

The Misuse of English Prepositions in The Nigerian Print Media: Issues of Grammaticality and Conventionality

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Abstract:

The print media have, over the years, been the cynosure of all eyes. It is an apparatus for language learning. However, when one listens to our radio and television broadcasts, especially the news bulletins, one will shudder at the level of ungrammaticality in the use of the English language. This dissertation therefore investigates the use of English prepositions in the Nigerian print media. It examines the arbitrary use of prepositions, the omission of prepositions, the superfluity of use, and their effects in media discourse. The theoretical framework adopted in this research is error analysis, which is considered one of the best ways to describe and explain errors made by learners who study English as a second or foreign language. It was established by Stephen Pit Corder in the late 1960s as an alternative to contrastive analysis that failed to account for learners' errors. This research therefore focuses on the extent to which the inappropriate use of prepositions impairs the communication of print media content. Five research questions and objectives were formulated for this study. To carry out the study, three major newspapers, namely *the Vanguard*, *the Nigerian Tribune*, and *the Sun*, were selected to ascertain the degree of appropriateness in the use of English prepositions in reports, general presentation, and features. The findings of this thesis reveal that an average user of the English language does not possess significant cognitive competence to handle the grammatical fluidity and arbitrariness that characterize the language, with particular reference to the preposition paradigm. Following the research findings, the researcher recommends the need for print media practitioners or journalists to remain 'in school' no matter their disciplines in order to serve their readers better through the use of standard English, including the correct use of English prepositions.

Keywords: Error, Preposition, Newspaper, Grammar

Introduction:

Language and communication are essential features that characterize humanity and set it apart from other animals. Through communication, people are able to share ideas, exchange information, and express their views. According to Agwu Florence Nne and Wosu Okachukwu Onuah,

"Human culture would not be possible without language... Language is present everywhere, and it can be found in our thoughts, meditations, dreams, etc. Through language, we are able to express our feelings, thoughts, and emotions" (1). It therefore follows that one can use language to create one's

own world, recreate one's culture, and even transmit one's experiences, which, in due course, are transmitted from generation to generation.

Through print media, the people's culture is disseminated. Muhammad Nasir made a critical case about the role of the media in a nation. He posited:

Print media have become almost as necessary as food and clothing. It is true that the media is playing an outstanding role in strengthening society. The print media has a strong social and cultural impact upon society, and it can play an effective role in bringing positive change to society. Because of its inherent ability to reach a larger number of people, it is widely used to convey messages to build public opinion and awareness (407)

This observation is pivotal to this research, which is on the present-day Nigerian print media. Language is a complex phenomenon according to its various levels of linguistic analysis, namely phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. These levels of linguistic analysis make it difficult to treat one aspect of the language without due reference to other aspects, which otherwise show their interrelatedness as segments of a complex phenomenon.

The print media has, over the years, been the cynosure of all eyes. It is an apparatus for language learning. Surprisingly too, not too long ago, a renowned linguist, Oluikpe Benson Omenihu, indicted the media when he said, "If one listens to our radio and television broadcasts, especially the news bulletins, one will shudder at the level of ungrammaticality in the use of the English language" (12). It is this indictment that sharpened the focus of this research, which is on the use of English prepositions in the Nigerian media. It therefore follows that since print media stands out as a model apparatus in language learning, the wrong use of English prepositions could lead to misinformation, ambiguity, and complexity, and the target audience will also copy the errors. This will further give rise to a chain reaction (tenterhooks) in language learning.

Furthermore, the English language has come to stay in Nigeria as an official language, and the broadcast industry and the print media are the areas of our social life where the use of English is mostly felt, second only to the school setting. The media are for all in their functions of entertainment, education, and information dissemination, which cut across every segment of the Nigerian audience. For this reason, the target language must be used in such a way that it effectively communicates the message it is meant to disseminate.

This study is based on the use of English prepositions in the Nigerian print media. The scope of this study is limited to the selected language performance of print media practitioners between 2017—2023 using the preposition paradigm. The investigation focuses on the three (3) major Nigerian newspapers: *The Vanguard*, *The Nigerian Tribune*, and *The Sun Newspapers* (all in Port Harcourt) and their recognition and appropriate use of English prepositions of time, direction, and space.

