Me kihingoini. (iii)Maiguire mohoro rediini. (iv)Andikire ngathitiini. (v)Mumbunge aragiriria andu ake.	<b>Into, at, on, in, for</b> (i)He spoke <b>into</b> the microphone. (ii)They are <b>at</b> the gate. (iii)They heard the news <b>on</b> the radio. (iv)He wrote the news <b>in</b> the newspaper. (v)A parliamentarian speaks <b>for</b> his people.
37. <b>ni</b> (i)Athnikaga <b>ni</b> Malaria. (ii)Athnagio <b>ni</b> njuki.	<b>From,by</b> (i)She was suffering <b>from</b> Malaria. (ii)She was being disturbed <b>by</b> bees.

<p>38. <i>na</i></p> <p>(i) <i>Uhoti wake ni uiganaine na wa andu ariangi.</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>Aruire na ucamba.</i></p> <p>(iii) <i>Aingirive nyumba na hinya.</i></p>	<p><b>To,with,by</b></p> <p>(i) Her ability is equal <b>to</b> that of others.</p> <p>(ii) He fought <b>with</b> courage.</p> <p>(iii) She entered the house <b>by</b> force.</p>
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∅ Means no preposition is used.

'X' has been used to indicate that no preposition is needed.

The degree of markedness of English prepositions in relation to the Kikuyu ones is a function of the number of prepositions in English within the semantic region of a single Kikuyu preposition. The more the number of prepositions that the L<sub>1</sub> Kikuyu speaker perceives to be in a semantic region of one Kikuyu preposition, the more marked the English prepositions in that field are. The point can alternatively be stated thus: the less the functions a given preposition has in English compared to Kikuyu, the more marked and hence difficult it is for an L<sub>1</sub> Kikuyu speaker to learn. Due to the small number of prepositions used in Kikuyu, learners could apply a few of the English prepositions erroneously in wider contexts than is permitted or omit prepositions in some contexts.

The present study applied the CAH and the MDH like some of the studies cited above and incidentally provided additional test of the validity of these hypotheses. It demonstrated that these theories provide answers to the question of the relationship between dissimilarities in preposition use across languages and preposition difficulty.

## 2.5 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study has been based on insights from the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis by Lado (1967) as quoted by Littlewood (1984), Eckman's (1977) Markedness Differential Hypothesis in Littlewood (1985), the Creative Construction Hypothesis by Dulay *et al* (1982) and Krashen's (1981) Monitor Model.

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) states that learners of a second language find the language easy to learn in those areas of language that are similar to their first language as a result of positive transfer from their L<sub>1</sub>. Those areas of L<sub>2</sub> that are dissimilar to L<sub>1</sub> are difficult to acquire, according to this hypothesis. The difficulty



encountered in learning contrasting features is as a result of negative transfer, also known as interference from L<sub>1</sub>.

Dulay *et al* (1982) cite the example of Spanish in which the adjective is usually placed after the noun unlike the case in English where the adjective comes before the noun. Due to this contrast in structures, according to the CAH, Spanish L<sub>1</sub> learners of L<sub>2</sub> English should tend to say 'the apple ripe' instead of 'the ripe apple'. This is what has been labelled negative transfer.

Positive transfer refers to the automatic use of L<sub>1</sub> structures in L<sub>2</sub> performance when the structures of L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> are identical, resulting in correct use of L<sub>2</sub>.

Dulay (*ibid*) give the example of the English and Spanish plural markers '-s' and '-es' which are alike in both languages, as candidates for positive transfer for a student learning either language with a background L<sub>1</sub> knowledge of the other.

Transfer has been observed on phonological, lexical and syntactic levels. It has also been realized that it does occur on levels where it is not immediately apparent. Klein (1986) gives the following additional situations of transfer:

- (a) English, German and Italian give different weight to the various features that mark an NP as the subject of a clause. In English, position is dominant; in Italian the lexical content and agreement with the verb is most important; in German case markings count above all other factors.

These peculiarities of the individual languages are bound to be transferred by learners of each of these languages when learning another language to the new language. The results could be for example, English sentences in which the NP position is arbitrarily shifted but case markings are meticulously observed.

- (b) Transfer may also take place on a conceptual level; in the acquisition of L<sub>1</sub>, speakers develop for example, a certain concept of time, modality and definitiveness. Such conceptual imprints may deeply influence the way they approach L<sub>2</sub>. A language that marks the definite-indefinite distinction for example, would seem likely to influence its L<sub>1</sub> speaker to encode this difference in his L<sub>2</sub> at least more so than a learner whose L<sub>1</sub> does not mark this distinction.

Klein (*ibid*) also says that the possibility of transfer from L<sub>1</sub> with either a positive or inhibitive effect increases as the learner's knowledge of the L<sub>2</sub> increases. This is because



the learner must first know the elements that correspond in the two languages in order for him to attempt to employ the transfer strategy. Lay (1982) in Kroll (1991) agree. Phillipson et al (1991) add that the process also includes translation.

Selinker (1992) in Phillipson (ibid) argues that translation is a learning strategy employed by L<sub>2</sub> learners. Similarly, Ringbom in Phillipson (ibid) says that exploitation of perceived typological proximity is one strategy pervading L<sub>2</sub> acquisition to reduce the learning burden. Dulay and Burt in Harmely (1991) say that the strategy facilitates production of L<sub>2</sub> though not necessarily accurate. They add that for typologically close languages understanding takes place much faster than typologically distant ones.

This research applied the CAH to the extent that the hypothesis embodies the assumption that L<sub>1</sub> features have an influence on the level of difficulties expected in the acquisition of the L<sub>2</sub>.

Eckman's (1977) Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH) as quoted by Ellis (1985) was also employed. This hypothesis takes the position that the difficulty that an L<sub>2</sub> language learner will encounter can be predicted on the basis of a systematic comparison of the grammars of the native language, the target language and markedness relationships between the two languages in question.

The hypothesis predicts that:

- (i) Those areas of the target Language (L<sub>2</sub>) which differ from the native language (L<sub>1</sub>) and are more marked than the native language will be difficult.
- (ii) The relative degree of difficulty of the areas of L<sub>2</sub> that are more marked than the L<sub>1</sub> will correspond to the relative degree of markedness.
- (iii) Those areas of L<sub>2</sub> which are different from L<sub>1</sub> but are not more marked than the L<sub>1</sub> will not be difficult.

The research has interpreted this hypothesis from a point of view of language typology. Zobl (1984) says that markedness between languages may arise from the fact of one language adhering to one tendency or rule while the other language adheres to a different tendency in a related aspect. In this study, English language was found to apply its prepositions in fewer contexts with varied meanings than Kikuyu language. Hence English seems to adhere to a rule of specialization of preposition meanings while Kikuyu adheres to a rule of generalization.

This hypothesis was used to investigate the relationship between L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> prepositions and the effect of the relationship on the difficulty levels encountered by learners in the acquisition of the English prepositions. It has particular appropriateness in that it provides the principle on the basis of which differences between L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> features can be measured and indexes of possible difficulties systematically assigned to the differences. A systematic comparison of the grammar of prepositions of L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> should form a basis for predicting the easy and difficult prepositions for the L<sub>1</sub> speakers acquiring L<sub>2</sub>. The comparison looked at the differences in range of functions between prepositions in the two languages, English and Kikuyu.

The research investigated whether the actual errors evident in the learners' use of L<sub>2</sub> corresponded to the differences in the range of meanings between the prepositions of the two languages. In so doing, it was checked whether the proportion of the errors were consistent with the predictions made on the basis of the Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH) and it therefore incidentally, served as a test of the hypothesis. The research has also illuminated the workings of markedness in languages and it therefore paves way for further research work using similar procedure.

The Creative Construction Hypothesis (Dulay *et al* 1982) in Ellis (1985) was used in investigating the acquisition sequence of the L<sub>2</sub> prepositions. The hypothesis views the learner as approaching L<sub>2</sub> acquisition in a creative manner. He applies learning strategies such as generalisation and transfer to simplify his learning work. Selinker and others (1972) in Faerch and Gabriele (1983) similarly say that learners use certain communication strategies such as transfer and overgeneralization where they feel that their L<sub>2</sub> knowledge is inadequate.

The third strategy that learners use is prefabrication which has been defined by Hakuta (1976) in Faerch and Gabriele (*ibid*) as a regular patterned segment of speech applied without knowledge of its underlying structure but with the knowledge as to which particular situations call for which pattern. An example is the pattern 'do - you' in 'What do you doing'? for 'What are you doing?'

A fourth communication strategy is over elaboration. The learner here produces utterances that are inordinately formal in an attempt to produce careful target language



utterances. For example some forms that are usually deleted in speech may be produced fully such as the word 'which' in 'Buddy, that's my foot which you are standing on.'

The fifth communication strategy is epenthesis or vowel insertion. This occurs only in the phonological domain. The learner is unable to produce unfamiliar consonant clusters in the target language and in an attempt to produce them uses schwa vowels between consonants where they are not required.

The Creative Construction Hypothesis (CCH) says that if learners of the same L<sub>1</sub> applied similar strategies in approaching L<sub>2</sub> acquisition, they would be predisposed to follow the same sequences of L<sub>2</sub> acquisition. On the strength of this, the CCH argues that L<sub>2</sub> learners may be endowed with an internal syllabus for L<sub>2</sub> acquisition. This syllabus determines, to a large extent, the learning path that the learners will follow if their natural processes are operational.

In a school situation, the internal syllabus may conflict with the school syllabus where the internal syllabus would be bound to prevail. For this reason, the knowledge of the setting of the internal syllabus is important in guiding teaching sequence such that it proceeds along the path mapped out by the internal syllabus thus enhancing the effectiveness of teaching efforts.

The Monitor Model by Krashen (1981) focuses on the relationship between spontaneous and guided language learning. Dulay *et al* (1982) summarize this relationship as follows: there are two ways for learners to gain proficiency in L<sub>2</sub>. The first is subconscious acquisition through purposeful and meaningful communication with speakers of the target language. The learner in this process is usually oriented to the content and effect of his utterances and not forms. He remains unaware of the linguistic rules and structures used.

The second way is through conscious internalisation of the linguistic rules. This takes place as a result of explicit description of the linguistic features in a formal learning environment such as a classroom

The monitor is the part of the learner's internal system that appears to be responsible for conscious linguistic processing. The learner employs the monitor when he is learning consciously. The monitor also aids in memorizing of dialogues, practising of drills and in responding to demands of conscious attention to linguistic form.



Learning through the monitor is effected through the learner's effort to control his/her language output and to self-correct it whenever necessary. This is referred to as the edit function of the monitor. The conscious processing of language is thought to underlie the learners' use of their L<sub>1</sub> structures to formulate L<sub>2</sub> sentences in particular situations. This is when the learners are required to produce structures that are not yet part of their subconscious linguistic system. They then tend to plug L<sub>2</sub> vocabulary into their consciously available L<sub>1</sub> syntax. This may result in a conscious word-for-word translation.

Klein (ibid) describes the monitor as controlling the language knowledge of the learner in the same way that a rider controls a horse.

The degree to which the monitor is used is seen to depend on at least the following:

- (1) The learner's age
- (2) The amount of formal instruction the learner has received.
- (3) The nature and focus required by the verbal task being performed
- (4) The individual personality of the learner.

Tasks which focus on linguistic manipulation are seen as encouraging monitoring as opposed to those focusing on communication. An example of a linguistic manipulation task is one that requires transformation of a positive statement into a negative one. An example is if one is required to change 'Faith is tall' into 'Faith is not tall.'

Learners do not always use the monitor. The monitor only becomes effective in certain situations. These situations have been identified as follows:

- (1) If there is enough time to operate it.
- (2) If the speaker is concerned with the correctness of his speech production.
- (3) If the speaker knows the correct rule.

The capacity for linguistic monitoring may be related to the other developmental changes that occur at puberty which include the ability to formulate rules and concepts. This is the age at which the learners pass through the developmental stage called by Piaget 'formal operations stage' cited in Gullotta (1983).

The Monitor Model in this study was used to account for some of the errors that learners made as a result of their mother tongue influence. The fact that the task given to the learners was also of a writing mode meant that the monitor was likely to come into

operation in the learners' work. The learner's awareness that the research questions tested their language accuracy and the availability of time to use the monitor may have prompted them to operate the monitor.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### 3.0 Introduction

The sections in this chapter present the procedure adopted in the study in the quest for the answers to the issues under investigation. The rationale for the choice of the methods used is also given.

### 3.1 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Nyeri District, in Central Province of Kenya (see map page (xi) ). This is one of the districts where Kikuyu language as  $L_1$  is most widely used by English  $L_2$  learners.

### 3.2 Sampling Methods

The purposeful sampling procedure was used to select schools in the rural areas. In these schools, the use of Kikuyu  $L_1$  is predominant among pupils and learning of English language is almost exclusively done in school. For urban children, a significant proportion of them learn English or Kiswahili as  $L_1$  or even "Sheng", slang. Thus the  $L_1$  influences in the  $L_2$  output of urban children are not necessarily of the Kikuyu language. Featuring such learners in the study was therefore likely to lead to erroneous conclusions if their  $L_1$  related errors were attributed to the Kikuyu language.

Simple random sampling was employed in selecting the actual schools. This was done by assigning numbers to the schools in the district that were in the rural areas and picking the numbers randomly. To select the pupils who were to make up the sample, simple random sampling was applied through randomly picking the names of the learners from class lists or learners from their classes. The sample comprised four pupils per class (grade) per school from class four to eight. This added up to twenty pupils per school and the five schools pooled a total of 100 pupils. Equal numbers of boys and girls were ensured in each cell to eliminate possible skewing influence of the gender factor on the results.



### **3.3 Research Sample**

100 primary school learners constituted the research sample. The pupils, who were aged between 8 and 17 years, were selected from 5 primary schools of Nyeri District. The schools were Muhito Primary school and Mukui Primary school in Mukurweini Division, Gathinga Primary school in Tetu Division, Nyaribo Primary school on the outskirts of Nyeri Municipality, and Kabendera Primary school in Kieni Division

The pupils who took part in the study were in grades 4,5,6,7 and 8. The choice of pupils in these school grades was apt as it was at such a stage in their learning that the pupils had been taught the usage of the various prepositions under study in this research as per the primary school syllabus.

### **3.4 Data Collection Techniques**

The data was collected by means of a written test (see appendix I) administered to all the research subjects. The test consisted of incomplete English sentences and a cloze test requiring use of prepositions to express given relationships. Questions of this type had particular merit for the research in that the blank spaces in the sentences that required answers from the learners were the obligatory occasion for the use of the prepositions under investigation. Other kinds of questions could have been limited in their ability to provide with high levels of precision, situations that demanded the use of the specific prepositions required. Illustrative pictures were provided for most of the questions to enhance understanding of the questions on the part of the respondents.

