The Usage of Colligations of Prepositions among Malaysian Law Undergraduates: A Needs Analysis

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Abstract

Needs analyses carried out among Malaysian law undergraduates, particularly in investigating their lack and deficiency in legal English competence have been rare. This paper aimed at investigating Malaysian law undergraduates’ perceptions and usage of colligations of prepositions, one of the most essential lexico-grammatical components in legalese. 40 semester three Malay law undergraduates in one public university participated in the study. Two types of data were collected for this purpose-the interview and essay writing test. Eight out of the 40 students participated in the interview, while all respondents took the essay test conducted a week later. The interview responses were analysed manually, and Dulay et al.’s (1982) Surface Structure Taxonomy was employed in the analysis of the subjects’ production of prepositional patterns in the Problem Question essays (of legal contract genre). The results from the interviews and essays have demonstrated that the subjects lacked knowledge of prepositions and their patterns, resulted mainly from interlingual (L1 negative transfer, i.e. Malay) and intralingual (difficulty with the L2 itself, i.e. legalese) interference, as well as the drilling method applied in both primary and secondary schools. More needs analyses should be carried in a specialised field like law in future for the short-term and long-term benefits of law students. While both English and law lecturers may gain feedback on their students’ current lexico-grammatical competence, where some actions can be taken to improve it, the results from the analysis may help in developing materials for ELAP (English for Legal Academic Purposes) courses, or in establishing an ELAP course, especially if the course has not yet been established in the institutions offering law programmes.

Keywords: Needs analysis, legalese, lexico-grammatical competence, colligations of prepositions

Introduction

The students who major in specialised disciplines such as law, engineering, and medicine need to possess adequate communicative language competence as a vehicle for their success in the academic and professional worlds. In situations in which English has become the primary medium of instruction in professional courses, e.g. law, possessing adequate English communication skills are deemed important. Since Malaysian judicial system since is rooted from the British judicial system English, English has become the main vehicle for law-making processes, judicial proceedings, court proceedings, and legal services (Noraini, 1997), though the usage of Bahasa Melayu¹ has been encouraged. Besides, English has become the main medium of instruction in law courses, legal discussions, and seminars, etc. Most legal texts and references are mainly written in English with the influence of English Law (Nur Muhammad Insan Jalil & Mohd Fauzi Kamarudin, 2009). But what linguistic aspect and skill that law students need to focus more?

Adult English as Second Language (ESL) law students in tertiary education need to possess collocational competence² for their survival in academic and professional worlds. They have to write well-crafted problem question essays often required of them in legal courses, carry out competent legal research, and defend themselves, with sound arguments and reasoning, in mock trials, etc. Gaining mastery over collocations, especially colligations of prepositions³, the knowledge of which legal patterns or word combinations sound more natural and appropriate in specific legal texts, genres, and contexts is extremely essential as it will indicate law students’ linguistic

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¹ Bahasa Melayu is the national language of Malaysians.
² Collocational competence is defined as one’s ability to combine words correctly with their partners (Hill, 2000).
³ Prepositions are defined as “a word which relates a substantive, its object, to some other word in the sentence” (Roberts, 1954: 222). There are many types of prepositions: single-word (i.e. in, on, of, etc.), two-word (i.e. because of, due to, owing to, etc.), three-word (as opposed to, at par with, in pursuit of, etc.), and four-word (i.e. on the other hand, on the grounds of, in the case of, etc.). Two-word, three-word, and four-word prepositions are complex prepositions.
competence. This ideal phenomenon, however, is not often the case. Even advanced ESL law students, including the subjects in this study\(^4\), lack collocational competence\(^5\), particularly colligation of prepositional\(^6\) competence. They may be capable of producing well-formed sentences but their sentences lack naturalness, are non native-like, and show a deviation from the spoken and written convention produced by the legal discourse community (Gozdzi-Roszkowski, 2004).