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives formulated specifically to guide the focus and subsequent findings of this research are to:

- i. Identify the misuse of prepositions in the three selected Nigerian newspapers;
- ii. Examine the types of errors.
- iii. Identify the type of errors in the use of prepositions that are prevalent in each newspaper

Literature Review:

Preposition: A Brief Overview:

The preposition paradigm is a closed system. According to Nwala, the word preposition denotes an "action or a situation of comments before a position", (66). The position of Nwala above means that a preposition performs actions that relate to space and time" (68). For example, the prepositions at, in, by, and on make references to time.

His sentence examples include:

- 1) The monkey took refuge under the three (location;

- 2) Mary swam across the river (location);
- 3) Martin visited Martha at 6 a.m.
- 4) Uchenna entered the class on time.

Florence Nne Agwu and Okachukwu Onuah Wosu, in their *Practical Functional Grammar and Usage*, use preposition to mean a "word or group of words used to show the relationship between nouns or pronouns and other words in a sentence. They are words that are placed before a noun or pronoun to show their relationship with other words in a sentence" (152).

Agwu and Wosu listed the following examples of prepositions: through, in, on, at, with, of, off, across, by, from, to, for, above, among, between, against, up, down, under, often, over, besides, beneath, by, outside, within, behind, after, into, before, below, etc. Their position shows that prepositions are commonly used to describe position, direction, time, place, method, etc. They help us understand order, time, connections, and positions, as shown in the sentences given by them below:

1. I am travelling to London.
2. He threw the stone into the wall.
3. The key is inside the box.

According to the English Language Guide, prepositions are a class of words that indicate relationships between nouns, pronouns, and other words in a sentence. Most often, they come before a noun. They never change their form, regardless of the case, gender, etc. of the word they are referring to" (45).

Examples:

1. She arrived after dinner.
2. What did you do it for?

The Guide lists the following as common prepositions:

On, in, into, out, besides, at, under, above, etc.

From the foregoing, we can therefore deduce that prepositions convey relationships between other words, usually in time, place, or direction. Prepositions are an integral part of many

expressions with verbs and adjectives, as well as idioms. They should always be learned together with the expressions they are part of, as their use cannot always be predicted. A prepositional phrase contains the preposition and the words it modifies.

Example:

Time: On Sunday, in the summer, at 5 o'clock... In the phrase, on, in, and at modify the words Sunday, summer, and 5 O'clock, indicating time and period.

Place: Under the bed, between you and me, at work, in front of the TV, or from home. In this instance, the prepositions point out the exact locations of the items in question.

Direction: Into the box, over the city, towards the car, away from here. Here, the prepositions specify movement and position.

Murthy Jayanthi Dakshina classifies prepositions into five kinds in English, namely: Simple preposition, Double prepositions, Compound prepositions, Participial prepositions and Phrase preposition

He gives a list of prepositions as "above, along, below, by, for, like, about, among, beneath, concerning, from, near, across, at, besides, despite, in, next, after, before, between, down, inside, to, against, behind, except, into, of, off, on, opposite, out, outside, over, past, round, since, though, till, towards, under, unless, until, unto, with" (197).

English and the Media:

The fundamental purpose of language is to enable communication. Trevor observes that "language is a social activity that demands joint action" (10). This means that nobody speaks or writes in a vacuum. We all aim to speak effectively and be understood, but this can only be effectively done when we belong to the same speech community as the receiver. The role of language in communication as enunciated by scholars, notable among them Ogbulogo quoted in Ogbite, includes an "informative role, phatic role, directive role, ideational role, and performative role" (75).

Globally, the power of the media inheres from the idea that people believe that whatever piece of

information they glean from the media is the truth and nothing but the truth. The media is the main stream of human interaction and communication, especially in this age of high-information communication technology. Communication accommodates every shade of opinion of its target audience. Language, which is used as a medium of communication, becomes a sensational curriculum (Arumehi, 2).

Here in Nigeria, the language in use in the media is English. The English language gained ground as Nigeria's official language with the British colonial administration in the early 19th century, which introduced religion and western education to the people.

This brought about the establishment of a school to aid communication with the locals as well as their business and missionary activities. The English language is Nigeria's official language. It is a unifying means of communication in a country blessed with over two hundred and fifty (250) ethnic groups and languages.

