



Semantics and syntactics of prepositions in verbs of movement in the Russian language: problems of interpretation among students of non-linguistic universities

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the study of the semantics and syntactics of prepositions in verbs of movement in the Russian language, as well as to the analysis of typical problems of interpretation faced by students of non-linguistic universities in the process of learning Russian as a foreign language. Special attention is paid to the semantic features of prepositions that define spatial-temporal and causal relationships, as well as their interaction with verbs of movement. The relevance of the study is due to the fact that prepositions in verbs of movement represent a significant difficulty for students whose native languages have a different grammatical structure. The article examines the causes of difficulties, such as the lack of analogues in the native languages of students, the complexity of the semantic perception of prepositions and their ambiguity. In the course of the work, typical mistakes of students are analyzed, key problem areas are identified and ways to eliminate them are proposed. To study the peculiarities of the interpretation of prepositions, methods of observation, questioning and analysis of written and oral works of students were used. Methodological approaches that can be used to improve the understanding and use of prepositions in verbs of movement, including communicative and interactive exercises, are also considered. The results of the study are of practical importance for teachers of Russian as a foreign language who develop educational materials and methodological recommendations for students of non-linguistic universities. The solutions proposed in the article are aimed at improving the grammatical competence of students and overcoming interlanguage barriers, which ultimately contributes to a deeper development of the Russian language.

Keywords:

verbs of movement, prepositions, semantics, syntactics, Russian as a foreign language, non-linguistic universities, problems of interpretation.

Introduction

The study of Russian as a foreign language (RFL) is a multifaceted task that requires consideration of various linguistic and psycholinguistic factors. A significant aspect of the learning process is mastering prepositions used with verbs of motion, as they serve as a foundation for expressing spatial, temporal, and

causal relationships. The semantics and syntax of such prepositions have a complex structure and are characterized by national specificity, which creates considerable difficulties for foreign students, particularly in non-linguistic universities [5].

According to research, one of the key reasons for the challenges in studying Russian

prepositions is the interference of the students' native language. However, in the context of non-linguistic audiences, it has been observed that the influence of the native language on the interpretation of Russian prepositions often manifests implicitly. This is due to the absence of exact equivalents of Russian prepositions in the native language, their polysemy, and the differences in grammatical structures between the two languages. For instance, the Russian preposition “через” has six meanings, each requiring different translation and understanding depending on the context [6].

Furthermore, Russian prepositions often function not only as grammatical elements but also as carriers of lexical meaning. This is evident in fixed expressions such as “играть на рояле” (“play the piano”) or “играть в футбол” (“play football”), where the preposition is lexically bound to the verb. These features require students not only to learn the rules but also to memorize numerous collocations, which complicates the learning process [8].

Differences in systems of governance between Russian and native languages also play a significant role. In Russian, the choice of preposition and case is often determined by lexical and grammatical relationships, which can be challenging for non-philology students to grasp without additional explanations [9]. For example, the combinations “готовиться к экзамену” (“prepare for an exam”) and “подготовка к экзамену” (“preparation for an exam”) use the same preposition and case. However, in other cases, such as “благодарить учителя” (“thank the teacher”) and “благодарность учителю” (“gratitude to the teacher”), variations occur. This requires a high level of linguistic analysis and the ability to perceive the system of governance as a cohesive phenomenon.

Another critical issue is the national traditions in linguistic didactics, which influence the perception and assimilation of the material. Students from national groups accustomed to learning grammar through an analytical approach may struggle to adapt to the Russian grammatical system, which demands in-depth theoretical analysis and a systematic approach [15]. For instance, the need to agree

words in gender, number, and case requires students to activate cognitive processes and develop a new type of speech planning.

The goal of this study is to identify the features of the semantics and syntax of prepositions with verbs of motion in Russian and analyze the problems encountered by students in non-linguistic universities while studying them. The primary focus will be on national audiences as a group demonstrating unique difficulties related to cross-linguistic interference and systemic differences between languages. To achieve this goal, the study aims to examine common student errors caused by native language interference, analyze teaching materials and methods, and propose recommendations for their improvement. It is expected that the results of the research will be beneficial for RFL instructors and methodologists developing curricula for students in non-linguistic specialties. Thus, the topic of the semantics and syntax of prepositions with verbs of motion represents a relevant area in the field of RFL, requiring further exploration and the development of effective teaching methods.

Literature Review

The semantics and syntax of prepositions with verbs of motion in the Russian language represent one of the most complex and relevant topics in teaching Russian as a foreign language (RFL). This topic is particularly significant in the education of students at non-linguistic universities, who often struggle to master the specifics of Russian spatial prepositions. The study of this issue has been reflected in the works of Russian and foreign linguists, as well as methodologists developing approaches to RFL instruction [14].

The semantic aspects of prepositions are thoroughly discussed in the works of O.S. Akhmanova and N.D. Arutyunova. The researchers highlight the polysemy of Russian prepositions, which complicates their acquisition by foreign students. For instance, the prepositions “в” and “на” have up to ten different meanings, requiring detailed explanations of their use depending on the context. This problem is exacerbated by the fact

that the students' native languages may lack equivalents for such prepositions or assign them entirely different semantic characteristics [1, 2].

