

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG



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GRADUATION PAPER

A STUDY ON PREPOSITION OF TIME IN ENGLISH

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HAI PHONG – 2009

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NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

Sinh viên:M. sè:.....

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NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI

1. Nội dung vụ việc yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tại xét nghiệm
(Về lý luận, thực tiễn, các số liệu cần tính toán vụ việc bản vẽ)

2. Các số liệu cần thiết để thiết kế, tính toán

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ABBREVIATIONS

1. N = Noun
2. Adj = Adjective
3. Adv = Adverb
4. V = Verb
5. Eg = Example
6. i.e = In explanation
6. Pre = Preposition
7. AmE = American English
8. BrE = Britain English

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PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale of the study

Learning foreign language is getting more and more important in our society nowadays. When we know a foreign language, we will understand and

As we all know, prepositions occupy a smaller number than other parts of speech like noun or verb but they play an important role in making a correct sentence. How to understand and use them correctly is not easy. In four-year studying English I myself as well as other students sometimes get confused at using prepositions.

In the process of looking for books and researching documents related to preposition, I found that there are many kinds of preposition and I am really interested in prepositions of time in English. English prepositions of time constitute a very important element of sentence formation. They help to establish a grammatical as well as semantic concord between different parts of a sentence which refer to time, periods of time, and duration of events and activities. Therefore, I decided to choose the time preposition as topic for my study in the B.A graduation paper.

2. Aims of the study

- Give an overview on English prepositions and their subclasses. In particular, prepositions of time.
- Help the learners at intermediate level understand the difference between preposition of time ‘when’ and time ‘duration’ in English.
- Identify problems of English foreign language learners when using prepositions of time.
- Give suggested solutions to the problems of English language learners when using prepositions of time

3. Scope of the study

Preposition of time is a comparatively wide part in English preposition. I am fully aware that my graduation paper cannot cover all aspects of prepositions in

English, so I focus on preposition of time with some typical aspects relating to them such as: Overview on English preposition as well as preposition of time, the analysis of the dimension of preposition of time and problems raised when using preposition of time and suggested solutions for them.

4. Method of the study

In order to gain the mentioned aims of the study, I try my best to collect related documents in reference books, from web pages and dictionaries. This theme is studied on the basis of analyzing, contrasting, research on linguistics and my knowledge, experiences during four-year -studying in Hai Phong Private University. Furthermore, discussions with my classmates and consultation with the supervisor are really helpful for my paper.

5. Design of the study

My graduation paper is divided into three parts:

The first part is introduction of the paper consisting of the rationale, the aims, the scope, the method, the design of the study.

The second part is the development with three chapters. Chapter one is theoretical background of preposition including overview on English preposition and prepositional phrase. Chapter two is an investigation into preposition of time in English including time 'when' and time 'duration' composing by introduction of preposition of time, an analysis of the dimension-types of preposition of time. Chapter three deals with the problems of English foreign language learners when using preposition of time and some solutions to those problems. Part three is conclusion which summarizes what have been discussed in the previous parts and put an end to the study.

PART TWO: DEVELOPMENT

Chapter I: Theoretical Background

I.1. Overview on English preposition

I.1.1. Definition of preposition in English

A preposition is traditionally defined in the following ways:

“A *preposition* is a word that indicates a relation between the noun or pronoun it governs and another word which may be a verb, an adjective or another noun or pronoun” (Curme, 1935: 87)

- (1) (a) *She voted against us*
- (b) *She was depends on us*
- (c) *Her opinion of us improved*

In three examples above, the words ‘*against, on, of*’ are treated as prepositions. The preposition *against* is said to relate *us* to the verb *voted*, the preposition *on* shows the relation between adjective *dependent* and the pronoun *us*, and preposition *of* in the third sentence indicates the relation between the noun *opinion* and the pronoun *us*

The concept of “*indicating a relationship*” however, is very vague and such a definition is clearly in need of considerable refinement (whether construed at the general or language-particular level) to distinguish prepositions from, for example, verbs and ‘*coordinating conjunctions*’, which can also relate one NP to another, as *loves* and *and* do in *Ed Loves Kim, and Kim arrived*.

In spite of significance of prepositions, standard grammars often assign them a rather vague definition, such as “*a word that shows the relation of a noun and pronoun to some other word in a sentence*”. (Warriner and Griffith, 1965:16)

The key word in this definition is ‘*relation*’. Relations signaled prepositions as just noted, are both grammatical (e.g, modifier of noun or verb) and semantic

(e.g, recipient, benefactive). This double role of prepositions will often provide important clues to the structure sentences.

I.1.2. Position of English prepositions

A preposition is followed by a "noun". It is never followed by a verb.

By "noun" we include:

- **noun** (dog, money, love)
- **proper noun (name)** (Bangkok, Mary)
- **pronoun** (you, him, us)
- **noun group** (my first job)
- **gerund** (swimming)

A preposition cannot be followed by a verb. If we want to follow a preposition by a verb, we must use the "-ing" form which is really a gerund or verb in noun form.

eg: She saved money by giving up cigarettes.

- However, prepositions may also come after nouns

e.g: in questions like 'What are they looking for?'

- Different prepositions can have very similar uses

e.g: in the morning, on Monday morning.

- Many nouns, verbs and adjectives are normally used with particular prepositions

e.g. the reason for, arrive at, angry with, on a bus.

- In English prepositions can come at the end of clauses, especially in an informal style

e.g What are you thinking about?

You are just the person I was looking for.

She's not very to talk to.

I hate being shouted at.

Here are some examples:

Subject + verb	preposition	"noun"
<i>The food is</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>the table.</i>
<i>She lives</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>Japan.</i>
<i>Tara is looking</i>	<i>for</i>	<i>you.</i>
<i>The letter is</i>	<i>under</i>	<i>your blue book.</i>
<i>Pascal is used</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>English people.</i>
<i>She isn't used</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>working.</i>
<i>I ate</i>	<i>before</i>	<i>coming.</i>

I.1.3 Classification of preposition in English

There are two ways to classify preposition:

I.1.3.1 Classification according to compositional types:

➤ **Simple preposition:**

Most of the common English prepositions, such as: *at*, *in* and *for*, are simple, ie consist of one word. Other prepositions consisting of more than one word are called complex or multi-word preposition. The following is a comprehensive list of simple prepositions

(F = Formal)

<i>Aboard</i>	<i>As</i>	<i>By</i>	<i>On (upon)</i>	<i>Round</i>
<i>About</i>	<i>At</i>	<i>Despite</i>	<i>Opposite</i>	<i>Since</i>
<i>Above</i>	<i>Atop</i>	<i>Down</i>	<i>Out</i>	<i>Than</i>
<i>Across</i>	<i>Before</i>	<i>During</i>	<i>Outside</i>	<i>Through</i>
<i>After</i>	<i>Behind</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Out with</i>	<i>Throughout</i>
<i>Against</i>	<i>Below</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>Over</i>	<i>To</i>
<i>Along</i>	<i>Beneath</i>	<i>In</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Toward</i>
<i>Alongside</i>	<i>Beside</i>	<i>Inside</i>	<i>Per</i>	<i>Under</i>
<i>Amid(st)</i>	<i>Besides</i>	<i>Minus</i>	<i>Plus</i>	<i>Underneath</i>
<i>Among(st)</i>	<i>Between</i>	<i>Notwithstanding</i>	<i>Re</i>	<i>Until (till)</i>
<i>Apropos(of)</i>	<i>Beyond</i>	<i>Of</i>	<i>Round</i>	<i>Up</i>
<i>Around</i>	<i>But</i>	<i>Off</i>	<i>Since</i>	<i>via</i>
<i>With</i>	<i>within</i>	<i>without</i>		

Table 1: Simple (Single-word) prepositions

* In addition to this table, there are a few words which behave in many ways like prepositions although they have affinities with verbs or adjectives: *Except, excepting, bar, barring, concerning (F), considering, following, including, granted, pending (F), less, like, near, save, unlike, worth.*

(2)(a) *He gave us all bar (= except) three of sketches*
(Quirk. R, 1972: 301)

(b) *Concerning all these disadvantages, his performance was quite good*
(Huddleston, R, 1984:346)

➤ **Complex prepositions**

Most complex prepositions are placeable, according to their form, into one of three categories:

- Adverb + prep: along with, apart from, aside from, as for, as to, away from, into, off of, on to, (or onto), out of, together with, up to, etc.
- Verb/Adjective/conjunction/etc + Prep: except for, owing to, due to, but for, because of, etc.
- Prep 1 + noun + Prep 2: by mean of, in comparison with, on account of, with regard to, in consequence of, etc.