Grammaticality and Conventionality:

Information spread is a global phenomenon that hinges on the use of language. The language in use should, of necessity, command international intelligibility. To a large extent, the language in use determines the degree of listenership, viewership, or readership any radio, television, or newspaper attracts to itself. Media workers, especially presenters, editors, or reporters, should be conscious of their language use since they serve a heterogeneous audience: the government, the chief executives of institutions, advertisers, politicians, professors, musicians, students, pupils, traders, and other admixtures of our local folks. For everyone, broadcasting is a glamour-oriented venture. It is germane that the physical glamour marries language glamour and prestige, which must be the standard of the British variety. It was in the 1930s that the received pronunciation (Rp), which is British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) English, started defining the standard form, and it has been adopted over the years in the broadcast industry as well as in the education sector.

Linguistics widely holds the view that broadcasters are used as examples or models and should therefore speak good English, which must correspond to the pronunciation of professional speakers employed by the BBC as newsreaders and announcers. This gives grammar the first option. Deviation from the standard usage of the English language in broadcasting could only be tolerated for the purpose of entertainment, where humorous or comic effects are intended to be achieved in a satire, or due to the low linguistic standing of the target audience. The system of language is organized to establish expression and content.

Therefore, every language used must, as a matter of expediency, conform to the rule of grammar of the language, which is the embodiment of expressive language. According to Oluikpe, "the grammar of a language is a set of normative rules that determine correctness" (48). These rules of grammar include tense, concord, word relations, spelling, punctuation, and redundancy.

Grammaticality is therefore the state or attribute of obeying the rules of grammar. Succinctly, grammatical correctness or usage accepted by native speakers of a language "Generative linguists are largely of the opinion that for native speakers of natural languages, grammaticality is a matter of linguistic intuition and reflects the innate linguistic competence of speakers" (Bader, M., & Haussler, J. 7).

According to Sprouse, "the difference between grammaticality and acceptability is that grammatical knowledge is categorical, whereas acceptability is a gradient scale" (8).

According to Lyons, "grammaticality is "that part of the acceptability of utterances that can be accounted for in terms of the rules" (86), a criterion that complements acceptability for semantic soundness.

In theoretical linguistics, a speaker's judgment on the well-formedness of a linguistic utterance, otherwise called grammaticality judgment, is based on whether the sentence is produced and interpreted in accordance with the rules and constraints of the relevant grammar. If the rules and

constraints of the particular language are followed, then the sentence is considered to be grammatical. In contrast, an ungrammatical sentence is one that violates the rules of the given language (Baur, 38).

A convention is a set of agreed, stipulated, or generally accepted standards, norms, social norms, or criteria, often taking the form of a custom. In language use, conventionality is a deviation from a standard form or norm for the purposes of linguistic or stylistic effects. For the media, it is in the form of the omission of certain lexical items to shorten sentence construction in order to achieve punchy news headlines. These stories have viewpoints, values, and structures that can be analyzed. Media language is intended for mass public consumption. In writing news stories, editors 'editorialize' their style and usage, and at times news and features are written by non-journalists. The process of editing news is by selection and deletion, which are the main strategies used in dealing with input texts, with some summarization, generalization, particularization, restyling, and translation.

Errors Versus Mistakes:

Errors reflect gaps in a learner's knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what is correct. In other words, they occur systematically as a result of the learner's incomplete knowledge of the rules of the target language. They appear repeatedly in the speech or writing of second language learners and are not recognized by them even if they are brought to their attention, unless they have a good command of the target language.

Errors are considered to be rule-governed since they follow the rules of the learner's interlanguage. For instance, a Persian-speaking learner of English who makes frequent use of subject-verb inversion in indirect questions (e.g., he doesn't know where he lives) does, in fact, follow the grammar of his interlanguage, which allows the use of such structures at that particular stage of second-language development.

Mistakes or Performance Errors are random deviations and do not reflect a defect in the linguistic system. They "reflect occasional lapses in performance". Thus, they are the result of some

failure in performance and represent the same types of mistakes that might occur in the speech or writing of native speakers, such as slips of the tongue or pen. false starts, lack of subject-verb agreement in a long-complicated sentence, and the like. Mistakes are due to non-linguistic factors such as fatigue, strong emotion, memory limitations, lack of concentration, etc.

Having reviewed the literature on words of some notable linguists and grammarians on the preposition paradigm who posit that the preposition paradigm is a critical area of English language among ESL users, the next chapter will showcase the design of this current essay in the process of data collection in order to appraise the use of prepositions in the Nigerian media to facilitate and determine the relevance of this study.