The syntactic aspects of prepositions are examined in the works of N.Y. Shvedova and V.V. Babaytseva, who emphasize the connection between prepositions and the Russian case system. The Russian language imposes strict requirements for the agreement of prepositions with the cases of nouns, posing difficulties for students accustomed to analytical languages, where word order plays a more critical role than grammatical forms [3].

The methodological aspects of teaching Russian prepositions are explored in the works of I.A. Zimnyaya, G.V. Rogova, and A.N. Shchukin. These researchers underline the necessity of using communicative and interactive methods for teaching prepositions, particularly in combination with verbs of motion. According to Zimnyaya, incorporating situational exercises and modeling real-life communicative tasks fosters a deeper understanding of the material [11,12].

The interference of native languages in learning prepositions has been analyzed by V.N. Wagner and A.A. Leontiev. They point out the influence of the linguistic worldview of students' native languages on their perception of Russian prepositions. The issue of interference is also addressed in the works of M.V. Rozhkova, who notes that difficulties in mastering prepositions with verbs of motion are often linked to the lack of students' skills in systematically analyzing linguistic material. Teachers should consider these features when designing educational materials and introduce methods that help overcome cross-linguistic barriers [7, 10, 12].

The practical significance of teaching prepositions with verbs of motion is emphasized by L.V. Denisenko. She argues that mastering prepositions is closely tied to the development of students' speech skills and their ability to produce coherent utterances. The use of visual materials, maps, and route diagrams helps students better understand the spatial relationships expressed by prepositions [4].

An analysis of the literature reveals that the study of the semantics and syntax of prepositions with verbs of motion is interdisciplinary, encompassing linguistics, psycholinguistics, and teaching methodology. Despite the extensive range of research, the topic remains relevant, as teaching Russian prepositions requires further development of approaches that consider the specifics of students' native languages and their communicative needs [13].

Methodology

The methodology encompasses theoretical principles, approaches, and techniques that justify how and why specific methods and processes are applied in teaching. For teaching the semantics and syntax of prepositions with verbs of motion to students in non-linguistic universities, the methodology should be based on several key aspects.

Cognitive-Communicative Approach

This approach considers how students perceive and conceptualize language, focusing on developing their ability to use language in real-life communicative situations. Students learn not only the rules for using prepositions but also their semantic essence, understanding meanings, contexts, and logical connections.

Intercultural Methodology

This approach addresses linguistic and cultural differences between Russian and the students' native languages. Native language interference often leads to errors. This methodology aims to identify these problem areas and develop strategies to overcome them, for example, through language comparison.

Systemic Approach

Prepositions are studied as part of a system, where they are interconnected with cases, verbs, and vocabulary. The process is aimed at fostering students' systemic perception of the language, which is particularly important for understanding the complex grammatical relationships characteristic of Russian.

Functional Approach

This approach examines prepositions in the context of their function within a sentence, such as indicating direction, time, or cause. It helps students understand that prepositions not

only connect words but also carry significant semantic loads.

Contextualization

Teaching prepositions in real-life contexts—whether linguistic, professional, or social—enhances learning outcomes. Students are more likely to assimilate material effectively when it is connected to their professional fields or everyday lives [16, 17, 18].

Results

The teacher needs to take into account the basic level of knowledge of non-philological students and build the learning process of movement verbs with a gradual transition from simple to more complex structures, ensuring consistent assimilation of the material.

- *Make sentences with verbs:* go-walk, go or go-ride-ride according to the pattern. Sample: I: shop-university-dormitory. – I went to the store this morning. I'm going to university now. Then I'll go to the dorm.

1. Tanya: polyclinic – pharmacy – lesson.
2. It is: stadium – swimming pool – gym.
3. Parents: work – supermarket – home.
4. Students: classes – park – cafe.
5. You: post office – hostel – kiosk.
6. John: Circus – cinema – exhibition.
7. Friends: library – collection – theater.

- *Finish the sentences.* Sample: Tanya goes to work by car, and...; Tanya goes to work by car, and Ahmed goes by bus.

1. Nastya goes home by taxi, and
2. Hamza goes to the park on a bicycle, and
3. Ivan goes to the university by tram, and
4. Ibrahim goes to Voronezh by train, and
5. A student goes to the train station on a bicycle, and
6. Victor goes to the forest on a motorcycle, and
7. Masha goes home on foot, and

- *Answer the questions. Use the words given in parentheses.* Sample: Where does the

student go home from? (Dean's office) – A student goes home from the dean's office.

1. Where do the students come from? (dormitory)
2. Where are you going from tonight? (circus)
3. Where does Ivan go to the cafe from? (faculty)
4. Where did your grandmother come from in Rostov? (village) 23
5. Where will Boris go to the factory from? (house)
6. Where does the girl go home from? (kindergarten)
7. Where is Margarita coming from? (polyclinic)

- *Select the desired verb of movement from the brackets.* Sample: Sofia met her friend when (walking-walking) from the club. – Sofia met her friend on her way out of the club.