According to Halliday (1967), a sentence contains many phrases and word groups called structural units which are sequenced horizontally. This sequence of units is ordered in the form of constituents (ranks) based on the stylistic convention, genre, and register of a particular discourse that simulates the discourse community or the society that speaks the language. The sequence of legal events is constructed through the chaining of colligations of prepositional patterns. This is construed, for example in the following clause taken from article 38 of Canada’s 1982 Constitutional Charter:

\[\text{An amendment to the Constitution of Canada may be made by proclamation issued by the Governor General under the Great Seal of Canada where so authorised} \ldots\]

(Williams, 2004: 115)

Such legal constructions, that is, legal knowledge is constructed and conceptualised via the chaining of colligations of prepositional patterns, see the underlined patterns above), should be made viable to law students in order for them to have complete mastery of law and their survival in legal profession and education. However, to what extent do our law students have competence in perceiving this chaining of sequence? And what method should be used to investigate whether law students have sufficient colligational competence adequate for their survival in legal education and profession?

This study purported to reach two main objectives. First, it purported to investigate Malaysian law undergraduates’ perceptions on colligations of prepositions. Second, it aimed to examine the usage of colligations of prepositions among the students, one of the most essential lexico-grammatical components in legalese. Based on the two research objectives, the two research questions formulated are as follows:

1. What are the perceptions of law undergraduates in UniSZA (University of Sultan Zainal Abidin) on colligations of prepositions?
2. How much do the law undergraduates know about colligations of prepositions?

\(^4\) The subjects were semester three undergraduate students majoring in law in the Faculty of Law and International Relations (FLAIR), University of Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), Malaysia.

\(^5\) In the context of this study, colligational competence is defined as students’ ability to colligate words accurately and perceive the semantic functions of the patterns in relation to other patterns within the context of the sentence and know the usage of the patterns.

\(^6\) Colligations of prepositions in this study refer to the combinations of content words (i.e. nouns, adjectives, or verbs) with prepositions (Benson et al., 1987; 1997). See further operational definition of colligations of prepositions employed in this study as below:

a. prep + noun + preposition, e.g. in contrast to, as opposed to, by virtue of, etc.
b. noun + preposition, e.g. approval of, discussion about, preference to, etc.
c. adjective / participle + preposition, e.g. contrary to, binding on, bound by, etc.
d. verb + preposition (particles), e.g. come to, enter into, look to, etc.
Carrying out a needs analysis study is crucial in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses or programmes. It is crucial for uncovering learner perceived needs and wants prior to the ESP establishment. It is also essential as a means of assessing or measuring ESP learners’ lack and deficiency of the ESP linguistic items being taught. Conducting a needs analysis is highly important that even ESP course contents will not be made possible or designed unless it is based on or “determined by the professional needs of the learner” (Crystal, 2003: 108). It might be appropriate to say that no ESP courses should be conducted without needs analysis, be it formal or informal.

Needs analysis studies carried out to investigate law students’ lack and deficiencies in English for Law courses have been lacking (Ahmad, 2007; Nur Muhammad Insan Jalil & Mohd Fauzi Kamarudin, 2009). Hence, it has been the main purpose of this study to add to the body of literature a needs analysis study involving law students in this area. Hutchinson and Waters’ (1987) model of ESP needs analysis - a learning-centred approach was used was employed to frame this study. This model suggests that the best way to analyse the students’ needs is to investigate their needs from the starting point to the ‘target situation’. This model focuses on two needs – ‘target needs’ and ‘learning needs’. While ‘learning needs’ attempts to uncover information regarding learners’ second language acquisition (SLA) factors, e.g. age, culture, background knowledge, etc., ‘target needs’ aims to examine learners’ ‘lacks’ (deficiency) and ‘wants’ of the target language. ‘Lacks’ has been defined as “the gaps between what the learner knows and the necessities” (ibid: 56), and this can be carried out using error analysis (Richards, 1984). This study focuses on the ‘target needs’ of the learning-centred approach.

Review of Related Literature

The increasing need for English communicative competence among law students has brought changes in ESP especially in the last few decades. There is an urge among the ESP practitioners to shift focus to English for Legal Academic Purposes (ELAP) since it is a new branch of ESP which is less explored by ESP practitioners (Marco, 2005).