The Theoretical Framework:

Error Analysis (EA):

This research adopts error analysis as its theoretical framework. Stephen Pit Corder developed error analysis in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in the 1960s. It served as a substitute for contrastive analysis, a behaviorist approach in which applied linguists attempted to forecast errors by utilizing the formal differences between the learners' first and second languages. Contrastive analysis's most useful components have been applied to the study of language transmission; however, error analysis revealed that it was unable to predict the vast majority of errors. One important discovery from error analysis is that a lot of learner errors are caused by incorrect assumptions made by the learners about the laws of the new language.

Error analysts make a distinction between mistakes and errors; the former are not systematic. They frequently try to create an incorrect typology. Errors can be categorized based on their fundamental kind, which includes omission, addition, substitution, and word order. Depending on how blatant they are, they can be categorized: overt errors, such as "I'm angry," are noticeable even when taken out of context, whereas covert errors are only obvious when taken into context. This is closely related to the classification by

domain, which refers to the scope of the context the analyst needs to look at, and extent, which refers to the scope of the utterance that needs to be altered in order to correct the error. Language-level faults can also be categorized into phonological, syntactic, vocabulary, lexical, and other categories. The degree to which they obstruct communication can be used to determine how serious they are; global faults make speech difficult to understand, whereas local errors do not. Since the meaning of "I am angry" is clear, it would be considered a local error in the example above.

Methodology:

This study employs a descriptive research design considering the fact that its goal is to analyse and describe the use of English prepositions in the Nigerian media. A descriptive design analytically involves the gathering of data that describes events and organizes, depicts and describes the data

collected. With regards to this established fact, descriptive research design is undoubtedly found appropriate for this study.

The sampling technique used was the systematic random sampling technique. Three (3) Nigerian Newspapers were randomly selected and monitored respectively to enable the researcher arrive at valuable research outcome which will be relevant to the research.

Presentation of Data on Prepositional Errors:

Since the data for this research work consisted of the misuse of prepositions or errors identified from the three selected newspapers, Corder’s clinical method of elicitation of errors was used, which involves getting information by means of written compositions or articles in the three selected Nigerian newspapers.

Table i: Prepositional Errors Identified in *The Sun*

S/N	Newspaper Headlines	Error Identified	Description of Error	Explanation of Errors	Correct Usage
1	Daily Sun, Wednesday, April 1st, 2015, page 7. “When Boko Haram unleashed Hell on Mubi.”	“Everyone off them was running for their lives”	Substitution	The glaring error in the meaning of the sentence is manifested in the substitution of the preposition of with off .	The correct expression is “Every one of them was running for their lives”
2	In the same edition in the article captioned “ <u>Right ways to praise, appreciate your child</u> ”	Parents should try and portray each other in good light towards their children	Arbitrary	There is a wrong use of the proposition towards in the expression	The correct preposition is before and not towards as used. The expression therefore should read, “parents should try and portray each other in good light before their children”
3	February 25, 2013 On page 3, under the article “Residence say 29 killed in	“Security operatives have been called upon to be at alert...”	Arbitrary	The expression to be at alert is wrong. Also, the definite article the which compulsorily should co-occur	The correct expression is to be on the alert . This is in addition of the definite article the which compulsorily co-occur with the expression.

	Warri Violence”.			with the expression is missing too.	
4	In the same article as above.	“The raid sparked strong international condemnation”	Omission	The preposition off was omitted in the expression.	The correct usage is “the raid sparked off strong international condemnation”
5		“The shooting happened during at Warri...”	Arbitrary	This is a case of superfluity. The two prepositions during and at cannot co-occur	The correct preposition for the sentence is at and not at during.

Table ii: Preposition Errors identified in *The Vanguard*

S/N	Newspaper Headlines	Error Identified	Description of (Arbitrary Use)	Analysis of Error	Correct Usage
1	September 7, 2023 “Tribunal Verdict: Defence Headquarter wains”	“ <i>The Defence Headquarters disclosed [] Wednesday that it had been informed that some unarmed politicians and persons are planning to cause disruption in the country following the ruling on the presidential election petitions of Tuesday</i> ”	Omission	In the sentence, on is omitted and should be inserted in the empty box as indicated	“The Defence Headquarters disclosed on Wednesday that it had been informed that some unarmed politicians and persons are planning to cause disruption in the country following the ruling on the presidential election petitions of Tuesday”
2	In the same edition, Pg 10 in the article captioned “Senate directs committees to wade into Doctors’ strike”.	“The senate [] Wednesday directed its committee on Health to intervene in the dispute between the Nigerian medical Association (NMA) and the Federal Government towards averting	Omission	On is omitted and should be inserted in the empty box as indicated	“The senate on Wednesday directed its committee on Health to intervene in the dispute between the Nigerian medical Association (NMA) and the Federal Government