All the questions administered were of the closed type requiring choice of answers from certain given options. Most of the choices given were prepositions but where the L<sub>1</sub> influence was bound to lead to non-preposition choices, such choices were given as distracters. The use of multiple choice questions enabled the pupils to tackle many questions in a short time as well as enhancing objectivity in the analysis of the responses that the learners gave.

### 3.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The test administered to the pupils was marked by identifying the correct and wrong learners' responses and awarding points. Each correct response earned 2 points. The incorrect responses in which learners had chosen prepositions were awarded 1 point each. No points were awarded for responses that were not prepositions. Difficulty was measured on the basis of the scores obtained in the tasks. High scores in the tasks were perceived as reflecting ease of the tasks in question, while low scores indicated difficulty.

The level of performance of each school-grade by percentage score was interpreted as an index of the school-grade's acquisition level of the preposition usages tested. The prepositions in which learners recorded high scores were judged to be acquired and vice versa. The scale for performance vis-a-vis acquisition shows how the various scores were interpreted (see page 45).

The questions that were given to the research respondents were tailored to test the learners' competence in prepositions usages that related in different ways with their L<sub>1</sub>. Some preposition usages have numerous L<sub>1</sub> based distracters while some had few or none.

Table 2 below shows how the relationships between English and Kikuyu prepositions as reflected and examined in the test administered in the study.

**Table 2: Meaning Relationships Between English and Kikuyu Prepositions as Reflected in the Research Test.**

English Preposition	Example in Context	Kikuyu Equivalent Preposition	Other English Prepositions in the same Meaning Range for Kikuyu L <sub>1</sub> Speaker	Markedness Status	Position of Preposition in Test
<b>On</b>	The boy is seated <b>on</b> a chair	<i>-Ini/-ira</i>	For, in, at	Marked	1.
<b>Under</b>	There is a box <b>under</b> the table.	<i>Rungu rwa</i>	0	Very Unmarked	2.
<b>To</b>	She is going <b>to</b> school	$\phi$	At, X	Relatively Marked	3.
<b>From</b>	She has come <b>from</b> home	<i>-uma/kuma</i>	Since	Unmarked	4.
<b>In</b>	She is <b>in</b> a dress	<i>-na</i>	With, on,	Relatively Marked	5.



With	She is <b>with</b> a boy.	-na	0	Very Unmarked	6.
At	She is <b>at</b> the gate	-ini	In, on, X	Marked	7.
By	She is to enter <b>by</b> the gate	-Ira/-ini	On, in ,for	Marked	8.
To	She is throwing the ball <b>to</b> her	-iria	For,at,	Relatively Marked	9.
By	The ball is to be received <b>by</b> girl B.	ni	0	Very Unmarked	10.
In	The people are travelling <b>in</b> the bus	na	With, at	Relatively Marked	11
Off	A vehicle has got <b>off</b> the road	nja- a/uma	Outside	Unmarked	12
By	The vehicle got there <b>by</b> accident	na	With, on	Relatively Marked	13
At	The vehicle was travelling <b>at</b> a high speed	na	With,by,on, over	Very Marked	14
Between	Person B is seated <b>between</b> person A and C	gatagati -a	0	Very Unmarked	15
Beside	Person B is seated <b>beside</b> person C	mwena wa	0	Very Unmarked	16
Over	They can hear news <b>over</b> the radio.	na/ira/ira- ini	For, with, in	Marked	17
In front of	The girl is <b>in front of</b> the woman	mbere ya	0	Very Unmarked	18
On	The woman has a box. She has bought it <b>on</b> credit	na/φ	By, with, for, at	Very Marked	19
With	The girl is walking <b>with</b> short steps	na	By, on	Relatively marked	20
Over	Tree B is leaning <b>over</b> tree A	-ire/iguru - a	For, on top of, on	Marked	21
Above	The shoot of tree D is <b>above</b> that of C	iguru -a	Over, on top of, on	Marked	22
Into	The glass has broken <b>into</b> pieces	- kanga/φ	X, to, by, until,	Very Marked	23
To	The pupils are seated close <b>to</b> one another	na	By, among, With	Marked	24
Into	The teacher is getting <b>into</b> the class	ingira/ ini/ingira- ini	X, in, to, at, on	Very Marked	25
Of	Pupil B seems to be saying that his hands smell <b>of</b> onions.	φ	X, for,	Relatively Marked	26
At	The boy is throwing stones <b>at</b> the dog	-iria	To, for	Relatively Marked	27
Over	The dog has jumped <b>over</b> the fence	iguru -a/ ini	In, above, on top of.	Marked	28
Away from	The dog is running <b>away from</b> the boy	-raihu na	Out of	Unmarked	29
At	They came <b>at</b> 9:30 p.m	φ	In, on, X, during, over, for	Very Marked	30



<b>Among</b>	There were talking <b>among</b> themselves	$\phi$	X, to, with, between	Very Marked	31
<b>In</b>	He was born <b>in</b> 1996	$\phi$	X, on, at, for, during, over	Very Marked	32
<b>On</b>	They called him <b>on</b> number 0733484922	<i>Na/ini</i>	By, with, at, in	Very Marked	33
<b>Of</b>	He kept going to the door <b>of</b> the house to listen for any movement.	<i>-a</i>	for	Unmarked	34
<b>Into</b>	He spoke <b>into</b> the microphone	<i>-iria/iria- ini/ini</i>	At, on, in, to, for	Very Marked	35
<b>Into</b>	He translated it <b>into</b> English	<i>na</i>	With, by, to, until,	Very Marked	36
<b>From</b>	She behaved as if she was suffering <b>from</b> malaria.	<i>ni</i>	By	Unmarked	37
<b>To</b>	Her ability is equal <b>to</b> that of others	<i>na</i>	With, by	Relatively Marked	38

From the table above, it is clear that there are differences in the range of preposition meanings between the Kikuyu language and the English language in preposition. The study investigated whether the differences had an effect on learning of L<sub>2</sub> English preposition usages for Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> learners.

The following scale was used to measure markedness where E stands for a preposition in English and the number of meanings given in brackets, is the number of the other prepositions in English that would be perceived to have the same meaning as the correct English preposition in a given context, from a Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> speaker's point of view. That is also the number of English prepositions that correspond to a single Kikuyu preposition in that field of meaning. The number of meanings correspond to the number of the additional prepositions that are in its field of meaning (see table 2 page28). This is based on the relationships between Kikuyu and English prepositions as illustrated above.

<u>Markedness Level</u>	<u>Number of Meanings</u>
E Very Unmarked	(0 additional meanings)
E+1 Unmarked	(1 additional meaning)
E+2 Relatively Marked	(2 additional meanings)

E+3 Marked (3 additional meanings)

E+4 Very Marked (4 additional meanings or more)

The prepositions in which a given class, say standard four pupils, scored at least 80% were interpreted as having been Fully Acquired, while those in which learners scored less than 80% were graded under levels of acquisition ranging from Well Acquired to Not Acquired. This is in agreement with the Ellis (1985) position that the criterion level of accuracy is often set at 80%-90%.

An order of acquisition was then drawn based on the scores of the five individual classes 4-8 on each preposition.

The scores obtained were also checked against markedness to determine whether in the prepositions with the highest degree of markedness, learners showed similarly poor performance while the least marked were best performed in.

The scale used to measure performance vis-à-vis acquisition was as below:

<u>Average performance in a preposition.</u>	<u>Acquisition Level</u>
80% - 100%	Fully Acquired
60% - 79%	Well Acquired
40% - 59%	Fairly Well Acquired
20% - 39%	Poorly Acquired
0% - 19%	Not Acquired



## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the responses of the research subjects to the tasks given in the research are analyzed. The scores obtained in the various preposition usages are presented to give a general picture of the learners' performance and different aspects of the responses examined as they relate to the objectives of the study. Such analysis will yield the necessary empirical information from which inferences are drawn on the issues under investigation.

The three critical issues to the study as reflected in the objectives of the study were whether there are variations in the difficulty levels of different English preposition for Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> speakers, whether markedness relationships bear on the difficulty levels in learning prepositions, and whether there is a link between learners' level of exposure to L<sub>2</sub> and acquisition of L<sub>2</sub> competence. These issues will be investigated in the light of the learners' scores sequentially, in that order, in the subsequent sections. In order to achieve this, for each of the objectives, the relevant characteristics of the learners' responses will be presented and analysed in relation to the objectives.

### 4.1 Learners' Responses

The 100 subjects responded to the 38 questions set in the questionnaire on English prepositions. The learners' responses were then assessed and 2 points awarded to each correct response. Where learners chose prepositions that were incorrect, 1 point was awarded. No points were awarded to choices that were not prepositions.

The Group Score method cited by Dulay *et al* (1982) was used in the processing of the scores. In this method, the scores obtained by individual learners in each question are combined and expressed as a percentage of the total expected group score for the question in the test.

In keeping with the principle of this method, if the total points garnered by the respondents in a question are 40 points out of eighty, the points then constitute half of the expected score and that is a 50% score.



Preposition meanings usually vary with change in contexts. For example, in the phrase 'on the table', the preposition 'on' may designate a meaning of position in relation to a surface or meaning of support. The meanings are exemplified in the sentences below:

1. The book is **on** the table (surface of the table).
2. The strong legs **on** the table render it sturdy.(supported by the legs)

Due to this fact, whole sentences were featured in the language structures that constituted the contexts of the prepositions to illustrate the usage being discussed and sharpen the precision of description of the usage.

In looking at the results, the general performance data is given first and then for each objective, the relevant data is presented and analyzed. Table 3 below shows the scores of the research respondents in the preposition questions. The scores are presented in a decreasing order.

**Table 3: Prepositions in a Decreasing Order of Performance by Learners**

Rank	Preposition	Context Example	Percentage Obtained	Score in Preposition
1	<b>At</b>	He came <b>at</b> noon.	94	
2	<b>Over</b>	The dog jumped <b>over</b> the fence.	94	
3	<b>On</b>	He is seated <b>on</b> a chair	92	
4	<b>Between</b>	Person B is seated <b>between</b> A and C.	92	
5	<b>To</b>	She went <b>to</b> school	89	
6	<b>Under</b>	A box is <b>under</b> the table	88	
7	<b>With</b>	The girl is <b>with</b> a boy	87	
8	<b>Into</b>	The glass has broken <b>into</b> pieces.	86	
9	<b>At</b>	She is <b>at</b> the gate	84	
10	<b>From</b>	A is suffering <b>from</b> Malaria	84	
11	<b>From</b>	She has come <b>from</b> home.	82	
12	<b>To</b>	Girl A is throwing the ball <b>to</b> girl B.	81	
13	<b>Away from</b>	A is running <b>away from</b> person B.	81	
14	<b>By</b>	The ball is to be received <b>by</b> B.	81	
15	<b>In</b>	A was born <b>in</b> 1996.	81	
16	<b>To</b>	Her ability is equal <b>to</b> that of the others.	79	
17	<b>Beside</b>	Person B is seated <b>beside</b> person A.	78	
18	<b>Into</b>	The teacher is getting <b>into</b> class.	75	

19	<b>To</b>	The pupils are seated close <b>to</b> one another.	75
20	<b>At</b>	The vehicle was travelling <b>at</b> a high speed.	73
21	<b>By</b>	The vehicle got there <b>by</b> accident.	72
22	<b>In</b>	The people are travelling <b>in</b> the bus.	70
23	<b>Into</b>	He spoke <b>into</b> the microphone	70
24	<b>Of</b>	He went to the door <b>of</b> the house.	68
25	<b>On</b>	He called him <b>on</b> number 0733456821.	68
26	<b>In front of</b>	A is <b>in front of</b> B.	67
27	<b>In</b>	She is <b>in</b> a dress	67
28	<b>By</b>	They are to enter <b>by</b> the gate.	66
29	<b>With</b>	The girl is walking <b>with</b> short steps.	66
30	<b>Over</b>	Tree A is leaning <b>over</b> tree B.	66
31	<b>At</b>	The boy is throwing stones <b>at</b> the dog.	63
32	<b>Into</b>	He translated Kikuyu words <b>into</b> English.	62
33	<b>Among</b>	The people talked <b>among</b> themselves.	61
34	<b>On</b>	She bought the box <b>on</b> credit.	59
35	<b>Off</b>	The vehicle has got <b>off</b> the road	58
36	<b>Above</b>	The shoot of tree A is <b>above</b> that of B.	55
37	<b>Over</b>	They can hear news <b>over</b> the radio.	42
38	<b>Of</b>	His hands smelled <b>of</b> onions.	22

From the table above, it is evident that the scores of the learners varied with individual preposition usages. Learners obtained high scores in some preposition usages but low scores in others. In the subsequent sections, this is analyzed as it relates to difficulty, markedness and acquisition orders.

#### 4.2 Ease and Difficulty in Preposition Usage

The study focused on 38 usages of English prepositions. The prepositions investigated were those that commonly feature in the day-to-day discourse of the learners. Besides, they are prepositions that should have been taught to most of the learners, according to the primary school syllabus. Therefore, the pupils ought to have encountered the preposition usages in their language experience. Ease or difficulty in the usage of prepositions was gauged by the scores obtained by the learners in given tasks

involving use of the prepositions as has been done in other researches such as cited in Dulay *et al* (1982). Ease was inferred in tasks in which pupils performed well while difficulty was discerned where dismal performance was observed

Learners posted a score of 80% and above in 15 preposition usages (see Table 4 below). In the other usages learners recorded scores within the range of 20%- 79%.

The scores were graded on a five-point scale which was used for measuring difficulty. This scale had intervals of 19 points between one level of performance and the next. This was done in order to have five levels of difficulty corresponding to five levels of markedness. Scores of 80% and above were in the highest range and 0-19% was the lowest score range. A summary of the scores is given in Table 4 below.



