

Locative Prepositions “at, in, on” and Translation to Vietnamese Through Frameworks

Nguyen Thi Tuyet Hanh

Faculty of Foreign Languages, Van Lang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

✉ **Corresponding Author:** Nguyen Thi Tuyet Hanh, **E-mail:** hanh.ntt@vlu.edu.vn

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Received: 10 October 2021

Accepted: 22 November 2021

Published: 25 December 2021

DOI: 10.32996/ijels.2021.3.12.2

KEYWORDS

Prepositions, “at, in, on”; cultural awareness, framework of prepositions

ABSTRACT

Based on the role of the frame of reference under the influence of point-of-view culture in the British and Vietnamese ethnic groups used as a cognitive premise in the translation, the article presents the justification of the contracting process about the reasons, similarities and differences as well as the semantic differences of the locating preposition “at, in, on” in English with the corresponding linguistic units in Vietnamese through specific communication contexts. Research results show that if the reference object (DTQC) in the positioning reference system of the English preposition is assimilated with the speaker in Vietnamese [similar to the reference frame in the reference system] then, the translation semantics of the preposition “at, in, on” will be similar to the expression semantics of the corresponding units in Vietnamese. In contrast, the different structural semantics are manifested because there is no similarity in the frame of reference.

1. Introduction

In some Vietnamese linguists such as Tran Quang Hai (2010), Nguyen Duc Dan (2015), have only mentioned the theoretical basis of the cognitive process of semantic translation on the points of view, the similarities and differences between the English preposition “at, in, on” and the corresponding locating linguistic units in Vietnamese through the difference in the object as a reference for positioning but the mechanism of reciprocal interaction between the locator and the locatum. Therefore, in this article, we present the causes of similar semantics and structural difference semantics through specific communication contexts of the locative prepositions “at, in, on” into Vietnamese with the framework of prepositions from the British and Vietnamese point of view culture as the basis for semantic perception.

2. Literature review

2.1. Definition of locative prepositions

A locative preposition is a word used to establish the relationship between two objects: locating objects and reference objects, namely DTDV and DTQC, by establishing a locating reference frame through which the spatial topological relationship in this location reference frame is established, and the object can be located (Logan, & Sadler, 1996; Levinson, 1996)

2.2. Definition of the framework of prepositions

The diversity of different types of the locative reference frame in the locative reference system can be the basic premise for the cognitive semantics of prepositions through structural structures (Crangle & Suppes, 1989) in different localized reference frames. Accordingly, the positioning reference frame in the positioning reference system is determined by the relationship between the basic features, the intrinsic features, or the interactive environment in the connotation within that locating frame of reference.

2.3. The relationship between the locative references and the semantics of the locative preposition

Because prepositions appear in the locating references system with different geometric frames of reference according to different types of relationships between DTDV and DTQC, we can perceive prepositions with many different semantic nuances (Levinson, 1996). In addition, various non-geometrical factors surrounding a micrograph such as roles-functions and interaction dynamics (e.g. prepositions) also play an important role in their positioning (Herskovits, 1986; Vandeloise, 1991; Bowerman, 1996; Feist & Gentner 1998; Coventry, & Garrod 2004; Carlson, Van der Zee, & Emile, 2005; Gärdenfors, 2014). Thus, in a framework of the

preposition, the locative preposition operates in physical space, and all these frames have an influence on the locator being evaluated, and it is marked as a DTQC in the interaction relationship. In addition, the properties of prepositions are expressed through the interaction relationship between DTDV and DTQC in the spatial topological reference frame that, according to Radden and Dirven (2007, p.307), the concept of "structure" "spatial link" which is the structure of the physical space between the geographies in natural space and is expressed through language in three basic types of spatial relationships, namely the relationship of position, directional relationship, and degree of relationship according to two basic strategies in space: the size of the landmark object as well as the orientation. The semantic of the preposition is specified according to the characteristics in the relationship between the DTDV and DTQC in the context.

