Chapter One

Second Language Acquisition and Prepositions

1.0 Introduction

The study examines the acquisition of English prepositions by Sinhala-speaking learners of English, with special reference to the lexical-functional divide proposed for prepositions.

The category of preposition has posed problems with respect to classifying it along the functional vs. lexical dimension (van Riemsdijk 1990, 1998; den Dikken 2003; Botwinik-Rotem 2004; Svenonius 2004). Littlefield (2009) utilized van Riemsdijk’s notion ‘semi-lexical’, which she decomposed to [+Lexical, +Functional], arguing that the combination of these two properties determined the order of acquisition of a number of prepositional elements in English. She considered as [+Lexical] those that contribute semantic content, and as [+Functional] those that are able to check the Case of their complements. These fundamental distinctions resulted in the four categories of prepositional elements in (1), the acquisition of which proceeds from the most lexical to the least lexical, as she claimed.

(1) a. Adverbs: *put down the cup* [+Lexical, -Functional]

b. Particles: *he ate it up* [-Lexical, -Functional]

c. Semi-lexical prepositions: *run to the store* [+Lexical, +Functional]

d. Functional prepositions: *translation of the book* [-Lexical, +Functional]
With the above in mind, we set off to study the acquisition of English prepositions by second language learners. We focus on the accuracy of comprehension and production of the four categories in second language learners of varying English proficiency. Comprehension of prepositions was assessed through a dictation task, and spontaneous production through picture story writing.

Since the study is on second language learners, in this chapter we detail theories and issues in SLA and in Chapter two, we present the theoretical issues pertaining to lexical and functional categories and the Littlefield’s fine-grained classification of prepositions, which this study tries to validate on the basis of evidence from second language learning.

Here, after an initial introduction to SLA in Section 1.1, we look at some of the differences and similarities between first and second language acquisition in Section 1.2, and the debate about the availability of Universal Grammar (UG) in SLA in Section 1.3. We also mention a few issues which have been frequently researched in SLA in Section 1.4, like language transfer, critical period, ultimate attainment, and negative evidence. As the present study looks at two types of tasks, we discuss the research methods used in first and second language acquisition in Section 1.5. We also highlight some of the problems second language learners are known to have with prepositions in Section 1.6. We conclude Chapter one with presenting location of the study (Sri Lanka) and English education and learning in Sri Lanka in Section 1.7.
1.1 Second language acquisition

The term `second language acquisition` refers to the acquisition of a new language by children and adults who already have full knowledge of their first language. It is thus distinct from childhood bilingualism, or simultaneous language acquisition, which refers to the child language acquisition of two languages simultaneously, with exposure to both languages beginning in infancy or soon after (Genesee 2000; Meisel 2001, 2004). Child second language acquisition, also known as sequential bilingualism, refers to the acquisition of a second language after age three or four, when much of the first language is already in place (McLaughlin 1978; Lakshmanan 1994; Gass & Selinker 2001). In this context, learners in the present study were all second language learners, since they were at least 8 years old, and already knew Sinhala as first language.

One of the ongoing debates in SLA is whether it is similar to or different from first language acquisition. This discussion is important since it throws light on the processes and routes in learning a first and a second language. Most of the discussion hinges on the issue of ultimate attainment, L1 transfer in L2 and the notion of critical period, which has been posited for first language as well. We begin with a quick description of the differences and similarities between first and second language acquisition.
1.2 First and second language acquisition

1.2.1 Differences

Some of the differences between first language and second language acquisition are intrinsic and reflect the brain processes; and some are extrinsic pertaining to the context in which the languages are learnt, in particular inside or outside a classroom. Here, we concentrate on consecutive bilingualism, and not early childhood simultaneous bilingualism.

The first most obvious difference is that L2 learners already have at least one other language in their minds; the initial language state of their minds is therefore different from the L1 child because of the first language they already know. What this presence of another language does to L2 learning has been a perennial source of debate among SLA researchers. This debate actually translates into a complete ban of the L1 in the L2 classroom or an advocacy of the first language in the classroom as much as possible. The debate centers around the assumption that presence of the L1 leads to transfer (Jarvis & Pavlenko 2007), and transfer is treated by language teachers as essentially detrimental to L2 learning. The theoretical segment of this comes from the discussion on availability or non-availability of UG principles and parameters in SLA, which we discuss in Section 1.3.