**Table 4: A Summary of Learners' Scores in Preposition Usages**

Percentage Range	Score	Number Of Questions in the Score Range and Context Examples	Number Of Usages In Score Range
80% and above		(i) He came <b>at</b> noon. (ii) He came <b>at</b> noon. (iii) He is seated <b>on</b> a chair (iv) Person B is seated <b>between</b> A and C (v) She went <b>to</b> school (vi) A box is <b>under</b> the table (vii) The girl is <b>with</b> a boy (viii) The glass has broken <b>into</b> pieces. (ix) She is <b>at</b> the gate (x) A is suffering <b>from</b> Malaria (xi) She has come <b>from</b> home (xii) Girl A is throwing the ball <b>to</b> girl B. (xiii) A is running <b>away from</b> person B. (xiv) The ball is to be received <b>by</b> B. (xv) A was born <b>in</b> 1996	15
60%-79%		(i) Her ability is equal <b>to</b> that of the others. (ii) A is <b>in front</b> of B. (iii) The teacher is getting <b>into</b> class. (iv) The pupils are seated close <b>to</b> one another. (v) He went to the door <b>of</b> the house. (vi) The vehicle was travelling <b>at</b> a high speed. (vii) The vehicle got there <b>by</b> accident. (viii) The people are travelling <b>in</b> the bus. (ix) He spoke <b>into</b> the microphone. (x) Person B is seated <b>beside</b> person A. (xi) She is <b>in</b> a dress. (xii) They are to enter <b>by</b> the gate. (xiii) The girl is walking <b>with</b> short steps. (xiv) Tree A is leaning <b>over</b> tree B. (xv) The boy is throwing stones <b>at</b> the dog. (xvi) He translated the words <b>into</b> English (xvii) He translated the words <b>into</b> English (xviii) The people talked <b>among</b> themselves.	18
40-59%		(i) She bought the box <b>on</b> credit. (ii) The shoot of tree A is <b>above</b> that of B. (iii) The vehicle has got <b>off</b> the road. (iv) They can hear news <b>over</b> the radio.	4
20%-39%		(i) His hands smelled <b>of</b> onions.	1
0%-19%			0

As the table above shows, in the bulk of the questions, the scores of the learners' lay below the Very Easy range of 80% and above. The learners obtained a score of 80% and above in 15 preposition usages. In 18 usages, the pupils got scores within the range of

60%-79% which corresponded to the Easy tag, while in 4 usages, the learners' scores were between 40% and 59% and were in the Relatively Difficult range. In 1 preposition usage, the learners got a score that was within the range of 20%-39%. This means that the preposition was Difficult.

The scale for difficulty measurement given earlier was used to measure the difficulty of the preposition usages. The scale is reproduced below:

<u>Performance Score</u>	<u>Difficulty Level</u>
80% and above	Very Easy
60-79%	Easy
40-59%	Relatively Difficult
20-39%	Difficult
0-19%	Very Difficult

The learners' scores are summarized in table 5 below and classified by their difficulty rating.

**Table 5: Summary of Learners' Scores in Prepositions Arranged by Difficulty Categories**

PREPOSITION DIFFICULTY RATING	NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRE PREPOSITIONS WITHIN THE RATING
Very Easy	15
Easy	18
Relatively Difficult	4
Difficult	1
Very Difficult	0

#### **4.3 Markedness Vis-a- vis Difficulty in Preposition Usage**

Markedness in this study refers to incongruence between Kikuyu and English prepositions in the number of meanings and usages. This is a difference in the range of contexts of usage where in each context, the preposition has a different meaning.

It was held that generally, the Kikuyu and English languages vary in the range of contexts of their application of certain prepositions. The Kikuyu language appears to



employ a small number of prepositions in contexts which the English language employs a wide range of these linguistic items (see Table 1)

The extent of the incongruence in the range of preposition usage across the two languages was used as a measure of the markedness levels for individual prepositions. The difficulty, as explained earlier, was determined on the basis of the performance recorded from the research respondents in each preposition featured in the questionnaire. High scores demonstrated ease while low scores indicated difficulty. Scores in the middle of these extremes were also graded depending on how they approximated either of the two extremes of ease and difficulty. A scale was set to measure markedness as shown in the previous sections, based on the variation of meaning or range of application of the prepositions across the two languages. The scale provided a basis for comparing the extent of the cross-linguistic variations with the difficulty evident in learning in L<sub>2</sub>. The scale is shown below:

Number of Inconsistent Meanings

Markedness Status

0	Very Unmarked
1	Unmarked
2	Relatively Marked
3	Marked
4	Very Marked

The prepositions were then grouped according to their level of markedness, thus forming markedness clusters. Each markedness cluster consisted of prepositions of equal markedness degree. The mean scores that the respondents obtained in the individual preposition tasks in a markedness cluster were combined and then their mean calculated. The mean was then expressed as a percentage score. Each markedness cluster therefore had a percentage mean score which reflected the general competence of the learners in that particular set of preposition usages. The performance of the learners in terms of mean scores in the prepositions of a given markedness cluster was used as an indication of the difficulty of the prepositions of the given cluster.



As stated above, if in a given preposition cluster of preposition usages, learners recorded a high mean score, an interpretation of ease was made, while difficulty was perceived if the mean score got was low.

The mean scores of the learners in prepositions of the various clusters was worked out. The series of Tables 6 show the percentage scores obtained by learners in the various preposition markedness clusters.

**Table 6: Percentage Scores Obtained in Preposition Markedness Clusters**

**A. Very Unmarked Prepositions**

PREPOSITION USAGE CONTEXT	PERCENTAGE SCORE OBTAINED
There is a box <b>under</b> the table	88
The girl is <b>with</b> a boy.	87
The ball is to be received <b>by</b> girl B	81
Person B is seated <b>between</b> person A and C.	92
The girl is <b>in front of</b> the woman.	67
Person C is seated <b>beside</b> person B.	78

Mean score 82.16%

**B. Unmarked Prepositions**

PREPOSITION USAGE CONTEXT	PERCENTAGE SCORE OBTAINED
The girl has come <b>from</b> home	82
The vehicle has got <b>off</b> the road.	58
The dog is running <b>away from</b> the boy.	81
He went to the door <b>of</b> the house.	68
She was suffering <b>from</b> Malaria	84

Mean score 74.6%

**C. Relatively marked Prepositions**

PREPOSITION USAGE CONTEXT	PERCENTAGE SCORE OBTAINED
The girl is going <b>to</b> school.	89
She is <b>in</b> a dress.	67
They are <b>at</b> the school gate.	84
Girl A is throwing the ball <b>to</b> girl B.	81
The vehicle got there <b>by</b> accident.	72
The girl is walking <b>with</b> short steps.	66
His hands smell <b>of</b> alcohol.	22
The boy is throwing stones <b>at</b> the dog.	63
Her ability is equal <b>to</b> that of the others.	79
The people are travelling <b>in</b> a bus.	70

Mean score 69.3%

#### D. Marked Prepositions

PREPOSITION USAGE CONTEXT	PERCENTAGE SCORE OBTAINED
He is seated <b>on</b> a chair.	92
They are to enter <b>by</b> the gate.	66
The people can hear news <b>over</b> the radio.	42
Tree A is leaning <b>over</b> tree B.	66
The shoot of tree D is <b>above</b> that of tree C.	55
The pupils are seated close <b>to</b> one another.	75
The dog has jumped <b>over</b> the fence.	94

Mean score 70.0%

#### E. Very Marked Prepositions

PREPOSITION USAGE CONTEXT	PERCENTAGE SCORE OBTAINED
The vehicle was travelling <b>at</b> a high speed.	73
She bought the box <b>on</b> credit	59
The glass has broken <b>into</b> pieces.	86
The teacher is getting <b>into</b> class.	75
They were <b>in</b> the house at 9 p.m.	94
The people talked <b>among</b> themselves.	61
The boy was born <b>in</b> 1996.	81
He called her <b>on</b> number 0733456329.	68
She spoke <b>into</b> the microphone.	70
She translated Kikuyu words <b>into</b> English.	62

Mean score 72.9%

The difficulty deduced from the learners' scores was compared with the markedness of the various preposition clusters. The scale for measurement of difficulty on the basis of the scores obtained was used to measure the difficulty. The scale which was earlier given is as reproduced hereunder:

#### Scale of Performance Vis-à-vis Difficulty

<u>Learners' Score</u>	<u>Difficulty Level</u>
80% and above	Very Easy
60-79%	Easy
40-59%	Relatively Difficult
20-39%	Difficult
0-19%	Very Difficult
0-19%	Very Difficult



To compare difficulty with markedness, the mean scores of the learners in various preposition clusters were used. The mean scores obtained in the preposition clusters and their corresponding difficulty measures were juxtaposed with the ones that were expected if markedness and difficulty had the exact relationship that was hypothesized at the start of the research.

The relationship observed is shown in the table below.

**Table 7: Comparison of Markedness and Difficulty by Markedness Clusters**

MARKEDNESS CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE SCORE OBTAINED IN PERFORMANCE	PERCENTAGE SCORE EXPECTED	EXPECTED DIFFICULTY LEVEL	ACTUAL DIFFICULTY LEVEL
Very Unmarked	82.16	80%-100%	Very Easy	Very Easy
Unmarked	74.6	60%-79%	Easy	Easy
Relatively Marked	69.3	40%-59%	Relatively Difficult	Easy
Marked	70.0	20%-39%	Difficult	Easy
Very Marked	72.9	0%-19%	Very Difficult	Easy

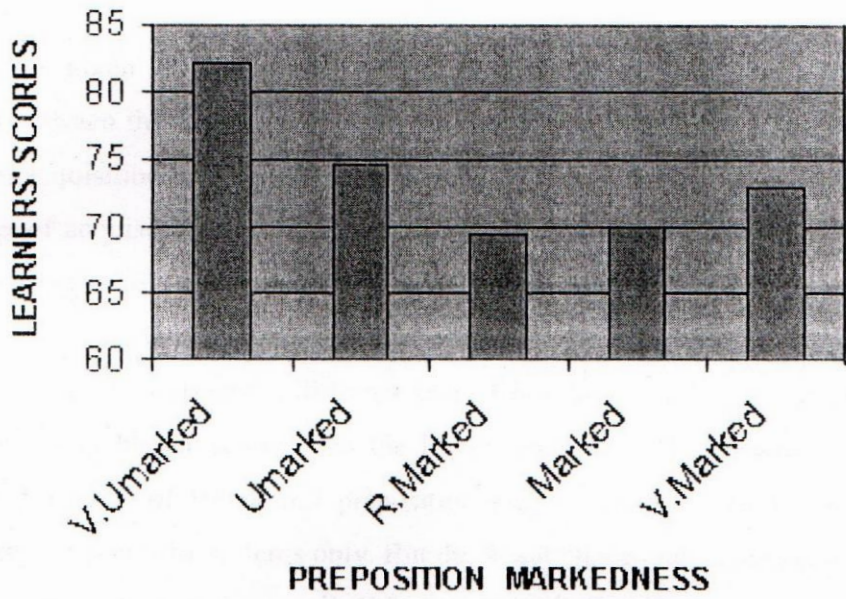
It is evident from table 7 above that the difficulties that were observed on the basis of the mean scores obtained in the preposition clusters matched the expected levels in some clusters but not in others. This is in the sense that for example, the prepositions that were expected to be Very Easy for the learners and those expected to be Easy were actually as projected in terms of the learners' mean scores. However in the other markedness clusters, the mean scores of the learners were higher than expected. This was as result of learners scoring many points for choosing prepositions even though the prepositions were not correct. This is the practice under the Group Score method.

Despite these inconsistencies, in the first two clusters A and B, learners' scores corresponded neatly with the clusters expected ranks relative to one another. The score of the markedness cluster C, D and E however, did not fall in their expected performance ranks. This means that in some markedness clusters with higher markedness levels, learners had a higher mean score than in some clusters that were less marked.

Notwithstanding the apparent inconsistency between markedness and mean scores the general trend of difficulty decreasing with decreasing markedness levels is clear as the graph below shows.



**Figure 2: A Graph Showing the Relationships Between Markedness in English Prepositions and Learners' Scores**



As graph 1 above shows, generally the more marked preposition clusters showed lower mean scores than the less marked clusters.

The lack of absolute consistency between the markedness levels and the means of the markedness clusters necessitated a further investigation of the relationships between the scores in different markedness clusters. This was another method of testing the hypothesis to the effect that the difficulty observed in the preposition usages would be directly proportional to the markedness level of each markedness cluster.

The T-test, which is a more accurate instrument than mean scores, was used. The instrument was particularly appropriate as it took cognizance of the fact that the number preposition usages varied from one cluster to another. The hypothesis was tested by use of the T-test with a significance level of alpha 0.1 (see the appendix). It compared the means of the various markedness clusters. The T-test showed that the mean scores obtained in the various markedness clusters were inversely proportional to

the markedness levels of the clusters. The higher the level of markedness of a cluster, the lower the scores the pupils obtained in the usages in the cluster. Therefore, the more marked a preposition usage cluster was, the more difficult it was to the learners.

#### 4.4 Preposition Acquisition Order

The tasks given to each of the grades of the learners were identical. Hence the differences between the scores of the learners of different grades reflected differences in the levels of acquisition of the preposition usages.

The order of acquisition of the prepositions under study was investigated on the basis of the scores posted by learners of the various school grades. The performance of each school grade group was compared with that posted by the other grades of learners. Each grade group of pupils obtained a different score from the others'. Generally the higher-grade learners had higher scores than the lower grade ones. For instance, the class 8 pupils scored a mean of 100% in 7 preposition usages. Grade seven pupils recorded a similar score in 3 preposition items only. But the lower classes never scored a mean score of 100% in any question, and generally the grade 4 pupils had the lowest scores.