Law students have to master all language skills to achieve English communicative competence (Ahmad, 2006). Spoken legal language, for example, has always been regarded as the most significant skill needed by most law students as this skill is commonly used in classroom, mock trial or moots, academic seminars and conferences, and lawyer-client consultation, etc. (Bhatia, 1987). Meanwhile, writing has also been considered as a very demanding skill for law students since this skill combines the content, linguistic knowledge, and the writing mechanics. There is a far-cry among ESP practitioners to carry out more research pertaining to law students, particularly in examining their learning needs and deficiencies in all the skills.

English for law (legalese) is well-known for its convoluted and complex language. It differs rather greatly from general English in which a common word like ‘case’ means a container or a situation, a ‘case’ in law is “a question or problem that will be dealt with by a law court” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 5th ed., 2009). Garner (2001) described ELAP as having its own mind-boggling jargon, rife with bloated expressions that displace everyday words. However, for the law discourse community, these are “indispensable linguistic devices which bring precision, clarity and unambiguity and all-inclusiveness” (Bhatia, 1993: 102). Legalese is also pervasive with longer stretches of words and phrases (containing prepositions and their phrases) and nominalisation (changing verbal phrases into noun phrases) in order to maintain clarity and formality of legal discourse. Therefore, due to the complexity of legal language, it is evident that law undergraduates should be given training in a specific language course (ELAP) to prepare and enable them to understand the law ‘language’ before they are ready to handle actual law courses.

As mentioned previously, research on needs analysis in the field of law has been very rare. Nur Muhammad Insan Jalil and Mohd Fauzi Kamarudin (2009) conducted a needs analysis to investigate law teachers and students’ perceptions on the importance of academic (legal) writing in studying and practicing law. This study did not focus on investigating the students’ lack and deficiency in English linguistic production, particularly the production of
colligations of prepositions, a crucial linguistic aspect in legal texts. However, the study reported about the respondents’ realisation of the importance of English not only for their academic success, but also for their future career as legal officers, lawyers, law makers, etc. Maybe a needs analysis study which has come close to this study is by Ahmad (2006; 2011). In his recent study (2011), he reported that the 83.5 % of the subjects in his study had inadequate skill of spoken English in various academic situations - asking questions to teachers, giving presentations, group work/pair work, and mock oral argument. This finding also supported the finding of his earlier study (Ahmad, 2006).

Methodology

The Study Population

The subjects in this study were 40 (11 male and 29 female) semester three law undergraduates in FLAIR (Faculty of Law and International Relations), UniSZA. They had completed the two Law of Contract courses offered in semesters I and II.

Data Collection

Two research instruments were employed in this study. To answer research question 1, we carried out an interview which involved only eight out of the 40 respondents. The interview was conducted in the office, a quiet place. The interview responses were recorded and transcribed. Then we analysed the data manually.

The second research instruments used were the essays written by the 40 respondents. The students were asked to write on three Problem-Question (PQ) questions (of legal contract genre). To ensure the validity and reliability of the questions (see Appendix A, we consulted the law lecturer teaching the two Law of Contract courses.

The respondents were placed in a classroom in order to answer the test, outside their law class time. The students were given two hours and a half to answer the questions. They were also supplied with the book of Contracts Act 1957, the normal procedure underwent anytime the law students take their tests and final exams. The essays were collected and the students’ erroneous production of colligations of prepositions were underlined and counted. In the analysis of the students’ errors, Dulay et al.’s (1982) Surface Strategy Taxonomy was employed. This taxonomy divides learner errors into four categories with their sub-categories such as omission, addition (regularisation, double-marking, simple additions), mis(in)formation (regularisation, archi-forms, alternating forms), and misordering.

Omission refers the absence of an item which must be present in a well-formed utterance. An example of omission is the missing of preposition at in the sentences: Why do you always look me?

Addition is the second category of Surface strategy taxonomy and is also the opposite of omission. The presence of an extra item which mustn't be present in a well formed utterance is characteristic for additions (Dulay et al., 1982: 156). An example of this form is the inclusion of preposition about in: We discuss about our homework.

Misformation refers to “the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure” Dulay et al. (1982: 158). An example of this type is the missing of –ing form in: I did this by spin the handle. The correct form should be: I did this by spinning the handle.

Misordering occurs in situations where prepositions are incorrectly placed. The preposition to should be placed at the frontal position rather than the in the middle of the sentence: Whom did you sent the letter? The correct sentence should be: To whom did you send the letter?
To guarantee a reliable marking, the students’ written scripts were also handed in to the second marker, another Law of Contract lecturer.

