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The use of prepositions among University students learning English as a second language

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Prepositional usage is a difficult grammar area among the students who are learning English as a second language. Thus, it has been demonstrated that even undergraduates learning English as a second language face difficulties when using prepositions accurately. The present study is an attempt not only to identify the common errors made by the students in using prepositions, but also to recognize the more familiar prepositions used among the students. This has led to the assumption that both teaching and learning prepositions in English by the teachers and learners who study English as a second language are inadequate. Forty undergraduates representing the four faculties, ten from each, were given a questionnaire to be answered. Accordingly, the faculty of Humanities, the faculty of Social Sciences, the faculty of Management and the faculty of Science in the University of Kelaniya answered the questionnaire consisting of fifteen questions including two open ended questions. The findings revealed that the students of the faculty of Science possess a thorough knowledge regarding the accurate use of prepositions while the knowledge of the students in the faculty of Social Sciences regarding the use of prepositions was very low. Furthermore, prepositions that had been used more accurately were: 'into', 'among' and 'from', while the prepositions that had been misused frequently were: 'on', 'between' and 'of'. Thereby, our research study became a success, signaling green lights for maiden future studies.

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