		the proposed strike action by doctors across the country”			towards averting the proposed strike action by doctors across the country”
3	“How Police is talking crime under Alkali” (August 2, 2022 P12)	“The police say 36 people who were perpetrators of evil with police uniform have been arrested”	Substitution	The expression “... with police uniform” means that the perpetrators committed the crime alongside the police uniform which has no semantic import	The police say 36 people who were perpetrators of evil in police uniform have been arrested.
4	In the same edition, Pg 13 in the article “Reps task MTN, GLO, Airtel, others”	“The service providers were asked to reduce their tariffs at the interest of the subscribers”	Arbitrary	Wrong preposition at was used.	The right expression is “the service providers were asked to reduce their tariffs for the interest of the subscribers”.
5	“2019: Voters tasked on Voting their Conscience” October 7, 2018	“The legislator advised the electorate not to exchange their votes with money”	Arbitrary	One exchange something for something not with	The correct expression is “The legislator advised the electorate not to exchange their votes for money”

Table iii: Preposition Errors identified in *The Tribune*

S/N	Newspaper Headlines	Error Identified	Description of Error	Analysis of Error	Correct Usage
1	“Edo PDP Primary: Supreme Court Declares Obaseki’s Faction Authentic Candidates of party” (February 1, 2023)	“The faction in PDP have resulted to some PDP members defecting to other parties”	Substitution	The Verb resulted takes the preposition in and not to as used.	The sentence should be read “The factions in PDP have resulted in some PDP members defecting to other parties”
2	Nigerian Exporters not Maximizing AGOA Opportunities –NACC (August 25, 2017)	“The commissioner thanked the chamber of commerce for acknowledging the laudable	Substitution	For was used as substitute for of which is the right preposition	The sentence should read “The commissioner thanked the chamber of commerce for acknowledging the

		achievement for the state government			laudable achievement of the state government”
3	Nigeria: Idris Kuta Dies at 65. (March 4, 2008)	Former president Ibrahim and former Vice President Atiku Abubakar had condoled [] the Emir of Minna Alhaji Umaru Bahogo over the death of senator Idris Kuta”	Omission	There is the case of omission of the preposition with as indicated in the box	The sentence should read “Former president Ibrahim and former Vice President Atiku Abubakar had condoled with the Emir of Minna Alhaji Umaru Bahogo over the death of senator Idris Kuta”
4	In the same edition, Pg 5 in the Article “Poultry Farmers Lament Economic Hardship, Seek Government Intervention to Prevent Industry Collapse”	“Nigeria’s unhealthy dependence on crude oil has resulted to neglect of the Agricultural Sector.	Arbitrary	Resulted to as used in the sentence is wrongly used.	The correct expression should read “Nigeria’s unhealthy dependence on crude oil has resulted in neglect of the Agricultural Sector”
5	Segun’s Honour well Deserved (January 24, 2013)	“He was given the honour [] view of his interest and commitment to recreational events in the State”	Omission	The preposition in was omitted in the expression.	We rather say: He was given the honour in view of his interest and commitment to recreational events in the State.

Table iv: Frequency of Types of Errors in the Newspapers

Newspapers	Types of Errors		
	Omission	Arbitrary	Substitution
<i>The Sun</i>	1	3	1
<i>The Vanguard</i>	2	2	1
<i>The Tribune</i>	2	1	2
Total	5	6	4

Table v: Reveals the Factors Responsible for the Errors from Oral Interview

S/NO	Factors responsible for the Errors
1	Most of the errors occur due to the lack of proper knowledge of prepositions
2	Some occur as a result of economy of space
3	Neglect of the major principles of journalism which is copy editing
4	Unchecked typography
5	Some of the editors are not well schooled.

Data Analysis

The data of this study is analysed according to its objectives.

Objective One: To identify the misuse of prepositions in the three selected Nigerian newspapers.

The data presentation above already takes care of the objective one of this study. As seen in the tables, the different misused prepositions in all three newspapers were highlighted.

