

An Investigation into Factors Affecting the Use of English Prepositions by Vietnamese Learners of English

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Abstract

English prepositions play a significant role in helping students form a well-structured sentence in their learning and communicating. To help Vietnamese learners of English acquire their competence, the authors have done survey research to investigate the factors affecting the uses of English prepositions made by Vietnamese learners of English. The population included 200 female and 200 male participants. A total of 400 answers on the questions provided in the 100-question questionnaire were used for hypothesis testing. The items in the survey were given different weights, and the total attainable marks were 100. The results showed that Vietnamese intra-lingual interference strongly affected prepositional sense expressed by Vietnamese EFL learners. Genders, level of learning (low, intermediate, and advanced), writing and speaking, and cognitive embodiment also played a significant role in terms of language transfer, affecting the usage of English prepositions by EFL learners.

Keywords: Language transfer, L1 influence, cognitive linguistics, English prepositions, non-linguistic factors

1. Introduction

English prepositions cause many difficulties for learners of English (Saravanan, 2014; Sultan, 2014; Özbay & Bozkurt, 2017; Heydari & Bagheri, 2012; Sudhakaran, 2015; AlQbailat, Al-Momani, & Almahameed, 2016) or they are even considered the most challenging factor in learning this language (Gvarishvil, 2012). The difficulties Vietnamese learners of English face when using English prepositions arise from the differences in Vietnamese and English prepositional system. In English, prepositions are an essential word class with 140 items and almost appear in every sentence while it is hardly defined in Vietnamese (Nguyễn Hoàng Phương, 2010).

Traditional Vietnamese grammarians tend to synchronize Vietnamese prepositions with conjunctions into conjunctions because both Vietnamese conjunctions and Prepositions are used to connect sentence elements. The only difference is inferred that conjunctions are used to connect clause levels, but prepositions for words or phrases. Therefore, the idea of the combination of two kinds of Vietnamese word class is not actively supported. However, the existence of Vietnamese prepositions and their functions is recorded and further studied. Vietnamese prepositions are classified recognized by two kinds: original prepositions, e.g., *tại, bởi, vì, của, etc.* and derivational prepositions (from nouns, e.g., *trong, ngoài, đầu, cuối, bên, cạnh, etc.* and verbs, e.g., *ra, vào, lên, xuống, etc.*). The Vietnamese prepositional system is so complicated that Vietnamese learners of English often get confused in the use of English prepositions, e.g.: ‘*He **acrossed** the street*’ instead of ‘*He **walked** across the street.*’

Since the vast difference lies in the cognition about the surrounding world of two cultures and the languages, which are reflected and organized in the human perception, Vietnamese people tend to transfer some of their cognition from their language, culture, and human experience to the target language. That is why a careful investigation of factors affecting the use of English prepositions is urgent and necessary for language educators.

2. Literature Review

The conception of mapping second language words with existing meaning in the first language has been acknowledged to be affected by the ecology and social context of an individual for time (Zhang & Liu, 2013). The aspect is considered as a positive component in understanding and comprehending the target language. For example, it is easier for adults to learn new language compared to children because they do not need to acquire many concepts

but new verbal symbols that represent these ideas (Rączaszek-Leonardi, Nomikou, & Deacon, 2018). A guided context during language learning offers learners an opportunity to learn the differences between concepts and words at the level of explicit knowledge. However, it does not necessarily lead to the implicit or automatic change process in the suggested conceptual level. In regards to the socio-ecological model, adults learn a new language easily because they are more exposed compared to toddlers or teenagers. The new language helps them to gain knowledge to map prevailing concepts obtained through the use of the first language. Given that teaching target language has explicit nature, an individual must consider the level at which the explicit teaching will influence the conceptual streamlining.

Cognitive studies of transfer are entirely new to linguistics recently. Not many researchers have carried on that line of business because it was complicated and intense. Only some of the studies focus on the major lexical categories (Giang & Khuong, 2014; Borovsky & Elman, 2006; Netra, 2016), L2 word order processing (Erdocia & Laka, 2018; Lee, Lu, & Garnsey, 2013; McDonald, 2008; Cat, Klepousniotou, & Baayen, 2015), language skills (Tare & Gelman, 2010; Burchinal, et al., 2000), teaching grammar (Rafliis & Lase, 2018; Tian, 2015; Kermer, 2016), but not for a minor lexical group of words such as prepositions or particles. Few cognitive analyses of preposition have been studied so far; However, the field of these researches are mainly focused on language teaching (Wijaya & Ong, 2018; Hung, Vien, & Vu, 2018). That is why the research gap for conceptual transfer is open up at present.

Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008) have developed a conceptual framework for detecting language transfer, also called Cross-linguistic Influence (CLI), concerning factors in its processes and conditions (p. 175). The first category involves linguistic and psycholinguistic factors. The second category mainly mentions the mental, attentional, and developmental factors that link to the cognitive maturity, universal process of SLA, learning attitudes, and attention to the language. The third category related to age, the intensity of language exposure, residence time, language proficiency, and the number and order of acquired languages. The fourth category is all kinds of factors from the language learning environment, and the fifth and last category is related to the language use factors.

After examining and studying several concepts regarding conceptual transfer on CLI, it was appropriate to develop an improved conceptual framework emphasizing on the social-ecological model and biopsychosocial model. The proposed framework embodies the multifaceted interactions that involve mutual repercussions between biological, social, and psychological constructs of the conceptual transfer. The framework suggests that nonlinguistic factors concerning language transfer act as both barriers and facilitators to support psychological, biological, and social effects on an individual's ability to learn a target language. Additionally, the constituents of the framework do have a unidirectional cause-consequence temporality. These aspects have causality systems and processes that influence one another over time and space in an interconnected way.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

This paper aims to examine the English preposition mastery of Vietnamese native speakers. The data are collected from 400 participants from secondary students to adult learners in Vietnam. The participants' ages are above 11. Most of the participants who are spending their academic life in schools or universities must learn English at one of the compulsory subjects at school. English is taught in schools as a school year exit for the next levels in their 9th and 12th grades. The research divided the total of the sample (400 participants, *more significant than the minimum must-have number of 385*) into four small groups for conducting a study such as secondary, high school, college, and graduate levels with the balance in a quantity of 100. Below are demonstrations for each of the groups.

Table 1. Sample sizes according to graduates

Graduates	Sample size	Jobs
Under 30	25	Multidisciplinary
Under 40	25	Multidisciplinary
Under 50	25	Multidisciplinary
Under 60	25	Multidisciplinary
Total	100	

Table 2. Sample sizes according to universities

University	Sample size	Major
<i>Ho Chi Minh City University of Food Industry</i>	25	Multidisciplinary
<i>Da Lat University</i>	15	Social Science
<i>The University of Da Nang – University of Foreign Language Studies</i>	15	English Major
<i>Ha Noi University</i>	15	Chinese major
<i>Can Tho University</i>	10	French Major
<i>Others</i>	20	Multidisciplinary
Total	100	

Table 3. Sample sizes according to high schools

Highschool	Sample size	Grades
<i>Public</i>	50	10 – 11-12
<i>Private</i>	30	10 – 11-12
<i>International</i>	15	10 – 11-12
<i>Study abroad</i>	5	10 – 11-12
Total	100	

Table 4. Sample sizes according to secondary schools

Secondary	Sample size	Grades
<i>Public</i>	50	6-7-8-9
<i>Private</i>	30	6-7-8-9
<i>International</i>	20	6-7-8-9
Total	100	

Table 5. Summary of Survey Participants

Variable	Observations	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Female	200	10.000	96.000	50.547	18.526
Male	200	10.000	96.000	48.622	22.109

The participants' data are separated into different categories aiming at investigating factors that may affect to CLI on the use of English prepositions by Vietnamese learners of English.

3.2 Instrumentation

The questionnaire consists of four parts. The first part is designed to collect all data related to social and psychological factors, language intensity, age, residence time, the number of acquired languages. The second part is a multiple-choice test with the most common English prepositions employed to investigate linguistic factors. The third part is writing with guided words and pictures task to investigate Vietnamese learners of English competence in language use. The last part is the cloze-test to measure the participants' English proficiency in using English proficiency. All tests are administered in one paper test and graded with 100 points. (See the Appendix)

3.3 Materials

The materials used in the research are the exercises of 10 units (from unit 13 to unit 22) in Part II of the book entitled *English Pronouns and Prepositions* (Swick, 2011). Prepositions are chosen for the research because they are sometimes underestimated and thought to be straightforward ones. The number of questions is randomly selected from the book with an equivalent amount. (See appendix).

