

# **A SEMANTIC STUDY OF SOME ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS**

**( A View of Case Category )**



## **THESIS**

**Presented to The Tarbiyah Faculty Of The State  
Institute Of Islamic Studies Sunan Kalijaga  
Yogyakarta**

**to fulfill one of the requirements to get  
the Scholar Degree of Strata One  
in Tarbiyah Islamiyah**

**By**

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**1995**

## CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

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The State Institute of Islamic Studies  
"Sunan Kalijaga" Yogyakarta  
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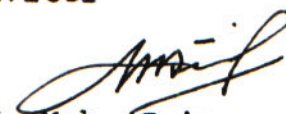
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## MOTTO

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ  
السِّنِّكُمْ وَالْوُجُوهِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ  
لِّلْعَالَمِينَ (الروم: ٢٢)

"Dan di antara tanda-tanda kekuasaan-Nya ialah menciptakan langit dan bumi dan berlain-lainan bahasamu dan warna kulitmu. Sesungguhnya pada yang demikian itu benar-benar terdapat tanda-tanda bagi orang-orang yang mengetahui."

Q.S. Ar-Rum:22

(Departemen Agama RI, 1987 : 644)

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"And of His signs is the creation of the Heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Lo! here in indeed are portens for men of knowledge." Ar-Romes:22  
(Pickthall, 1947: 291)

DEDICATION



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To :

1. My almamater
2. My esteemed parents
3. My dear sisters and brothers

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين الصلوة والسلام على أشرف  
الأنبياء والمرسلين سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين أما بعد

Praise and thanks be to Allah, the God of all universe. He is who creates all the creatures, included one spectacular creature, the brain, for human beings. And He creates them in various colors, languages, and cultures to be friends to each other, to complete in making "peace" in the world, and to become increasingly devout for their "peace" in the beyond. The distinction is the God's mercy for the sake of "fastabiqul Khairat". And He is who has blessed the writer in composing and finishing this writing.

This thesis is one of the requirements that must be fulfilled by a student in Tarbiyah Faculty. Furthermore, it is to examine and to train the scientific capacity of the student in analyzing the problem and reproducing his knowledge. This thesis entitles "A Semantic Study of Some English prepositions (A View of Case Category)".

The writer, in this opportunity, would like to give unrestricted thanks and honors to :

1. Drs. Muhammad Anis, M.A., the Dean of Tarbiyah Faculty, for his permit or license.



2. Prof. Drs. H. Muhammad Zein, the adviser, for his encouragement, direction, and guidance.
3. Those who have made the writer knows the English, for their services of implanting the knowledge.
4. Those who handled and are implicated in the munaqosyah session, for their participation and sincerity.
5. Those who the writer cannot mention one by one, for their help, advice and encouragement. May God bless them all. Amiin.

Finally, the writer is aware of all lacks on this thesis. Accordingly, the writer hopes and receives all critics and suggestions. Thank you very much. May Allah bless this work, and may it be useful. Amin.

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Yogyakarta, Dec. 19, 1994

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. The Clarification Of The Title

In order to avoid misunderstanding of what is meant by the title "A Semantic Study Of Some English Preposition (A View Of Case Category)", the writer considers it is necessary to explain some key words. They are :

##### 1. Semantic Study

It is a term used in linguistic. It consists of two words, namely "semantic" and "study". Semantic is an adjective that means "connecting with the meaning of words or the sense of word" (C.K. Ogden, 1955 : 325). According to Hornby this term means "relating to meaning, especially meaning in language." (1986 : 1177). The word study, here, is a noun of transitive word study as well. It means "a process of gaining knowledge of subject, especially from books." (Hornby, 1986 : 1277). The word study is frequently used interchangeably with the word analysis. So the noun phrase "semantic study" in the term of linguistic means : "an analysis based on the meanings or the senses of the word relations ...

relations such as synonymy and paraphrase, logical inclusion and exclusion; also the explication of logical relations between sentences of analyticity and contradiction." (Meethan, 1969: 499).

## 2. English Preposition

According to Virginia S. Taylor Thatcher, English is one of low German group of language spoken by the people of England and the descendants of native of that country as the Americans, Canadians, Australian Colonist, etc. (1870 : 289). Preposition means "a word that connects a noun or pronoun, by indicating relationship between the things for which they stand." (Curme, 1947 : 19). Many other detail and clear definitions about preposition will be discussed in the next chapter.

