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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 those investigating the students’ lack of competence in legal English, are rare. This paper aimed to investigate Malaysian law undergraduates’ perceptions and usage of colligations of prepositions, one of the most essential lexico-grammatical components in legalese. 40 third semester Malay law undergraduates from one public university participated in the study. Two types of data were collected for this purpose – an 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 Strategy 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 demonstrate that the subjects lack knowledge of prepositions and their patterns, resulting 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 methods applied in both primary and secondary schools. More needs analyses should be carried out in a specialised field like law for future for the short-term and long-term benefits of the students. While both English and law lecturers may gain feedback on their students’ current lexico-grammatical competence, whereby some actions can be taken to improve performance, 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.

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

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1. 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 is deemed important. Since the Malaysian judicial system is derived from the British judicial system, English has become the main vehicle for law-making processes, judicial proceedings, court proceedings, and legal services (Noraini, 1997), though the usage of Bahasa Melayu (the national language of Malaysia) has been encouraged. Furthermore, English has become the main medium of instruction in law courses, legal discussions, and seminars. Most legal texts and references are written in English due to the influence of English Law (Nur Muhammad Insan Jalil & Mohd Fauzi Kamarudin, 2009). But what are the linguistic aspects to which law students need to pay greater attention?

Adult English as Second Language (ESL) law students in tertiary education need to possess collocational competence (an ability to combine words correctly with their partners) (Hill, 2000) for their survival in the academic and professional worlds. They have to write well-crafted problem/question essays in legal courses, carry out competent legal research, and defend themselves, with sound arguments and reasoning, in mock trials, etc. Gaining mastery over collocations (the words that combine frequently with other words), especially colligations of prepositions (the frequent combinations between two or more grammatical words forming the patterns, e.g. enter into an agreement, seek the approval of the FIC, under the agreement of, etc.) is essential as it is a measure of the law students’ linguistic competence. This ideal, however, is seldom achieved. Even advanced ESL law students, including the subjects in this study (undergraduate law students in the Faculty of Law and International Relations (FLAIR), Sultan Zainal Abidin University, Malaysia, lacked collocational competence (the ability to colligate words accurately and perceive the semantic functions of the patterns and usage in relation to other patterns in context), particularly colligation of prepositional 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 (Gozdz-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:

*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 [...]*

(Williams, 2004: 115)

Such legal constructions, that is, the construction and conceptualisation of legal knowledge via the chaining of colligations of prepositional patterns (see the underlined patterns above), should be taught to law students in order for them to have complete mastery of law and to ensure their survival during their legal education and professional life. However, to what extent do our law students have competence in perceiving these chains of sequences? And what methods should be used to investigate whether law students have sufficient colligational competence to study and practice law effectively?

This study aimed to fulfil two main objectives. Firstly, it purported to investigate Malaysian law undergraduates’ perceptions on colligations of prepositions. Secondly, it aimed to examine the usage of colligations of prepositions - one of the most essential lexico-grammatical components in legalese - among the students. Based on the two research objectives, the two research questions formulated were as follows:
• What are the perceptions of law undergraduates in FLAIR, UniSZA on colligations of prepositions?
• How much do the law undergraduates know about colligations of prepositions?

Carrying out a needs analysis study is crucial in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses or programmes. The role of such a study is to determine learners’ perceived needs and wants prior to the establishment of an EAP (English for Academic Purposes) or ESP programme. It is also essential as a means of assessing or measuring ESP learners’ deficiencies in relation to the linguistic items being taught. Conducting a needs analysis is highly important, to the extent that the design of ESP course contents must be “determined by the professional needs of the learner” (Crystal, 2003, p.108). It is legitimate to suggest that no ESP courses should be conducted without a needs analysis, be it formal or informal.

Needs analysis studies carried out to investigate law students’ linguistic deficiencies in English for Law courses are far from numerous (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 via a needs analysis involving law students. Hutchinson and Waters’ (1987) model of ESP needs analysis, i.e. a learning-centred approach, was employed to frame this study. This model suggests that the best way to analyse the students’ needs is to investigate them from the initial 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’ deficiencies (lacks) and wants in relation to the target language. ‘Lacks’ has been defined as “the gaps between what the learner knows and the necessities” (ibid, p.56), and this can be carried out using error analysis (Richards, 1984). This study focuses on the ‘target needs’ from the learning-centred approach.

2. 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 important skill needed by many law students as this skill is commonly used in the classroom, mock trials or moots, academic seminars and conferences, and lawyer-client consultation (Bhatia, 1987). Meanwhile, writing has also been considered a very demanding skill for law students since it combines the content, linguistic knowledge, and writing mechanics. There is a consensus among ESP practitioners on the importance of conducting more research pertaining to law students, particularly in examining their learning needs and deficiencies in all skills.

English for law (legalese) is well-known for its convoluted and complex language. It differs greatly from general English, in which a common word like ‘case’ may mean a container or a situation. However, 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) describes 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, p.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 the study and practice of law. However, this study did not focus on investigating the students’ deficiencies in English linguistic production, particularly the production of colligations of prepositions, a crucial linguistic aspect in legal texts; instead, it reported on the respondents’ realisation of the importance of English, not only for their academic success but also for their future careers as legal officers, lawyers, and law makers. One researcher whose work has relevance to this study is Ahmad (2009; 2011). In
his recent study (2011), he reported that 83.5% of the subjects had inadequate spoken English skills in various academic situations, e.g. when asking questions to teachers, giving presentations either in pairs or groups, or conducting mock oral arguments. This finding supported the findings obtained in his earlier study (Ahmad, 2009).