This category may be further subdivided according to which prepositions function as Prep1 and Prep 2

- In + Noun of: in case of, in charge of, in view of, in need of, in spite of, in front of, in lieu of, in favor of, in place of, in face of, in aid of, in quest of, in respect of, in search of, in consequence of, etc.
- In + Noun + with: in connection with, in contact with, in common with, in line with, etc.
- By + Noun + of: by means of, by way of, by virtue of, by dint of, etc.
- On + Noun + of: on account of, on behalf of, on top of, on pain of, etc.
- Other types: at variance with, in exchange for, in return for, in addition to, in relation to, etc.

Here the table list of complex prepositions:

<i>Along with</i>	<i>Apart from</i>	<i>Aside from</i>	<i>As for</i>
<i>As to</i>	<i>Away from</i>	<i>According to</i>	<i>By mean of</i>
<i>By way of</i>	<i>By dint of</i>	<i>By reason of</i>	<i>By virtue of</i>
<i>In case of</i>	<i>In front of</i>	<i>In relation to</i>	<i>In charge of</i>
<i>In view of</i>	<i>In need of</i>	<i>In spite of</i>	<i>In front of</i>
<i>In favor of</i>	<i>In place of</i>	<i>In common with</i>	<i>In quest of</i>
<i>In respect of</i>	<i>In search of</i>	<i>In consequence of</i>	<i>In connection with</i>
<i>In contact with</i>	<i>In aid of</i>	<i>In line with</i>	<i>In exchange for</i>
<i>In addition to</i>	<i>In lieu of</i>	<i>In to</i>	<i>At variance</i>
<i>Off of</i>	<i>On to</i>	<i>Out of</i>	<i>Owing to</i>
<i>On account of</i>	<i>On behalf of</i>	<i>On top of</i>	<i>On pain of</i>
<i>Except for</i>	<i>But for</i>	<i>Because of</i>	<i>With regard to.....</i>

Table 2: Complex (Multiword) prepositions

I.1.3.2 Classification according to the semantic relations

In the survey of prepositional meanings to which most of this chapter is devoted, time and place relations will be dealt with first, and will be followed by a more cursory exemplification of other relationships such as: “goal” “cause” “purpose”...So varied are prepositional meanings that no more than a presentation of the most notable semantic similarities and contrasts can be attempt here.

❖ Prepositions of time

Prepositions of time usually occur as adjuncts or post modifiers, but it can occasionally be itself the complement of a temporal preposition as in:

(3)(a) *We camped there for the summer*

(b) *I haven't seen him in years*

(Quirk, R, 1973: 154)

The subclasses of prepositions of time consist of those indicating **point of time** like: *at, in, on...*; **duration time** like: *since, for, till, until, during.....up to...*; **relationship of time** like: *before, after, between, from.....to.....*

❖ Prepositions of place

Prepositions of place are typically either adjuncts (relating an event or state affairs to a location) or post modifier (relating some “ object” to a location) they may also act as obligatory ‘ predicative’ adjuncts following the verb BE as the following example:

(4) (a) *My car is at the cottage*

(b) *Tom went to the door.*

(Quirk, R, 1973: 146)

Some prominent prepositions of place are: *to, at, from, away from, on(to), on, off, (in)to, in, out of, etc.*

Prepositions of place comprise two groups including those indicating position like: at, in, on....and those indicating direction which often go with the verbs indicating movement like : to, into...going with the verbs: go, walk, crush.....

For example:

(5) (a) *Adam went to the station to meet Sheila*

(Collin, C, 1997: 140)

(b) *He crashes into the fence*

(Collin C, 1997 : 93)

❖ Prepositions of cause or reason

There are prepositions expressing either the material cause or the psychological cause for a happening:

(6)(a) *Because of the drought, the price of bread was high that year.*

(b) *On account of his wide experience, he was made chairman.*

(Quirk, R, 1973: 56)

Other prepositions of cause or reason include: *for, from, due to, owing to, etc.*

Phrase of cause and reason answer the question “Why”

❖ Prepositions of purpose or intended destination

Let us consider the following examples:

- (7)(a) *Everyone ran for shelter*
 (b) *He'll do anything for money*
 (Quirk, R, 1973:156)

The use of “for” illustrated above have in common a notion of “purpose”. The notion of ‘purpose’ can be seen from the possibility of paraphrase by a clause *in order to*: *for money = in order to gain money*.

Phrases of purpose or destination answer the questions ‘Why....?’, ‘What...for?’, ‘Where...for?’, ‘Who....for?’

They frequently occur as post-modifiers as well as adverbials:

The scenery for the play, etc.

❖ **Preposition of recipient, goal, target**

The number of propositions expressing recipient, goal, target is limited, they include *for, to, at*. Although they are organized in the same group of meaning, in certain case it is easy to realize the differences between them.

When preposition “for” is followed by noun-phrases denoting persons or animals, the meaning is rather one of “intended recipient”

- (8) *He made a beautiful doll for his daughter*
 (Quirk, R, 1973:157)

* The *for* phrase can often be equated with an indirect object.

In contrast, while the preposition ‘*for*’ expresses ‘intended recipient’, the preposition ‘*to*’ expresses ‘actual recipient’.

- (9) *I gave the book to my friend.*
 (Quirk, R, 1973: 157)

At, in combinations such as *aim at* (where the prepositional phrase is complementary to the verb), expresses intended goal or target:

- (10) (a) *After aiming carefully at the bird, he missed it completely*
 (b) *A vicious mongrel was snapping at his ankles.*
 (Quirk, R, 1973: 157)

❖ **Prepositions of source and origin**

The converse of “*to*” (= ‘goal’) is “*from*” (= ‘source’):

(11) *Bill lent the book to me ↔ I borrowed the book from Bill*

(Quirk, R, 1973:157)

‘**From**’ is also used with reference to ‘place of origin’:

(12) *He comes from Australia (= He is Australian)*

(Quirk, R, 1973:157)

Other of source, origin consists of “of”:

(13) *I have a little hat made of wool.*

(Collin, C, 1997: 104)

This type of prepositional phrase occurs not only as an adjunct, but as a post-modifier: *The man from Mars, a friend of mine from London*

❖ **Prepositions of manner, means and instrument**

The prepositions of manner comprise *with, in...manner, like, as* as in the following sentences:

(14)(a) *We were received with the utmost courtesy*

(b) *The task was done in a workmanlike manner*

(c) *The army swept through the city like a pestilence*

(Quirk, R, 1973: 158)

* Note that like with intensive verbs, as in: Life is liked a dream, refer not to manner but to resemblance.

The prepositions of means and instrument include *by, with, without*.

➤ **By** can express the meaning ‘by means of’:

(15)(a) *I usually go to work by bus/train/car.*

(b) *The thief must have entered and left the house by the back door*

(c) *By working the pumps, we kept the ship afloat for another 40 hours*

(Quirk, R, 1973:158)

➤ **With**, on the other hand, expresses instrumental meaning as in:

(16)(a) *He caught the ball with his left hand*

(b) *Someone had broken the window with a stone*

(Quirk, R, 1973:158)

- For most senses of *with*, including that of instrument, *without* expresses the equivalent negative meaning:

(17) *I drew it without a ruler (= I did not draw it with a ruler)*

(Quirk, R, 1973: 158)

Phrases of means and instrument answer the question “How...?”

(18) *A: How did he do it?*

B: By working hard

(Quirk, R, 1973: 158)

❖ Prepositions of accompaniment

There is only one preposition with the meaning of accompaniment which is preposition “*with*”. Especially when followed by an animate complement, *with* has the meaning ‘in company with’ or ‘together with’.