## 3. Case Category

This subtitle is intended to restrict the analysis. In the other words, in this thesis, the writer would like to analyze some English prepositions from the point of case category.

Bergen and Cornelia Evans stated that many grammarians used the term Case to mean the

function ...



function that the word has in the sentence or the case that it would have in completely inflected language. And the term category means a class division in any general scheme of classification. (1957 : 86-87). Charles Fillmore used the term case to talk about basic syntactic-semantic relationships. Some languages express such relationships with inflectional endings on noun, and in English, it expressed by prepositions. He also notes that for English, cases are indicated by prepositions in which the surface categories of subject and direct object are indicated by a combination of word order and the absence of prepositions. (Poedjosudarmo, : 3-4)

From the definitions above, in this connection, what the writer means by the title "A Semantic Study Of Some English Prepositions (A View of Case Category)" is an effort to analyze the meanings or the senses of some English prepositions viewed from case category for the sake of teaching English especially the teaching of English preposition.

#### B. The Background Of The Title

Knowing a language obviously means knowing the morphemes, simple words, compound words and their mean-

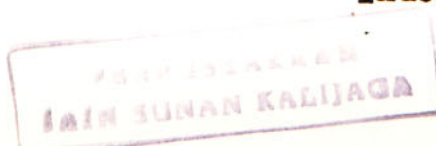
meanings...



ings. We comprehend sentences because we know the meanings of individual words, and we know rules for combining their meanings. If a person studies a foreign language, he or she has to learn both words meaning and how to combine them into sentence meanings. Memorizing the word will not get very far. In acquiring the native language, of course, we learn these semantic rules unconsciously because "the study of linguistic meaning concerns the study of word and morpheme meanings, as well as the study of rules for combining meanings." (Victoria Fromkin and Robert Rodman, 1978 : 188).

Two words in different languages can never be exactly the same, though the words seem to have similar meanings, there will still be some differences in concept and use. This phenomenon usually causes some additional difficulties in language learning - teaching. This can cause a person who is learning a foreign language to misuse words since he will certainly be strongly influenced by his own language. And, this will, therefore, lead to misunderstanding. In the problem of teaching English as a foreign language to Indonesian students, for example, there are similar words in English and Indonesian which infact still have different concepts. Let us consider the word "fish" in English and "ikan" in Indonesian. For

Indonesian...



Indonesian speakers, "ikan" can mean "fish" as well as whales and porpoises. Whales and porpoises however are never called "fish" by English-speaking people. An Indonesian student who still does not know the differentiation clearly will say "fish" to refer to whale instead of mammal, and this will make an English-speaking person surprised and confused.

Another example is the problem of word "cat" in English and "kucing" in Indonesian. Ordinarily, in Indonesian, "kucing" always means domestic cat. However in English "cat" can also mean tiger, lion, etc. as well as domestic cat.

If we know such a distinction, we have a lot of advantages in teaching English as foreign language. We can explain the meanings of word clearly and precisely. A mere word to word translation is inadequate. Merely consulting a bilingual dictionary to know the meaning of foreign word is not a good way. Hayakawa, A Japanese American linguist, says in his book titled "Symbol, Status and Personality", that the best way to find what a word means is not to look it up in the dictionary but to observe how it is used (1953: 5). Similarly, Portia G. Perrin in Jack C. Gray also stated that words have meaning only as they are used in particular statements. They can be studied individually but as they are recorded in dictionary, for example, they

have ...



have only typical or possible meaning. And one way to show that meaning is not in the word is to consider some words that are used in several senses which sense was intended is usually clear from the sentence in which it is used, -that is from the context.

Besides this, he also explains that the meanings of statements, then, is in situation; it is the consequence of the statement and is the resulting several factors, namely :

1. the speaker's intention and attitude, 2. his part association with the words, his knowledge or experience with the thing or idea the statement is about.
2. the typical use of words by people who speak the language the associations of the words are likely to arouse.
3. the listener's attitude and the associations with both the words and the objects.
4. the object or situation or idea to which they are referring. (1963 : 11)

For a large class of words, the meaning of word is in its uses in the language. Language, then, according to Wittgenstein, is integrated into our behavior and our interactions with others in an intimate way. We use it to give commands, to answer questions, to greet each other, to argue and so on. (1953 : 31) .

