



# THE INVESTIGATION OF PREPOSITIONS IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE

**Pazilova Nasibaxon Muhammadqosimovna**

Docent, Andijan state university, Andijan, Uzbekistan

**Bai Yunqing**

First-year student of Master's Degree, Andijan state university, Andijan, Uzbekistan

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<b>Received:</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2022 <b>Accepted:</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2022 <b>Published:</b> 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2022	This article deals with the problems of English and Chinese prepositions which finds out similarities and dissimilarities of prepositions. It discusses general information about secondary parts of speech and its types.
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Prepositions are known to be challenging for learners since they sometimes appear to possess an idiosyncratic behavior which does not subject to any predictable pattern even across nearly identical contexts. According to Matula (2007), prepositions can be some of the hardest words to acquire although they might appear easy and straightforward to learn. Therefore, it is not surprising if the most common mistakes committed by non-native speakers in their writing is the preposition errors.

The study of prepositions in English and Chinese, the construction of their semantic scheme, the determination of the relationship between them are shown in detail through broader examples.

Moreover, the task to find a correct preposition to be used poses a problem to an ESL learner since prepositions differ a lot in every language. This research specifically focuses on the prepositions in, on and at because these prepositions are considered as central and widely used prepositions and thus these prepositions are among the important prepositions in English. Moreover, there are some studies which show that there are problems related to these three prepositions that create difficulties for second language learners. For example, Matula contended that the prepositions in, on, and at, do not always refer to spatial relationships which means they can be used to refer to entities and other domains other than physical or spatial relations. Thus, this poses difficulty for language learners as well as teachers. Takahashi (1969) said that "... many teachers simply tell their students that the functions and the usage of prepositions involve intuition, and this reliance on native intuition prevents many ESL learners from mastering prepositions".

A preposition is one of the nine parts of speech. The name *preposition* (pre + position) means "place before". A preposition typically comes before **another word**—usually a noun phrase. It tells us about the relationship between the noun phrase and another part of the sentence. Some very common prepositions are: *in, of, on, for, with, at, by*

Prepositions are divided into the following types according to their meaning.

a) prepositions denoting place and direction; **at, in, on, about, above, after, by, down, near, out, up, over.**

1. Manuma appeared in the door way.

2. Walker come in.

b) prepositions denoting time; **after, about, at, ago, by, for, from, during, poss, over, until.**

1. In a minute the serlant returned.

2. At night she was eugaged to dance at the hotel. SMS-196.

c) prepositions denoting couse and purpose **by reason of, thanks to, in order to.**

1. The started woman half closed her door again, as the saw by the glare of a large wood fire

2. Some of the dishes were replaxed by the order of Miss Peyton.

d) prepositions denoting comparison:

**like, unlike, in comporison with, in spite of.**

1. The settled himself, handsomely, in life like other men of his years.

Sometimes the authors look at the place of the prepositions in the sentence

write about whether they have lexical meaning. For example: the great Russian scientist V.V. Vinogradov prepositions are divided into 2 groups:

1) Local

2) Temporal

Without any helping verbs, a sentence will be incomplete. So, it is mandatory to include auxiliary verbs. Preposition relates different items to each other. The preposition of the cause shows the reason of a happening or being in a sentence. Preposition mostly indicates the cause of something happening or the purpose of an action.

Preposition joins a verb with the noun and shows the reason for happening.

Here are some of the examples mentioned below:

- They are traveling on the train.
- Ruma reacted to the incident.
- I am playing Ludo with my friends.
- The moon shines because of the sun.
- The tourists arrived on the island on a hovercraft.

**Let us see some more examples of a preposition in detail:**

- **To:** This is used to show the purpose of the noun. This preposition joins a noun with a verb.

Ex: Alesha gave a hundred rupees to her brother.

- **For:** This word is also used to show the purpose of the noun and joins a noun with usually another noun or an adjective.

Ex: They went for an interview to get a job.

- **From:** The word "from" is used to indicate distance or direction from separation, deprivation.

Ex: She is traveling from Hyderabad to Vijayawada.

- **Into:** This word is used to express any movement action that something enclosed.

Ex: He and his friends jumped into the well.

- **Around:** This word can be used in two ways. It can either be used as a preposition followed by a noun, or without a following noun.

Ex: There was a massive crowd of people around the shop.

- **Within:** This word refers to less than a specific distance from something.

Ex: The stick was within Johnny's reach.