[1a]	<i>The magazine</i> (<i>Tạp chí</i>)	<i>is</i> ∅	<i>on</i> <i>ở trên</i>	<i>the shelf</i> <i>kệ</i>
[1b]	<i>The magazine</i> (<i>Tạp chí</i>)	<i>is</i> ∅	<i>above</i> <i>ở trên</i>	<i>the shelf</i> <i>kệ</i>
[1c]	<i>The magazine</i> (<i>Tạp chí</i>)	<i>is</i> ∅	<i>over</i> <i>ở trên</i>	<i>the shelf</i> <i>kệ</i>

In the above examples [1a], [1b], [1c] in Vietnamese, the position of "magazine" relative to the "shelf" in the three sentences have the same meaning as "on" "shelf". However, with different locative reference frames, different prepositions are used to properly express the semantic properties of the locative situation in certain frames of reference.

Accordingly, with the reference frames in the locating reference system being the "magazine" in direct contact with the "shelf", the semantics of the preposition "on" in the sentence "the magazine is on the shelf" is rendered. In the case when the reference frame in the locating frame of reference is the "magazine" that is not in direct contact with the "shelf" surface with a small distance, the semantics of the preposition "above" in the sentence "the magazine is above the shelf" is recognized. Likewise, if the reference frame in the locating frame of reference is a "magazine" that is not in direct contact with the shelf surface with a large distance margin, the semantics of the preposition "over" in the sentence "the magazine is over the shelf" is used.

2.4. Define positioning objects, reference objects in the reference framework of prepositions

Radden and Dirven (2007:305) gave some definitions related to spatial positioning in the frame of reference as follows: according to the cognitive linguistics literature on space, the thing to be located is called positioning objects (DTDV) (in the cognitive linguistic literature on space, the thing to be located is usually described as the trajector), and the thing that is considered as a reference point is called reference objects (DTQC) (the thing that serves as the reference point as the landmark).

2.5. The point of view on the semantic utterances in English

When locating a certain object in a positioning situation, the British only consider the relationship between the trajector and landmark as a reference frame for positioning in the navigation system (McCarty, Pérez, Torres-guzman, To, & Watahomigie, 2004, p.150) as in the example:

[2]	<i>The balloon is flying</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>the sky.</i>
	(<i>Quả bóng đang bay</i>	<i>trong/ trên</i>	<i>bầu trời).</i>

The reason is that why the British perceive this is because they only determine the positioning of the "balloon" (DTDV) with the "sky" (DTQC) and the relationship of inclusion [frame of reference] (the balloon is contained by space of the sky) and is described through the preposition "in".

2.6. The point of view on the semantic utterances of Vietnamese.

When locating an object in a positioning situation, the Vietnamese "take themselves as the center to perceive the universe" as a reference frame for positioning in the navigation system (Nguyen, 1977, 1989); (Nguyen, 1998, 2005, p.42-50) as in the example:

[3]	<i>Sang, you go up</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>the board.</i>
	(<i>Sang, thầy mời em lên</i>	<i>bảng).</i>	

The reason the language entity locating "up" is used in the example [3] is because the Vietnamese define it determines the positioning of "you" (the speaker) with "the speaker — the board" — the DTQC with the superposition relationship [frame of reference] (the speaker is near the writing board) [the speaker is identified with the board and because the board is hung on the podium higher than my seat, so the speaker is also in a higher position than me] and is represented by the locating entity "up".

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

Researchers decided to design this study based on qualitative research, specifically a researcher case study to answer the research question of:

1. "Why do you use a reference framework of prepositions to survey translation of locative prepositions "at, in, on"?"
2. "What are similarities and differences in translation of English and Vietnamese in locating the preposition "at, in, on"?"

3.2 Procedure

The course in British and American literature, a weekly 5-hour lecturer throughout the semester, was designed to integrate prepositions "at, in, on". The main task of the 100 students was to apply their learning of the framework of prepositions gained in the classroom to serve my survey. Students from the course were divided into small groups to carry out the implementation of the "reasons of using the framework" "differences and similarities in the translation of locating prepositions", After each phase of the project, participants were required to complete their reflective journal online platform order keeping their memories and experience. The framework of prepositions programs lasted for 12 weeks. In the end, 100 reflective journal entries were collected for each phase of the framework of prepositions. At the end of the course, students were required to answer the open-ended questions regarding the factors that make them engaged throughout the program.