The second fundamental difference is that L2 learners are older and therefore cognitively mature. L1 children learn language as well as gradually develop cognitively. Therefore, in L1 learning, particular aspects of language development are closely linked to growth in cognition: the one-word stage depends for example on the
sensorimotor abilities of object constancy and representational thinking; complex syntax requires the ability to conserve at the concrete operations stage (Sinclair de Zwart 1969). Similarly, the development of spatial concepts goes hand in hand with the development of L1 spatial terms (Bloom 2002). In second language learning, learners have more developed attentional resources, working memory and metalinguistic skills. Therefore, the aspects of language acquisition related to maturation are irreversible; the L2 learners start with the attributes of maturation appropriate to their age, not those of the L1 children.

A third difference is in the context and the nature of input learners are given. Children acquire their first language in family care-taking situation; the situations of human babies are rather similar apart from cultural differences in child-rearing practices. L2 learners learn languages in a variety of situations, in naturalistic contexts, in trade contexts and in classroom contexts, and each of these contexts vary in the nature of input and exposure. The language input that L1 children get from their caretakers differs dramatically from the input provided to L2 learners. Natural contact situations are almost like L1 contexts. However, in second language contexts, course books and teaching materials are carefully selected and graded in vocabulary and syntax, thereby making is far from natural input. Second language teaching has often attempted to recreate the conditions of the L1 child in the L2 classroom mostly in terms of using only a single language and having a simple interaction between students and teachers or between students.

The fourth difference, which can be attributed to context or cognition, is the success of first language acquisition and the failure of second language acquisition (Bley-
Vroman 1989). Children barely differ in their acquisition of the first language so far as the main features of the spoken language are concerned. They all end up learning the phonology, vocabulary and grammar appropriate for their dialect, class, age, gender, etc. However, individual differences in second language acquisition are extreme. Some reach a near-native stage, and others can barely cross the threshold level, and still others use only a pidginized form.

1.2.2 Similarities

The L2 sequence for English grammatical morphemes was similar, though not identical, to that found in L1 acquisition by Brown (1973), the greatest differences being the irregular past tense (*broke*), articles (*the*), copula and auxiliaries (Dulay, Burt & Krashen 1982). Lightbown and Spada (2006) review studies which have proposed that the acquisition of question words (*what, where, who, why, when, and how*), show a great similarity in first and second language acquisition. Based on the morpheme studies in L2 acquisition, Krashen (1982) put forward the *Natural Order Hypothesis* that he developed to account for second language acquisition. He claimed that we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order. This acquisition order is not determined by simplicity or the order of rules taught in the class.

Other similar sequences of syntactic acquisition have been found in L1 and L2 learning. L2 learners, like L1 learners, start by believing that *John* is the subject of *please* in both *John is easy to please* and *John is eager to please* and only go on to discover it is the object in *John is easy to please* after some time (Cook 1973: Tucker & d’Anglejan 1975). L2 learners, like L1 children, at first put negative elements at the beginning of the sentence *No the sun shining* and then progress to negation within the
This debate on the similarity and dissimilarity between first and second language acquisition is theoretically presented as access and no access to Universal grammar. These are two extreme views; however, intermediate positions have also been posited. Therefore, the positions are: no access hypothesis, full access hypothesis, indirect access hypothesis, and partial access hypothesis. We discuss these four positions in the following section.

1.3 Availability of UG in SLA

Many second language acquisition (L2) studies over the last 20 years have focused on a principles and parameters model of acquisition. The aim has been to determine whether Universal Grammar (UG), an innate system of parameterized principles assumed to constrain first language acquisition (L1), also guides L2 acquisition.

The theory of UG has led to important theoretical and empirical advances in both L1 and L2 acquisition. Much research on L2 acquisition in the 1980s explored whether or not L2 grammars are subject to the constraints imposed by UG on L1 grammars. Among others, there are mainly two opposing views with regard to the ‘UG-accessibility’ problem. For the proponents of a UG-based L2 model, similar to L1 learners, L2 learners also make use of UG-based knowledge in acquiring a second language (e.g., Flynn 1987; Schwartz 1991, 1992; White 1985, 1989, 1990). For others, (adult) L2 acquisition is fundamentally different from L1 acquisition and is mediated by general problem-solving strategies, but these strategies are not
necessarily linguistic-specific (Bley-Vroman 1990 as cited in Schwartz, 1993; Clashen & Muysken 1986, 1989; Schachter 1989, 1990). What is important, however, is that no matter what theoretical position L2 researchers adopt, there are certain facts on which they all agree.