Data Analysis and Findings

The data analysis and findings will be presented according to the research questions.

Research question 1: What are the perceptions of law undergraduates in UniSZA (University of Sultan Zainal Abidin) on colligations of prepositions?

Several important findings were obtained from the analysis of the interviews (see Appendix B for the interview questions). When asked about the reasons contributing to the difficulty of prepositions, all the respondents students reported that prepositions were the grammatical items they were unsure of. Some were even unaware of the existence of prepositions and prepositional patterns though they had met them in reading, and used them in legal essays and assignments. Some even mentioned that they had confused prepositions with other parts of speech, particularly the conjunctions.

Meanwhile, the respondents gave various responses when asked about their coping strategies with prepositional phrases (i.e. how they managed to produce prepositional patterns correctly, e.g. in writing, though they did not know what constituted prepositions and their patterns, e.g. in contemplation of, in the light of, and subject to contract, etc.). Some of them informed that they committed the patterns as one word to their memory, while others claimed that they subconsciously learned the patterns through repeated exposures to lectures and legal materials. A few of them also mentioned that since the patterns were immensely used in the sample essays given by their lecturers, they then assumed that the patterns were very important to be learnt and produced.

The respondents confessed that their difficulties with prepositions were partly due to L1 interference and the previous grammar teaching method. The usage of prepositions in Malay differs substantively from the prepositional usage in English. Thus, the influence of Malay impacted the students’ production of prepositions. Some students even mentioned that they frequently used their own intuition in using prepositions, and this intuition meant resorting to Malay prepositions. Besides, they felt that the rote memorisation method used in teaching prepositions in their primary and secondary schools was not very effective in helping them learn prepositions. They still recalled the time when they were drilled to memorise prepositions, and that did not help them a lot in understanding the usages of prepositions. According to them also, the fact that prepositions have their own patterns had never been discussed by their English teachers in both primary and secondary schools.

Besides L1, some students admitted that legalese itself was a major barrier for them to acquire legal English and legal contents. Legalese was found to differ largely from general English due to its distinctive style. Legal maxims, specialised terminologies, and complicated nominal and prepositional phrases were cited as the major factors causing the difficulty. This language barrier hindered them from understanding legal texts and successfully conveying their thoughts and reasoning in answering legal PQ questions.
Research Question 2: How much do the law undergraduates know about colligations of prepositions?

Table 1: Students’ performance in three PQ essays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PQ Essays</th>
<th>*PQ1</th>
<th>PQ2</th>
<th>PQ3</th>
<th>PQ1 + PQ2 + PQ3 (Total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of words</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>36,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of patterns</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate patterns</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>9,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erroneous patterns</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown from the table above, the approximate total number of words the students produced was 36,500. During the counting process, some students were found to produce longer essays exceeding 400 words, while some of them wrote in less than 200 words per essay. The exceeded number of words was not counted. Meanwhile, the total number of colligations of prepositional patterns produced was 11,000. The figure was large, and it should have increased more if the prepositional patterns which had been copied directly from the Contract Acts and those which had been repeated were counted. This large figure can be explained in terms of the frequency of these patterns in legal texts (see Bhatia, 1993).

Meanwhile, a large number of accurate patterns produced (i.e. 9,500) can be explained in terms of the inclusion of the patterns N + of prepositions (e.g. the communication of an acceptance, the knowledge of acceptance, free consent of parties, etc.) and V (passive) + by constructions (e.g. made by the offeror, forbidden by the law, not disqualified by any law, etc). They had been counted as patterns in this study. Since the majority of the students produced these two categories of patterns accurately, this had contributed to the large gain of accurate patterns.

The total number of inaccurate patterns produced was 1,500. This amounted to almost one-fifth of the accurate patterns. This figure should have increased to more than 4500 patterns if I had taken into account the repeated erroneous patterns (i.e. sometimes they were repeated more than three times). The students seemed to have major problems with V + Prep constructions, i.e. they had difficulty in determining prepositions that should follow the verbs. For example, in the construction enter into a contract, many students always confused preposition into with preposition to. Since the patterns within this category constitute the most frequent patterns in legal contract genre, the errors produced should not be tolerated, and they should be treated.