(19) (a) *I’m so glad you’re coming with us*

(b) *Jock, with several of his friends, was drinking till 2 am.*

(Quirk, R, 1973:159)

In the sentence (35), the ‘*With*’ phrase serves a function very close to coordination with ‘*and*’: ‘Jock and several of his friends were.....’

Prepositional phrase of accompaniment functions as post-modifier thus in:

(20) *Curry with rice is my favorite dish*

(Quirk, R, 1973:160)

❖ Prepositions of support, opposition

There are three prepositions: ‘*for*, *against*, *with*’ expressing the meaning of support or opposition. Thus in:

(21)(a) *Are you for or against the plan?*

(= *Do you support or oppose the plan?*)

(b) *Remember that every of us with you*

(= *on your side*)

(Quirk, R, 1972:326)

For conveys the idea of support, *with* that of solidarity or movement in sympathy, *against* conveys the contrary idea of opposition.

❖ Prepositions of concession

There is variety of prepositions expressing the concessional meaning, such prepositions or prepositional phrase as: *despite*, *in spite of*, *for + all*, *with + all*, *notwithstanding*. Convey the same meaning, concession, though there is still a little difference in meaning between them and they are often separated from the main clause by a comma.

(22) (a) *I admire him, in spite of his fault*

(b) *He lost the fight, for all his boasting*

(Quirk, R, 1973:161)

(c) *With all his boasting and ostentatious training, he was knocked out in the first round by a man lighter than himself.*

(d) *Thomas, notwithstanding his tedious rhetoric, is a master of the sublime in prose style.*

(Quirk, R, 1972: 328)

In spite of is a general-purpose preposition of concession; *despite* is rather more formal and *notwithstanding* is formal and rather legalistic in style. The combinations *for all* and *with all* (all being an obligatory pre-determiner with this meaning) are chiefly colloquial.

❖ Prepositions of subject matter

With the meaning '*on the subject of, concerning*', *about* and *on* can combine with a considerable range of verbs and adjectives including:

Speak out/on : *teach (someone) about*

Argue about/ on : *read about*

Hold forth about/ on : *hear about*

Lecture about/ on : *quarrel about*

Preach about/ on : *keep quiet about*

Confer about/ on : *tell (someone) about*

Write about/ on : *inform (someone) about*

On tends to refer to deliberate, formal linguistic communication (speaking lecturing, writing, etc) and is therefore inappropriate for verbs like *chat* or

quarrel, teach, which do not necessarily involve the subject of the sentence in using language.

(23) *He spoke on butterflies*

(Quirk, R 1973:162)

Would suggest he was making a formal speech, however the sentence:

(24) *He spoke about butterflies*

(Quirk, R, 1973:162)

Would probably refer to an informal conversation or casual allusion

* Semantic types of Prepositions

Semantic types	Prepositions
Time	<i>At, in, on, about, during, for, since....</i>
Place	<i>Above, around, at, behind, beneath,</i>
Cause and reason	<i>Because of, on account of.....</i>
Purpose or intended destination	<i>For...</i>
Recipient, goal, target	<i>For, to, at...</i>
Source and origin	<i>To, from, of...</i>
Manner, means, instrument	<i>With, in, by,,, without.....</i>
Accompaniment	<i>With</i>
Support, opposition	<i>For, against, with</i>
Concession	<i>Despite, in spite of, for + all, with + all</i>
Subject matter	<i>About, on</i>

Table 3: Semantic types of prepositions

I.1.4. Preposition in parallel form

When two words or phrases are used in parallel and require the same preposition to be idiomatically correct, the preposition does not have to be used twice.

(25) (a) *You can wear that outfit in summer and ~~in~~ winter.*

(b) *The female was both attracted ~~by~~ and distracted by the male's dance.*

However, when the idiomatic use of phrases calls for different prepositions, we must be careful not to omit one of them.

- (26)(a) *The children were interested in and disgusted by the movie.*
(b) *He was fascinated by and enamored of this beguiling woman.*

(<http://www.english-for-students.com/>)

I.1.5. Function of prepositions

Prepositions perform three formal functions in sentences. They can act as an adjective modifying a noun, as an adverb modifying a verb, or as a nominal when used in conjunction with the verb form *to be*.

I.1.5.1. Prepositions functioning as adjectives

In the following sentences, prepositional phrases perform the function of modifying the nouns *boat*, *pen*, and *car*:

Look at the boat with the blue sail.

Please hand me the pen next to the telephone.

Park the car beside the fence.

I.1.5.2. Prepositions functioning as adverbs

In these examples, notice how the prepositional phrases perform adverbial functions by modifying the verbs *after*, *stalled*, and *won*:

The coyote runs after the rabbit.

The car stalled despite the tune-up.

The team won without the starting quarterback.

I.1.5.3. Prepositions functioning as nominals

In English, sometimes words function as nouns but aren't themselves nouns. These words are called nominals. Prepositions sometimes perform this important function in sentences when they are used in conjunction with the verb *to be*.

For example:

The park is next to the hospital.

The student is between an A and a B.

The fight scene is before the second act.

I.1.6. Semantic properties of prepositions

In semantic terms, the preposition functions to illustrate a logical, temporal, or spatial relationship between the object of the prepositional phrase and the other components of the sentence. Consider the following examples:

(27) *The dog is asleep on his bed.*

In this example, the prepositional phrase *on his bed* indicates a spatial relationship between the subject *dog* and the object *bed*. If the preposition *on* was replaced with *under* or *beneath* the spatial relationship would be altered.

(28) *The town hasn't been the same since the war.*

In this sentence, the prepositional phrase *since the war* indicates a temporal relationship between the verb phrase *hasn't been the same* and the object *war*.

(29) *The family survived despite the accident.*

The prepositional phrase *despite the accident* in this sentence indicates a logical relationship between the survival of the family and the accident.

I.2. Prepositional phrase

I.2.1. Definition of prepositional phrase

A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition followed by a prepositional complement, which is characteristically a noun phrase or a wh-clause or V-ing clause

(Quirk, R, 1973:142)

(30) (a) *Every single person without a computer background failed.*

(b) *That's a good way of trying to get to know each other.*

(c) *It's just a question of which is more efficient approach.*

(Greenbaum, S, 1996:159)

That-clauses and infinitive clauses, although they frequently have a nominal function in other respects, do not occur as prepositional complements.

Alternative between the presence and absence of preposition are observed in case like:

(31)(a) *He was surprised at her remark*

(b) *He was surprised at her saying this*

(c) *He was surprised at what she said*

(d) *He was surprised that she said*

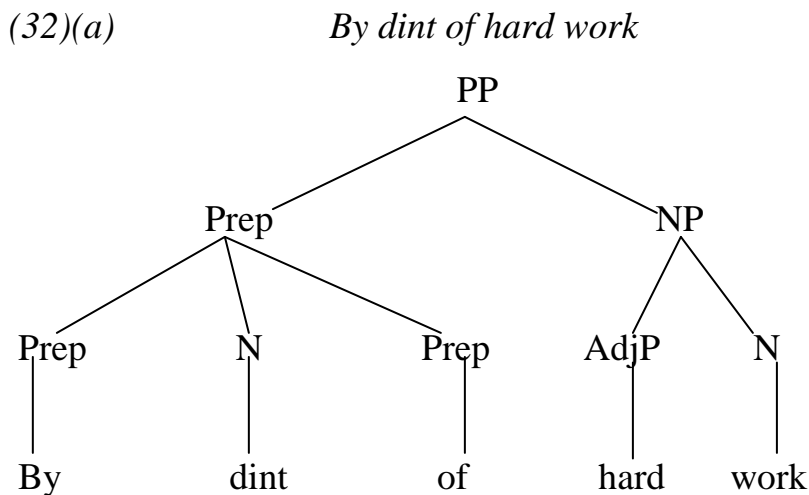
(Quirk, R, 1973:142)

Further examples of verbs and adjectives which can have either prepositional complements or that-clauses are: *decide (on)*, *inform (of)*, *insist (of)*, *afraid (of)*, *aware (of)*, *sorry (about)*, *sure (of)*...