1.3.1 UG is not available

Among research that focuses on the non-availability of UG, considerable attention has gone into the differences between L1 and L2 acquisition (Bley-Vroman 1990 as cited in Schwartz, 1993; Clashen & Muysken 1986, 1989; Schachter 1989, 1990). In his Fundamental Difference Hypothesis, Bley-Vroman (1990), as cited in Schwartz, 1993 claims that L1 acquisition and adult L2 acquisition are fundamentally different processes. Although UG is operative in adult L1 acquisition, in the case of L2 acquisition, it is replaced by non-linguistic systems which involve analogy and hypothesis testing. In his view, adult L2 acquisition is guided by domain general problem-solving mechanisms.

Much of Bley-Vroman’s argumentation relies on comparing the ultimate attainment of young L1 and adult L2 learners. For example, he points out that although every normal adult attains native speaker competence, adult L2 learners generally do not reach this level. That is, unlike L1 acquisition, there is a general failure in adult L2 acquisition with respect to ultimate attainment.

1.3.2 UG is available

On the other side of the debate, proponents of the Full Access to Universal Grammar view argue that innate linguistic mechanisms remain active throughout adulthood, and
that differences between children and adults are because of other sources (see White 2003 for an overview).

The first source of evidence comes from comparisons between child and adult second language learners. Early morpheme-order studies (Dulay & Burt 1974; Larsen-Freeman 1975) focused on developmental sequences across second language learners from different native languages and found that the order of morpheme acquisition was largely similar across languages, and across a language learnt as a first and a second language. On the assumption that innate linguistic knowledge is available to child second language learners, evidence of similar developmental sequences among children and adults (with the native language held constant) is used to argue that such knowledge is available to adult learners as well (Gilkerson 2006; Schwartz 2003; Unsworth 2005).

The second source of evidence comes from studies of 'poverty of the-stimulus' phenomena with adult second language learners: when adult learners are able to master aspects of the second language which are not instantiated in the native language, not obvious from the input, and not explicitly taught in the classroom, this provides evidence that innate linguistic knowledge is at work (Dekydtspotter, Sprouse & Anderson 1997; Montrul & Slabakova 2003). Much of this work has been done with phenomena at the syntax semantics interface (Slabakova 2006; Sorace 2003, 2005).
1.3.3 UG is indirectly available

White (1986) and Flynn (1987) proposed that UG operates in L2 acquisition, but via the L1. In other words, L2 learners start with the principles and parameters of their L1. Then they try to reset the parameters of the L1, where the parametric value differs from the L2.

In this model of SLA, positive evidence (input) is still the driving force, but reduced to the extent that L1 now serves somewhat as a filter to L2 obtainment: viz., the implicit knowledge of L1 mediates L2 throughout all the crucial stages of learning particularly with regards to parameterization. This would suggest that certain L2 learners will have difficulties with alternative parameter settings, for e.g., null subject language type L2 learners will have difficulties accepting the obligatory nature of overt sentential subjects (as in Spanish to English). Therefore, the difference between L1 and L2 is not a mere quantitative difference, but more importantly a qualitative difference.

1.3.4 UG is partially available

Partial Access Hypothesis has been proposed to account mainly for L2 development of functional categories (Martohardjono & Gair 1993; Hawkins & Chan 1997). According to this perspective, some UG subparts are fully available while other subparts are inaccessible or partially accessible to the language learner. In L2 acquisition, Vainikka & Young-Scholten (1998) argued that adult L2 initial grammar (and probably child L2 initial grammar as well) projects only lexical categories, while functional categories (FCs) follow later. Eubank (1993) and Hawkins & Chan (1997) asserted that not only lexical categories but also FCs are projected from the L2 initial
state. However, not all the features of FCs are projected: for example, in the IP projection, Agr or Tense may be underspecified and in the CP projection, wh-operator movement may be missing.

1.4 Issues in second language acquisition and research

Some issues in second language acquisition research have been perennial sources of debate. They are the issue of transfer from L1 to L2, learning after the critical period, the lack of ultimate attainment, and the need for negative evidence.