3.4 Statistical Coding

The deletion of English prepositions was used to assess their overall semantic accuracy and capability to fill in the blanks appropriately in this test. In the first test, the correct answers were coded with digit "0" and incorrect answers with the digit "1-3" in order to analyze the frequency of correct and incorrect of the reach of questions. The coding was marked from 0 to 3, based on the proximity to the correct answer, which was coded 0. The second and fourth tests were designed to asked participants to describe the place or spatial relation of an item with the other things in the text with the help of the pictures. There were five pictures in total. The questions were given different weights, and the total attainable marks were 100 marks.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Relationship between Vietnamese Intra-Lingual Interference and Prepositional Senses Expressed by Vietnamese EFL Learners

The study put up the hypothesis that Vietnamese intra-lingual diversity does not relate to prepositional senses shown by Vietnamese EFL learners. Based on the scores obtained from the test questions on the questionnaire, the data were obtained and analyzed using statistical techniques and compared against the score they scored in the multiple-choice test. The marks were ranked from 0 to 100, according to the way they performed in the multiple-choice test.

From the results obtained, it shows that the mean score of the participants, Vietnamese learners of English, whose English is their second or foreign language, had the lowest with a mean of 56/100 in comparison with other groups whose numbers of acquired languages are more than two. The high standard deviation of 126 about mean meant that there was a massive difference amongst the EFL learners.

Basing on the mean values, it reveals that learners who only study English as their foreign language had difficulties in using English prepositions. This result meant that the Vietnamese Intra-lingual effect has a negative influence on the use of English prepositions.

The outcome, these calculations revealed that intra-lingual diversity had a significant factor in influencing the use of prepositions. It could be noticed that the value of p 0.000183 to be a smaller figure than 0.05. This result infers that there exists a significant effect of Vietnamese intra-language interference on the use of prepositions.

Table 6. Summary of the ANOVA test on different groups of learners

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	10171.89	2	5085.944	8.794455	0.000183	3.01851
Within Groups	229011.8	396	578.3126			
Total	239183.7	398				

It is evident and essential that in Vietnam, oral and written modalities of their language are a crucial part of social and communication interaction. At homesteads, written and verbal communication are essential, even to a point where young ones are traditionally taught to listen, read, and write their Vietnamese language. In schools, churches, and even public domain activities, it mainly involves people interacting and communicating extensively in Vietnamese. The Vietnamese practice context gives the use of the English prepositions by EFL learners no chance to use them. It seems possible only in the classwork domain that the use of English prepositions is emphasized and reinforced. At this point, there will always exist a conflict between English prepositions, structure, pronunciation, and even spelling to those who only English as their foreign language in comparison with the participants who have more than one acquired language. Still, the difference is very slightly (coefficient range 0.78- 0.87). Hence, it can be concluded that some of the participants of the survey have a greater ability in the use of English prepositions (those with at least two foreign languages) while Vietnamese learners of English as their second language only perform with the lower scores. Therefore, there is evidence to show that intra-lingual diversity has a significant effect on the use of English prepositions by Vietnamese EFL learners.

4.2 Gender Difference in Terms of Negative Transfer when Acquiring English Prepositions

To test if there exists no significant difference between genders in the use of the prepositions, data on the participants' final score against their respective gender was tabulated. This data were manipulated later with a Chi-Square test. The result from the survey was used to test the hypothesis that gender does not take part in shaping a person's command of the use of English prepositions. Table 5 shows how 200 females and 200 males performed in the use of

English prepositions. Considering the mean value obtained of 50.547 for females and 48.622 for males, and the standard deviation value of 84.7 show that there is a slight difference between the two genders, with the difference pointing in one direction, implicating that female had better use of English prepositions than male students had. This finding is also evident from the questions 31, 48, 57, 68, and 72 in the test, where the differences between the female and male performance in the use of English prepositions are noticeable easily. Because most males never attempted these questions, they have difficulties with questions consisting of complex English prepositions. 67% of male participants failed these questions compared to their female counterparts. Furthermore, the results from the Chi-square test revealed that it is of significance statistically the effect of gender on prepositions choice by Vietnamese EFL learners, as p (0.00062) was less than 0.005 (See Table 7). There exists a difference between male and female performances in the use of English prepositions that do not express themselves enough to be noticed. An explanation that can be given to support this argument is that female students like to express themselves, verbally better than male students. That gives them more exposure to the use of prepositions more often. Female sex tends to use oral learning strategies and social orientation effectively more than males in learning English. The results on the speaking test (interviews) showed that 60% of female participants performed well while male students managed a score of 49%. Generally, from this study, it can be reported that gender plays a significant role in shaping the use of English prepositions by Vietnamese EFL learners.