The mean scores of the various grades matched the grades in terms of rank. This means that the mean scores of the various school grades in a decreasing order corresponded to the hierarchy of the grades in the school system. The performance of the different class groups is shown in the table that appears below:

**Table 8: Scores of Learners of Various School Grades in Preposition Usages.**

QUESTION	QUESTION POSITION IN TEST	PERCENTAGE SCORE OBTAINED BY LEARNERS' GRADE				
		GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
The boy is seated <b>on</b> a chair.	1	73	93	95	100	100
There is a box <b>under</b> the table.	2	85	70	88	93	98
The girl is going <b>to</b> school.	3	80	90	90	90	98
She has come <b>from</b> home.	4	73	78	75	90	98
She is <b>in</b> a dress.	5	55	63	63	78	78



She is <b>with</b> a boy.	6	65	95	85	90	98
They are <b>at</b> the school gate.	7	63	83	83	93	98
They are to enter <b>by</b> the school gate.	8	60	68	53	75	78
She is throwing the ball <b>to</b> girl B.	9	73	65	80	88	100
The ball is to be received <b>by</b> girl B.	10	60	78	83	85	100
The people are travelling <b>in</b> the bus.	11	63	75	70	68	75
The vehicle has got <b>off</b> the road.	12	43	48	50	75	58
The vehicle got there <b>by</b> accident.	13	60	73	63	83	83
The vehicle was travelling <b>at</b> a high speed.	14	60	60	73	80	90
Person B is seated <b>between</b> person A and B.	15	83	88	90	98	100
Person B is seated <b>beside</b> person C.	16	68	83	83	83	75
They can hear news <b>over</b> the radio.	17	58	45	48	45	50
The girl is <b>in front of</b> the woman.	18	45	63	60	83	85
The woman has bought the box <b>on</b> credit.	19	55	55	53	63	68
The girl is walking <b>with</b> short steps.	20	68	60	63	70	68
Tree B is leaning <b>over</b> tree A.	21	70	73	60	60	68
The shoot of tree D is <b>above</b> that of tree C.	22	45	53	58	45	78
The glass has broken <b>into</b> pieces.	23	73	75	85	100	98
The pupils are seated close <b>to</b> one another.	24	58	68	73	90	95
The teacher is getting <b>into</b> class.	25	65	85	78	63	83
The boy seems to say that his hands smell <b>of</b> onions.	26	38	35	13	18	10
The boy is throwing stones <b>at</b> the dog.	27	60	68	70	65	55
The dog has jumped <b>over</b> the fence.	28	88	88	88	98	100
The dog is running <b>away from</b> the boy.	29	75	68	80	93	88
They were in the house <b>at</b> 9:30 p.m.	30	83	93	95	100	100
The people are talking <b>among</b>	31	43	55	48	73	80

themselves.						
He was born <b>in</b> 1996.	32	70	73	83	80	100
He called his uncle <b>on</b> number 0733542396.	33	58	55	63	73	85
He moved near the door <b>of</b> the house.	34	53	55	60	83	88
She <b>blew</b> some air <b>into</b> the microphone.	35	70	78	60	73	68
She translated Kikuyu words <b>into</b> English.	36	55	68	60	60	65
She was suffering <b>from</b> Malaria.	37	65	75	83	95	98
Wambui's ability is equal <b>to</b> mine.	38	68	68	80	85	95
<b>CLASS TOTAL MEAN</b>		63.5	70.15	70.65	78.52	82.94

The means of the various school grades in the entire test show that the lower a grade was in the school hierarchy the lower their scores were. Grade 4 pupils therefore posted the lowest total mean score of 63.5 followed by the immediate higher grade, class 5 which had a total mean score of 70.15. Grade six had a mean score of 70.65, grade seven a mean score of 78.52 and grade 8 posted the highest mean score of 82.94.

To highlight the differences in performance between the various grades of learners, the scores of the various school grades were summarized. This was to show the number of preposition usages that each grade group was able to reach each range of scores in the measurement scale (see Table 8 page 57).

The scores of the various school-grades are summarized in the Table 9 below:

**Table 9: Summary of Scores of various School Grades in English Preposition Usages**

Percentage Score	Number Of Questions Within Score Range By Class/Grade				
	CLASS 4	CLASS 5	CLASS 6	CLASS 7	CLASS 8
80 and above	5	9	16	22	24
60-79	21	21	15	13	10
40-59	11	7	6	2	3
20-39	1	1	0	0	0
0-19	0	0	1	1	1

The preposition usages in which a given class of school grade students scored a mark of 80% and above were deemed to have been fully acquired. This is



consistent with the scale of performance vis-à-vis acquisition. This is shown in the scale given below:

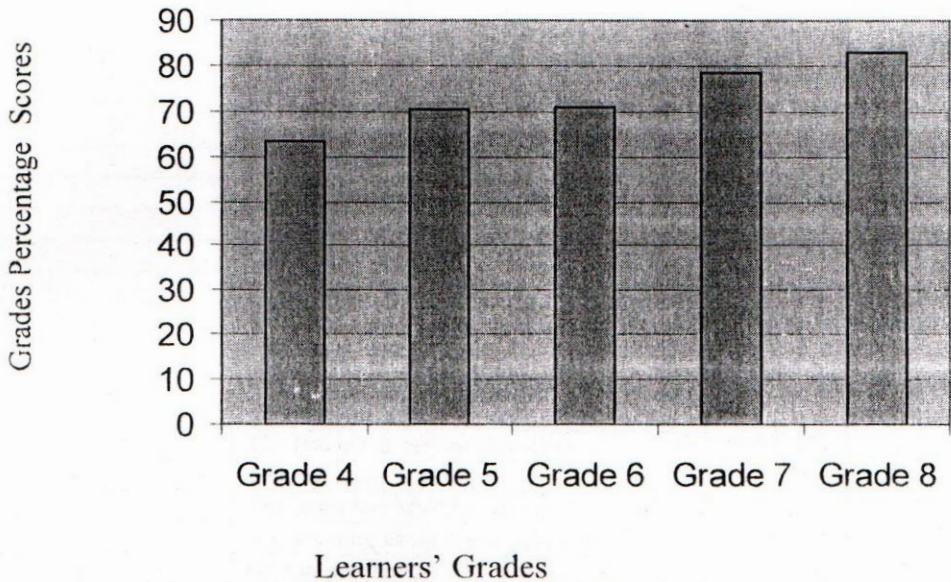
<u>Learners' Score</u>	<u>Acquisition Rating</u>
80% and above	Fully Acquired
60%-79%	Well Acquired
40%-59%	Fairly Well Acquired
20%-39%	Poorly Acquired
0%-19%	Not Acquired

As the summary of the school- grade mean scores shows, the grade eight learners scored the 80% mark in 24 out of the 38 preposition usages which is equivalent to 63% of the questionnaire items. This was the highest number of high scores that was obtained by any class. Class seven learners got the 80% score in 22 of the total usages in the test, which is 58% of the questions in the questionnaire. The other three grades of learners, class six, class five, and class four reached the score in 42% then, 24% and 13% of the preposition tasks respectively.

This means that the number of preposition usages in which each school grade learners were able to clinch the acquisition mark of 80% points was highest for the highest grade of learners, which is grade eight pupils. The lowest grade of learners managed to score 80% mark in the least number of preposition usages. A graphic representation of the mean scores against the school grades appears below:

**Graph 2**

**Figure 3 : A Graph Showing Scores of Various School Grades in Preposition Tasks.**



For some preposition tasks, it was observed that a lower grade class of pupils had scores that demonstrated acquisition of a usage which a higher-grade group of pupils did not show evidence of acquisition. Since this is a cross-sectional study, it was logical to take the entire sample of learners as representing one group which goes through the various grades or levels of the school. The performance of a lower grade group of learners was therefore necessarily reflective of an ability already possessed by the higher grade students. The prepositions in which a higher-grade group performed well were therefore to be added to those in which the lower grade pupils had done well. If that is taken into account, the acquired prepositions for the various grades of learners are found to be as is in the table that follows:



**Table 10: English Preposition Usages Fully Acquired by Learners**

PREPOSITION	USAGE CONTEXT EXAMPLE	CLASS BY WHICH THRESHOLD REACHED				
		4	5	6	7	8
Under	A box <b>under</b> the table					
Over	The dog has jumped <b>over</b> the fence					
Between	Seated <b>between</b> A and B					
At	He came <b>at</b> noon					
To	She is going <b>to</b> school.					
On	A is seated <b>on</b> a chair					
With	The girl is <b>with</b> a boy					
Beside	Person A is seated <b>beside</b> person B					
At	She is <b>at</b> the gate					
Into	The teacher is getting <b>into</b> class					
From	She has come <b>from</b> home					
Into	The glass has broken <b>into</b> pieces.					
Away from	A is running <b>away from</b> person B					
At	He came <b>at</b> noon					
By	The ball is to be received <b>by</b> person B					
To	Throwing the ball <b>to</b> girl A					
In	A was born <b>in</b> 1996					
From	A is suffering <b>from</b> Malaria					
To	Her ability is equal <b>to</b> mine					
Of	He went near the door <b>of</b> the house					
In front of	The girl is <b>in front of</b> the woman.					
By	The vehicle got there <b>by</b> accident					
At	The vehicle was travelling <b>at</b> a high speed.					
To	The pupils are seated close <b>to</b> one another					
Among	The people talked <b>among</b> themselves					
On	He called him <b>on</b> number 0733456821					

A preposition usage in which all the school grades did not reach scores within the range of 40%-50% was found to be poorly acquired. The preposition is shown in the table below.

**Table 11: Prepositions Usage Poorly Acquired by the Learners**

PREPOSITION	USAGE CONTEXT EXAMPLE
Of	His hands smell of onions.



## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the results of the research test administered to the learners as presented in the previous chapter and assesses their implications on the objectives of the study. The assessment is done in the light of the theories that underpin this research. The implications of the of the learners' performance constitute the conclusions and on the basis of such conclusions, recommendations are made.

### **5.1 Conclusions**

#### **5.2 Difficulty in Use of Prepositions**

The study sought to establish whether the difficulty prevalent in English prepositions is a uniform or varied phenomenon across the individual prepositions under study. This was embodied in one of the three stated objectives: to determine the English prepositions that are easy and the ones that are difficult to acquire among Kikuyu first language speakers. The assumption related to the objective stated: Kikuyu first language speakers find some preposition usages easy and others difficult to acquire (see page 2).

The hypothesis was then subjected to a suitable experimental test comprising a broad spectrum of English preposition usages which was administered to native speakers of Kikuyu language in primary schools, learning English. The difficulty status of the specific prepositions under study was gauged from the learners' scores in questions on the prepositions.

The scores obtained in the test in the individual prepositions were distributed across the five levels of the performance scale. In 15 out of the 38 preposition usages in the test, a mean score of 80% and above was posted which corresponds to the Very Easy tag. In the next level in the order of increasing difficulty, which is scores of 60%-79%, there were 18 prepositions usages. There were 4 preposition usages in which learners recorded a mean score of between 40% and 59%, while in 1 preposition usage the pupils had a

score within the range of 20%-39%. The scores therefore depicted gradations in the difficulty obtaining in different preposition usages.

From the foregoing, the prepositions featured in the questionnaire evidently present a continuum of difficulty levels. Some preposition usages are easy while others are difficult. It is for that reason that the learners performed well in some preposition usages but poorly in others. On the basis of these findings therefore, the first hypothesis is borne out; Kikuyu first language speakers find some English preposition usages easy while others are difficult for them to learn.

The prepositions featured in the study can consequently be grouped in the order of difficulty on the basis of the difficulty measured on the five-point scale given earlier (see page 50).

### **5.3 Relationship between Markedness and Difficulty**

This study also undertook to determine the effect of the differences between the preposition systems of the two languages, English and Kikuyu on the learning of English prepositions. Precisely, the research identified the discrepancies in the two languages in the semantic loading of prepositions and assessed these differences against the difficulties evident in the learning of the L<sub>2</sub> English prepositions for the L<sub>1</sub> Kikuyu speakers.

The term markedness was applied for the degree of the discrepancies between semantic loadings in the prepositions of the two languages. This emanates from the fact that some languages have fewer prepositions than others and may therefore apply these linguistic elements for a wider range of meanings than those languages with a rich stock of such linguistic items. In effect, the prepositions applied in a wider range will have greater number of meanings than those used in fewer contexts.

The difficulty of the preposition usages was determined on the basis of the performance of the learners in certain preposition tasks as explained earlier. The scores of the learners were graded on a difficulty scale ranging from the Very Easy to the Very Difficult statuses. Markedness was measured on a weak-strong scale depending on the extent of dissimilarities in the range of contexts of usage between the two languages and



the prepositions were grouped on the basis of their markedness levels. The difficulty status of a given group of prepositions was then compared with its markedness level.

The results obtained revealed a positive correlation between markedness and difficulty. The least marked prepositions registered the highest mean score of 82.166% thus the lowest difficulty level and the other groups of prepositions generally followed a consistent pattern in the order of markedness and difficulty. The T-test showed that higher levels of markedness consistently resulted in lower scores of the learners.

The import of this outcome is that differences in preposition semantic loading across languages can form a basis for predicting the difficulties involved in using given prepositions for an L<sub>1</sub> Kikuyu speaker learning L<sub>2</sub> English. The prepositions that are least marked are the easiest to learn while the most marked ones pose the greatest degree of difficulty to learners. In the light of this finding, the demand of the second objective, to find out whether the difficulty in preposition acquisition among Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> learners of English is as a result of markedness relationships between English and Kikuyu languages, has been satisfied. It is the conclusion of this study that markedness levels between Kikuyu and English languages determined from the differences in the semantic loads of prepositions across the languages is a factor influencing difficulty in the learning of English prepositions.

In this study, evidence of erroneous word for word translation was sought. This was by calculating the incidence of L<sub>2</sub> translation equivalents from L<sub>1</sub> used in wrong contexts where they are apparently motivated by the L<sub>1</sub> system. Eleven English preposition usages in the test had clear L<sub>1</sub> translation equivalents which had been featured as distracters. The learners made 721 errors in these questions out of which 305 errors were as a result of L<sub>1</sub> equivalence matching. This works out to 42.3% of the errors committed in these prepositions. This closely relates with a study cited in Dulay *et al* (1982) in which mother tongue-related errors were 9 out of 19 errors in preposition use. This constitutes 47.36% of the errors observed. The use of transfer was therefore a major learning strategy employed by the pupils. A significant part of the learners' difficulties therefore arose from the failure of the strategy in those areas where L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> differed

The possible positive end of transfer was similarly investigated. A check on the preposition usages in which there was clear parallelism between L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> and no

competing options was done. These were the questions that were classified as Very Unmarked. In this cluster of prepositions, learners showed the best performance of all those featured in the test. The learners recorded a mean score of 82.166% which was vastly greater than in its nearest competing cluster which had a mean score of 74.6%. The difference in scores between these two clusters was greater than between any other clusters. This was therefore a clear case of the realization of the benefits of cross-linguistic transfer.

Two aspects of the results also deserve mention. There were wide disparities in the learners' mean scores in the various preposition clusters. This was not expected since the intervals of markedness from cluster to cluster were equal. The second aspect, which is related to the first, was the wide variations of scores in prepositions that were within the same markedness clusters. These aspects appear to constitute evidence that difficulty of prepositions is not purely a function of markedness relations between the languages involved. If markedness were the only factor, all prepositions of the same markedness level would have had the same score. For this reason, it is apparent that one cannot determine difficulty on the basis of markedness solely, with pinpoint accuracy. Other possible factors exerting influence on performance should be taken into account.

In the opinion of Larsen-Freeman (1976) in Dulay *et al* (1982), one other possible factor affecting difficulty is frequency. Although no consensus has been reached on the role of frequency of occurrence of linguistic items in the language input received by the learner, there are research findings that ascribe a positive role to frequency in learning. Dulay (*ibid*) *et al* say language patterns that are used very frequently within the learners' earshot tend to be memorized and may therefore occur at an unexpected stage in the learners' acquisition process. They cite Browns experiment in which the children he observed were able to produce Wh- questions on roughly appropriate occasions before they had analysed their structure due to the high rate of occurrence of this type of question in the learners' linguistic experience.

