

## **Research on Preposition Teaching of College English Based on Cognitive Linguistics**

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**Abstract.** English prepositions are a kind of polysemous words, which are abstract and complex. English prepositions have been paid close attention by scholar. They are also the difficulties in English teaching. The basic theories of cognitive linguistics, such as image schema theory and metaphor theory, can be used as useful supplements to the traditional preposition teaching. This paper discusses the applications of image schema theory and metaphor theory in the teaching of English prepositions to provide some references for the relative researchers.

### **Introduction**

Prepositions are very important in English teaching. Although the study of prepositions has been carried out in the academic circles, there is still a lack of practical teaching mode in the teaching of prepositions. Among the most English parts of speech, the most abundant and subtle word is a preposition. Its strong ability of semantic reproduction, flexible use, high frequency of use, as well as the use of great difficulty, are less than other parts of speech. Many students are not accurate and skilled in the use of prepositions, and often make the same mistakes. Therefore, we will do some research and Discussion on English prepositions, which will help learners to master the use of English prepositions. Although the number of English prepositions is limited, it is flexible and widely used. Therefore, it is very important for Chinese learners to master the usage of these prepositions. The combination of advanced teaching ideas and appropriate teaching methods will lead to a successful teaching model and bring more excellent teaching results. In this process, how to explore an effective teaching model has become the primary task of English teaching. According to the traditional semantics, the semantics of English spatial prepositions is very arbitrary, that is to say, there are no correlations between the meanings of prepositions. With the development of cognitive linguistics, the cognitive approach has put forward different views. It is based on the cognitive experience of human beings to explain the evolution and construction process of preposition semantics. In view of this, we consider if the cognitive model applied to teaching, training them to explore the motivation of prepositional meaning construction, help students clearly know the significance of the prototype solution of prepositions, while easily learn other metaphorical meaning.

### **Image Schema Theory and Its Application in Preposition Teaching**

**Image Schema Theory.** Schema is a psychological term, refers to the people based on perception and representation on the relevant experience and information processing into a certain conventional cognitive structure, can be stored in long-term memory, the generality and abstractness of the. Contemporary cognitive linguistics has accepted and developed schema theory, which has formed the theory of image schema in the framework of cognitive linguistics. In cognitive linguistics, the human understanding of the objective world and the world of human beings as well as in the interactive teaching experience of the course, through the cognitive process of categorization, the understanding of the objective world will be based on the abstract schema forms exist in the minds of the people. Schema refers to the fact that people process information and experience into some kind of cognitive structure, which can be stored in human memory for a long time. The image schema has initially formed the image schema theory under the framework of cognitive linguistics. People's daily

perception of interaction in the repeated, relatively simple dynamic style, there are basic and complex points. The basic image schema can interact with each other to form a more complex image schema, after repeated cycle, people will continue to form a complex concept based on the basic concept, and through the days and months multiplying the deposit of culture, and gradually formed the concept of complex system. The conventional cognitive structure formed by the processing of experience and information is stored in the form of Schema in the long memory of human beings. The schema has the basic and the complex, has the degree difference in the general and the abstract and so on, the basic schema can form a more complex schema. Schema has the character of non - cognition and acquisition, which is stored in the form of schema knowledge.

**Application of Image Schema Theory in Preposition Teaching.** The image schema is the cognitive structure of the most basic simple, we obtain from daily experience, when the human brain formed a kind of image schema, the original meaning will not consciously use it to recognize those new, complex and abstract things. Most prepositions said with the concept of space, in the process of use prepositions, people on the basis of the spatial concept and give it new meaning, thus forming a network of cognitive grammar. Polysemy of prepositions will be positioned in the discussion of spatial direction relations when the entity called emitter, will serve as the reference entity is called a (LM), this paper adopts the following the same term. The prepositions on as an example to demonstrate the specific operation process, according to the different parts of the contact and trajectory landmark can be divided into four kinds. The multiple meanings of English prepositions are related to each other, one of which is the core meaning. The prototype category, there are many non-core category and a few marginal category typical spatial preposition on. Its meaning is contact. The third is landmark in the upper lower contact, cognition has the most unmarked. Therefore, the third sense of on appeared in the sequence of acquisition, is the prototype. The prototype meaning includes the following basic meaning: space contact and trajectory landmark; emitter of landmark pressure on the body; a support. The object of human cognition, the spatial relationship between categorization and conceptualization. The spatial cognition has varying degrees of difference.

People from different perspectives to observe the same spatial structure, choose different reference to determine the spatial relationship of objects. Chinese learners learn English spatial prepositions, the concept of space in their native language has been established, so in the process of learning English preposition space, categorization and conceptualization of language learners of spatial relations and spatial cognition will affect the English space concept understanding, construction and production, but also affected by the English space category system. In short, the Chinese learners' English spatial prepositions are influenced by the two spatial categories of Chinese and English. The similarities and differences between English Spatial categories and the similarities and differences between English and Chinese in spatial categorization can lead to difficulties in the acquisition of Chinese prepositions.