Having .....



Having analyzed some statements above, the meaning of word, according to the writer, is depend on the context, not on the text. A word has different meanings in different context or situations. In other hand one meaning can be expressed by several words. In practice, we all know what is for a word to have meaning . Knowing the meanings of the word means that we can do a number of things, we can use it properly, we can explain it to others in term of paraphrases or synonyms.

We all agree with the opinions that the language regarded as basically an information system, it will associate message (the meaning) with a set of signs (the sounds of language) or the symbol of the written text. But the communication is not simple. Palmer reveals several reasons, namely :

1. Language does not always have a message in any real senses, certainly not in the sense of a piece of information.
2. In language, both the sign and the messages are themselves enormously complex.
3. It is extremely difficult to specify precisely what the message is. (1986 : 6).

In our country English is regarded as the first foreign language to be taught or studied. It is given to the learners from junior high school level to the university level. It is, from those programme, ex-

expected ...

pected that the students have good command of English so that they can deepen their knowledges and sciences as most of the science and technology are written in English and have been discovered by develeped countries. And to gain those aimed the students should master English well.

As stated implicitly in the first paragraph of this subchapter, it can be said that one of the important sign of a person who has mastered English well is his knowledge of the meaning and the correct use of prepositions. It is important, because "most of the sentences contain one or more prepositions. The sentences without prepositions will not make much senses" (Burtness , 1981 : 125).

In this thesis the writer deal with prepositions. The teaching of preposition is one of the most problematics in the teaching of English as a foreign language. English prepositions are very difficult for foreign students to learn. A good knowledge of the uses and the meanings of prepositions is absolutly for mastering English. J.B. Heaton says that prepositions and particles cause more difficulty to many overseas students than other aspect of English. (1977 : v ). Therefore, by presenting an analysis of some English prepositions, it is hoped that the writer can give a little contributions to the teaching of English preposition ....



position to Indonesian students.

Non-Native speakers probably have more trouble in mastering prepositions. This is partly, because the rules governing prepositions are quite complex than they appear to native speakers who use prepositions easily and frequently and scarcely give them a second thought. To see just how involved the preposition rules can become, however, consider a few of the rules for relationships of time. We must use "in" when we refer to year or month (in 1947, in July), shift "on" for days (on monday, on April, 11), then switch to "at" when refering to minutes or hours (at 9: 00 A.M, at noon). As for relationship of places, we use "in" for our city ( in Sanfrancisco ), "on" for our street (on Birch Avenue), and for our numbered adress (at 4 Birch Avenue).

Prepositions are also troublesome for non-native speakers in that they do not always mean that the standard dictionary definitions say they mean. A standard definition of "on", for example, is "in contact with the surface of something" (Hornby, 1986 : 861 ) as in "the book is on the desk", or "The picture is on the wall". But in the sentence "We have supplies on hand", the supplies are certainly not on the surface of the hand. Or take the preposition "up". This preposition usually refers to the higher position, as in

"The girl ...



"The girls are walking up the hills". But in the sentence " Harry is up to something ", no reference is being made height at all.

To prevent the students from having misconception and misusing the words, it is necessary to show the similarities, differences and overlaps between English and Indonesian terms. By this we can find the difficulties that might be faced by the students in learning English words, particularly prepositions. Further we can see that languages classify things in the real words differently, or in other words, we can say that different languages have different semantic system. A good way of making semantic analysis to show practical problems of foreign language teaching is by analyzing the semantic system, that is attempting to relate the forms in the language to element system of another .