Stevik (1982) concurs with Dulay (*ibid*) on the value of frequency in accelerating learning. He adds that in order for the learners to retain the items acquired earlier as a result of high frequency of occurrence, the frequency has to be appropriately managed. He draws a distinction between massed and distributed practice. If a learner is exposed to



an item several times without interruption, this is termed massed practice and its profitability to learning is quite limited. Distributed practice refers to exposures to an item that are interrupted by exposure to other items. He says distributed practice has a positive effect on learning. It should therefore be used in teaching.

Stevik (ibid) also feels that the intensity of the linguistic experience in which a language item is encountered does count a lot. Intensity in Stevik's terms is the vividness of the exposure, the long-term importance of the experience and the emotional depth at which the material touches the hearer, and the cognitive breadth of the material in the learner's mind. These factors relate to the teaching and learning environment but not to the nature of the languages in question such as markedness relations. The effects of these factors to different prepositions in varying degrees, may have led to inconsistency with the expectations in performance of the learners in the test items administered.

#### **5.4 Preposition Acquisition Sequence**

Knowledge of the sequence of occurrence of the various language elements in the acquisition stages of the learners is of crucial importance to the instructional process. The success of teaching is largely dependent on the extent of compatibility of teaching with the learner's mental preparedness for acquisition of the content material.

In cognizance of this fact, the study examined the possibility of existence of an acquisition order of the English prepositions for the learners involved in the research. This was in a bid to illuminate any possible workings of this phenomenon on the learning process.

Learners' scores in tasks of preposition usage were the basis for determining the acquisition status of the prepositions in the study. Where high scores were obtained, high levels of acquisition were discerned, while low scores indicated low acquisition levels. Diverse types of preposition usages were presented and learners of different levels of schooling experience involved, helping assess the acquisition progression as the learners moved up the school levels.

The scores of the different school grades were compared in order to establish any possible relationship between school grade level and performance in the prepositions. The performance of each school-grade was then gauged on a scale of acquisition.

The results that ensued manifested differences in performance in individual prepositions by different school grades of students. The lowest grade of students performed poorly in the highest number of preposition tasks. Conversely, the highest-grade learners obtained high scores in the highest number of items.

Generally, there also emerged particular preposition items whose acquisition was not evident in the lower grade groups but an increasing acquisition index was evident as pupils went up the grades. The orders of acquisition of the usages featured in the study were examined in the light of Kendall Coefficient of Concordance. This instrument checks orders of acquisition to determine whether the orders portrayed by different groups are significantly different as to be regarded as separate. The highest level of significance is 1 while the least is 0. When subjected to the instrument, the orders for the various school-grades of students produced a coefficient of 0.7810. This coefficient is quite significant as it is quite close to the highest possible level of significance. This means that learners of different levels in the school system were at different levels of acquisition of the prepositions featured in the study.

The net effect of this finding upholds the initial prediction that there is a regular acquisition order of English prepositions among Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> learners. This effectively confirms the third hypothesis to the effect that there is a regular acquisition order of English preposition usages among Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> learners of L<sub>2</sub> English.

It is prudent to enumerate and reflect on some interesting situations that emerged regarding some prepositions. The learners' scores in the preposition tasks depicted some lower grade groups outperforming their higher-grade counterparts in some items. For example, in question 17 (They can hear news **over** the radio), grade four pupils, the lowest grade group clinched the highest mark, 58%, while the highest-grade learners, class eight students scored 50%. Similarly in question 26, (The boy seems to be saying that his hands smell **of** onions) grade 4 pupils scored 38% and grade 5 obtained a score of 35%. Grade 6 learners had 13%, grade 7 managed 18%, but class 8 scored only 10%.



To understand this aberration, the effect of the change of the syllabus which had led to classes 4, to 6 being under a new syllabus while grade 7 and 8 were under another syllabus, was investigated. The syllabus was not found to be a likely cause as it also affected classes 5 and 6 yet their scores were not so high. It was found that the preposition was taught in the lower classes 1, 2 and 3 under both syllabuses. It was taught again in class 4 under the new syllabus. Since even classes 5 and 6 did not obtain high scores, the high score for class 4 could not be attributed to the new syllabus. This curious mismatch between school grade and acquisition levels may be explained as resulting from differences of the teaching or learning strategies employed in the different school-grades of learners. These variations could be such as the frequency of the exposure to the items and the intensity of the exposure to the learners, which were explained earlier.

Dulay *et al* (1982) report an additional factor. They say that in some situations, however effective the instructional process is, learners backslide to an older hypothesis until they feel that the new hypothesis has been confirmed. This means that even after learners have been taught a structure, they may linger on their previous understanding of the structure until a later stage when they feel confident about using the structure correctly, as taught. The lower grade pupils may be employing the new knowledge taught while the higher grade ones are grappling with doubts about the new instructions.

A related issue are cases where the lowest grade learners have acquired an item reasonably well but not the immediate higher-grade learners although the other learners have acquired the item. A case in point is question number two (There is a box **under** the table) where class four pupils scored a mean score of 85%. Grade 5 learners had 70%. Class 6 pupils scored 88% while grade 7 learners obtained 93% and the score for standard 8 was 98%. Phillipson *et al* (1991) offer the explanation that in the view of Pienmann (1995), the usage could be a feature that lies outside the acquisition order dictates in the learners mind. Pienmann (*ibid*) terms such features variational features. These features can be learned at any time if the learner is motivated to learn them.

For variational features if lower grade students are exposed to them before the higher-grade learners, the lower grade learners will exhibit acquisition before the higher-grade group of learners. It could therefore be the case that standard 5 pupils had not been taught the usage but grade 4 pupils had been taught and the item is a variational feature.

## 5.5 Recommendations

This section reviews briefly, the conclusions reached from the results of the research on preposition learning and usage. The conclusions have then been synthesized with the benefit of findings and recommendations from other researches as well as insights from linguistic experts. This has given rise to recommendations on methodology and strategies for the teaching of English prepositions among the Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> learners of English L<sub>2</sub>. The recommendations however, have wider applications in the teaching of language in general since they result from wide consultations that reach well beyond the area of English syntax.

The conclusions in the earlier section boil down to three fundamental and interrelated facts on English preposition learning for the Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> speakers. These are

1. Some English preposition usages are easy while others are difficult for L<sub>1</sub> Kikuyu learners.
2. The difference in the range of meanings between L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> preposition usages is related to the difficulty of the L<sub>2</sub> prepositions. The greater the difference between the range of meanings of L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> preposition usages, the more difficult the L<sub>2</sub> preposition usages are to the Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> learners.
3. There is a regular acquisition order of English prepositions for Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> learners of L<sub>2</sub> English.

From the conclusions above, it appears logical to address markedness, the differences in the range of meanings of the prepositions of the two languages as the principal determinant of ease or difficulty in learning of prepositions and the rate of acquisition. Where markedness is high, difficulty levels are high and the acquisition rate is low and vice versa.

There is need for the learning situation to be favourable to learning and teaching to be such that it facilitates learning of the specific items that would otherwise be difficult to learn. The learners' involvement need to be carefully thought through to nurture their learning process.



The recommendations to be made are of two kinds; those that are specific in that they arise from the findings of the study, and general ones to the teaching of prepositions and the English language as a whole.

### 5.6 Preposition Difficulty and Markedness

The study has found that some prepositions are easy or difficult depending to a large extent, on their similarity to the L<sub>1</sub> prepositions in the range of their meanings. This difficulty extends its effect to the acquisition rate of the L<sub>2</sub> prepositions. Teaching should take cognizance of this phenomenon and anticipate and prepare for the inhibitive effect that the dissonance between L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> imposes on the learning process.

Teachers of English could work out the degree of the discrepancies between L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> preposition usages by identifying the translation equivalents in the languages in L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> and checking the number of distracters that arise out of the dissimilarities between the languages' systems. This may require the teacher to have knowledge of the learners' first language, which is quite desirable in the opinion of Tomlinson & Ellis (1980). However, since it is not always possible for teachers to be competent in the learners' L<sub>1</sub>, the teacher could seek the necessary assistance from his colleagues who speak the learners' L<sub>1</sub>.

In working out the markedness level of an English preposition usage, for example 'in', as used in the sentence 'He is **in** a coat' (*Ena igoti*) one needs to identify the Kikuyu preposition '*na*' as the translation equivalent. Next it should be considered that typically, the preposition '*na*' translates into English as '**with**' as is shown by sentences 1 and 2 below.

1. She is **with** a boy (*Ena kahii*)
2. He spoke **with** courage. (*Aririe na ucamba*)

The English preposition '**with**' therefore constitutes a factor of markedness for a Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> learner of the English preposition 'in' in the particular usage of the sentence given above.

Still, generally, the preposition '*na*' occurs in contexts that convey the meaning of 'use' in English, where '**on**' is used, as in the sentences:

3. He moved **on** his feet (*Arathire na maguru*)

4. She weighed herself **on** the weighing machine (*Arethinmire na githimi*)

5. She spoke **on** phone (*Araririe na thimu*)

The meaning of 'use' does correspond to the English preposition 'on' for Kikuyu 'na'. Therefore the meaning of use evokes in the Kikuyu learner of L<sub>2</sub> English the preposition 'on'.

Both the preposition 'on' and 'with' therefore, complicate the process of the selection of the preposition 'in' in the particular usage of the preposition in the sentence 'He is in a coat' for an L<sub>1</sub> Kikuyu learner of English. We can hence conclude that the two prepositions constitute markedness for the preposition 'in'. The choice of the preposition is therefore constrained by the two distracters. The preposition will therefore be more difficult to learn than those with less distracters but easier than those prepositions with more distracters. The more the distracting prepositions a given usage has, the more difficult it is to use and the later it is learned by the Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> speakers.

For prepositions where there are no distracters, learning is easy and it occurs early. These prepositions were classified as Very Unmarked in this study and were expected to be the easiest for the learners, a phenomenon that was actually observed. Other preposition usages had distracters ranging from one to four. Those with four distracters were the most difficult, as expected.

Once the teacher has established the degree of variability between the prepositions across the two languages, they should make a decision on the degree of emphasis needed to impart particular preposition usages. Greater differences between L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> usages, which are demonstrated by the presence of a large number of distracters, call for more emphasis and a variety of teaching techniques.

More research should be done along the lines of this research to find out the effects of other first languages on the learning of L<sub>2</sub> English prepositions.

One way of stressing an item that has been perceived as posing difficulty, as was seen earlier, is by exposing the learner frequently to the item in the fashion that is described as distributed practice. The teacher may teach a given preposition usage on Monday, teach other items on Tuesday, then revisit the item on Wednesday briefly, on the sidelines of another topic and very briefly again, on the Friday of the same week.



On the explicit teaching front or formal learning, more techniques can be employed to improve its results. Stevik (ibid) suggests some techniques that teachers may use in teaching English. One such technique is the direct method. In using the method, the teacher could teach prepositions by engaging in demonstrative activities which he describes as he carries them out using the target language. He could therefore teach in accompaniment of the appropriate activity for each sentence he utters. For example, he may physically carry out the relevant activities while saying such sentences as:

I am walking **to** the desk.

I am now **at** the desk.

I have sat **on** the desk.

I have put a book **on** the desk.

Let me now take the book **from** the desk.

I am now putting a piece of paper **in** the desk.

Language drills is another effective tool for language teaching which do come in handy in preposition teaching. Stevik (ibid) proposes the use of a drill he calls substitution correlation. A possible application of the drill in preposition teaching might be as in the sentences below:

The two of you *agreed* **on** the plan.

You *agreed* **with** him on the plan.

You must have *agreed* **to** his suggestions on the plan.

In this drill, the learner is practising how to use the verb 'agreed' with a variety of prepositions that change depending on the context.

The third technique is a preposition game. The game involves use of some objects such as Cuisenaire rods or even books of different colours to help create prepositional relationships which learners are taught to describe. Students are divided into groups and each group is given a few rods of identical number and colours from group to group. The rods of one of the groups are then arranged in some configuration and are obscured from the view of the rest of the groups. The group with the arranged rods then describes the configuration of the rods to the other groups and the groups try to duplicate the arrangement of the describing group. The description might be something like:

The red rod is **under** the yellow rod.

The green rod is **on** the black rod.

The blue rod is **between** the yellow rod and the red rod and **next to** the black rod. Learners will demonstrate understanding of the meanings of the prepositions under study by being able to replicate the configuration of the rods of the group that describes for the others.

On the basis of the findings of this research, it would be in order if teaching materials are designed in such a manner that the learners' special difficulties that arise from the peculiarities of their L<sub>1</sub> are addressed. This may be by writers producing materials that identify the likely areas of difficulty for speakers of different first languages. The materials should advise that special emphasis be put on those preposition usages.

### 5.7 Acquisition Sequence

One of the findings of this study is that there is a regular acquisition order of English prepositions for Kikuyu L<sub>1</sub> learners of L<sub>2</sub> English. Teachers should be conscious of this fact and teach the preposition usages that have been found to be acquired early first, then teach the others at stages that correspond to their relative stages of acquisition.

### 5.8 General Recommendations

As pointed out in the introduction chapter of this study, many English prepositions have so many meanings. Wood (ibid) says that due to the large number of meanings, the prepositions do not have clearly defined meanings apart from the phrase or construction in which they occur.

Due to the multiplicity of preposition meanings, it is quite unlikely that learner will learn a sufficient number of preposition usages by merely being taught the prepositions in class. For this reason it is important to consider the merits of other strategies that may be germane to teaching.

Dulay *et al* (ibid) distinguish between two environments of the learner; the natural and the formal environment. A natural environment is one where language is used with focus on the content as opposed to focus on the form of the language. This means that



when the learner of the L<sub>2</sub> uses the target language, the evaluation of his competence places emphasis on the ability of the learner to convey meaning and not on the accuracy of the linguistic structures employed. Prabhu (1987) reports of a successful project in India based on this tenet.

The formal environment proponents advocate explicit teaching of rules of the language and use of drills and exercises to impart the skills of the new language. The concept of consciousness raising is used in this discourse. This refers to highlighting of rules and patterns in so that the learner may learn them and apply them in his language output. This is anticipated in the teaching under the recommendations in 5.6 and 5.7 above. Gass, in Phillipson (1991) reports of studies in which explicit teaching of grammar accorded its recipients a learning advantage over those who did not receive such instructions. Spada and Lightbown (1989) in Phillipson *et al* (1991) cite similar results with English learners in Quebec Canada. However, reliance on consciousness raising alone is also limited in its contribution to the learners' ability to communicate in oral situations.