Table 7. Summary of Chi-square test on Gender Grade Distributions.

Chi-square (Observed value)	48.698
Chi-square (Critical value)	49.802
DF	35
p-value	0.0062
Alpha	0.05

As the computed p-value is smaller than the significance level $\alpha=0.05$, one rejects the null hypothesis H_0 .

The results also show that Questions 1-60 were easy questions, while 61-100 were assumed to be problematic questions. From the variance calculated is shows a wide spread of answers given by the participants on the question. The variance range is large (19.16-24.167), meaning the answers given by participants were far from the correct choice.

4.3 The Tendency of Vietnamese Learners to Use Simple Preposition Rather Than Complex Preposition

In order to determine the ability of Vietnamese learner's proficiency to comprehend and use simple or complex prepositions, a multiple-choice test was used as a tool to assess the EFL learner's knowledge of their specific structure. Besides, the prepositions in the questionnaire test were based on their frequency they appeared in the Vietnamese education system textbooks. The test included 14 simple questions and 20 complex prepositions. (See table 9). A demonstration in Table 8 shows that the college participants (55.68) performed better than graduate participants (39.87) on the study test did. Furthermore, the reveals that the total mean of all answers by both college participants and graduate participants on both complex and simple prepositions was around 45. These results infer that Vietnamese learners of English have knowledge on the use of English prepositions. Though a small disparity exists in the percentages between college and graduate, there is a statistically important significant disparity between the two groups data in terms of using the English prepositions. The statistical significance (0.0123) is smaller than 0.05 (see Table 10). This reveals that the use of English prepositions by Vietnamese EFL learner's proficiency level plays a crucial role in the understanding of simple and complex prepositions. Tables 4 and 6 show a detailed statistical description of the results. It comprehensively reveals the percentage of false answers on each case on the test (simple and complex prepositions). Considering the performance of both college participants and graduate participants concerning the simple prepositions of one word, it is evident that more than 42.43 (Mean) of the simple prepositions and 52.45 (Mean) are problematic to the EFL learners. The higher portion of incorrect answers for complex prepositions questions in the survey is also consent between college participants (49.65% and 55.68%) and graduates (36.00% and 19.87%). A look at what type of questions were attempted, and those performed well in other questions of the survey was done. There was a tendency of most participants not to attempt questions that seemed hard, and the high variance calculated below could reveal that most had their answers far from the correct choice. This survey shows that Vietnamese EFL learners in this survey have difficulties in their use of complex English prepositions (with more than two-word prepositions).

Table 8. Results of incorrect answers for Simple Prepositions and Complex Prepositions

	College	Graduate	Means of total answers (%)
Simple preposition	49.65	36.00	42.43
Complex preposition	55.68	39.87	52.45
Mean for total answer	53.4	41.54	45.65

Table 9. Table showing compound and Simple Prepositions in the Test

Simple prepositions	Complex prepositions
1. In	1. according to
2. Until	2. in reference to
3. With	3. ahead of
4. After	4. in regard to
5. Before	5. apart from
6. Since	6. in spite of
7. Up	7. because of
8. Over	8. instead of
9. Within	9. by means of
10. Throughout	10. on account of
11. Off	11. by way of
12. For	12. out of
13. At	13. in back of
14. On	14. up to
	15. in front of
	16. with respect to
	17. in exchange for
	18. as far as
	19. as well as
	20. as a result of

Table 10. Table Showing T-Test of Variation between Diploma and Bachelor Students

	N	M	SD	T	Df	Sig
Proficiency level (Complex prepositions)						
College degree students	400	1.61	0.253	-2.675	624	0.01
Graduate degree students	400	1.25	0.154	-2.7543	624	0.01
Proficiency level (Simple prepositions)						
College degree students	400	1.67	0.243	-3.653	624	0.01
Graduate degree students	400	1.47	0.29	-2.6443	624	0.01

4.5 Difference Among Low, Intermediate, and Advanced Levels of EFL Learners in Terms of Negative Transfer Impacting on a Specific Preposition Usage

To evaluate the relationship between levels of learning and the use of prepositions, the analysis variants to investigate this was the individual respondent's total scores with the variation of their level of learning. A Chi-Square test was also used here to evaluate the effect. The outcome from the study was to test the hypothesis that no significant difference exists amongst the low, advanced, and intermediate levels of EFL students in the context of transfers that affect the use of English prepositions. The data were separated to examine the performance of 50 low-level

