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The Position Of Prepositional Constructions In The Sentence In Modern English

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ABSTRACT

This article describes prepositions pose a challenge to the learners as well as teachers of English because of the uniqueness of the problem involved. The learners face difficulties in the proper usage of prepositions in sentences, and therefore, land in trouble. Besides that, each of these prepositions has various meanings and usages that make the learning process equally difficult. In English, many prepositions are used to describe both spatial and temporal relationships.

The article presents theoretical ideas in this regard and proves them with examples.

Keywords:

The category of spatial prepositions; Preposition; translation; process; polysemous; grammatical form.

Prepositions are the subtlest and a set of small words that are of a closed class in English language. They express a relation between two entities, one being that represented by the prepositional complement, the other by another part of the sentence. The prepositional complement is characteristically a noun phrase, a nominal wh-clause, or a nominal -ing clause. For instance, *The book is on the table*, *Mary is not responsible for what she did*, *Dylan read the manual before installing the system*. Prepositions do not accept new words easily, but they have notoriously polysemous behaviours in sentences. They are difficult to learn as most of them have different functions and they do not have many rules to help in choosing the right prepositions in a particular

context. They combine with other parts of speech to express new meanings, and they participate in idiomatic expressions. For instance, *He was angry at the weather and He was angry with me for failing to keep our appointment*. Sometimes, one preposition comes with the verb form, another with the adjective and still another with the noun form of the root word. For instance, *sympathize with someone*, *sympathy for someone* and *sympathetic to someone*.

The basic syntactic properties and semantic functions differ in many languages. In other languages, the prepositions occur after the complement (subject-object-verb). They are called post positions. In English language, they are usually placed before a noun or a noun

equivalent (subject-verb-object). Languages such as English, French, German, and numerous others are prepositional languages whereas Korean, Turkish, Finnish, and lots of others are postpositional languages. They often cause problems for second language learners as there are no one-to-one correspondences between English and the other languages. Besides, many prepositions have metaphorical and abstract meanings that a language learner finds difficult to learn. The task of choosing the right preposition is made even more difficult when the preposition is used together with a noun, a verb, or an adjective, especially since there are no general rules by which a preposition is assigned. For instance, She relied on Max, similar to the other one, the author of the book – the prepositions on, to, and of are determined by rely, similar and author respectively. While learning, the various meanings and meaning extensions of prepositions are perhaps the greatest challenge. A pedagogical strategy is essential for students to pay attention to the co-occurrence, collocation, and discourse behavior of prepositions. According to Lindstromberg (1998) prepositions are traditionally classified into three categories: prepositions of place, of direction (or motion or movement) and of time. These prepositions pose a challenge to the learners as well as teachers of English because of the uniqueness of the problem involved.

The learners face difficulties in the proper usage of prepositions in sentences, and therefore, land in trouble. Besides that, each of these prepositions has various meanings and usages that make the learning process equally difficult. In English, many prepositions are used to describe both spatial and temporal relationships. Both spatial and temporal functions of prepositions may pose challenges on the part of the second language learners (Kemmerer, 2005). Lindstromberg (2010) states that spatial preposition is a physical thing located in relation to another. The meaning of each preposition is spatial to describe these meanings; the trajectory (TR) and the landmark

(LM) are defined. For example, The ball is on the table. Here, the preposition on functions as a preposition of place. The phrase, *the ball* refers to a thing whose location the speaker wants to indicate. It refers to the subject of the preposition. The phrase, *the table* refers to another thing, the landmark of the preposition. The preposition locates the Subject (the ball) in relation to the Landmark (the table). The category of spatial prepositions is broadly divided into two groups: prepositions of static location and prepositions of direction. When prepositions follow verbs, they become distinct whether they describe the location or direction. For example, the preposition at is used to represent a static location of an object in most cases, e.g. *John is waiting for his friend at the store*. There are cases in which at represents a direction or a destination, e.g. *The dog jumped at my face or we arrived at the park*. While the number of spatial prepositions is small, the number and variety of spatial relationships denoted by them are many. This provides an insight into the problems and challenges of the inherent ambiguity and vagueness in the usage and understanding of spatial prepositions. (Quirk et al., 1972, p. 377) says that the temporal uses of prepositions frequently suggest metaphorical extensions from the sphere of place. In fact, prepositions of time are very regular and easy to understand as compared to prepositions of place. Many prepositions are very versatile, and a lot of research has gone into ways of identifying and organizing the polysemous meanings that a preposition can have. For the most part, however, studies have focused on the meanings of spatial and temporal prepositions (e.g. Boers and Demecheleer, 1998; Brugman 1981, 1984; Cooper 1998; Hawkins 1984; Herskovits 1981, 1986; Jackendoff 1990; Jackendoff & Landau 1993; Horberg 2006; Lakoff 1987; Langacker 1987; Leech 1969; Lindstromberg 1999; Miller & Johnson-Laird 1976; Nam 1955; Talmy 1983; Tseng 2000; Tyler & Evans 2003; Vandeloise 1991).

Preposition is the first term necessary to define in the current study. For the simplicity

of how prepositions are used for this study, I limit the definition and exclude distinctions such as free prepositions and bound prepositions. Biber et al. (1999) refers to prepositions as “links which introduce prepositional phrases”; “... a preposition can be regarded as a device which connects noun phrases with other structures” (p.74). I invented a sentence that includes a preposition to confirm how the descriptions above fit this study. The sentence, A summary is included in the text, presents a simple example for explanation. The preposition in connects the noun phrase the text to form the prepositional phrase in the text. This prepositional phrase shows the reader the location of where the subject a summary performs the action (or the verb) is included. Analysis of the uses of in and on as prepositions in this study will fully illustrate the ways in which prepositions function in authentic exam

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