3. Methodology

3.1 The Study Population

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

3.2 Data Collection

Two research instruments were employed in this study. To answer research question 1, interviews were held with eight out of the 40 respondents. The interview was conducted in a quiet place, namely the office. Interview responses were recorded and transcribed, and then the data was analysed manually. The second research instrument used was an essay question given to all 40 respondents. The students were asked to write on three Problem-Question (PQ) essay topics (from the legal contract genre). To ensure the validity and reliability of the questions (see Appendix A), the law lecturer teaching the two Law of Contract courses was consulted.

The respondents sat the test in a classroom outside scheduled law class times. They were given two and a half hours to answer the questions. They were also supplied with the Contracts Act 1957, as is normal procedure during law tests and final exams. The essays were then 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, i.e. omission (deleting the forms), addition (i.e. errors in double-marking and simple additions), misinformation (errors in providing the right forms), and misordering (errors in ordering the forms). Omission refers to 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 the Surface Strategy Taxonomy model, 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, p.156). An example of this form is the inclusion of preposition about in the sentence: We discuss about our homework. Misinformation refers to “the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure” Dulay et al. (1982, p.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 in the middle of the sentence. An example of this is: Whom did you sent the letter? The correct sentence should be: To whom did you send the letter? To guarantee the reliability of the marking, the students’ written scripts were also handed in to a second marker, another Law of Contract lecturer.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

The data analysis and findings are presented in the same order as the research questions.

Research question 1:

What are the perceptions of law undergraduates in FLAIR, UniSZA (Sultan Zainal Abidin University) about 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 difficulties with prepositions, all respondents reported that prepositions were the grammatical items they were unsure of most. 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.

Furthermore, 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 admitted that they committed the patterns to memory as one word, 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 frequently used in the sample essays given out by their lecturers, they had assumed that it was very important to learn to produce them.

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 into memorising prepositions, commenting that it did not help them to understand the uses of prepositions. Many of them were unaware that prepositions have their own patterns as this had never been discussed with them by their English teachers at either primary or secondary school level.

Besides L1, some students admitted that legalese itself was a major barrier to the acquisition of 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>Total = PQ1 + PQ2 + PQ3</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 in Table 1 above, the approximate total number of words produced by the students was 36,500. During the counting process, some students were found to have produced longer essays exceeding 400 words, while some of them wrote less than 200 words per essay. Words exceeding the limit were not counted. Meanwhile, the total number of colligations of prepositional patterns produced was 11,000. The figure was large, and it would have been greater 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, the large number of accurate patterns produced (i.e. 9,500) can be explained in terms of the

† 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.
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). These were counted as patterns in this study. Since the majority of the students produced these two categories of patterns accurately, this had contributed to the significant number of accurate patterns.

Table 2. Samples of erroneous colligations of prepositional patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>.</th>
<th>Erroneous Colligations of Prepositional Patterns</th>
<th>Types of pattern</th>
<th>Causes and Corrections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noun + Prepositions</td>
<td></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>Addition (delete to)</td>
<td>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>Misformation (replace for with to)</td>
<td>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>Omission (missing article ‘the’)</td>
<td>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>Omission (missing article ‘the’)</td>
<td>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>Misformation (replace to with in)</td>
<td>As in a general rule, ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb + Prepositions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>it means voidable by looking of the nature of the contract.</td>
<td>Misformation (replace of with at)</td>
<td>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>Addition (delete to)</td>
<td>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>Addition (delete about)</td>
<td>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>Omission (add for)</td>
<td>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>Addition (delete to)</td>
<td>If Mr Chen had told Mr Daud that he have accept the offer, the contract will become enforceable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective + Prepositions</td>
<td></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>Addition (replace with with to)</td>
<td>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>Misformation (replace with with to)</td>
<td>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>Misformation (replace to with on)</td>
<td>The contract was binding on them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Both parties are clearly aware about the illegality.</td>
<td>Misformation (replace about with of)</td>
<td>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>Misformation (replace to with for)</td>
<td>A supplies B, a minor with necessaries suitable for his condition of life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total number of inaccurate patterns produced was 1,500. This amounted to almost one-fifth of the accurate patterns. This figure would have been more than 4500 if the repeated erroneous patterns had been taken into account (i.e. sometimes these 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.
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 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) concur that legalese is a complex language, requiring concentrated efforts by law students to master it.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Several conclusions and recommendations can be given based on the findings discussed above. Firstly, the study highlights to ESP practitioners that ELAP as a new branch of ESP needs 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 deficiencies, particularly related to legal collocations has been rare. More needs analysis studies should be carried out with law students in order to design better ELAP programmes in institutions offering law courses. Secondly, more ELAP practitioners should be employed to 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 for ELAP practitioners raise their students’ awareness of these patterns.

6. Suggestions for further research

It can be claimed that this study is one of the few to focus on analysing students’ production of collocations of prepositions in the field of law. Due to the fact that this area of study has been somewhat neglected, more research is required. Furthermore, since the study of collocation include lexical and grammatical collocations, future researchers may expand their studies in both areas.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia for sponsoring this study under the SLAB/SLAI project.
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
   ______ in the light of
   ______ subject to contract

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?

References