(secondary and high school), 50 intermediate-level (college) and 50 advanced-level (post-graduate) learners to prepositional use in the study. The results obtained reveal an important and very significant negative relationship between the EFL learners who participated in the survey level of learning and their performance in the questionnaire test given. It was indicated that the participants who sailed from the low level of classes attained higher scores than those from senior classes. These results found here were considered very strange, as the ‘critical period’ hypothesis cannot justify this outcome because students in this survey started learning English (using prepositions) at the low-level classes. Therefore, participants from the senior level of education should be scoring higher total scores than low-level learners. This necessitates perhaps one to explore into the context of the use of English prepositions critically in order to give relevance to these results from the study. To explain this, students from the lower levels of education had more time learning; reciting and exposure were the daily use of the English prepositions in the Vietnamese education system, at least under the instructions of the teachers. They were better off than their senior counterparts who did not get the pressure to use English prepositions. The factor of exposure and practice played a crucial role here more. The level of learning here reveals that it is not simply the time or number of classes one spends in English. Generally, this meant that the participants from lower-level classes were more able students than those from senior classes. This result explains why low-level learners had managed higher scores than those of intermediate and advanced levels. One can only conclude that way basing on the total group score mean, but an evaluation of the data using the Chi-test determines the significance.

Table 11. Total Score Level of Learning Distribution of independence between levels of learning (low, intermediate and advanced)

Chi-square (Observed value)	47.698
Chi-square (Critical value)	48.802
DF	35
p-value	0.00472
Alpha	0.05

Table 11 illustrates that the p-value is 0.00047, which is smaller than 0.005. This result infers that the level of learning amongst Vietnamese EFL learners has a significant effect on the use of English prepositions. The table 11 shows the distribution between levels of learning and scores in the Chi-Square test. From the descriptive test also, it is noticeable that more of the low-level participants attempted the descriptive analysis, which is 56 participants, compared to a score of 34 for advanced and 26 for intermediate levels of learning.

4.6 Cognitive Embodiment and the Difference among Regions in Terms of Language Transfer Affecting the Usage of Specific Preposition

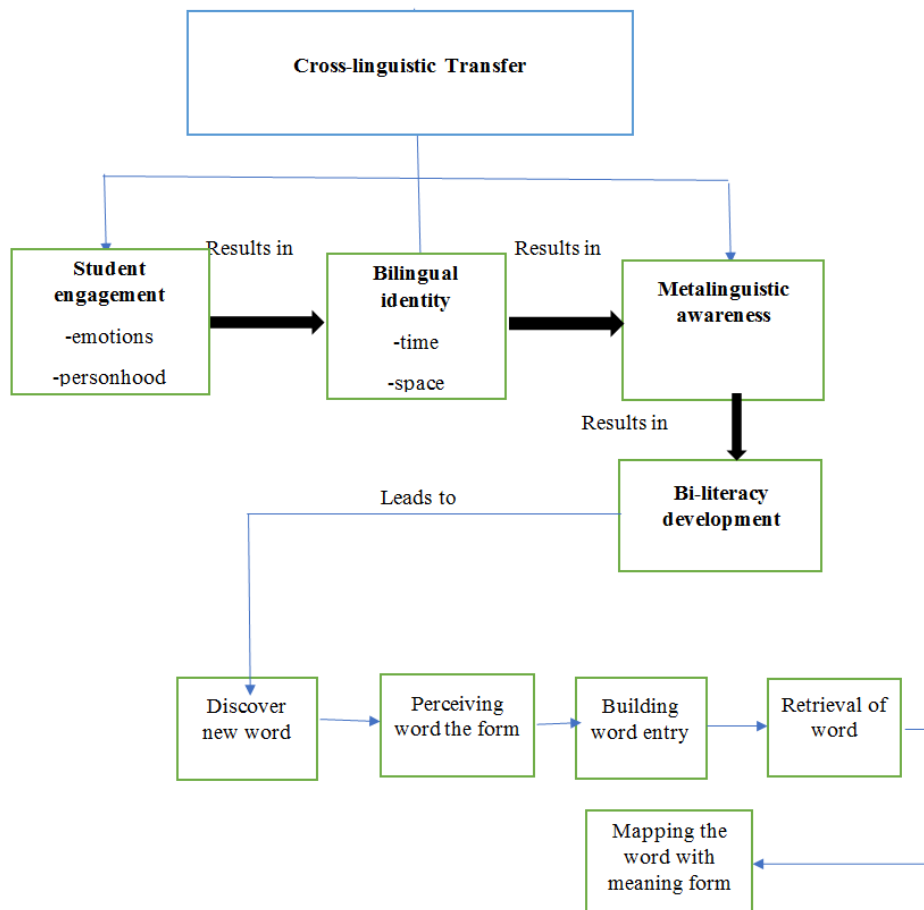
Participants were asked to describe some pictures drawn on the questionnaire paper briefly. This was to test the interference of using local prepositions by the participants. The Vietnamese learners could only handle around ten common simple prepositions, which accounts for nearly 25% of the total 45 English spatial prepositions. Thus, it could be noticed that there existed a tendency of participants to be dictated by cognitive embodiment on how or what prepositions to use. Most of the participants were concerned about the world they could see but not the unseen. The most commonly used preposition was ‘on’ with a frequency of 330 and ‘in’ with 256 in their descriptive essay. Some of the prepositions like “outside, along, through” and “against” were used once. Most of the participants focused much on the ‘surface’ and simple phrases. They did not know geometric factors that could make them use complex prepositions like “behind,” “next to” and even “beyond.” The EFL learners regarded that something described is already on or either in the picture drawn. They were never worried about the gaps in which it could be similar to in the same picture.