Objective Two: To examine the types of errors.

The errors identified are wrong use of prepositions such as: arbitrary, omission, and substitution errors. The arbitrary selection involves the use of wrong prepositions in some sentential constructions, thereby causing either ambiguity or flaw in semantic signification. Omission errors portray the poor understanding of the verbs that compulsory co-occur with prepositions in order to give the intended meanings both in the literal and idiomatic contexts while substitution error is the replacement of item in a sentence, strategy or words when the specific information is forgotten or unknown.

Objective Three: To identify the type of errors in the use of prepositions that are prevalent in each newspaper.

As seen in table iv, arbitrary errors are more frequent or prevalent in the selected Nigerian newspaper, and these are closely followed by

omission errors, then substitution errors. Some of the errors were caused by incorrect sentence construction or transformation, which goes against the standards of the internationally recognized English language. Some occur as a result of using the incorrect wording or sentence structure.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The following are the key findings of this study:

- i) The three newspapers that were chosen all had glaring grammatical problems, and they all had different kinds of errors.
- ii) Among the errors found are improper prepositional usage, such as omission, substitution, and arbitrary use.
- iii) A few of the errors were caused by incorrect sentence construction or transformation that deviates from the internationally recognized English language. Some occur as a result of using the incorrect wording or sentence structure.
- iv) Neglect of one of the cornerstones of journalism, copy editing and gatekeeping over information presentation and content, was evident.
- v) There was blatant misuse of the journalese application, where grammar seemed to be sacrificed on the altar of journalese.
- vi) Administrative, professional, or personal considerations may have contributed to the errors. A few of the mistakes were also the result of poor

space management and a dearth of competent editors, respectively.

vii) Very few typographical errors resulted from improper checking.

An examination of the empirical literature also revealed that a large number of writers have noted grammatical mistakes in newspapers (Bowman, 12). The errors were further divided into lexical, syntactical, and semantic categories. They were caused by misuse of Journalese, socioeconomic effects, and individual native language habits (patterns and conventions). Thus, the researcher wants to emphasize that even if journalese is overused in the media, Nigerian print media appears to be particularly guilty of employing it improperly. When one reads or listens to international publications, especially the BBC and Times magazine, which both utilize flawless English, one comes to respect this point of view. This is the standard that Nigeria's print media ought to strive for.

Grammaticality of language cannot be sacrificed on the altar of journalese or word economy, whether for socioeconomic or professional reasons. Newspapers serve as a public information channel and aid in the daily decision-making of readers. Based on the aforementioned, editors, reporters, and journalists will benefit much from the examination of grammatical faults discovered in the three chosen Nigerian newspapers.

Conclusion:

Information spread through print media is a global phenomenon that hinges on the use of language. The language used should command international intelligibility. It is the language in use that determines the degree of readership a newspaper or tabloid can attract. The only exception to this assertion is musical programming, because music is accorded the status of being a universal language. One can enjoy a piece of music without a proper understanding of the lyrics. With the global push to fashion out an international language of communication in the areas of education, government, commerce, science, and technology, it becomes imperative to appreciate in the interim the

unequal status the English language has already attained in global communications.

Language, according to Smith, is a “learned, shared, and arbitrary system of vocal symbols through which people in the same speech community or subculture interact and hence communicate in terms of their cultural experience and expectations.” The English language is not our mother tongue, but it is a tool for our profession. It has become obvious that the language has to be learned. For it to be learned properly, the user has to go to school, read voraciously, and remain in school’.

Accordingly, from the result of this study, the researcher concludes:

1. The use of English prepositions is a problem among users of the English language as a second language (ESL) particularly in the Nigerian media environment.
2. The arbitrary selection or omission of prepositions constitutes a major area of grammatical blunder among media people in Nigeria with the attendant semantic ambiguity it poses in the dissemination of information to their audiences.
3. The difference between the linguistic performance of those “who studied” English as a discipline and those who studied other disciplines is considerable.

Thus, the use of English prepositions poses a lot of problems to an average learner of English as a second language due to the fluidity of the semantic import of prepositions as they occur in different sentential environments. This is more obvious as prepositions are binding elements among word classes. In the words of Murthy, “prepositions are the ‘bolt’ and ‘nut’ in sentence construction” (22) Therefore, it is imperative for more time to be channeled towards the mastery of English prepositions through more practical approach in the teaching and learning process.

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