Prepositions serve a wide variety of uses in English. In this thesis the writer limits himself not to talk about adverbial particles and idiomatic expressions using prepositions. Not all prepositions will be discussed here. The writer only discusses preposition indicating motion. To be specific, 32 prepositions are listed below, namely :

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. across    | 17. off    |
| 2. against   | 18. on     |
| 3. along     | 19. onto   |
| 4. alongside | 20. out of |

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| 5. at      | 21. outside |
| 6. below   | 22. over    |
| 7. between | 23. past    |
| 8. beyond  | 24. per     |
| 9. by      | 25. round   |
| 10. down   | 26. around  |
| 11. for    | 27. to      |
| 12. from   | 28. toward  |
| 13. in     | 29. under   |
| 14. inside | 30. up      |
| 15. into   | 31. up to   |
| 16. near   | 32. with    |

In analyzing prepositions, the writer uses the case category as the basis of this analysis. To be specific only the orientation roles : path, source, agent, goal and vehicle as the meaning outside of language. And he will see how English language handles these meanings by prepositions, and how the meanings are expressed in Indonesian. By seeing the comparison between the ways English and Indonesian handle, we will have a lot of advantages in teaching English prepositions to Indonesian students.

The way used for the analysis of the indications of this ideas in Indonesian is by translating the examples used in the analysis of English prepositions. By this way we will see the similarities and differences

between .....



between the way English and Indonesian handle the meanings, and thus we can see or find the difficulties that might be faced by the students in learning English prepositions.

#### C. The Formulation Of The Problem

Based on the background prescribed above, the writer would like to determine the sequence of the problem in the form of problem formulation as follow:

1. What are the meaning of some English prepositions ?
2. What are the categories (classification) of some English prepositions ?
3. How can the meanings of English prepositions be expressed into Indonesian ?
4. What are the problems faced by students in learning English prepositions ?
5. How should the English prepositions be taught or be presented ? Or in otehr words, what are the ways or the techniques in teaching English prepositions ?

#### D. The Reason For Choosing The title

The reasons which encourage the writer to choose the title are as follow :

1. Being aware that the writer is a candidate  
of English ....



of English teacher, the writer, of course, has a high competence to the language study and its aspect, including preposition .

2. Being conscious of quite complex problem of English preposition, the writer highly intends to analyze it in detail to obtain comprehensive of the analysis.
3. The writer wants to find out some alternative ways in teaching and learning English preposition.
4. Up to this time, as far as the writer knows, this topic has not been discussed before.
5. The writer himself is extremely interested in this topic.

#### E. The purpose Of Writing

In composing this thesis, there are many purposes which the writer wants to achieve, namely :

1. To describe the nature of English preposition, including the meaning of preposition the kinds of preposition, the positions of preposition the use of preposition and the distinction between preposition from particle and from other parts of speech.
2. To analyze some English prepositions in order to know the ways English handle the meanings of them indicating motion.
3. to overcome.....

3. To overcome the difficulties faced by students in learning English preposition.

#### F. The Method Of Writing

This thesis is aimed at being librarial thesis of which the data will be expected come from librarial resources. This means that the writer will collect data and information concerning the primary problem or topic as much as possible to be analyzed or discussed. To solve the problem in accordance with the problem, the writer takes some steps as follow :

1. Collecting data to be analyzed about English and Indonesian prepositions. The writer has read some books, some magazines, and some other found resources as references to solve the problem mentions above.
2. Analyzing the data. By this step the writer uses the inductive method to analyze facts being relevant to the title, from it, summaries are taken.
3. Comparing Data , that is comparing two facts or more that may have differences and similarities , and then, some facts will be found.
4. Concluding the facts will be the last step. By this the purpose of the writing are expected to be achieved.

#### G. The Organizing .....



## G. The Organizing Of The Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters, they are: Introduction, the nature of prepositions, the analysis of the English preposition, difficulties faced by the students in learning English preposition, and the last chapter is conclusion and suggestion.

The first chapter is Introduction. It describes about the definition of the title, the background of the title, the formulation problem, the reason for choosing the title, the purpose of the thesis, the writing method and the organizing of the thesis.

The second chapter is the nature of the preposition. This chapter presents the definition of preposition, the kind of the prepositions, the position of prepositions, the use of prepositions and how to distinguish the preposition from particles and from the other parts of speech.

The third chapter discusses about the analysis of meanings of the English preposition. The writer deal with prepositions indicating path, source, goal, object and vehicle. To start the analysis is by giving the meanings of preposition and giving several examples in various sentences. Then the writer analyzes the sentences one by one in terms of semantic and syntactic roles of the noun phrases concerned.

In chapter .....



In chapter four the writer try to show how the ideas conveyed by English prepositions can be expressed into Indonesian. The writer, here, deal with the indications of path, source, goal , object and vehicle in Indonesian. This part is essential to have a clear comparison between the two languages in this matter.