These three sentences were removed from part 5 of the questionnaire with the mistakes in using the prepositions due to the negative transfers from their native mother languages. It can be revealed that sentences formulated above were negatively interchanged from their native Vietnamese mother tongue dialect, structures, and semiotics when they were told to write. The cause of this effect is that it is from two unrelated cultures in identifying their intelligent embodiment. Generally, Vietnamese persons usually establish themselves as a central point to test some of the things in the universe. They judged objects without their relationship to a position. Prepositions like “on” with fundamental space meaning of to have contact with the surface was lost during the entire action of transferring words from their native languages. If could be assumed “on” the lady as in sentence 2 above, the bulb would have been having contact on the lady’s head or at least one of her body parts, and it could be said ‘the bulb’ is on the ceiling then they would be

no bulb in the room. This supports the hypothesis that prepositions “over” and “up” that imply sight are mostly used than the prepositions like “beneath” and “below” that lack sight. This is because they are the first to interact with and are easier to remember. In addition, the negative impact of the first language affected those EFL learners who could not identify the positional meaning of the preposition, for example “below” and “in”. Because the Vietnamese EFL learners start to interact with English prepositions at school with all the background community experiences, there is likely to be a tendency that competency and development in the use of English prepositions will definitely be affected.

5. Conclusion

The paper was to investigate the factors that may affect the use of English prepositions by Vietnamese native speakers. It is essential that six findings from the study contribute some facets to the fields of CLI under the cognitive perspective. From this study, it shows that that Vietnamese intra-lingual interference negatively contributes to prepositional sense expressed by Vietnamese EFL learners. Furthermore, it explains that genders, level of learning (low, intermediate, and advanced), writing and speaking, and cognitive embodiment play a significant role in terms of language transfer, affecting the usage of English prepositions by EFL learners. Also, this study revealed that Vietnamese transfer negatively influences the acquisition and use of English prepositions and has difficulties in using both simple and complex prepositions. For further research in the future, authors suggest the framework for analyzing the conceptual transfer as follow:



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APPENDIX

Survey Question for investigating English prepositions uses

I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Full name:.....
2. Your age:
3. Your gender: a. female b. male c.-
4. Your hometown:
5. Your religion:
6. Your favourite colours: a. red b. yellow c. white d. green e. blue
f. orange g. black h. purple i. pink j. brown k. grey
7. How long do you spend reading books? a. hardly b. seldom c. 1-2 hours d. 3-4 hours e. > 4 hours
8. How do you spend your free time?
 - a. playing games, surfing Facebook, Zalo, reading news, etc. on mobile
 - b. spending time reading books
 - c. spending time with family and local community
 - d. playing sports and outdoor activities
 - e. others
9. Your background education
 - a. Secondary School qualification
 - b. High school qualification
 - c. Vocational qualification
 - d. College qualification
 - e. High education qualification
10. When did you start to learn English?
 - a. Since primary school
 - b. Since secondary school
 - c. Since high school
 - d. Since college or university
 - e. others
11. Besides Vietnamese and English, which language can you speak and write well?