7 If taken into consideration of the repeated patterns, i.e. more than three times, the subjects actually had produced more than 4500 patterns. Many repeated patterns were produced since they wrote the same PQ essay questions.
Table 2: Samples of erroneous colligations of prepositional patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>.</th>
<th>Erroneous Colligations of Prepositional Patterns</th>
<th>Types of Patterns</th>
<th>Causes and Corrections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Noun + Prepositions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regarding to the issue, the letter of acceptance by Mr. Chen is valid as he posted the letter of acceptance.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Addition (delete to) Regarding the issue, the letter of acceptance by Mr. Chen is valid as he posted the letter of acceptance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>However, there is an exception for the general rule which is the postal rule.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Misformation (replace for with to) However, there is an exception to the general rule, which is the postal rule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>the instantaneous manner is not same as the postal rule</td>
<td></td>
<td>Omission (missing article ‘the’) the instantaneous manner is not the same as the postal rule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>this can be seen in case of Tinn v Hoffmann.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Misformation (replace to with in) this can be seen in the case of Tinn v Hoffmann.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>As to the general rule.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Verb + Prepositions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>it means voidable by looking of the nature of the contract.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Misformation (replace of with at) it means voidable by looking at the nature of the contract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Acceptance is complete when it reached to the knowledge of the proposer.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Addition (delete to) Acceptance is complete when it reached the knowledge of the proposer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>When the offeree had noticed about the death of the offeror,</td>
<td></td>
<td>Addition (delete about) When the offeree had noticed the death of the offeror.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Section 11 of the same act provides the person who is competent to the contract.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Omission (add for) Section 11 of the same act provides for the person who is competent to the contract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>If Mr Chen have tell to Mr Daud that he have accept the offer, the contract will become enforceable.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Addition (delete to) If Mr Chen had told Mr Daud that he have accept the offer, the contract will become enforceable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Adjective + Prepositions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The law related with the case is under section 4 (a) of the Contracts Act 1950;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Addition (replace with with to) The law related to the case is under section 4 (a) of the Contracts Act 1950.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The above case is quite similar with the situation of the problematic question.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Misformation (replace with with to) The above case is quite similar to the situation of the problematic question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>the contract was bound to them.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Misformation (replace to with on) the contract was binding on them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Both parties are clearly aware about the illegality.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Misformation (replace about with of) Both parties are clearly aware of the illegality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A supplies B, a minor with necessaries suitable to his condition of life.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Misformation (replace to with for) A supplies B, a minor with necessaries suitable for his condition of life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the findings shown in Table 2, we can conclude that the learners’ errors were mainly caused by misformation (7 cases), followed by addition (5 cases), and omission (3 cases). The errors were mainly caused by intralingual (difficulty with legalese itself) as can be seen from all the five patterns under the N + Prep category and the five patterns under the V + Prep category. The five patterns under Adj + Prep category were caused by the interlingual interference (the learners’ L1, i.e. Malay). The fact that many of the errors were caused by the difficulty with legalese has been supported by many law linguists. Bhatia (1993; 1998); Williams (2004); Krois-Lindner (2006) that legalese is a complex language, thus requiring concentrated efforts by law students to master it.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Several conclusions and recommendations can be given based on the findings discussed above. First, it shows to ESP practitioners that ELAP is a new branch of ESP that needs a serious attention. While there is a deficit in legal materials prepared for international ESL law students (Candlin, Bhatia, & Jensen, 2002), research carried out to investigate law students’ linguistic deficit, particularly related to legal collocation has been rare. More needs analysis studies should be carried out with law students in order to design a better ELAP programme in institutions offering law programmes.

Second, ELAP practitioners should be increased so that they will facilitate the teaching and learning of legalese. Since law students have difficulty in producing accurate prepositional patterns, the essential elements of legalese, as in the case of the students in the present study, it is essential therefore, to groom ELAP lecturers or practitioners to teach or raise law students’ awareness of the patterns.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study can be claimed as one of a few studies focusing on analysing law students’ production of colligations of prepositions in the field of law. Due to the fact that this area of study has been rare, more further research is required. Furthermore, since the study of collocation include lexical and grammatical collocation, future researchers may expand their studies in both areas.