I.2.2. Structure of prepositional phrase

Many grammars make a distinction between ‘simple preposition’ consisting of a single word, and ‘complex preposition, consisting of from two to four words including at least one simple preposition as we mentioned in part I.1.3

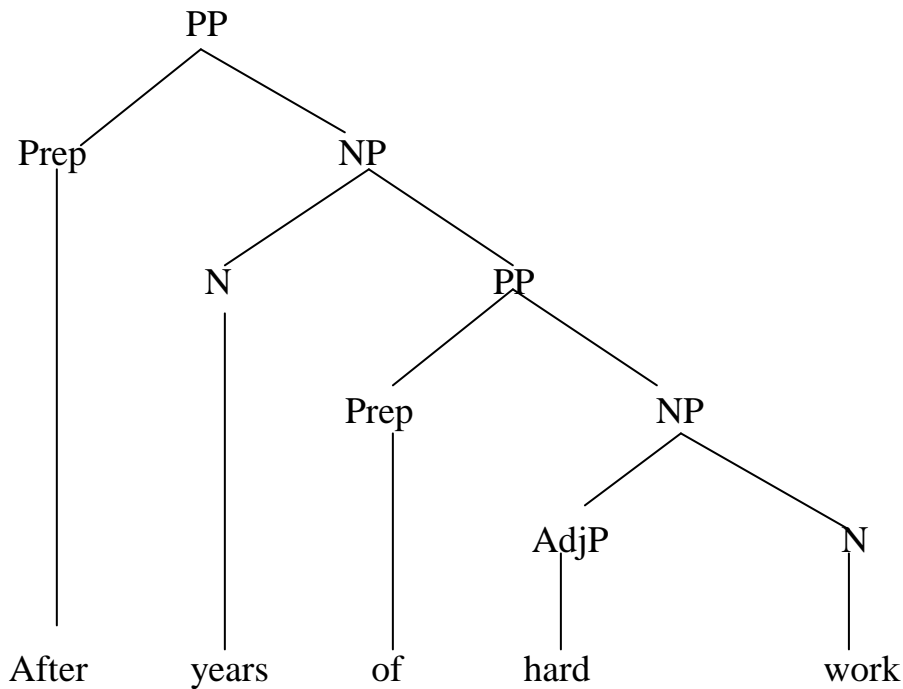
The structure of prepositional phrase (PP) headed by a complex preposition will be distinguished from that of a PP containing a smaller PP embed within it. For example, *by dint of hard work* will have the structure shown in (32a)



Whereas *after years of hard work* (where there is no complex preposition) will have that shown in (32b)

(32b)

After years of hard work



There are, however, considerable difficulties with this analysis.

It is reasonable to regard (32b) as a more basic or elementary syntactic construction than (32a). After has an Np as complement, following the most frequent structure for PPs; the NP Years of hard work contains a PP as post-head dependent, which again is a very frequent structure for NPs; putting these two standard structures together then yields (32b), which thus represents a virtually fully productive construction. In (32a), by contrast, there are very severe restrictions on the permitted combinations of words in the complex prepositions, such that the latter must be listed in the dictionary as wholes rather than being the output of general rules. We may think complex prepositions as rising historically through the ‘lexicalisation’ . The fusion into a single lexical item – of the first words of some productive construction like (32b). (The dint which survives in by dint of meant “stroke, blow”). Analysis (32a) takes this lexicalisation to be accompanied by a syntactic regrouping such that the lexicalized sequence becomes a syntactic constituent.

(32a) and (32b) both contain the partial structure:

Prep1 + N + Prep2 + NP

(32a) *After several minutes we located the key for the door.*

○ After several minutes: prepositional phrase.

After (preposition) + several minutes (object of preposition)

○ For the door: prepositional phrase.

For (preposition) + the door (object of preposition)

(32b) *The flock of tiny swallows flew over the trees near the lake.*

○ Of tiny swallows: prepositional phrase

Of (preposition) + tiny swallow (object of preposition)

○ Over the trees: prepositional phrase

Over (preposition) + the trees (object of preposition)

○ Near the lake: prepositional phrase

Near (preposition) + the lake (object of preposition)

I.2.3. Complementation and modification in Prepositional phrase structure.

Prepositions takes the following kinds of complement

I.2.3.1. Noun phrase as in :

Against the tree

Of little value

These are much the most frequent kind of complement and, as we have seen, the preposition is in effect traditionally defined as taking an NP complement. But we must certainly allow for other kinds too.

I.2.3.2. Clause

Prepositional phrase can be expressed by clause as in :

- *(the question) of why he had left,*

- Including *-ing constructions*, as in *before going bed.*

I.2.3.3. Prepositional phrase as in:

From under the car

Until after the meeting

Here one PP, *under the car*, is embedded as complement within a larger PP *from under the car*. Only a few prepositions take such complements, and the examples given illustrate what are probably the most productive case: *from* + locative PP (cf. *from inside the building*) and *until* + temporal PP (cf. *Until just before the meeting*). Note, however, that the most neutral locative and temporal preposition, *at*, does not occur in such complements: *from* (**at*) *Sydney*, *until* (**at*) *noon*.

In addition there are a number where the second preposition is determined by the first, instead of being paradigmatically contrastive as in the above examples: *Except for the spelling*, *Apart from his uncle*, *(a decision) as to whether it would be cancelled*, *because of the rain*. Etc

1.2.3.3.1 Adverb phrase as in: From here

Since then

The prepositions concerned are those that occur productively with PP complements, and the AdvPs are locative or temporal.

1.2.3.3.2 AdjPs as in:

(33)(a) *He regards it as inefficient*

(b) *He took her for dead*

(c) *It went from bad to worse*

(Huddleston. R 1950: 345)

Of these, the construction with *as* is much the most productive, with virtually any AdjP being a potential complement. In the examples given, the semantic relation between ‘*inefficient*’ and ‘*it*’ is the same as in ‘*He considered it inefficient*’, where ‘*inefficient*’ is a (predicative) complement of the verb.

Normally prepositions take a single complement, but there are some constructions which are probably best analysed as PPs with two complements. In ‘*He lives across the road from us*’, for example, *from us* is dependent on *across (the road)* in that we could not have ‘*He live from us*’. There is no reason to regard *the road from us* as a constituent (and note also the possibility of omitting *the road*, as in *across from us*) the only reasonable analysis will have

across as head, the NP *the road* as the first complement and the embedded PP *from us* as second element. Another example cited in the literature:

(34) *He sent it to Bill in New York.*

(Huddleston. R, 1950:346)

Chapter II: An investigation into preposition of time and their dimension

In most general terms, a preposition expresses a relation between two entities, one being that represented by the prepositional complement. Of the various types of relational meaning, those of PLACE and TIME are the most prominent and easy to identify. Other relationships such as INSTRUMENT and CAUSE may also be recognized, although it is difficult to describe prepositional meanings systematically in terms of such labels. Some prepositional uses may be best elucidated by seeing a preposition as related to a clause;

Eg:

(35)(a) *'The man with the red beard = The man who has the red beard'*

(b) *'My knowledge of Hindi = I know Hindi'*.

(Quirk, R, 1973:142)

II.1. Preposition of time

II.1.1 Definition of preposition of time

Time prepositions are used to clarify what time an event happened or will happen. Time prepositions are used nouns and pronouns.

There are many prepositions expressing time such as: in, at, on, after, ago, before, between, by, during, for, from...to, from...till/until, past, since, till/until, to, up to, within, throughout, through,

- Examples of time preposition

*She is going to work **at** night*

*The meeting is **on** Monday*

*The team will arrive **in** Summer*

*We have not seen them **since** last week*

*We cannot meet **until** next Sunday*

*He kept talking **during** class*

*It rained **throughout** January*

II.1.2 Classification

As Randolp Quirk, according to semantic types. Prepositions of time are divided into the following kinds:

II.1.2.1 Preposition of time ‘when’

At, on, in as prepositions of ‘time when’ are to some extent parallel to the same items as positive preposition.

