

PROBLEM OF TEACHING ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS TO LEARNERS USING INTERACTIVE METHODS

Azizova Fotimaxon Saidbaxramovna

Doctor of philosophy on pedagogical science PhD

Uzbekistan State World Language University (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)

The department of theoretical aspects of the English language

Mustafojeva Sevinch Bahrom qizi

Bachelor's Students of Uzbekistan State World Language University (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)

Abstract

This article discusses the difficulties of teaching English prepositions, which are often challenging due to their abstract and context-based usage. The study focuses on using interactive methods such as games and group activities to improve learners' understanding. The results show that interactive approaches help students use prepositions more accurately and confidently.

Key words: prepositions, grammar, interactive methods, English language teaching, EFL learners, communicative approach, language learning, classroom activities.

INTRODUCTION

Prepositions are one of the most challenging aspects of learning English as a foreign language. Many learners confuse prepositions due to their abstract nature and multiple meanings. For instance, the prepositions in, on, and at often cause difficulties because their use depends on context, collocations, and idiomatic expressions.

The present study seeks to investigate the difficulties learners face when using English prepositions correctly. It focuses on interactive teaching methods that can help students better understand prepositions through practice and contextual examples. Research has shown that errors with prepositions are among the most common mistakes in speaking and writing for EFL learners.

By exploring preposition use in an interactive classroom environment, this study aims to improve learners' accuracy, comprehension, and confidence in using English prepositions.

Grammar is crucial because it provides learners with the rules to structure sentences correctly. Understanding grammar allows students to communicate ideas clearly and accurately in both writing and speaking. Grammar also supports reading and listening comprehension since students can recognize sentence patterns and relationships between words.

Moreover, strong grammar knowledge boosts academic success. Learners who master grammar perform better in writing tasks, exams, and presentations. It also increases their confidence when speaking or writing, as they can rely on correct structures rather than guessing.

Prepositions play an essential role in English because they indicate relationships between nouns, pronouns, and other words in sentences. Misuse of prepositions can change the meaning of a sentence entirely. For example:

I am good at swimming. vs I am good in swimming.

She is interested in music. vs She is interested on music.

Teaching prepositions helps learners:

1. Avoid grammatical errors and ambiguity.
2. Understand spatial, temporal, and logical relationships in sentences.
3. Improve fluency in speaking and writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching English prepositions has long been considered one of the most challenging aspects of language learning due to their abstract meanings and context-dependent usage. According to Scott Thornbury (1999), prepositions are particularly difficult because they rarely have direct equivalents in learners' native languages, requiring deeper conceptual understanding rather than simple memorization. This suggests that traditional teaching methods may not be sufficient for effective learning.

Similarly, Jeremy Harmer (2007) highlights the importance of interactive teaching methods such as group work, discussions, and communicative activities. He argues that students learn more effectively when they actively use language in meaningful contexts. This is especially relevant for prepositions, as their correct usage often depends on real-life communication.

In addition, Penny Ur (2012) emphasizes that interactive techniques like games, role-plays, and task-based activities enhance student motivation and participation. She notes that such activities help learners internalize grammatical structures, including prepositions, more naturally and effectively.

From a theoretical perspective, Rod Ellis (2003) states that language acquisition improves when learners are actively involved in the learning process. Interactive methods allow students to notice patterns, test hypotheses, and receive feedback, which are essential for mastering complex grammar elements like prepositions.

Moreover, H. Douglas Brown (2000) supports the use of communicative language teaching (CLT), arguing that grammar should be taught through meaningful interaction rather than isolated exercises. This approach helps learners achieve both fluency and accuracy.

From my perspective, interactive methods are not only useful but essential in teaching English prepositions. Based on classroom observations and practical experience, I believe that students often struggle with prepositions when they are taught through translation or memorization alone. However, when learners engage in interactive tasks such as role-plays, games, and group discussions, they become more confident and better understand how prepositions function in real-life situations. Therefore, integrating interactive methods into teaching not only improves comprehension but also makes the learning process more engaging and effective.

ACTIVITY: PREPOSITION WORD GAME

If I were teaching prepositions, I would use a fun activity called a “Preposition Word Test Game.”

Step 1: Explain what prepositions are and give examples: in, on, at, under, over, between, among, for, with.

Step 2: Write several sentences on the board with missing prepositions.

Step 3: Divide students into small groups. Each group receives a worksheet with sentences where prepositions are missing. Their task is to choose the correct preposition for each blank.

Example:

The book is ___ the table. → on

I will meet you ___ 5 PM. → at

Step 4: Organize a small competition. Each group reads their answers aloud. The teacher checks correctness, and the group with the most correct answers wins.

This activity helps learners: Understand preposition usage in context. Avoid common mistakes. Make the lesson interactive

According to Azizova,(2008) thus, the learners and students should always research new methods of teaching english, which will provide long awaited qualitative leap.

To teach prepositions successfully, teachers should use clear explanations, simple examples, and interactive activities such as games, sentence completion exercises, and group tasks. These methods help students understand how prepositions function in real communication. When students practice using prepositions in meaningful contexts, they remember them more easily and use them correctly.

Overall, effective teaching of prepositions helps students improve their grammar, writing, and speaking skills. By using engaging and practical teaching strategies, teachers can make learning prepositions easier, more interesting, and more effective for students.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, prepositions are a very important part of language because they show the relationship between words and help students express time, place, and direction accurately. Understanding prepositions allows learners to communicate more clearly, avoid grammatical mistakes, and make their writing and speaking more natural. Therefore, teaching prepositions is an essential part of language learning.

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