References


**APPENDIX A**

**PROBLEM-QUESTION QUESTIONS**

**ESSAY WRITING TEST**

Name: ………………………………………………… Matric No. …………………..

Directions: Please answer ALL the questions below. Write in BETWEEN 200 to 400 words for each question. Time suggested is 2 ½ hours.

**Question 1**

Mr. Daud, an XXY executive offered to sell his Ferrari to Mr. Chen in order to buy a fishing boat. He stated that acceptance had to reach his office by 23rd January 2008. Explain the legal situation in the following circumstances:

a. Mr. Chen posted a letter of acceptance to Mr. Daud on 21st January but the letter was lost.

b. Mr. Chen telephoned Mr. Daud on 22nd accepting the offer but Mr. Daud insisted that Mr. Chen accept the offer in writing.

c. Mr. Chen faxed a letter of acceptance on 23rd January but Mr. Daud had passed away by the time the letter reached him.

**Question 2**

Kenny Shin, a Chinese national, had agreed to purchase three pieces of land belonging to Mr. Rosyam for RM 3 million. Both of them were aware that the transaction needed the approval of the Foreign Investment Committee (FIC) in line with the Government’s relevant Guidelines which forbade the acquisition of any property in Malaysia over 2 million approval. The parties were not inclined to abide by the directive Guidelines, as compliance thereof would incur additional payment of taxes and stamp duty to the Government. Kenny Shin and Mr. Rosyam attempted to circumvent the Guidelines and executed three separate sale and purchase agreements. They had completed the third sale agreement but could not complete the third sale agreement as the necessary approval to subdivide the land could not be obtained by Mr. Rosyam. Both of them come to see you. Kenny Shin wishes to rescind all the sale agreements and demands the repayment of RM 1 million for the moneys he had paid under the first and second agreements. He wants to know whether he could seek restitution under section 66 of Contracts Act 1950. Mr. Rosyam wants to plead the issue of illegality alleging that the agreements were void and unenforceable.
**Question 3**

Chin, a minor, induced Lim to lend him RM $400 by introducing himself to be of full age. He refused to pay the loan when asked a month later as promised. Lim wants to sue Chin for breach of promise and comes to you for legal advice. Advise him on this issue.

**APPENDIX B**

**PRE-STUDY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Why are prepositions difficult?
   
   a. Is that because some prepositions are used and meant differently in English?
   
      e.g. sleep *in* bed (English) versus sleep *on* bed (Malay)
   
   b. Is that because prepositions are required in English while they are not in Malay?
   
      e.g. knock *on* the door (English) versus knock *X* the door (Malay)
   
   c. Do you resort to Malay prepositions when you cannot find the equivalent forms in English while writing legal essays or assignments and then translate them back to English? Is this strategy effective?

2. Do you think that legal discourse is an added difficulty for you to acquire or use prepositions correctly? For examples:

   a. Section 7 *provides for* the form of acceptance. v He *provides* money *for* the needy.
   
   b. The offer of a *reward for* information is often exhausted once accepted. v The head of the village offers a *reward for* the lost of his daughter.

3. Are some legal prepositional patterns easier to learn than others? And why are some difficult?

   a. Is that because you always meet those patterns or make use of them?
   
   b. Is that because you do not meet them often and make use of them?

   For example, based on these prepositional patterns, which do you think are familiar to you? Please tick.

   ________ come to the knowledge of
   
   ________ based on the case of
   
   ________ in contemplation of
4. When you have problems in using prepositional patterns while doing your work, what do you do: e.g. refer to your teacher, find samples of such patterns online or in books?

5. Do you notice that prepositions and prepositional patterns are frequent in legal texts?
   a. Do you realize that they always come in patterns?
      e.g. consideration for, claim for damages, by virtue of section 2 (a), etc?
   b. Do you learn by heart (memorizing) these patterns? Or Do you apply other techniques?

6. In conclusion, what is your major difficulty with prepositions?
   a. Is that because you transfer the Malay prepositions to English?
   b. Is that because of the legal language itself which contains many complex collocations of prepositions?