The next chapter talks about the problems/difficulties that may be faced by Indonesian student in learning the English prepositions based on what the writer has discovered in the previous chapters.

And, finally, this thesis will be closed by the sixth chapter, that is Conclusion, consisting of conclusion, suggestion and closing words.

This organizing of the thesis is taken or attempted to give the readers a logic successive thinking or reasoning of this thesis as a whole to make it easier for them to understand.

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## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION, SUGGESTION AND CLOSING WORDS

#### A. Conclusion

After following and passing through the steps of description and analysis, we are arriving at the conclusion. To help the readers understand easily the main points of this thesis, the writer would like to ~~sift~~ them in the conclusions. The main points to which the writer considers significant are the following :

1. The meanings of prepositions are depended on the context. A preposition has different meanings= and it can indicate different case categories in different contexts or situations. In the other hand, one meaning can be expressed by several words.
2. From the thirty-two English prepositions investigated, there are twelve prepositions indicating path, one that indicates source, nineteen indicating the case goal, one preposition that indicates object, and four prepositions that indicate the case vehicle. Besides indicating path, at and beyond can also indicate goal. The preposition by can indicate both the case path and vehicle. And besides

indicating.....

indicating goal, in and on can also indicate the case vehicle.

3. The meaning or ideas conveyed by English prepositions are usually be expressed in Indonesian by : verb-forms like menyeberang(i), melewati, melalui, melintasi, mengarungi, melampaui, mengelilingi, etc. to indicate the case path; dari to indicate Source; ke, menuju, kepada, pada, ke atas, ke bawah, ke dalam, ke luar, ke tengah, ke hulu, sampai di, etc. to indicate goal; dengan for the case obj ct; and dengan, lewat and naik to indicate vehicle. Sometimes the English prepositions are not translated at all and have no equivalents in Indonesian. These prepositions Usually be expressed by verb-forms and by changing sentence- structures.

4. The problems/difficulties faced by the students in learning English preposition may be determined or caused by :

- a. The overlaps between English and Indonesian terms,
- b. The combination of two cases.
- c. Some English prepositions do not have

be translated....



be translated into Indonesian.

- d. Some English prepositions do not have equivalents in Indonesian.
- e. Some ideas handled by prepositions in English are often expressed verb-forms in Indonesian.

5. The ways or techniques which can be applied in the teaching of English preposition are :
  - a. Definition and explanation
  - b. Translation
  - c. Picture
  - d. Demonstration

#### B. Suggestion

These suggestions are intended to answer the question of the fifth formulation of problem and to complete the available conclusion.

1. The teacher should realize that the teaching of a foreign language usually makes a trouble for the students to understand the contrast aspects between the foreign rules and his own. Consequently, to make the students understand those rules, not only to know, but be able to imitate them, it seems necessary to ask the students or likely to show simply the contrast rules.

2. Further,.....

2. Further, the appropriate method to teach the means of prepositions, it is also suggested, is dual-language method by using translation drill technique. The teacher must put the preposition in sentences or at least in phrases. Then shows the translation of the whole sentence or phrase. Especially for prepositions that cause particular problems, some explanations about differences between English and Indonesian expressions should be given. By knowing the comparison, it is hoped that the students will understand the meanings of prepositions better and clearly.
3. The other techniques to teach the meanings of English prepositions are by using pictures and demonstration. Both pictures and demonstration can be used to clarify the meaning of the English prepositions and also to check the students' understanding.

#### C. Closing Words

Praise and thanks be to Allah, SWT., and all blessings belong to Allah only, the ease, and the physical and spiritual force to the writer in composing and finishing this thesis without significant obstacles. The writer sincerely admits that without His helps, it is impossible for him to realize this work.

The writer with all humbleness, realises that this thesis is still covered by many lacks, to which he actually does not hope. Although it has been attempted with maximal endeavor, the lacks are still remaining for the restricted ability of the writer.

Further, unrestricted thanks and honours are dedicated to Prof. Drs. H. Mohammad Zein, once more for his advice and encouragement, without which this writing will not be completed.

At last, the writer wishes this composition will be useful for them who have paid attention to it, and those who have opportunities to read this, particularly the writer himself. Amiin.

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