- **Between:** This is frequently used to introduce a prepositional phrase that tends to consist of either two singular or plural noun phrases.

Ex: Sam is sitting between Stella and Flora.

### Solved Exercises

Find out the prepositions from the following sentences

1. The pale twilight fell in soft waves on her face.

Ans: in; on.

2. The book is lying under the oakwood table.

Ans: under.

3. The professor placed his cup of coffee on the table before resuming the lecture.

Ans: of; under.

4. Did you refill the can of juice from the refrigerator?

Ans: of; from.

5. The nurse asked Rahul to place his hands on top of the table.

Ans: on; of.

6. A desk job requires you to sit in the same place for hours.

Ans: in; for.

Prepositions are words that connect nouns, pronouns, adjectives and provide a way to understand the relationship between two words or sentence sections. The word or section that the preposition leads into is called the "object."

Prepositions are vital to understanding English and even more so with Chinese. They can be used to describe time, place, actions and much more. Once you grasp how to use prepositions, you can easily put together sentences on the fly.

Here's an example:

A dab **of** butter.

So how can we translate this into Chinese using the correct preposition and word order? Luckily, Mandarin operates on a subject-verb-object basis. (English also flows this way.)

的 (**de**)— **of** is the preposition of the sentence. It's the word that connects two concepts together to make one solid statement. So here's that same English sentence in Chinese:

少量的奶油 (*shǎo liàng de nǎi yóu.*)

Pretty simple, right?

While this translation might be fairly straightforward, they won't all be that easy. There are some differences in terms of location of the preposition.

For example, let's look at another sentence.

I will see **to** it.

由我来做。 (*yóu wǒ lái zuò.*)

Well, that's pretty crazy, right? Our preposition 由 (**yóu**) — **to** comes at the very beginning of the sentence. Sometimes, prepositions can even come at the end of the sentence (although this is less common). Most of the time, though, they'll remain in the middle similar to where they are in English.

1. 关于 (**guān yú**)

**Meaning:** about

有关于猫的电影。(yǒu **guān yú** māo de diàn yǐng.) — There are movies **about** cats.

In this sentence, the preposition comes closer to the beginning of the sentence. (Remember, prepositions in Mandarin can appear near the beginning or even at the end of a sentence.)

2. 以上 (**yǐ shàng**)

**Meaning:** above, or more

他有三本以上的书籍。(tā yǒu sān běn **yǐ shàng** de shū.) — He has three **or more** books.

The preposition links 他有三本 (tā yǒu sān běn) — **He has three books** to the concept of having more books, but not a precise number.

3. 其中 (**qí zhōng**)

**Meaning:** among

你是其中最帅的一个。(nǐ shì **qí zhōng** zuì shuài de yī gè.) — You are the most handsome one **among** them.

In Chinese, the preposition is at the forefront of this sentence, connecting 你是 (nǐ shì) — **You are** with the idea of being handsome. However, this preposition makes it clear that the person you're talking to is the most handsome person in the group.

4. 在 (**zài**)

**Meaning:** at

我会在家里等。(wǒ huì **zài** jiā lǐ děng.) I will wait **at** home.

This preposition is in a spot that makes more sense to beginners, but still sounds a bit off. Essentially, the translation is "I will, at home, wait."

5. 前 (**qián**)

**Meaning:** before

中午前回家。(zhōng wǔ **qián** huí jiā.) — Go home **before** noon.

前 (**qián**) — **before** can also be used as a noun in a sentence. So beginners, look for context clues! In this sentence, the time description comes first, then the preposition, then the action. Remember, Mandarin follows the subject-verb-object direction of sentence structure.

6. 旁 (**páng**)

**Meaning:** beside

她待在温暖的篝火的旁边。(tā dài zài wēn nuǎn de gōu huǒ de **páng** biān.) — She stays **beside** the warm bonfire.

7. 之间 (**zhī jiān**)

**Meaning:** among, between

我在工作之间。(wǒ zài gōng zuò **zhī jiān**.) — I am **between** jobs.

The rough translation of this sentence is "I'm here, jobs in between."

The sentence establishes the existence of the subject, the existence of the possession of jobs or gigs and the distinction of not exactly possessing a job yet.

8. 由 (**yóu**)

**Meaning:** is, for

这由我负责。(zhè **yóu** wǒ fù zé.) — I am responsible **for** this.

Literally, "This is my responsibility."