1.4.1 Transfer

In language acquisition, carry-over of L1 knowledge to L2 is called language transfer. The question of what is more likely to be transferred from L1 to L2 and how the mechanism of transfer works has given rise to different linguistic models and hypotheses over the last two decades. One of the earlier hypotheses was the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Lado 1957; Stockwell, Bowen & Martin 1965) which predicted the likelihood of linguistic transfer in second language acquisition based on the similarities as well as differences between various aspects of L1 and L2. That is, similarities in linguistic structures in two languages will result in positive transfer, while differences will create an interference and negative transfer. However, the survey of the recent research on Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis fails to find significant support and therefore, its validity has been questioned by many scholars (Gass & Selinker 1983; McLaughlin 1984).
A more flexible theory underlying language transfer is a theory of markedness (Eckman, 1997; Moravcsik & Wirth 1986) which claims that those linguistic phenomena in the target language that are more marked than the corresponding phenomena in L1 will be more difficult to learn, whereas the unmarked forms will be learnt quickly. The marked features are more likely to be substituted with the corresponding structures in L1. However, it is often difficult to apply this theory cross-linguistically, since there is no clear syntactic mechanism to determine markedness.

Within the UG accessibility framework, one hypothesis, the Full Transfer Full Access Hypothesis (Schwartz & Sprouse 1994, 1996; White 1989, 1990), maintains that the L1 grammar, including L1 parameter settings, constitutes the initial state of L2 acquisition (full transfer), but that L2 learners have full access to UG at all times during the acquisition process (full access), and thus that parameter resetting is usually possible. However, what aspects transfer from L1 to L2, and how a child overcomes such transfers is still a question of debate.

1.4.2 Critical Period

The idea of a critical period for language acquisition which is generally presumed to occur somewhere around or before puberty implies that after that period or age, it should be impossible for L2 learners to achieve a native-like performance in the L2. While there are a few documented cases of individuals who, apparently, have succeeded against all odds to master an L2 with a native-like proficiency, most previous studies have shown that the earlier one starts to learn a second language, the more likely one will reach a native-like pronunciation (Asher & Garcia 1969; Oyama
These latter studies are generally taken as providing support for the concept of a critical period in the field of phonology has traditionally been associated with the fact that most adults who have learned a second language (L2) after puberty remain with a noticeable 'foreign' accent. As far as perception of the language is concerned, however, there is still scarce evidence in favour of or against such a critical period.

1.4.3 Ultimate Attainment

In second language acquisition research, second language acquisition ultimate attainment refers to the outcome or end point of acquisition. Research suggests that second language learners typically do not fully master its phonology (Bialystok & Hakuta 1994; Flege 1987; Oyama 1976; Williams 1980) and morphosyntax (Johnson & Newport 1989; Newport 1990, 1991). While some explanations focus on the timing of the input, thereby suggesting a critical or sensitive period for L2 acquisition (Johnson & Newport 1989); other explanations focus instead on the quality and quantity of input, concentrating on adult-child differences in the nature and amount of L2 experience despite similar length of time immersed in an L2 environment (Burling 1981; Cochrane 1977). Still other explanations focus on motivation, affective and sociolinguistic factors, and individual differences in learning rates (for reviews, see Bialystok & Hakuta 1994; Flege 1987; Snow & Hoesnagel-Hohle 1978).

1.4.4 Need for negative evidence

An issue currently being debated in second language acquisition research is whether negative evidence (i.e. information to the learner that his or her utterance is ungrammatical) plays a positive role in the acquisition of the L2. Some researchers.
such as White (1991a; 1991b) and Carroll & Swain (1993), have argued that negative evidence has positive effects while others (Schwartz & Gubala-Ryzak 1992) are sceptical about such effects. However, it has often been found that L2 learners are good at correctly accepting grammatical sentences, while often show difficulty in rejecting ungrammatical ones, suggesting a need for negative evidence.

1.5 Research methods in second language acquisition

As a new area of research, SLA research undoubtedly borrowed most of its research techniques from first language acquisition and has continued to do so. A useful practical survey of the main L1 research techniques is provided in McDaniel et al. (1996). The techniques most obviously borrowed from L1 acquisition research are those for studying actual sentences that L2 learners produce, which we can call spontaneous naturalistic data. The L1 corpus studies by Brown (1973) and Wells (1981) recorded children's sentences over a period of years and analyzed them in terms of mostly syntactic criteria. In SLA research, the ESF project adopted a similar approach by recording large amounts of speech by immigrants to five countries and producing an account of the learners' common basic grammar and semantic stages through which they progressed (Klein & Perdue 1997).