Choose the correct answer for each of the questions.

I. Prepositions That Indicate Location

1. A tiny rabbit was hiding _____ a bush.
A. on B. with C. to D. under
2. Please don't sit _____ me.
A. at B. next to C. over D. among
3. We saw several baby birds _____ a nest in that tree.
A. at B. behind C. in D. between
4. There was nothing _____ the plane but empty space.
A. with B. below C. to D. among
5. Father stays _____ the factory until 5:00 P.M.
A. on B. under C. above D. at
6. An angry man stood directly _____ us.
A. at B. over C. with D. in the middle of
7. John stayed _____ me the entire time.
A. beside B. among C. in D. between
8. I saw Maria _____ the many people at the party.
A. under B. in back of C. above D. among
9. There was a huge bug sitting _____ my bed!
A. at B. with C. on D. between
10. I saw a stranger crouching _____ my car and the truck.
A. at B. above C. with D. between

II. Prepositions That Indicate Movement or Direction

11. The children ran _____ the gate.
A. toward B. at C. in D. with
12. The young couple strolled _____ the beach.
A. out of B. along C. into D. above
13. The ball rolled _____ the table.
A. at B. off C. in D. between
14. Is Thomas already _____ work?
A. at B. in C. to D. on
15. I was hurrying _____ my desk.
A. at B. on C. to D. in
16. Someone came running _____ the room.
A. onto B. into C. above D. off
17. We slowly drove _____ their house.
A. off B. on C. at D. by
18. Ms. Brown came _____ England last year.
A. toward B. at C. onward D. from

19. The poor girl fell _____ bed.
 A. out of B. onto C. under D. by
20. I dropped the tools _____ the box.
 A. onward B. into C. off D. from

III. Prepositions That Indicate Time

21. They left the theater _____ the end of the film.
 A. on B. to C. before D. until
22. I should be home _____ ten o'clock.
 A. on B. during C. by D. for
23. She only works _____ nine to three.
 A. from B. during C. at D. for
24. We always have a picnic _____ the Fourth of July.
 A. in B. to C. on D. from
25. Do you always eat lunch _____ noon?
 A. on B. for C. since D. at
26. Bill has been sad _____ his fortieth birthday.
 A. since B. to C. at D. for
27. Aunt Jane came to town _____ Carmen's big party.
 A. to B. for C. in D. on
28. We do a lot of shopping _____ the holiday season.
 A. to B. during C. by D. on
29. It's coldest here from December _____ February.
 A. to B. on C. at D. in
30. I'm afraid that we'll have to wait _____ tomorrow.
 A. until B. at C. since D. to

IV. Compound Prepositions

31. Some men stood _____ the store.
 A. out of B. instead of C. in front of D. up to
32. _____ the forecast, it's going to rain today.
 A. Out of B. According to C. By means of D. Instead of
33. _____ his remark, I just said, "Shame."
 A. In reference to B. Ahead of C. Instead of D. By way of
34. We stayed home _____ the power outage.
 A. out of B. by way of C. because of D. in regard to
35. Do you still live _____ the shop?
 A. with respect to B. by way of C. in back of D. in regard to
36. There _____ us stood a large bison.
 A. by way of B. because of C. ahead of D. on account of
37. He quickly drove _____ the driveway.

- A. by means of B. because of C. out of D. apart from
38. I was too nervous to walk _____ the president.
A. with respect to B. in regard to C. by way of D. up to
39. It happened _____ your carelessness!
A. with respect to B. on account of C. instead of D. by means of
40. She can't comment _____ that matter.
A. according to B. by means of C. up to D. in regard to

V. Prepositions That Combine with Other Words

41. The strange woman was an _____ agent.
A. upheaval B. bygone C. downstairs D. undercover
42. The newly elected governor is a(n) _____ person.
A. downstairs B. upstanding C. ingrown D. bygone
43. She _____ her voice with the anger she felt.
A. intoned B. upset C. underwent D. ingrown
44. They decided to go _____ for dinner.
A. uptown B. ingrown C. by and large D. uphill
45. Did you follow our club's _____?
A. bylaws B. outlook C. bylaws D. insight
46. Her views just aren't _____.
A. uphill B. up-to-date C. down-and-out D. underage
47. The hikers followed the creek _____.
A. up-country B. downstairs C. by and by D. up-country
48. The old man didn't want to _____ his wife.
A. outline B. outlive C. outlook D. up-country
49. My aunt _____ a serious operation last year.
A. up-country B. upheld C. underwent D. installed
50. His look was _____ and his face quite sad.
A. downcast B. bygone C. upstanding D. outlook