The preposition **AT** is used in the following descriptions of time:

With clock times:

My last train leaves at 10:30.

We left at midnight.

The meeting starts at two thirty.

With specific times of day, or mealtimes:

He doesn’t like driving at night.

I’ll go shopping at lunchtime.

I like to read the children a story at bedtime.

With festivals:

Are you going home at Christmas/Easter?

* In certain fixed expressions which refer to specific points in time:

*Are you leaving at the weekend?**

She’s working at the moment.

He’s unavailable at present.

I finish the course at the end of April.

We arrived at the same time.

The preposition **IN** is used in the following descriptions of time

With months, years, seasons, and longer periods of time:

I was born in 1965.

We’re going to visit them in May.

The pool is closed in winter.

He was famous in the 1980’s.

The play is set in the Middle Ages.

They’ve done work for me in the past.

With periods of time during the day:

He's leaving in the morning.

She usually has a sleep in the afternoon(s).

I tried to work in the evening.

To describe the amount of time needed to do something:

They managed to finish the job in two weeks.

You can travel there and back in a day.

To indicate when something will happen in the future:

She'll be ready in a few minutes.

He's gone away but he'll be back in a couple of days.

The preposition ON is used in the following descriptions of time:

With days of the week, and parts of days of the week:

I'll see you on Friday.

She usually works on Mondays.

We're going to the theatre on Wednesday evening.

*Note that in spoken English, on is often omitted in this context, e.g.: I'll see you Friday.

With dates:

The interview is on 29th April.

He was born on February 14th 1995.

With special days:

She was born on Valentine's day.

We move house on Christmas Eve.

I have an exam on my birthday.

II.1.2.2 Preposition of time 'duration'

Duration is expressed by *for*

(36) *We camped there for the summer*

(Quirk. R 1973: 154)

So too in idiomatic phrases like *for ever* and *for good*

Besides, '*over, all through, and throughout*' have a durational

meaning parallel to their pervasive meaning in reference to place as in

(37) *We camped there through the summer.*

(Quirk. R 1973: 154)

Over normally accompanies noun phrase denoting special occasions (such as holidays and festivals), and so generally refers to a shorter period of time than *all through or throughout*.

'*From...to*' is another pair of prepositions whose locative meaning is transferred to duration. The American English alternative expression (*from*)...*through* avoids the ambiguity as to whether the period mentioned second is included in the total span of time.

(38)(a) *We camped there (from) June through September (AmE)*

(= *up to and including September*)

(b) *We camped there from June to (or till) September*

(= *up to [? And concluding] September*)

(Quirk. R 1973: 154)

II.1.2.3 Others

Before, after, since, until/till

As prepositions these occur almost exclusively as prepositions of time, and are followed by either temporal noun phrase (eg: before next week), subjectless V-ing clause (eg: since leaving school) or a noun phrase with a deverbal noun or some other noun phrase interpreted as equivalent to a clause:

- Until the fall of Rome (= until Rome fell)
- Before the war (= before the war started or took place)
- Until specifies a terminal point with positive and a commencement point with negative predications:

(39) (a) *We slept until midnight (= We stopped sleeping then)*

(b) *We didn't sleep until midnight (= We started sleeping then)*

(Quirk. R 1973: 154)

Between, by, and up to

Other prepositions of time are between, by, and up to

- (40)(a) *I'll phone you **between** lunch and three o'clock*
 (b) ***By** the time We'd walked five miles, he Was exhausted*
 (c) ***Up to** last week, I hadn't received a reply*

By specifies a commencement point; contrast:

- (41) (a) ***By** that time he was exhausted (= He was then exhausted)*
 (b) ***Until** that time he was exhausted (= He was then no longer exhausted)*

This means that by-phrases do not co-occur with verbs of durative meaning:

- (c) *He lay there **{by/until}** midnight.*

(Quirk. R1973: 155)

The following table lists the prepositions of time and their meanings:

II.1.3 Absence of prepositions of time

As mentioned above preposition of time are always used before time like hour, date, month, year.... but in some certain case, they are not appreciated.

Prepositions of time when are always absent from adjuncts having the deictic words last, next, this and that; the quantifying words some and every; and nouns which have 'last', 'next' or 'this' as an element of their meaning: yesterday/today/tomorrow. For example:

- (42)(a) *I saw him **last Thursday***
 (b) *I'll mention it **next time I see him***
 (c) *Plums are more plentiful **this year***
 (d) ***Every summer** she returns to her childhood home*

The preposition is usually optional with deictic phrases referring to time at more than one remove from the present, such as (On) Monday week (BrE), (in) the January before last, (on) the day before yesterday. So too with phrases which Identify a time or after a given time in the past or future: (in) the previous spring, (at) the following weekend, (on) the next day. On the whole, the sentence without the preposition tends to be more informal and more usual

* NOTE

Informally, we also have omission of the temporal preposition in sentence such as:

(43) *I'll see you Sunday*

Where the preposition '**on**' is omitted before a day of the week standing on its own. Another informal type of omission is in initial position preceding a plural noun phrase:

(44) *Sundays we go into the country*

The preposition '**For**' is often omitted in phrase of duration

Such as:

(45)(a) *We stayed there (for) three months*

(b) *The snowy weather lasted (for) the whole time we were there*

(c) *(For) a lot of the time we just lay on the beach*

The omission almost invariably takes place with phrase which begin with all; such as all day, (all the) day

(46) *We stayed there all week (not for all week)*

In other cases, however, the omission is impossible: for example, where the action of verb is clearly not continuously co-extensive with the period specified:

(47) *I lived there three years* *I lived there for three year*

(48) *I taught him three years* *I taught him for three years*

Initial position in the clause also seems to discourage omission:

As in:

(49) *For 600 years, the cross lay unnoticed*

(Quirk. R 1973: 156)

Prepositions of time

Prepositions	Use	Examples
in	<i>in months</i>	<i>in July; in September</i>
	<i>year</i>	<i>in 1985; in 1999</i>
	<i>seasons</i>	<i>in summer; in the summer of 69</i>
	<i>part of the day</i>	<i>in the morning; in the afternoon; in the evening</i>
	<i>duration</i>	<i>in a minute; in two weeks</i>
at	<i>part of the day</i>	<i>at night</i>
	<i>time of day</i>	<i>at 6 o'clock; at midnight</i>
	<i>celebrations</i>	<i>at Christmas; at Easter</i>
	<i>fixed phrases</i>	<i>at the same time</i>
on	<i>days of the week</i>	<i>on Sunday; on Friday</i>
	<i>date</i>	<i>on the 25th of December*</i>
	<i>special holidays</i>	<i>on Good Friday; on Easter Sunday; on my birthday</i>
	<i>a special part of a day</i>	<i>on the morning of September the 11th*</i>
after	<i>later than sth.</i>	<i>after school</i>
ago	<i>how far sth. happened (in the past)</i>	<i>6 years ago</i>
before	<i>earlier than sth.</i>	<i>before Christmas</i>
between	<i>time that separates two points</i>	<i>between Monday and Friday</i>
by	<i>not later than a special time</i>	<i>by Thursday</i>
during	<i>through the whole of a period of time</i>	<i>during the holidays</i>
for	<i>period of time</i>	<i>for three weeks</i>
from ... to from... till/until	<i>two points form a period</i>	<i>from Monday to Wednesday</i> <i>from Monday till Wednesday</i> <i>from Monday until Wednesday</i>
Past	<i>time of the day</i>	<i>23 minutes past 6 (6:23)</i>
Since	<i>point of time</i>	<i>since Monday</i>

till/until	<i>no later than a special time</i>	<i>till tomorrow until tomorrow</i>
To	<i>time of the day</i>	<i>23 minutes to 6 (5:37)</i>
up to	<i>not more than a special time</i>	<i>up to 6 hours a day</i>
Within	<i>during a period of time</i>	<i>within a day</i>

Table: 4 Prepositions of time in English

II.2. An analysis of the dimension-types of preposition of time.