9. 尽管 (**jǐn guǎn**)

**Meaning:** despite

尽管你有缺陷, 我仍然爱你。(jǐn guǎn nǐ yǒu quē xiàn, wǒ réng rán ài nǐ.) — I love you **despite** your flaws.

Like we mentioned before, sometimes prepositions come right at the start of the sentence. In this sentence specifically, the use of 尽管 (**jǐn guǎn**) — **despite** changes the statement 你有缺陷 (nǐ yǒu quē xiàn) — **you have flaws** to 尽管你有缺陷 (jǐn guǎn nǐ yǒu quē xiàn) — **despite you having flaws**.

10. 除了 (**chú le**)

**Meaning:** except

除了夏林没有人来。(chú le Xià Lín méi yǒu rén lái.) — No one came **except** for Xia Lin.

Notice the location of this one at the front of the sentence, too.

11. 为了 (**wèi le**)

**Meaning:** for

她会为了爱而做任何事情。(tā huì wèi le ài ér zuò rèn hé shì qíng.) — She will do anything **for** love. (Literally, "She will, for love, do anything.")

Pretty easy stuff. 为了 (**wèi le**) — **for** is sometimes also seen as 对于 (**duì yú**) — **for**.

为了(wèi le) — **for** is notably different from 由(yóu) — **for**. 为了(wèi le) is used when talking about doing something “for the purpose of” or “in order to” do something. 由(yóu) is used as a preposition for something “as the result of” or “because of.”

**12. 在...附近 (zài...fù jìn)**

**Meaning:** near

在教堂附近 (zài jiào táng fù jìn) — **near** the church

While these three characters are on opposite sides of the sentence, they only make sense when the others are present.

**13. 的 (de)**

**Meaning:** of

他所有的朋友都很有趣。(tā suǒ yǒu de péng yǒu dōu hěn yǒu qù.) — All **of** his friends are fun.

You'll see the preposition 的 (de) — **of a lot** in the Mandarin language. It's probably the easiest preposition to remember. It's also used to announce possession of someone or something.

Here's another example.

你是我的朋友。(nǐ shì wǒ de péng yǒu.) — You are my friend.

The addition of 的 (de) changes the word 我(wǒ) — **me** to 我的(wǒ de) — **my**.

**14. 至于 (guān yú)**

**Meaning:** as for

至于我,我喜欢食物。(zhì yú wǒ, wǒ xǐ huān shí wù.) — **As for** me, I love food.

至于 (zhì yú) — **as for** is another really convenient and simple preposition. It almost always comes at the beginning of a sentence.

**15. 外 (wài)**

**Meaning:** outside

在餐厅外面等。(zài cān tīng wài miàn děng.) — Wait **outside** of the restaurant.

**16. 自 (zì)**

**Meaning:** since

她自生病后变得很憔悴。(tā zì shēng bìng hòu biàn dé hěn qiáo cuì.) — She has gotten haggard-looking **since** she got sick.

**17. 比 (bǐ)**

**Meaning:** than

你比我好。(nǐ bǐ wǒ hǎo.) — You are better **than** me.

This preposition comes after the subject of the sentence.

**18. 通过 (tōng guò)**

**Meaning:** through

通过大门 (tōng guo dà mén) — through the gate

**19. 至 (zhì)**

**Meaning:** until

我上九点至五点的班。(wǒ shàng jiǔ diǎn zhì wǔ diǎn de bān.) — I have work from nine **until** five.

This preposition makes more sense than many other prepositions in Mandarin. The rough translation is “I am at nine until five for work.”

**20. 下 (xià)**

**Meaning:** under

椅子的下面 (yǐ zi de xià mian) — **under** the chair

**21. 和...一起 (hé...yī qǐ)**

**Meaning:** with

和你一起 (hé nǐ yī qǐ) — **with** you

Like 在...附近 (zài...fù jìn) — **near**, this preposition needs to include every character around the noun or pronoun in order to make sense.

In this article, we have provided the details of preposition of cause, reason, and purpose in English and Chinese. To understand how to use them, you have to understand the above rules and examples we have mentioned to know where to use them and in which manner. These prepositions will help you in the completion of sentences in a better and appropriate way. To understand them more clearly, you must try your hands on some sentences. Practice to make some sentences using these prepositions, and you will get amazed by the results as it is effortless & fun exercise. Once you learn how to use them, you can quickly write good content. Hope this article helped you to understand them in a better and easier way.

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