1. My friend (went-went) to Moscow on an excursion.
2. Anna and I met when (we were driving) from Moscow.
3. Yesterday Omar (walked-walked) with my friends to the museum.
4. Sergey bought bread and milk when (walking-walking) home.
5. Last year, Mohamad and Hamza (went-went) to St. Petersburg.
6. Ivan, why didn't you (go-went) to class yesterday? 7. Ahmed (rode-rode) on the tram and suddenly saw a beautiful girl.

- *Interactive task:* "Create a dialogue." Students work in pairs, where one plays the role of a person who asks for directions, and the other plays the role of a local resident who explains the route. In the dialogue, students must use at least 5 different verbs of movement with the correct prepositions, describing the route with orientation to a map or diagram. The teacher recalls the verbs of movement that can be used in dialogue, and the prepositions with which they are combined. For example: go (to, on, through, by); turn (to, in); go (through); walk (to); exit (from).

Examples of schemes for composing a dialogue using verbs of movement with prepositions:



• Creative task: "My weekend"

The teacher explains the purpose of the exercise: to learn how to correctly use prepositions with verbs of movement in describing everyday events. Examples of verbs of movement and their combinations with prepositions are recalled, for example:

Go to (park, shop, school).

Walking around (street, alley, city).

Cross over (bridge, road, square).

To leave (the city, the house).

Each student should write a text about their weekend, including 5-7 sentences. The text should be logical, contain at least 5 verbs of movement with correct prepositions. Such exercises contribute to the harmonious development of all language skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening), strengthen students' confidence in their knowledge and make the language learning process more effective and interesting.

Discussion

Semantics and syntactics of prepositions in verbs of movement in the Russian language is a difficult aspect of study for students of non-linguistic universities. Prepositions accompanying verbs of movement play a key role in the formation of spatial, temporal and causal relationships, but their ambiguity and grammatical specificity often become an obstacle to mastering. The main difficulty lies in the fact that many students interpret prepositions through the prism of their native language worldview, which may differ significantly from Russian. For example, the prepositions "from", "with" and "from" often cause confusion, especially in the context of

expressing the direction of movement ("leave the house", "take off the shelf", "leave a friend"). It is important to keep in mind that the interpretation of prepositions is not limited to their lexical meaning: they are closely related to the system of Russian cases, which requires students to master a complex grammatical structure.

Syntactic difficulties also include choosing a preposition depending on the specific verb of the movement. For example, to indicate a border crossing, the preposition "through" ("cross the road") is required, and to indicate the place of stay — "on" or "in" ("go to the market", "go to school"). Such subtleties are often overlooked in the learning process, which leads to mistakes and a decrease in students' confidence. Methodically, it is important to pay attention not only to the explanation of the rules, but also to the formation of students' skills in their application. The use of role-playing games, contextual dialogues and multimedia materials makes it possible to integrate the study of prepositions into natural speech practice. Thus, effective preposition training for verbs of movement requires a systematic approach that combines a theoretical framework with practical exercises. This allows students of non-linguistic universities to better master the Russian language and confidently apply it in communication.

Conclusion

The semantics and syntactics of prepositions in verbs of movement represent a complex and important aspect of learning Russian as a foreign language, especially for students of non-linguistic universities. The

study showed that the difficulties of mastering this topic are due to many factors, including the ambiguity of prepositions, their interaction with verbs of movement, differences in language systems and the influence of the native language of students. Despite the existing barriers, effective methodological approaches can significantly increase the level of Russian language proficiency among students of this category.

One of the key conclusions is the importance of taking into account the level of knowledge of students at the initial stages of education. The transition from simple designs to more complex ones contributes to the gradual and conscious assimilation of the material. Special attention should be paid to creating a solid base, including an understanding of the basic semantic functions of prepositions, their combinations with verbs of movement and their connection with the case system. In the process of teaching movement prepositions, it is methodically justified to use an intercultural approach. A comparative analysis of the grammatical features of the native and the studied languages helps to identify areas of possible interference and develop strategies to overcome them. Such techniques help to minimize the impact of language differences and strengthen the skills of competent use of prepositions in various contexts.

Creative and interactive exercises, such as writing texts, dialogues, working with routes and maps, play a significant role in shaping the skills of using prepositions in real speech. They not only help students to master grammatical constructions, but also stimulate the development of communicative competence. The inclusion of multimedia materials and digital tools in the educational process makes classes more interesting and effective, increasing students' motivation. The results of the study emphasize the importance of a systematic approach to learning, where theory is harmoniously combined with practice.

Teachers should pay attention not only to explaining the rules, but also to creating conditions in which students can actively use prepositions for verbs of movement. This technique helps to strengthen students'

confidence in their language abilities and increase their readiness to use the language in real life situations. Prospects for further research in this area include the development of specialized teaching aids and exercises focused on the national characteristics of the audience. This can help in creating more accurate and effective approaches to teaching Russian as a foreign language. Thus, teaching prepositions with verbs of movement is not only an important, but also a promising area of teaching Russian as a foreign language. The integration of theoretical knowledge with practical tasks and taking into account the characteristics of students of non-linguistic universities allow them to form stable language skills necessary for successful mastering of the Russian language.

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