II.2.1. Dimensional preposition of time

Languages typically have forms that mark the dimensionality of the landmark in a spatial relationship. In English, some of the dimensional prepositions used to characterize the shape of the landmark are also used to express notions of time. As is well known, English spatial and temporal prepositions make a three-way distinction: zero-dimensional *at* is used for moments of time as in *at this moment*, two-dimensional *on* is used to describe periods of time, in particular days as in *on my birthday*, and three-dimensional *in* and *within* are used to refer to periods of time other than days, both shorter than days as in *in a second* and longer than days as in *in a week*. The one-dimensional preposition *along* is not used for temporal notions

	English	
time notions	dimension	preposition
point	0	<i>at</i> (this moment)
duration		<i>for</i> (a week)
period: days	2	<i>on</i> (this day)
other units	3	<i>in</i> (a week)

Table 5: English dimensional prepositions of time

The picture is, however, more systematic with metaphorical extensions of content words: a moment of time is metaphorized as a zero-dimensional “point in time”, duration is described one-dimensionally as having “length” or being “long” or “short”, and a period of time is seen either two-dimensionally as a “stretch” of time if the focus is on temporal continuity, as in *a stretch of two weeks without sunshine*, or three-dimensionally as a “span” of time if the focus is on the bounded duration of the period

II.2.2. An analysis of the dimension-types of preposition of time

II.2.2.1) Zero- dimensional point in time : At

The idea of orientation point links the spatial and temporal usage where a point in space is transferred to a point on some time continuum or temporal space. Hence, while the *at*-spatial denotes a spatial point, the *at*-temporal indicates a ‘point’ in time; *at 5am today*, *at midnight*. However, what may be regarded as a zero dimensional chronological ‘point’ is a matter of construal and not one of objective reality. Therefore, uses such as *at night*, *at the 13th to 16th week of pregnancy* are strictly speaking not the ‘point’ in chronological time but are comprehended as the ‘point’ of time; notwithstanding the fact that they actually designate rather being periods of time. *At* in the temporal domain may also indicate age, or. a point in one’s life time such as *at age 18*. Some fixed phrases such as *at this moment*, *at this point in time*, *at present*, etc, are taken to be established conventional units falling within the temporal domain

(50) *The train will arrive at 10:00 o'clock*

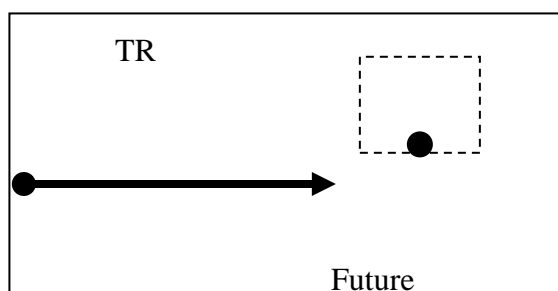


Figure A

As shown in (50) and Figure (A), the *at* preposition denotes the link between the trajector (the train) and the verb abstract future (will arrive) to the more abstract sense the time shown by the landmark (10.00 o'clock)

*) *Structure: At*

At + particular time: dawn, midday, noon, night, midnight, nine o'clock etc

E.g: at dawn.

At + the + a particular time in a week/month/year: start/end of the week/month/year, weekend.

E.g: at the start of July.

At + calendar festival season: Christmas, New Year, Easter etc..

E.g: at Easter.

At + meal: breakfast, lunch, mid-morning, tea, dinner, supper etc.. *E.g: at breakfast.*

II.2.2.2) Two- dimensional period of time: On,

On belongs to the dimension-type 2 is used to describe periods of time in particular days, and the prepositional complement of ***on*** can be seen as a two-dimensional object, as in:

(51) *Where will you be on New Year's Day*

For the prepositional complement of preposition of time ***on***, New Year's Day in above sentence considered a two-dimensional object and treated as surfaces, focus on temporal continuity.

The preposition ***on*** is often used in **time phrases**. When ***on*** is used in this way, it is followed by noun phrases that show a **specific calendar time**

Do not use ***on*** with **general clock or calendar time**

wrong: *I'll see you on 10 o'clock tomorrow morning

wrong: *U.S. Independence Day is on July

The fixed expression ***on time*** means 'at the scheduled time'

Examples:

The meeting was scheduled to begin at 9:00 AM. It began at 9:00AM.

(The meeting began on time).

*The plane was scheduled to leave at 12:10 PM. It left at 12:15, not at 12:10 (The plane didn't leave **on time**).*

***) Structure: On**

On + day of the week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday etc.

E.g. on Thursday.

On + particular part of a day: Friday morning, Saturday afternoon.

E.g. on Sunday evening.

On + particular date: 25 July 2001, 4 January.

E.g. on 19 March.

N.B. On the nineteenth of March is how this date is read aloud or said in conversation.

On + calendar festival day: Christmas Day, Palm Sunday.

E.g. on Easter Sunday.

c) Three-dimensional period of time: IN

In is three-dimensionally of time if the focus is on the bounded duration of the period as in

(52) *In England, it often snows **in** December*

December in this sentence is three-dimensional object, treated as container.

That shows the periods of time

***) Structure: In:**

in + the + a part of a day: the morning, the afternoon, evening.

E.g. in the afternoon.

in + month: January, February, March, April, May etc..

E.g. in June.

in + season of the year: Spring, Summer, Autumn.

E.g. in Winter.

in + specific year: 1988, 1989, 1990 etc..

E.g. in 1999.

in + the + a specific century: nineteenth century.

E.g. in the twentieth century.

in + **historical period of time**: the Dark Ages, Pre-historic Times.

E.g. *in the Middle Ages*.

Note; No preposition is used if the day/year has *each, every, last, next, this* before it:

I go to England every Christmas (**not** at every Christmas)

I'll see you next Monday afternoon. (**not** on Monday afternoon)

Martin left home last evening. (**not** in the evening)

II.3. The influence of preposition of time on prepositional complement.

As Randolph Quirk, a prepositional phrase consists of a preposition followed by a prepositional complement, which is characteristically a noun phrase or a Wh-clause or v-ing.

PREPOSITION	PREPOSITIONAL COMPLEMENT
-------------	--------------------------

<i>At</i>	the bus-top
-----------	-------------

<i>From</i>	what he said
-------------	--------------

<i>By</i>	signing a peace treaty
-----------	------------------------

In term of preposition of time, prepositional complement of time is changeable depending on the preposition. Let us consider the following examples:

(53) (a) *We camped there for the summer*

(b) *We camped there in the summer*

The summer acts as a prepositional complement. But the summer in 53a following preposition *for* describes the length of time that means we camped there all through the summer but *the summer* in 53b following preposition *in* show the point of time that means we camped there at sometime during the summer

Let us another examples:

- **at Christmas** (24th Dec - 1 Jan),
- **on Christmas** (25th Dec),
- **on Christmas holidays** (24th Dec - 1 Jan)

Chapter III: Some difficulties encountered by learners of English language and some suggested solutions

Owing to the habit of communication and interference of mother tongue, Vietnamese learners of English often make some common mistakes when using preposition as well as preposition of time as follows:

III.1. Confusion of Preposition of time in relation to conjunction and adverb

III.1.1. The borderline between preposition of time and conjunction

Some prepositions of time and conjunctions in English have identical forms like *after, before, since*.....; therefore, it is easy to confuse or to use them incorrectly.

Let us consider the following sentences

- (54) (a) We met her **after** lunch.
(b) We thanked them **after** they did it

“**After**” in 96a acts as a prepositions of time denoting the relation whereas in 96b acts as a conjunction denoting the connection.

Other examples:

After we ate, we went to the movie (conjunction)

After the lecture, we went to the movie (preposition)

I've been living in Denver since last summer (preposition)

I've been living in Denver since my father died (conjunction)

III.1.2 The borderline between preposition of time and adverb

Let us consider the following sentences:

- (55) (a) He has been here **since** Monday
(b) He left school in 1993. I haven't seen him **since**

In the above sentences, although *since* appear in both sentences, it has different functions. Since in 97a is a preposition, in 97b is an adverb.

From the confusions above, the best method to detect prepositions is by analyzing the syntactic functionality of each linked sentence element.