This research takes the position that each of the approaches has unique and unquestionable merits that it offers to learning and that the two approaches can be applied in a complementary manner. .

The Kenyan teaching situation employs both methods, each to a certain extent. It supplies content of the English language by teaching many academic subjects in English. The subjects are as mathematics, science, geography, religious education and business education among others. This is usually complemented with reading of passages on diverse subjects and teaching of grammar.

One of the major weaknesses setting back the process of learning of the English language however, is the dearth of comprehensive input material. This is due to lack of speakers in the learning environment who use the English language natively or at least naturally, in all aspects of life. Most of what learners receive in form of the target language input in schools is in academic topics often confined to the concepts of academic disciplines. This input is deficient of the wide variety of language forms that come with social discourse. This is the position taken by Genesse (ed) (1994), who says that language learners develop L<sub>2</sub> mastery fully through using the language in many

different settings with a wide variety of respondents and audiences and for a wide variety of purposes.

Learners whose language use is limited to school topics tend to be competent in communicating academic constructs mostly in the same linguistic structures as they were taught, but weak in other areas of communication. In the view of Stern (1983), language teaching should approach language learning objectively through the study and practice of structural, functional and socio-cultural aspects and it should offer opportunities to live the language as a person.

The way forward is therefore to enhance the use of the two approaches. The communicative approach ought to be strengthened by teachers using content to help highlight the forms of language that are intended for the learners to acquire. The approach may also be enhanced by use of visual and audio aids in the teaching process. This will integrate the linguistic forms such as the words or structures that the learners are exposed to in the context of images of audio visual or tactile kind and improve the possibility of the learners recalling the linguistic images.

In the absence of native speakers of the target language, the method can further be enriched by establishing a culture of use of English language in all aspects of communication among learners and between learners and teachers. The only exception should be where another language, such as Kiswahili needs to be used. This would not only offer an abundance of opportunities for learners to practice the use of their language competence, but would also supply the lower grade learners with models to emulate in the higher-grade learners. The learners may correct their peers' errors. In the view of Tudor (1996), when learners correct their peers, both learners are involved in listening and thinking about language.

Another way of enhancing learners' language competence is the use of class readers. Learners ought to be subjected to copious reading materials. Stotsky in Kroll (1991) found that better readers produced more syntactically mature structures than poor readers. Similarly, Eckhoff's study (1983) in Kroll (1991) found that the structures in class readers are reflected in children's writing. Stotsky (1993) in Kroll (ibid) concludes that reading is more effective in improving writing than either grammar exercises or extra writing practice.



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**APPENDICES**  
**APPENDIX I**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**WRITTEN TEST.**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION.**

Name of the student.....Sex.....

School.....

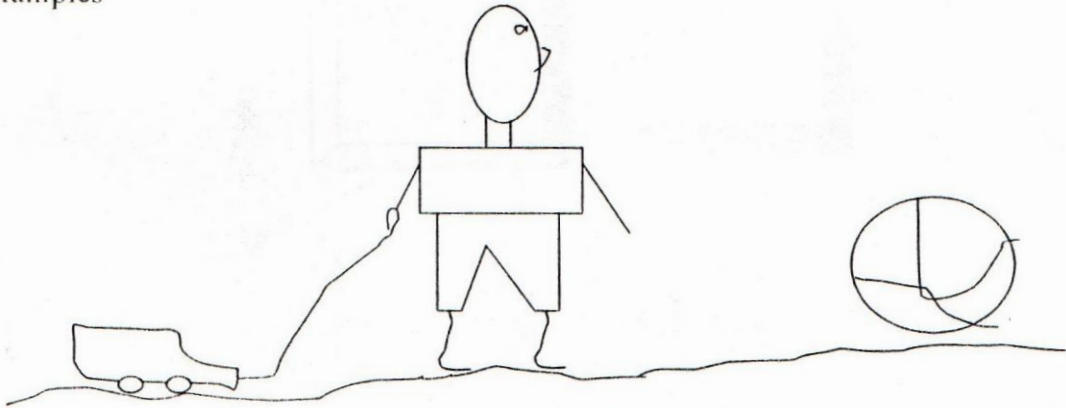
Class.....

**Instructions**

Answer all the questions

1. Fill in the blank spaces in the sentences below using the correct word or words given in the brackets.
2. Choose only one word or group of words such as “in front of” for each question.
3. If no words are needed to fill the blank space, fill in X.

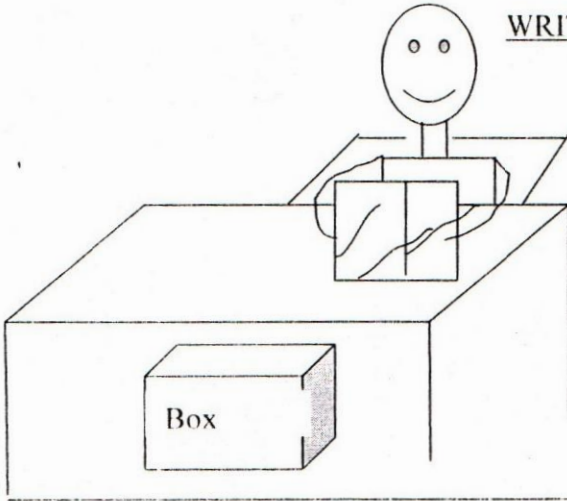
**Examples**



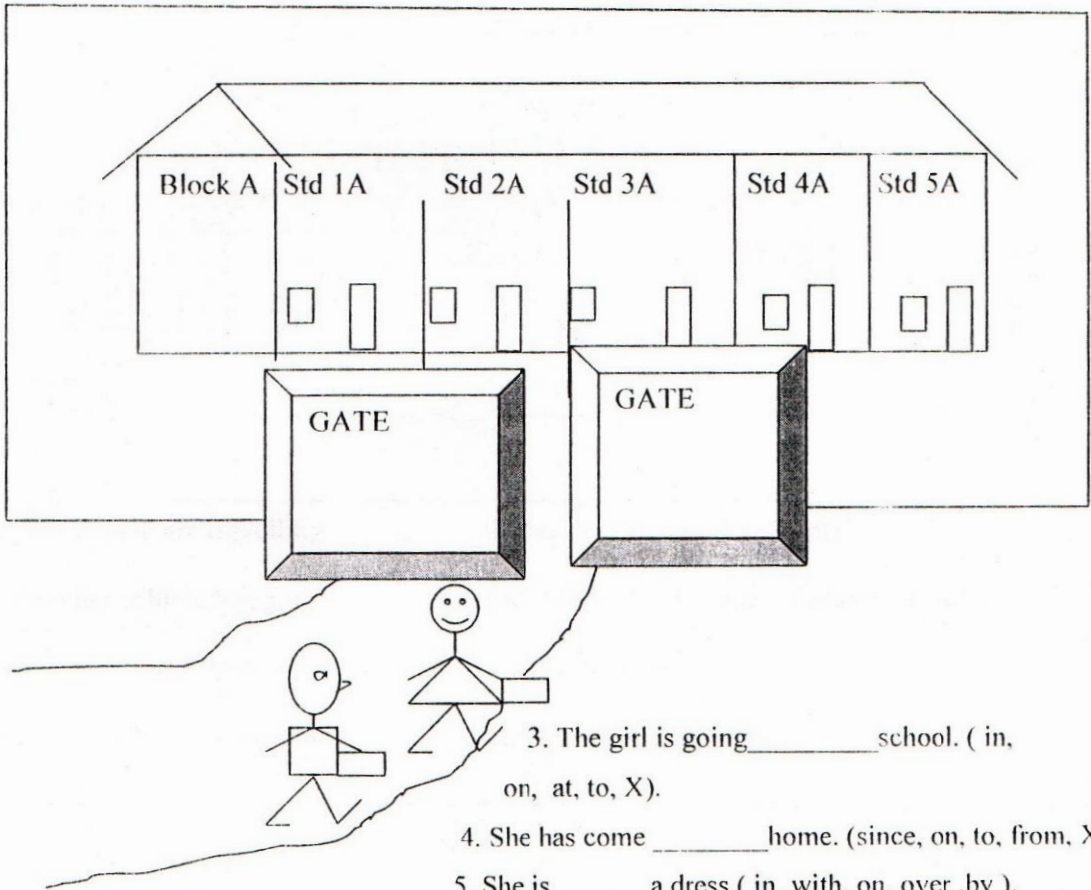
- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The boy is looking <u>at</u> the ball. ( at, for on, in front of, behind )</li><li>2. He is pulling <u>X</u> his toy.( to, for ,in, near, X)</li></ol> |
|---|



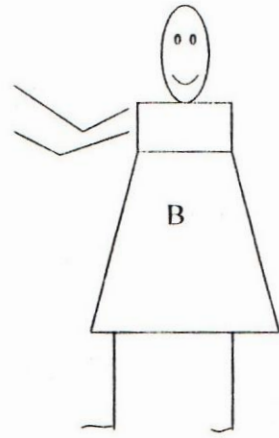
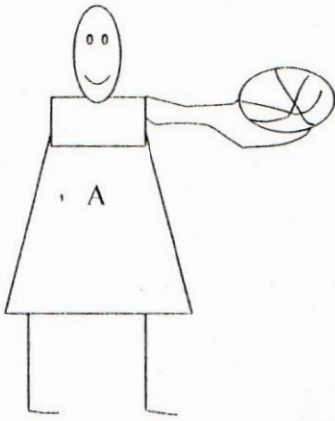
WRITTEN TEST



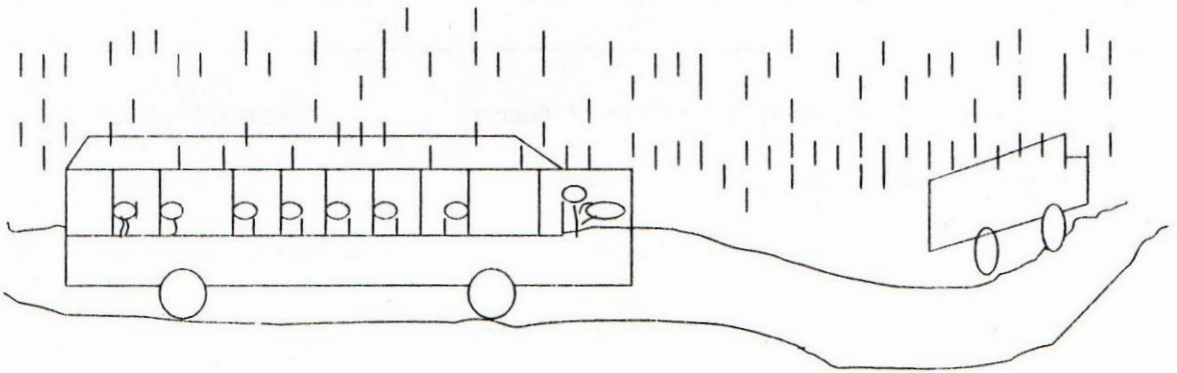
1. The boy is seated \_\_\_\_\_ a chair.  
( at on, in, for, X).
2. There is a box \_\_\_\_\_ the table.  
( over, on, under, in. up).



3. The girl is going \_\_\_\_\_ school. ( in, on, at, to, X).
4. She has come \_\_\_\_\_ home. (since, on, to, from. X)
5. She is \_\_\_\_\_ a dress.( in, with, on, over ,by ).
6. There is a boy who is \_\_\_\_\_ her. (and, with, to, in, at)
7. They are \_\_\_\_\_ the school gate (for, in, on, with, at).
8. They are to enter \_\_\_\_\_ the gate. (by, in, on, for, with).

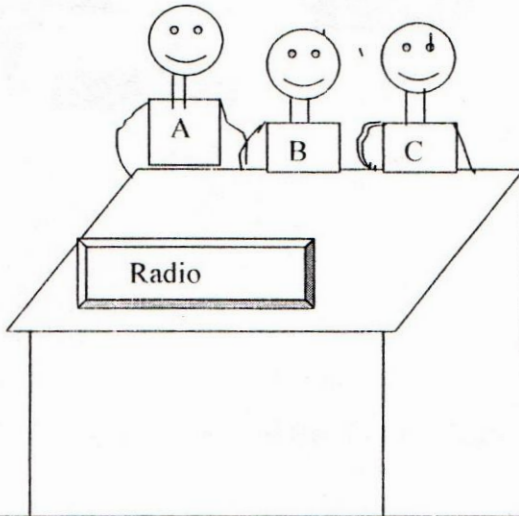


9. Girl A is throwing the ball \_\_\_\_\_ girl B. (for, at, to, on, X)  
10. The ball is going to be received \_\_\_\_\_ girl B.(on ,at ,to, by ,with)

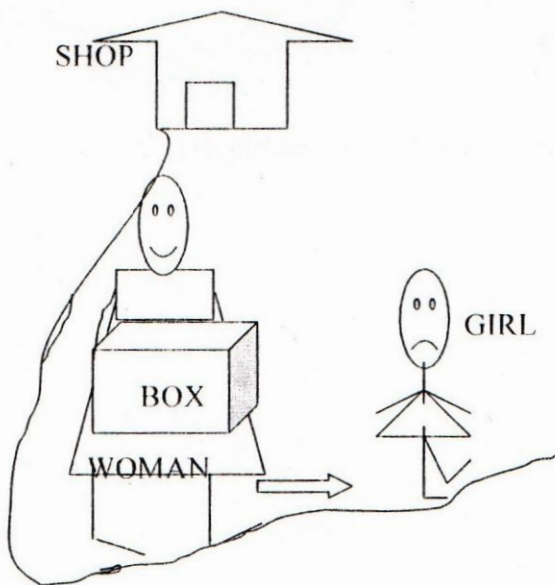


11. The people are travelling \_\_\_\_\_ the bus. (with, and, for, in, at)  
12. Another vehicle has got \_\_\_\_\_ the road. (off, behind, aside, opposite, outside)  
13. The vehicle got there \_\_\_\_\_ accident.(with ,on of, by, to)  
14. The vehicle was travelling \_\_\_\_\_ high speed. (on, at, with, by, over)