VI. Words That Require a Specific Preposition

51. I began to beg my father _____ more money.
A. for B. off C. about D. of
52. She was being followed _____ a strange man.
A. to B. on C. for D. by
53. Juanita also _____ to our club now.
A. wishes B. gives C. depends D. belongs
54. Don't you want to _____ for a little help?
A. care B. wish C. watch D. ask
55. I never stop worrying _____ my daughter.
A. of B. about C. for D. to

56. I really care _____ her. I'm in love.
 A. for B. to C. by D. at
57. Tom has absolutely no interest _____ jazz.
 A. in B. for C. at D. to
58. It's difficult for them to forget _____ the war.
 A. on B. of C. up D. about
59. I know I can _____ on your honesty.
 A. hope B. rely C. plead D. stay
60. I _____ for a good night's sleep.
 A. dream B. walk C. long D. plead

VII. Prepositions and Phrasal Verbs

61. It's cold. The heat _____ probably off.
 A. is B. on C. are D. ask
62. If you ask _____, you'll get his address.
 A. out B. around C. with D. to
63. The old woman was _____ something again.
 A. up to B. onto C. about D. into
64. She was too timid to _____ Juan out.
 A. look B. be C. ask D. out of
65. The scientist knew she was _____ something.
 A. in B. onto C. out of D. up
66. My lawyer won't be _____ until noon.
 A. off B. out of sight C. on D. in
67. Your parents are so up-to-date and _____.
 A. with it B. around C. onto something D. in it
68. Why was the TV _____ all night?
 A. up to something B. to C. on D. out
69. The detective believed she was up _____.
 A. and around B. with it C. off D. to no good
70. He wants to take a shower, but the water is _____ again.
 A. on B. onto C. off D. to


VIII. Phrasal Verbs as Participles


71. Jim came through _____ me again.
 A. on B. up C. with D. for
72. Let's get on _____ the meeting.
 A. at B. with C. back D. to
73. The drowsy woman came _____ very slowly.
 A. at B. onto C. up with D. to
74. The children came _____ a little cottage in the woods.

- A. upon B. at C. off D. off
75. I work all afternoon. I get _____ 5:00 P.M.
- A. off at B. C. back at D. into it
76. Ms. Brown _____ with a wonderful slogan.
- A. comes to B. came at C. came up D. has come upon
77. Hurry! You're _____ behind in your work.
- A. getting B. got C. pushing D. coming
78. How can I get _____ this deal?
- A. back up B. behind in C. in on D. on with
79. The two boys got _____ after school.
- A. up with B. into it C. back at D. on with
80. She got _____ us for gossiping.
- A. up with B. on with C. on with D. back at


IX. Cloze-Test

Read the following story and fill in each gap with the most suitable preposition in the box.

Let me tell you how to go (81) _____ your house (82) _____ the castle. You ride  (83) _____ the MA

163 (84) _____ Wildstone for about 12 km. Go (85) _____ the town  until you get (86) _____ the

 school. Then turn right . Go (87) _____ the church  , you come to a

roundabout  ride on in the direction of Greenhurst. Keep straight on till a crossroads. Go (88)

_____ the lights  Ride (89) _____ the road  for another 5 km (90) _____ a



bridge

(91) _____ the river, (92) _____ the forest

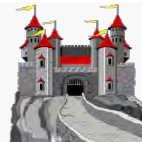


(93) _____ the



meadows

You'll see a windmill in the distance.



You'll get (94) _____ the castle very soon. You can't miss it

Remember that the show starts (95) _____

8 pm. Don't be late.

IX. Participial Prepositions

Rewrite each sentence changing the italicized preposition to a participial preposition.

Example: The group spent hours *on* this issue.

The group spent hours *considering* this issue.

96. We'll need to put in a lot of time *on* this problem.

97. I had a lot to tell *about* the crimes he had committed.

98. I wanted to speak to her *about* our future together.

99. Maria passed every test *except* the one in math.

100. The picnic will go on as planned *after* the rainstorm.

IV - Picture descriptions

Choose one the following pictures and describe it in your own words.

Picture A



Picture B



Picture C



Picture D



Picture E



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