The development of cognitive linguistics provides a new perspective for foreign language teaching, the prototype theory holds that the semantic structure of the prepositions is a prototypical meaning as the center of the category, there are prototypical meanings and meanings of edge points. The prototype meaning is considered as the most representative in the semantic category, which is first recognized by the people. In the teaching process, follow the schema level teaching model and schema Acquisition Law to teach the basic level of reading material, reading material and using the method of repeated the same basic schema category, in order to achieve the basic schema of comprehension and acquisition. On this basis, the difficulty of reading materials is further improved, and the corresponding schema knowledge in the mind of the students is expanded and enriched. In the mind of students, the basic schema knowledge has been used as the background knowledge of the same subject matter, which is difficult to understand. The other senses refer to the prototype meaning as the cognitive reference point, and use the image schema, through the metaphorical cognitive model, to expand and extend the family similarity to form a semantic chain. Semantic extension is of great significance to the teaching of English prepositions.

## **Metaphor Theory and Its Application in Preposition Teaching**

**Metaphor Theory.** Metaphor theory regards metaphor as a kind of language phenomenon, which is a rhetorical phenomenon used to modify the discourse. However, metaphor is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also a cognitive phenomenon of human being. It is a cognitive activity in which one's experience in one field is used to illustrate or understand the experience of another. Cognitive linguistics is a branch of cognitive science, which is an interdisciplinary subject of cognitive psychology and linguistics. Due to the status of cognitive science thinking as the object in the system of science is rising, so as to language cognitive linguistics and cognitive science research object combination is showing its importance and necessity. Language is one of human intelligence activities, is a product of cognitive process, is the embodiment of human cognition, so the study of language must explore the relationship between language and cognition, observe the cognitive characteristics and cognitive structure of language structure, so as to reveal the essence of language. This requires us to use the theory and results of cognitive science to study the generation, development and rules of language. Metaphor is not arbitrary, but derived from the structure of everyday experience. The cognitive theory of metaphor is a watershed between traditional and contemporary metaphor. The traditional metaphor theory mainly describes the statement itself and the use of language, while the contemporary cognitive theory of metaphor that through cognitive and conceptual domain mapping function to another conceptual domain, which has a metaphorical statement, can acquire the metaphorical meaning. In daily life, people often refer to as the concrete, concept, thinking, experience, treat the intangible and difficult to define the concept of relationship between cognitive styles formed a different concept. Cognitive linguistics holds that a conceptual metaphor consists of two parts: a domain and a target. Conceptual metaphor is the mapping of the domain with a relatively clear internal structure to a less structured target domain. Behind every language there is a complex conceptual system. The conceptual system contains a large number of conceptual metaphors.

**Application of Metaphor Theory in Preposition Teaching.** Metaphor plays an important role in human conceptual system. It is regarded as a systematic way of thinking, behavior, and expression of ideas. With the development of human language for a long time, prepositions are endowed with rich metaphorical meanings. In the teaching of prepositions, we should pay attention to the internal relations between the semantic meaning and the semantic meaning of prepositions.

In the limited prepositions, there are few prepositions of metaphor. However, when prepositions and nouns are combined into phrases, they are able to express a wide range of expressions. For example, the preposition and abstract noun, express: not only can enrich the contents of the abstract concept concrete, also to human body movements and emotions are described, more can reflect the status and nature of a thing. There are many kinds of prepositions with metaphorical meaning, and they are rich in objects. They can be very flexible. There are many kinds of objects with metaphorical meaning, and they have a wide variety of objects, which is also a component of the rich expression. Abstract nouns are only one of the forms, and the object of the preposition can also be a proper noun, a personal pronoun, a verb, and a single noun. Since prepositional phrases can also be used as adjectives, adverbs of degree can be used to modify the prepositional phrase, which emphasizes the content of the prepositional phrase. Some prepositions and nouns because of the use of a wide range of factors such as the use of a fixed phrase. After the emergence of a new combination, the expression of these phrases will be more tension. It can be inferred that in can represent any direction, and that it is the most unique locative prepositions in English locative prepositions. The concept of space and time is a twin sister in the physical world. They complement each other and can transform each other. So in says time is a natural thing. It also gives us a revelation or bold inference: the azimuth preposition can basically express the time. As time comes from the conceptual metaphor of space, it plays the role of bridge between surface metaphor and deep metaphor. As discussed above for up, the metaphorical meaning of the spatial meaning of in is, in many cases, also alluding to other special meanings. This special meaning is far away from the core meaning of in, but it can also get a glimpse of the relationship between the core meaning and the core meaning. When it comes to the extent that

people are not easy to understand or understand, it is the deep metaphor of the locative preposition. The level of metaphor may vary from person to person. For some people it is a metaphor for the surface, while others may be a metaphor for the deep. The understanding of metaphor is sometimes influenced by cultural background and knowledge. Metaphor itself is not only language level, but also culture and cognition levels.

### **Conclusion**

Cognitive linguists believe that there is an internal relation among the meanings of polysemous prepositions. One of them is the core meaning, and the others are formed based on the core meaning. According to the image schema theory and metaphor theory, teachers can help students to store and recall the meanings of prepositions, which can improve the memory effect and improve the efficiency of preposition learning.

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