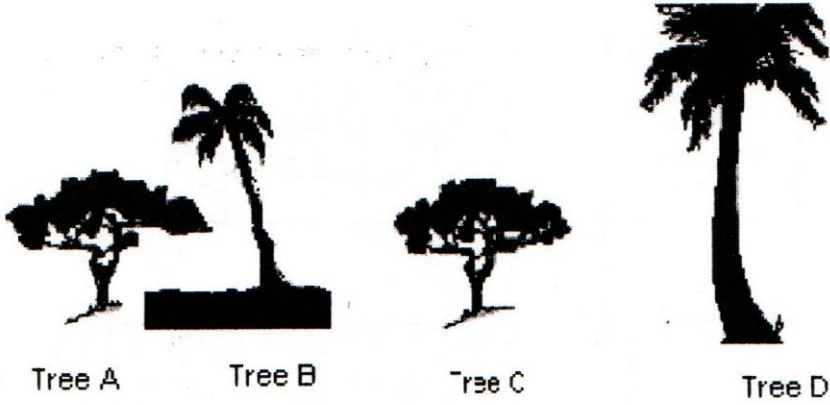




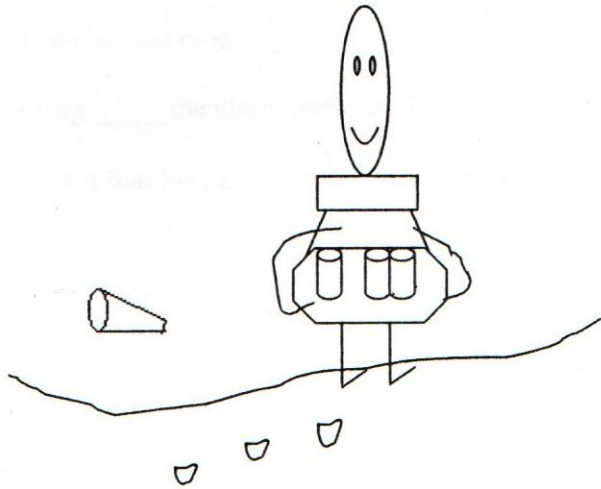
15. Person B is seated \_\_\_\_\_ person A and person C. (between, at, behind, in, outside)
16. Person C is seated \_\_\_\_\_-person B. (aside, beside, besides, on, between)
- 17 The people can hear news \_\_\_\_\_ the radio. (with, for, in, X, over)



18. The girl is \_\_\_\_\_ the woman. (in front of, backwards, towards, ahead, for)
19. The woman is carrying a box. She may have bought the box \_\_\_\_\_ credit (for, by, on, with, at)
20. The girl is walking \_\_\_\_\_ short steps. (with, by, at, on, for)

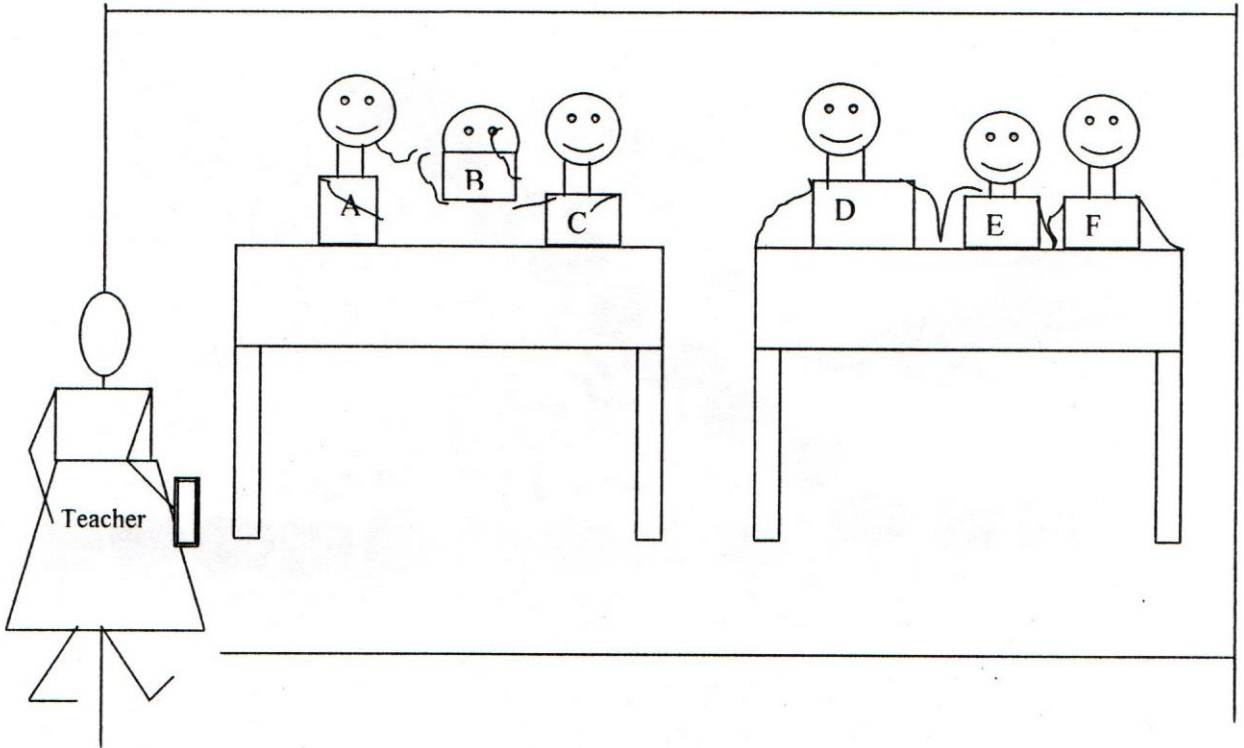


- 21. Tree B is leaning ..... tree A ( on, for, before, over, on top of)
- 22. The shoots of tree D is .... that of tree C. ( on, high, above, over, on top of)

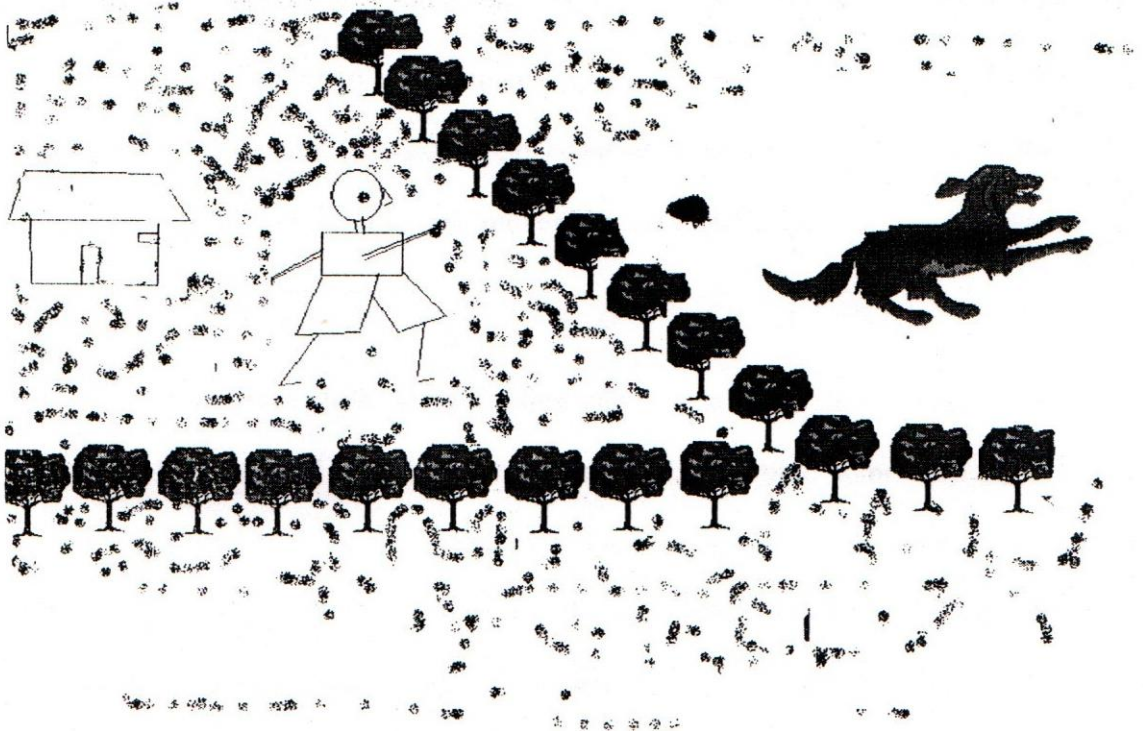


- 23. The girl has dropped a glass. It has broken \_\_\_\_\_ pieces. (to, by, until, into, X)





- 24. Pupils A, B and C are seated close \_\_\_\_\_ one another. ( with, by, to, among ,at)
- 25. The teacher is getting \_\_\_\_\_ the class. (into, in, X, at, to )
- 26. Pupil B may be saying that his hands smell-----paraffin.(at, to ,for ,of ,X)



27. The boy is throwing stones ----- the dog (at, for, to, on, in)
28. The dog has jumped ..... the fence ( in, above, over, on the top of, at)
29. The dog is running ----- the boy.(out of, towards, backwards, aside, away from)

In passages I and II, use any appropriate preposition such as **in, on ,with** e.t.c to fill the blank spaces making correct sentences.

Example: The rain fell \_\_\_ the morning. Answer : **in**

I Kamau and his four brothers were in the house (at, on, in, for, during)\_\_\_\_\_ 9:30 pm. Kamau was reading a passage entitled 'TEETH CARE' while his four brothers were talking (with, X, to, among, between)\_\_\_\_\_ themselves. The youngest who was born (at ,in, on, for, during) \_\_\_\_\_ 1996, was excited about his birthday which



was to be observed in a day's time.

He was also planning to call his uncle (at, on, by, with, in) \_\_\_\_\_ number 0733484922 to inform him about the occasion. He once moved near the door (on, X, with, for, of) \_\_\_\_\_ the house to listen for any movement and to his delight, his uncle suddenly made a knock and entered.

II           The three girls Wangui, Njeri and Wanja were close friends. They shared whatever they got and usually played together. They would sometimes perform some drama with Njeri wearing a coat and tie and appearing to blow some air (at, on, in, into, for) \_\_\_\_\_ an imaginary microphone, like a preacher and talking . Wanja would be translating the Kikuyu words (by, with, in, into, to) \_\_\_\_\_ English.

Wangui on her part seemed to like behaving like a crawling baby and shivering as if she was suffering (of, by, for, X, from) \_\_\_\_\_ Malaria. At school Wangui's ability was equal (to, and, with, by, for) \_\_\_\_\_ Wanja's, while Njeri's was slightly better.

**APPENDIX II**  
**LEARNERS' RESPONSES TO PREPOSITION QUESTIONS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

QUESTION	RESPONSE GIVEN AND LEARNERS GIVING RESPONSE				
1	X	in	for	at	Correct
	2	8	1	3	86
2	over	on	in	up	Correct
	5	9	5	7	75
3	X	in	at	on	Correct
	2	4	13	2	89
4	X	since	on	to	Correct
	6	9	on	to	70
5	with	on	over	by	Correct
	42	10	7	5	32
6	and	to	in	at	Correct
	2	6	4	13	75
7	for	in	on	with	Correct
	8	12	10	3	67
8	in	on	for	with	Correct
	43	10	11	3	33
9	X	on	at	for	Correct
	11	1	7	7	74
10	on	at	to	with	Correct
	3	2	13	20	62
11	with	and	for	at	Correct
	40	1	5	10	46
12	behind	aside	opposite	outside	Correct
	17	14	16	23	30
13	with	on	of	to	Correct
	34	8	6	5	46
14	on	with	by	over	Correct
15	at	behind	in	outside	Correct
	0	7	3	5	85
16	aside	besides	on	beside	Correct
	11	6	4	2	77
17	X	with	for	in	Correct
	16	26	17	30	11
18	backwards	towards	ahead	for	Correct
	14	14	10	2	60
19	for	by	with	at	Correct
	24	16	20	23	17
20	by	at	on	for	Correct



	34	11	20	14	31
21	on	for	before	on top of	Correct
	9	6	3	47	36
22	on	high	on top of	over	Correct
	2	28	15	16	39
23	X	to	by	until	Correct
	2	11	6	7	74
24	with	by	among	at	Correct
	8	14	17	8	54
25	X	in	at	to	Correct
	4	32	4	5	55
26	X	at	to	for	Correct
	65	7	5	11	12
27	for	to	on	in	Correct
	8	57	4	3	28
28	in	above	on top of	at	Correct
	2	3	8	1	86
29	out of	aside	at the back of	towards	Correct
	3	4	8	15	70
30	on	in	for	during	Correct
	4	2	3	3	88
31	X	with	to	between	Correct
	6	11	37	8	38
32	at	on	for	during	Correct
	16	8	5	3	68
33	at	by	with	in	Correct
	5	25	30	6	35
34	X	on	with	for	Correct
	10	16	13	5	47
35	at	on	in	for	Correct
	9	12	17	17	45
36	by	with	in	to	Correct
	9	19	31	17	24
37	X	of	by	for	Correct
	9	7	7	9	68
38	and	with	by	for	Correct
	13	15	8	3	60

## APPENDIX III

### KENDALL'S COEFFICIENT OF CONCORDANCE

This is an instrument used to compare the ranks displayed by different groups in the same tasks. In this study, the ranks of the various preposition usages displayed by the various school-grade groups were compared in order to find out whether the levels of acquisition of the preposition usages varied among the groups. Variation in the acquisition levels would highlight differences in the degree of learning of the tasks from one group to the other.

The ranks are computed from the scores obtained by the groups. The preposition usage in which a group scores the highest mark usually takes the highest rank and all the others follow depending on the scores that the learners obtained. Where a tie occurs as a result of the learners obtaining the same score in different questions, the questions are first assigned ranks in a progressive order as if they were different scores. The ranks of the identical scores are then added together and their sum is divided by the number of tasks involved in the tie and each of the preposition usages in the tie is given the product of the division as their rank.

For example in the learners' test, the standard 4 class had scores of 75% and 70% as the highest ones. Therefore these take ranks 1 and 2 respectively. The next score in a decreasing order is 65% in question 15 and question 30. Since in these two tasks learners got the same score, we work out their rank by first assigning them the next two places in ranking which are position 3 and 4. We then add 3 to 4 and get the sum of 7. We then divide 7 by 2 and get 3.5. This is the rank that the two preposition usages.

### STEPS IN CALCULATING KENDALL'S COEFFICIENT OF CONCORDANCE

N (number of morphemes ranked i.e the number of preposition usages tested) = 38

K (number of studies i.e groups being compared) = 5 i.e grades 4,5,6,7 and 8

Sum of ranks i.e total number of the ranks of the morphemes under study = 3705

This is from adding the ranks of the preposition usages for each class and adding all of them together (see Ranks column on page 86).