Prepositions link two sentence elements having different syntactic functions. For example: verbs and their direct objects; nouns and their attributes; etc. **Conjunctions** link two morphologic/syntactic elements of the same type (including two prepositions), or two sentences. **The adverb** determines only one sentence element (a verb, a noun, an adjective, or another adverb) or an entire sentence

III.2.The confusion of using some pairs of preposition of time

In English, there are many pairs of prepositions of time making confusing for learners such as:

Since and for

On, in, at and by

In and within

By and until

Therefore we must distinguish the differences between them

Since and for

Since refers to the starting point of an action. It means ‘from a particular point of time in the past’ and it should be used with the present perfect tense of the verb.

*He has been absent **since** last Monday. (NOT He is absent since last Monday.)*

*It has been raining continuously **since** yesterday morning. (NOT It is raining since yesterday morning.)*

For is used to talk about duration. It refers to a period of time.

*I have been waiting here **for** two hours.*

*We have been living here **for** three years.*

A common mistake is to use **since** when referring to a period of time. You must not use ‘He has been absent since two days’ or ‘I have been studying since two hours.’

On, in, at and by

While mentioning about time preposition ‘**at**’ indicates an exact point of time, ‘**on**’ a more general point of time and ‘**in**’ a period of time.

*I shall be there **at 4 pm**.*

*We set out **at dawn**.*

*I was born **on May 26**.*

*The postman brought this letter **in the morning**.*

*I shall visit them **in summer**.*

*It is very hot **in the day** and quite cold **at night**.*

Note that ‘at night’ is an exception to this rule.

By is used to show the latest time at which an action will be finished. So it is usually used with the future tenses.

*I shall be leaving **by 6 o’ clock**.*

*I hope to finish the work **by the end of this year**.*

In and within (time)

In means at the end of a certain period; **within** means before the end of a certain period.

*The spacecraft will reach the moon **in three days**. (= at the end of three days)*

*The spacecraft will reach the moon **within three days**. (= before the end of three days)*

*The loan should be repaid **in a year**.*

*The loan should be repaid **within a year**.*

Note that this distinction too is not always kept and **in** is often used for **within**.

By and until

Both **until** and **by** indicate “any time before, but not later than.”

Until tells us how long a situation continues. If something happens **until** a particular time, you stop doing it at that time.

For example:

*They lived in a small house **until** September 2003.*

(They stopped living there in September.)

*I will be away **until** Wednesday*

(I will be back on Wednesday.)

We also use **until** in negative sentences.

For example:

*Details will **not** be available **until** January.*

(January is the earliest you can expect to receive the details.)

If something happens **by** a particular time, it happens at or before that time. It is often used to indicate a deadline.

For example:

*You have to finish **by** August 31.*

(August 31 is the last day you can finish; you may finish before this date.)

We also use **by** when asking questions.

For example:

*Will the details be available **by** December?*

(This asks if they will be ready no later than December

III.3. Confusion of the variety of lexical meanings of preposition

The most obvious feature of prepositions is the variety of lexical meanings that many of them can have. Let us consider the meanings of *around* and *beneath* in following sentences:

(57) (a) *They walked around the statue*

(b) *I will return around 5:00*

(58) (a) *Horace stood beneath the Balancing Rock*

(b) *Horace is beneath contempt*

This variety of meanings sometimes creates confusion for students, particularly those who simplistically associate certain structures with prepositions. For instance object construction is sometimes associated with paraphrases using the prepositions *to* and *for*. However, this semantic relation emerges only when to

has a recipient meaning and for has a beneficiary meaning. In other words, the sentences in (100a) and (100b) can be rephrased as sentences with indirect objects (100c) and (100d)

- (59) (a) *I offered a dozen widgets to Hickle*
 (b) *I made an artificial earlobe for Hickle*
 (c) *I offered Hickle a dozen widgets*
 (d) *I made Hickle an artificial earlobe*

The most appropriate way to overcome this type of problem is to clarify the semantic types of prepositions. The semantics of prepositions covers a wide range of meanings. Traditional categories along with some typical ones, are given in the following table

Semantic types	Prepositions
Time	<i>At, in, on, about, during, for, since....</i>
Place	<i>Above, around, at, behind, beneath,</i>
Cause and reason	<i>Because of, on account of.....</i>
Purpose or intended destination	<i>For...</i>
Recipient, goal, target	<i>For, to, at...</i>
Source and origin	<i>To, from, of...</i>
Manner, means, instrument	<i>With, in, by,,, without.....</i>
Accompaniment	<i>With</i>
Support, opposition	<i>For, against, with</i>
Concession	<i>Despite, in spite of, for + all, with + all</i>
Subject matter	<i>About, on</i>

III.4. Missing of preposition of time

Prepositions, prepositions of time as well are the most frequently occurring type of word in the English language. So, they are a pretty important word group to understand

A missing preposition is a common mistake for both native speakers and non-native English speakers. Prepositions can be hard for non-native English

speakers as well, since their translations are difficult. One English preposition might have two or more translations in another language, so it can get confusing.

Eg: (60) (a) *I want know how to meet new people*
(b) *By the time we arrived the party, it was finished.*
(c) *I traveled Russia this summer*

The preposition "to" is required before an infinitive in the sentence 60

The sentences 60a and 60c require a preposition after the verbs arrive and travel

Therefore, correct sentences must be:

I want to know how to meet new people
By the time we arrived at the party, it was finished
I traveled to Russia this summer

The best way to learn about prepositions is to look them up in a dictionary, or to practice more exercises on prepositions, prepositions of time as well (see more in Appendix B)

PART THREE: CONCLUSION

Prepositions in English are very diverse. This paper described in detail preposition of time. English prepositions of time constitute a very important element of sentence formation. They help to establish a grammatical as well as semantic concord between different parts of a sentence which refer to time, periods of time, and duration of events and activities. Prepositions, preposition of time as well occupy a smaller number than noun or verb and they do not have tense or mood but they play a very important role in making a sentence. If we omit it, the sentence is sometime meaningless.

In this paper, preposition in English also has been summarized semantically as follow:

Prepositions consisting of preposition of place, of time, of cause and reason, of purpose or intended destination, of manner means and instrument, of source and origin, of concession, of recipient goal and target, of accompaniment, of support and opposition, of subject matter.

The main part of this paper was the study on preposition of time and their dimension-types concluding 'time when' (AT) and 'period of time' (IN, ON),it pointed out problems for English foreign learner when using preposition as well as preposition of time and suggested solutions for those problems.

In conclusion, despite of my careful study, I am fully aware that mistakes are unavoidable. However, I hope that this subject will be studied further and can be helpful data for learners of English

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APPENDIX A

The meanings of prepositions in English

The table below gives the most usual meanings of English prepositions. Each meaning is illustrated by an example.

About

1. On the subject of: This is a story about elephants.
2. Approximately: He is about ten years old.

Above

1. Higher than; over: The plane flew above the clouds.

2. Earlier on a page: There is a heading above each diagram.

Across

1. From one side to the other: We walked across the field.

2. On the other side of: There is a store across the street.

After

1. Later in time: after ten o'clock; after lunch

2. Later in a series: Q comes after P in the alphabet.

3. In pursuit of: The dog ran after the cat.

Against

1. In opposition to: Theft is against the law.

2. Touching; supported by: I leaned my bicycle against the wall.

Along

1. Following the length of: We walked along the road.

Among

1. Within a group: The money was shared among three people.

Note: In formal English, among is usually used only when referring to more than two persons or things. In contrast, between is used when referring to two persons or things.

Around

1. Circling something: We walked around the block.

2. Surrounding: There is a fence around the garden.

3. In different parts of: I looked around the house for the keys.

4. In the other direction: We turned around and went back home.

5. Approximately: He is around six feet tall.

At

1. A specific location: at 23 Chestnut Street; at the park

2. A point in time: at 5 o'clock; at Christmas

3. A condition: at peace; at war; at rest

4. An activity: at work; at school; at play

5. Towards: Look at someone; wave at someone

Note: When referring to a specific location or to a point in time, *at* is usually used. When referring to a certain street or a certain day, *on* is usually used. When referring to a location as an area, or when referring to a unit of time longer than a day, *in* is usually used.
e.g. *at Christmas; on Christmas day; in the Christmas holidays*

Before

1. Earlier in time: before two o'clock; before Christmas
2. Earlier in a series: S comes before T in the alphabet.

Behind

1. At the back of: The little girl hid behind her mother.
2. Late: I am behind in my work.
3. Cause; origin: Who was behind that idea?

