



The analysis of Non-Persian speakers' errors in using simple prepositions in written Persian texts: A cognitive approach

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Abstract

Factors like polysemy, diversified usage of prepositions in different contexts, and collocation of prepositions with special verbs make non-Persian speakers' Persian learning challenging. This research focuses on the type and frequency of errors in using simple prepositions in Sa'adi Foundation's corpus of written texts, presenting new analytical cognitive theories. Following the descriptive-analytical method, this article extracts data on a systematic random sampling basis from the corpus of texts written by non-Persian speakers in six different competency levels. One hundred six samples of texts written by the statistical population were randomly selected from the corpus of 535 texts, extracting a collection of 1,369 phrases/clauses. Then errors in using simple Persian prepositions in the sentences were identified and classified. Results showed that errors in using prepositions could be classified into three groups: "Illogical Addition", "Illogical Omission", and "Substitution of Wrong Preposition", each having sub-divisions. Afterward, errors were analyzed based on Lakoff's (1987) and Johnson's (1987) image schema theory and Tyler and Evans's (2003) Principled Polysemy. Analysis of errors showed that the cognitive system's principled polysemy is formed in learners' minds while making errors in using special prepositions in parallel paths, too. One reason for such errors is that different prepositional concepts are taught in isolation. Any endeavor in cognitive linguistics that successfully relates the prototypical meaning and peripheral meanings will help connect prepositions' conceptual network. When teaching prepositions, teachers should consider their semantic networks.

Keywords: Cognitive linguistics, Prepositions, Error, Prototypical meaning, Peripheral meaning

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