X (combined ranks from different studies (ie different classes) for a given preposition usage)

$$M \text{ (mean rank or } \bar{X}) = \frac{3703.5}{N} = \frac{3703.5}{38} = 97.46$$

S = (The sum of the squares of the difference between individual preposition rank and the mean rank ie  $(X - \bar{X})^2 = 89224.75$ )

W = Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance

$$W = \frac{S}{\frac{1}{12} K^2 (N^3 - N)} \quad K^2 = 5^2 = 25 \quad N^3 - N = (38 \times 38 \times 38) - 38 = 54834$$

$$W = \frac{89224.75}{\frac{1}{12} 25(54834)} = \frac{89224.75}{2.0833333 \times 54834} = \frac{89048.8}{114237.5} = 0.7810$$

The table below shows the ranks of the preposition usages portrayed by each grade-group of learners and some of the figures arrived at.

Table 12 KENDALL COEFFICIENT OF CONCORDANCE

QUESTION	CLASS/RANK					$(\bar{X})$	$(\bar{X})^2$	RANKS
	4	5	6	7	8			
1	8	2.5	1.5	2	4	79.5	6320.25	18
2	2	22	6	9.5	10	48	2304	49.5
3	5	4	3.5	9.5	14.5	61	3721	36.5
4	8	10	18.5	9.5	14.5	37	1369	60.5
5	36	29.5	27.5	23.5	27.5	46.5	2162.25	144
6	13.5	1	9	13.5	10	50.5	2550.25	47
7	22	9	12.5	9.5	10	34.5	1190.25	63
8	27	25.5	36	25	27.5	43.5	1892.25	141
9	8	12.5	9	9.5	4	54.5	2970.25	43
10	27	12.5	12.5	18	4	23.5	552.25	74
11	19.5	16.5	24	30.5	29	22	484	119.5
12	27	32.5	33	23.5	30	48.5	2352.25	146
13	27	20	27.5	20	24.5	21.5	462.25	119
14	27	32.5	21	21.5	18.5	23	529	120.5
15	3.5	5.5	3.5	4	4	77	5929	20.5

16	11	7.5	6	15.5	21.5	36	1296	61.5
17	22	32.5	36	38	38	69	4761	166.5
18	27	12.5	18.5	15.5	17	7	49	90.5
19	36	37.5	36	33.5	32.5	77.5	6006.25	175.5
20	17	32.5	27.5	29	32.5	41	1681	138.50
21	13.5	20	31	35.5	32.5	35	1225	132.5
22	22	25.5	21	33.5	24.5	29	841	126.5
23	8	16.5	9	2	10	52	2704	45.5
24	32.5	25.5	21	13.5	14.5	9.5	90.25	107
25	17	7.5	16	30.5	24.5	2	4	95.5
26	32.5	35.5	38	37	37	82.5	6806	180
27	27	25.5	24	32	36	47	2209	144.5
28	1	5.5	6	5.5	4	75.5	5700.25	22
29	8	16.5	16	9.5	20	27.5	756.25	70
30	3.5	2.5	1.5	2	4	84	7056	13.5
31	38	35.5	34	27	24.5	61.5	53782.25	159
32	13.5	20	12.5	21.5	4	26	676	71.5
33	32.5	37.5	27.5	27	21.5	48.5	2352.25	146
34	32.5	29.5	24	18	18.5	25	625	122.5
35	13.5	12.5	31	27	32.5	19	361	116.5
36	36	25.5	31	35.5	35	65.5	4290.25	163
37	19.5	16.5	12.5	5.5	10	35.5	1122.5	64
38	17	25.5	16	18	14.5	6.5	42.25	91
TOTALS							89224.75	3705



## APPENDIX IV

### T-TEST

The instrument was used to investigate whether the scores that the learners obtained in the various markedness clusters of preposition usages tallied with the relative levels of markedness of the prepositions.

### STEPS FOLLOWED IN USING THE T-TEST

#### 1. Stating the hypotheses

The hypotheses being tested can be stated as:

$H_0$  In the more marked preposition usages, learners' mean scores were lower than in the less marked preposition usages

$H_1$  In the more marked preposition usages, learners mean scores were higher than in the less marked preposition usages

2. Determining the level of significance at which to test the hypotheses stated. Alpha 0.1 was chosen. This represents a 90% level of confidence.

3. Calculate the degree of freedom (df). This is usually done by use of the following formula

$$df = \frac{(S_1^2 + S_2^2)^2}{\frac{(S_1^2/m)^2 + (S_2^2/n)^2}{m-1 + n-1}}$$

where n stands for the number of cases .In this study the number of cases are the number of preposition usages under comparison. Each preposition cluster is compared with another and their respective number of preposition usages constitute the cases.

4. From tables determine the Critical Value by identifying the column that the level of Significance chosen above. This was done through computer.

5. Compute the T statistic.

The formula is

$$T = \frac{\bar{X} - \bar{Y} - \Delta_0}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2}{m} + \frac{S_2^2}{n}}}$$

Where T= t-computed

$\bar{X}$ - Sample/observed mean

n- Number of cases.

m – hypothesised mean difference

S-Sample variance using the formula  $S_1 = \frac{\sqrt{n\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2}}{n(n-1)}$

#### 6. Conclude

The hypotheses stated required a one tailed t-test. Therefore, only the one-tail results are considered.

If the computed T falls in the region of rejection, then reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ). If it falls in the region of acceptance, accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis.

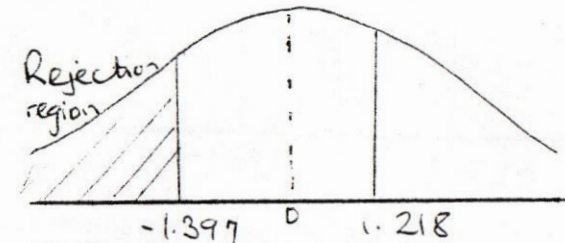
The results obtained were as in the table that follows:

Table



t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

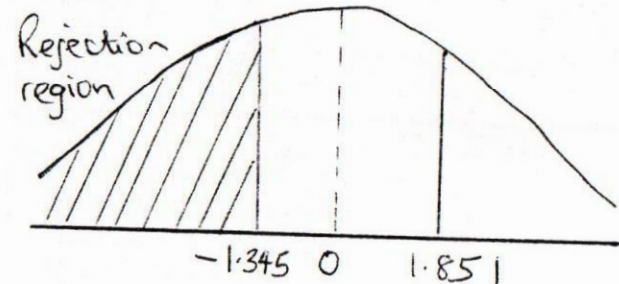
	Alpha 0.1	
	Very Unmarked	Unmarked
Mean	82.16666667	74.6
Variance	80.56666667	125.8
Observations	6	5
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	8	
t Stat	1.218090954	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.128946071	
t Critical one-tail	1.396815605	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.257892142	
t Critical two-tail	1.85954832	



The Very Unmarked prepositions had a greater mean score than the unmarked prepositions

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	Very Unmarked	Relatively Marked
Mean	82.16666667	69.3
Variance	80.56666667	348.4555556
Observations	6	10
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	14	
t Stat	1.851878142	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.042623299	
t Critical one-tail	1.345031251	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.085246597	
t Critical two-tail	1.76130925	

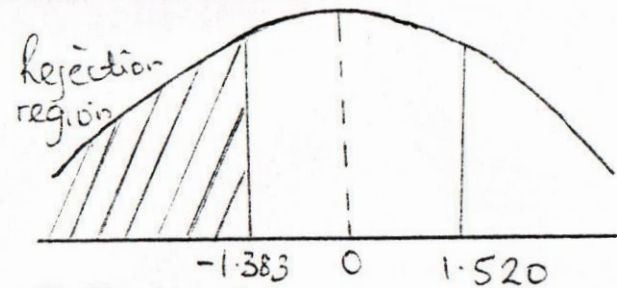


The Very Unmarked prepositions had a greater mean score than the Relatively Marked prepositions

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	Very Unmarked	Marked
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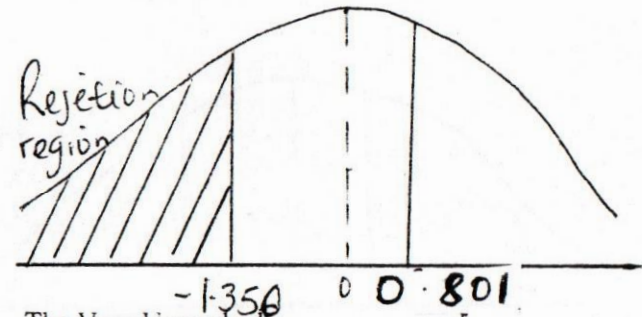
Mean	82.16666667	70
Variance	80.56666667	354.3333333
Observations	6	7
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	9	
t Stat	1.520277282	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.081381679	
t Critical one-tail	1.383028803	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.162763359	
t Critical two-tail	1.833113856	



The Very Unmarked prepositions had a greater mean score than the Marked prepositions

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

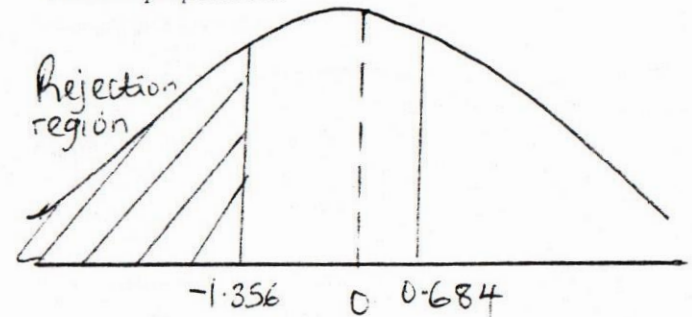
	Very Unmarked	Very Marked
Mean	82.16666667	72.9
Variance	80.56666667	130.3222222
Observations	6	10
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	13	
t Stat	1.801476583	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.047427895	
t Critical one-tail	1.35017217	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.09485579	
t Critical two-tail	1.770931704	



The Very Unmarked prepositions had a greater mean score than the Very Marked prepositions

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances  
Alpha 0.1

	Unmarked	Relatively Marked
Mean	74.6	69.3
Variance	125.8	348.4555556



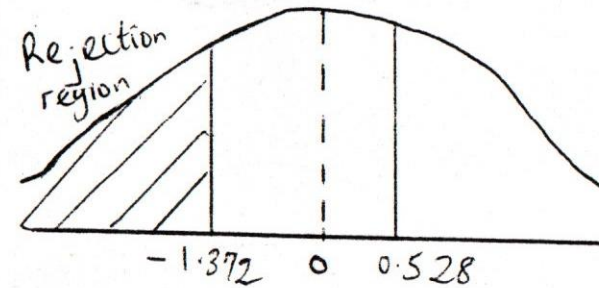


Observations	5	10
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	12	
t Stat	0.684195383	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.253425189	
t Critical one-tail	1.356218036	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.506850378	
t Critical two-tail	1.782286745	

The Unmarked prepositions had a greater mean score than the Relatively Marked prepositions

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

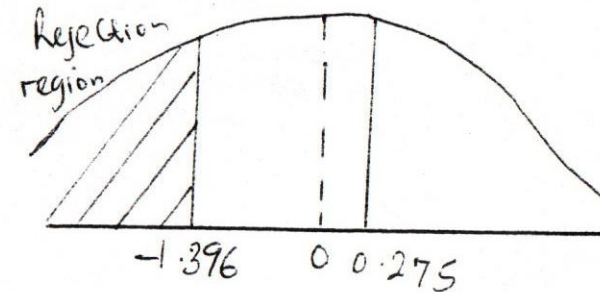
	Unmarked	Marked
Mean	74.6	70
Variance	125.8	354.3333333
Observations	5	7
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	10	
t Stat	0.528424883	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.304365581	
t Critical one-tail	1.372184215	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.608731163	
t Critical two-tail	1.812461505	



The Unmarked prepositions had a greater mean score than the Marked prepositions

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	Unmarked	Very Marked
Mean	74.6	72.9
Variance	125.8	130.3222222
Observations	5	10



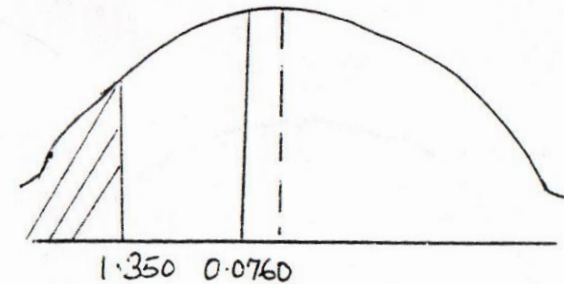
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0
df	8
t Stat	0.275081546
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.395112262
t Critical one-tail	1.396815605
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.790224525
t Critical two-tail	1.85954832

The Unmarked prepositions had a greater mean score than the Very Marked prepositions

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

Alpha 0.1

	Relatively Marked	Marked
Mean	69.3	70
Variance	348.4555556	354.3333333
Observations	10	7
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	13	
t Stat	-0.075719005	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.470397755	
t Critical one-tail	1.35017217	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.940795509	
t Critical two-tail	1.770931704	

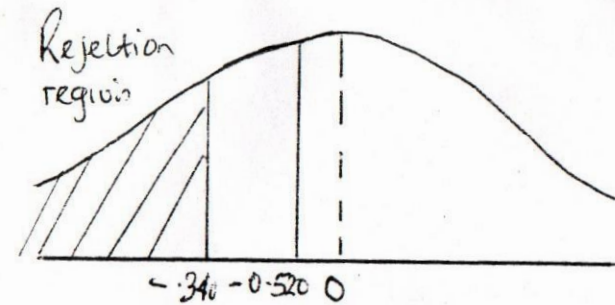


The Relatively Marked prepositions had a greater mean score than the Marked Prepositions

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances



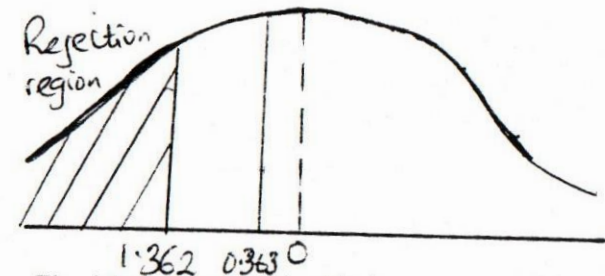
	Relatively Marked	Very Marked
Mean	69.3	72.9
Variance	348.4555556	130.3222222
Observations	10	10
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	15	
t Stat	-0.520278056	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.305231808	
t Critical one-tail	1.340605422	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.610463615	
t Critical two-tail	1.753051038	



The Relatively Marked prepositions had a greater mean score than the Very Marked prepositions

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	Marked	Very Marked
Mean	70	72.9
Variance	354.3333333	130.3222222
Observations	7	10
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	9	
t Stat	-0.363491669	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.362314651	
t Critical one-tail	1.383028803	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.724629302	
t Critical two-tail	1.833113856	



The Marked prepositions had a greater mean score than the Very Marked prepositions