Below

1. Lower than; under: below freezing; below sea level
2. Later on a page: Footnotes are provided below the text.

Beneath

1. Lower than; below: beneath the earth

Beside

1. Next to; at the side of: I sit beside her in class.

Besides

1. Also; as well as: We study other languages besides English.

Between

1. An intermediate location: Toronto lies between Montreal and Vancouver.
2. An intermediate time: between Christmas and New Year's Day
3. Intermediate in a series: B comes between A and C in the alphabet.
4. An intermediate amount: between five and ten people
5. Within a group of two: The money was shared between two people.

Beyond

1. Farther than: The mountains lie beyond the horizon.
2. Further than; exceeding: That was beyond my expectations.

But

1. Except: I have read all but the last chapter

By

1. Near: a house by the sea
2. Past: He waved as he drove by the house.
3. Not later than: Try to finish the work by next week.
4. In units of: cheaper by the dozen; sold by weight
5. Through the means of: travel by plane; written by him

Concerning

1. Connected with; about: He studies everything concerning trees.

Despite

1. In spite of: We walked downtown despite the rain.

Down

1. To a lower position: The ball rolled down the hill.
2. Further along: He lives down the street.

During

1. Throughout a period: She works during the day.
2. Sometime within a period: An accident occurred during the night.

Except

1. Not including: I have visited everyone except him

For

1. Duration of time: We walked for two hours.
2. Distance: I walked for five kilometers.
3. Purpose: I bought this jacket for you.
4. In the direction of: She left for New York.
5. In favor of: We are for the proposal.
6. Considering: The boy is clever for his age.

From

1. Place of origin: We left from Boston; he comes from Mexico
2. Start of a period of time: from now on; from yesterday until today

3. Start of a range: From 20 to 30 people were present.
4. Cause: He suffers from nervousness.
5. Source: I first heard the story from you.

In

1. Place thought of as an area: in London; in Europe
2. Within a location: in the room; in the building
3. Large units of time: That happened in March, in 1992.
4. Within a certain time: I will return in an hour.
5. By means of: write in pencil; speak in English
6. Condition: in doubt; in a hurry; in secret
7. A member of: He is in the orchestra; in the navy
8. Wearing: the boy in the blue shirt
9. With reference to: lacking in ideas; rich in oil

Inside

1. Within: They are inside the house.

Into

1. To the inside of: We stepped into the room.
2. Change of condition: The boy changed into a man.

Like

1. Resembling: That looks like him.
2. Appearing possible: It looks like rain.
3. Be in a suitable mood for: I feel like going swimming.

Minus

1. Less: Three minus two equals one.

Near

1. Close to: near the school; near the ocean

Of

1. Location: east of here; the middle of the road
2. Possession: a friend of mine; the sound of music
3. Part of a group: one of us; a member of the team

4. Measurement: a cup of milk; two meters of snow

Off

1. Not on; away from: Please keep off the grass.
2. At some distance from: There are islands off the coast.

On

1. Touching the surface of: on the table; on the wall
2. A certain day: That happened on Sunday, on the 6th of June.
3. A certain street: on South Street
4. About: a book on engineering
5. A state or condition: on strike; on fire; on holiday
6. By means of: live on a pension; shown on television

Onto

1. To a position on: The child climbed onto the table.

Opposite

1. Facing: The library is opposite the fire station.

Out of

1. To the outside of: She went out of the room.
2. From among: We won two games out of three.
3. Motive: We spoke to them out of politeness.
4. Material: The bridge is made out of steel.
5. Beyond: out of control; out of danger

Outside

1. On the outer side of: outside the house
2. Beyond the limits of: outside my experience

Over

1. Above; higher than: There are cupboards over the sink.
2. Covering: We spread an extra blanket over the bed.
3. Across: I jumped over a puddle.
4. More than: It cost over ten dollars; it took over an hour
5. During: I saw him several times over the past week.

6. By means of: We made plans over the telephone.

Past

1. Up to and beyond: I walked past the house.
2. After (in time): It was past 2 o'clock; half past two
3. Beyond: past belief

Per

1. For each: 60 kilometers per hour; price per liter

Plus

1. With the addition of: Six plus four equals ten.

Since

1. From a specific time in the past: I had been waiting since two o'clock.
2. From a past time until now: I have been waiting here since noon.

Through

1. Across; from end to end of: the main road through town
2. For the whole of a period: I slept through the night.
3. By means of: Skill improves through practice.

Throughout

1. In every part of: throughout the world
2. For the whole of a period: throughout the winter

Till

Note: Till can be used instead of until. However, at the beginning of a sentence, until is usually used.

To

1. In the direction of: Turn to the right.
2. Destination: I am going to Rome.
3. Until: from Monday to Friday; five minutes to ten
4. Compared with: They prefer hockey to soccer.
5. With indirect object: Please give it to me.
6. As part of infinitive: I like to ski; he wants to help.
7. In order to: We went to the store to buy soap.

Toward (or Towards)

1. In the direction of: We walked toward the center of town.
2. Near; just before (time): It rained towards evening.

Under

1. Beneath: under the desk; under the trees
2. Less than: Under 100 people were present.
3. In circumstances of: under repair; under way; under discussion

Underneath

1. Below, under: underneath the carpet

Until

1. Up to a certain time: She will stay until Friday; until 5 p.m.

Upon

Note: On and upon have similar meanings. Upon may be used in certain expressions, as in once upon a time, and following certain verbs, as in to rely upon someone.

Up

1. To a higher place: We went up the stairs.
2. In a higher place: She lives up the hill.

Up to

1. As far as: up to now; I have read up to page 100.
2. Depending on: The decision is up to you.
3. As good as; ready for: His work is up to standard.

Versus

1. Against (sports, legal): The next game is England versus Australia.

Via

1. By way of: He went to Los Angeles via San Francisco.

With

1. Accompanying: He came with her; I have my keys with me.
2. Having; containing: Here is a book with a map of the island.
3. By means of; using: I repaired the shoes with glue.

4. Manner: with pleasure; with ease; with difficulty

5. Because of: We were paralyzed with fear.

Within

1. Inside of: within twenty minutes; within one kilometer

Without

1. Not having: Do not leave without your coat; without money

APPENDIX B

Exercises on prepositions of time

Fill in the gaps (if necessary) with on / in / at

1. My birthday is ___ April 4.
2. We always have a big family reunion ___ Christmas.
3. My aunts and uncles came to visit ___ Christmas Day.
4. I'll see you ___ Friday.
5. We always play tennis ___ the weekend.
6. I'll call you ___ tomorrow.
7. Sally got married ___ February 14th 2005
8. She had her first baby ___ December, ___ Christmas Eve!
9. We usually watch TV ___ the evening.
10. I hate ___ Mondays!

11. ___ Tuesdays and Fridays I have a piano lesson.
12. ___ last Spring we went to the USA for 2 weeks.
13. We're going away ___ next weekend.
14. My family always gets together ___ Easter and ___ Easter Sunday the children have great fun looking for the eagle's eggs.
15. Daffodils bloom ___ in _____ Spring.
16. In Europe school starts ___ in _____ September.
17. ___ Mother's Day, I always give a card and flowers to my mother.
18. Her birthday is ___ July 10th. In Cyprus, it's ___ July, so she usually has a barbecue on the beach for her friends and family. That's the advantage of having a birthday ___ the summer.
19. My grandfather died ___ the age of 87.
20. He left ___ 7:00 ___ the evening.
21. I usually start work _____ 9 a.m.
22. I hardly ever work _____ Sundays
23. I have lots of meetings _____ the morning.
24. I have been working here _____ 15 years
25. I hope I will be promoted _____ two or three years.