Naturalistic data is usually scored taking into account obligatory occurrences of particular syntactic forms. And this scoring technique has continued use in SLA research from Dulay and Burt (1974) to the Competition Model (Pienemann 1998), though the definition of what constitutes an obligatory occasion for a grammatical form keeps changing with years and the models in which they are used.
Another form of data collection in SLA is getting learners to produce speech data in controlled tasks. These are often referred to as elicited production. Eliciting sentences through picture description was used by for example, Bellugi and Brown (1964) for L1 plurals and by Dulay and Burt (1974) for L2 grammatical morphemes. Various ways of getting people to talk have been used ever since. The most popular of these is requiring children to describe wordless picture stories.

A third type is the elicited imitation technique which asks children to repeat sentences; the ways in which they change the sentence are believed to reveal properties of their underlying competence. Elicited imitation has been used for second language acquisition by Cook (1973) for testing the comprehension of relative clauses, and by many others. SLA research also favours Error Analysis (EA) (Corder 1971), which looks at the differences between the learners’ speech and that of native speakers and then looks for patterns and their psycholinguistic explanations.

Other techniques like introspection data, where L2 learners are asked about their emotions, motivations and strategies, surveyed in McDonough (1981). The other grammaticality judgments, the vital technique used in generative SLA research. L2 learners are asked whether they feel that certain sentences are grammatical or not and their answers compared with those of native speakers, explicitly or implicitly as in Hawkins and Chan (1997).

Having detailed issues, theory and research methods in SLA, we now turn your attention to the area studied in this thesis: acquisition of English prepositions. The
acquisition of English prepositions is especially difficult for students learning English as a second language. The following section briefly discusses a few of the reasons prepositions cause problems for English language learners.

1.6 Second language acquisition of English prepositions

The English preposition is often defined as a word that describes the location or direction of one object in relation to another. However, prepositions are often vague and confusing and it is extremely hard for second language learners to learn the nuances of all the English prepositions, how to understand them, and how to use them. In English, prepositions are words, while in Sinhala they are represented as spatial postpositions (2a) or are suffixes (locative, ablative case) (2b) (Tilakaratne 1992).

(2) a gala udə sitinə monarə:
    gal-a udə sitinə monar-a:
    rock-the on staying peacock-the
    ‘the peacock on the rock’

(2) b dænwim puwəruwehi
    dænwim puwəruw-ə-êhi
    bulletin board-the-on
    ‘on the bulletin board’
However, these formal differences are not known to affect second language acquisition (Sudharshana 2013), and second language children are quick to figure out these differences and use language specific forms, with no transfer from L1 to L2.

What was found by Sudharshana (2013) to be difficult, however, was the different meanings of the English prepositions and the contexts in which they can be used. For instance, Sudharshana showed that Kannada learners of English do not use the English on in contexts like ‘balloon on a stick’ or ‘apple on a screwer’, for which they tend to use a verb based construction (like balloon tied to a stick and apple poked by a screwer). However, the more prototypical and salient meanings (e.g., cup on the table, hat on the head) are consistently used correctly. Also, the spatial uses of prepositions are learnt before non-spatial uses.

Moreover, the use of prepositions in context varies greatly from one language to another. The same prepositions can carry vastly different meanings in various languages. For instance, a native speaker of Spanish would have difficulties translating the preposition por into English, since it can be “expressed in English by the prepositions for, through, by, and during” (Lam 2009: 2).

Learning prepositions become more difficult because prepositions are generally polysemous, i.e. it is the characteristics of prepositions that they have multiple meanings. Learners often become frustrated when trying to determine prepositional meanings and when trying to use them appropriately (Koffi 2010:299). Tyler & Evans (2003) listed out the polysemous use of over, and showed how all meanings can be
derived from a proto-scene. Given below are a few sentences with over and the meaning in parenthesis.

(3)    a. Colombo is over the Mahaveli river (on-the-other-side-of).
    b. She will stay over the weekend in Chennai. (temporal)
    c. The sun is over the small garden. (up)
    d. Mary looked over the question paper carefully. (examining)
    e. She likes rice over bread. (preference)
    f. The film is over. (complete)
    g. Her hand baggage is over nine kilograms. (more than)

As there is a polysemy in prepositions, the second language learners get confused in producing and comprehending them.

Lam (2009) points out that prepositions can be difficult to recognize in English in speech because they typically contain very few syllables. As a result, language learners may not be able to recognize prepositions in rapid, naturally occurring speech, and often miss them unless they are necessary for the meaning of the sentence. This would mean that functional uses of preposition are less likely to be recognized.

Another difficulty comes from prepositions that conflate complex meanings into a single morpheme. Stringer (2005) has shown that traversal paths (e.g. across through) present a particular lexicalization difficulty in the early stages of acquisition. In Stringer’s study, first language children of English, Japanese and French were
found avoiding this difficulty by splitting such complex paths into sub events, as in (3), where *through* needed to be used.

(4) a. He goes in it...he comes out (split into two sub events) \( (3;3) \)

b. ...goes under the trunk (only one sub event) \( (3;9) \)

Similar difficulties were noticed for Indian second language learners by Sudharshana (2009) as well.

Three studies (Dagut & Laufer 1985; Hulstijn & Marchena 1989; Laufer & Eliasson 1993) examined learners’ avoidance of phrasal verbs in favour of their single-word synonyms. All three studies found that ESL students whose L1s do not contain phrasal verbs (for example, Hebrew language) tend to prefer single-word English verb equivalents to phrasal verbs, whereas students whose L1s have phrasal verbs, tend to use English phrasal verbs. A study by Sjoholm (1995) indicates that results in learning English phrasal verbs are related in part to their presence or absence in the learner’s native language.

1.7 The location of the present study

The acquisition research that is reported in this thesis comes from a group of Sinhala speaking learners of English from Grade 4 to Grade 10. Sinhala is the official language of Sri Lanka, which is a multicultural-multilingual country. Majority of the people speak Sinhala, where Tamil is spoken by the next largest community.
A quick look at the English education in Sri Lanka might be necessary here. The English Language was introduced to Sri Lanka by its last colonizers, the British and was immediately used as the language of administration at higher levels in early 19th century. In spite of being the official language, English never really became the language of all the people and served only a small minority. Unlike the previous colonizers, the Portuguese and the Dutch, the British took a more positive interest in improving the education system (Gamage 2011 as cited in Satharasinghe 2012).

The status of English in Sri Lanka has undergone many changes as the only official language since its introduction by British (Gunesekera 2005). Through the official language Act. 1956, Sinhala, the language of the majority was made the only official language. In July 1987, English was again given the official status, giving it equal status with Sinhala and Tamil. In November, 1987, it was officially informed to the public that English was given the status of link language, and it remains the same to date (Satharasinghe 2012).

The New Educational Reforms (NER), carried out by the Presidential Task force, on general education of the country, brought many changes in the sphere of English education. The English language was developed at all the levels of the school system and an activity based Oral English (ABOE) was introduced in order to improve oral skills for Grades 1 and 2. From Grade 3, students were introduced to formal teaching of English as a subject though the focus remained oral English. English was made a main subject for G.C.E. Ordinary Level exam in Grade 11 (Raheem & Devendra 2010). For Grade 12 and 13 a course in General English was introduced and a
question paper on general English was incorporated in G.C.E. Advanced Level examination.

In 2002, English medium Education was introduced to schools, starting with G.C.E Science classes, and it moved on to other disciplines and also the other grades from Grade 6 onwards. All the Government run schools follow the same curriculum and the syllabus for each grade, and in each grade, two English text books are used: Pupil's Book and the Work Book, published by the 'National Institute of Education' under the Ministry of Higher Education, Sri Lanka.

1.8 Conclusion

In Sinhala there are no prepositions, therefore what is transferred is generally questionable. The present study is not interested in gleaning out cases of transfer. Many of the other difficulties in prepositions are relevant since functional and non-functional prepositions often are homophonous, and they can be seen as prototypical/non prototypical and spatial and non-spatial.

The present study does not overtly compare first and second language acquisition, though indirectly it compares of our study on second language learners with Littlefield's work on first language. The focus is less on ultimate attainment and more on validating Littlefield's fine-grained categorization, thus challenging the binary dichotomy between lexical and functional prepositions. The present study tries to
understand the clausal architecture represented in the second language brain, to see if this is similar or different from first language acquisition.

The next chapter details the theory and research in lexical and functional categories with special reference to prepositions.