3.3 Data analysis

The student was assessed via a reflective journal. The scores at each phase sum up from the student of the reflective journal to represent the engagement of that stage. The validity and reliability were examined before this analysis.

4. Results/ finding and discussion

The main purpose is to answer the research questions based on the analysis of the reflective journal.

4.1 Question 1: "Why do you use a reference framework of prepositions to survey translation of locative prepositions "at, in, on"?"

Through the survey, the first reason is that there is no consensus on the concept of Vietnamese word types that have roles and functions corresponding to English prepositions [locating linguistic entities, Vietnamese linguists all recognize the presence of prepositions in Vietnamese — this locative linguistic entity is as a type of Vietnamese word or at least a word form (a preposition) — this locative linguistic entity is in a word type of "conjunction" or "word relation" that has the role and function corresponding to English prepositions.

Through the survey, the second reason is that in the process of cognitive translation semantics, in many cases, the selection of locative linguistic entities corresponding to English locative prepositions can only be made through the properties of the concept of reference frames. Considering an English example where the preposition "in" (in) is used:

[4] *The kite is flying in the sky.*
 (Con diều đang bay trên/ trong bầu trời)

However, in Vietnamese, the "above" or "on" for locating a language entity is used:

*The kite is flying *"above" the sky.*

*The kite is flying *"on" the sky.*

In the example above, the British designate the position of the "kite" (DTDV) with the "sky" (DTQC) with an inclusive relationship-[frame of reference] (the kite is included by the space of the sky). Meanwhile, because the Vietnamese "take themselves as the center to receive the universe" [reference], it is advisable to implement the positioning language to use because the kite is flying above the speaker's head (in the sky) [frame of reference].

4.2 Question 2: "What are the similarities and differences in translation of English and Vietnamese in locating the preposition "at, in, on"?"

a. The similarities in the translation of English and Vietnamese in locating the preposition "at, in, on"

When the English locative prepositions and the corresponding units in Vietnamese have the same locative reference framework in the locative situation, when translated, the semantics of the preposition "at" will become similar to the Vietnamese semantic expression "ở"; the semantics of the preposition "in" will be expressed similar into the Vietnamese expression semantics of "trong"

and the semantics of the preposition “on” will be transformed into the similar Vietnamese semantics of the expression “trên” as in the examples below:

Table 1. The similarities of English prepositions “at, in, on” and the Vietnamese semantic expression

N°	Example	English preposition	The Vietnamese semantic expression	Semantic expressions
[5]	The remains of this extensive wood are still to be seen at the noble seats of Wentworth, of Wharnccliffe Park, and around Rotherham (Smith, 1909). (còn tìm thấy ở những nơi phong cảnh kì thú...) (Tran Kiem, 1999).	“at”	“ở”	[locator]- container reference framework
[6]	... as might enable him to make a figure in –the national convulsions which appeared to be impending (Smith, 1909). (mưu bá đồ vương trong những biến cố quốc gia) (Tran Kiem, 1999).	“in”	“trong”	[locator]- container reference framework
[7]	Wamba could not be prevented from occasionally lingering on the road (Smith, 1909). Oămba vẫn la cà trên đường về (Tran Kiem, 1999).	“on”	“trên”	[positioning indication]- overlapping reference framework

b. The differences in translation of English and Vietnamese in locating the preposition “at, in, on”

When the English locative prepositions and the corresponding units in Vietnamese exist in dissimilar reference locating framework with new expressive properties in addition to the usual spatial positioning (such as to cause, effect, etc.), movement, nature, purpose, the method under the influence of “meaning variation”, when translated, the structural semantics of the prepositions “at, in, on” will be perceived with different translations, different from the structural semantics of the corresponding units in Vietnamese through specific communication contexts as shown in the examples below

The first difference is that *intermingled semantics of three prepositions “at, in, on”*. Accordingly, the structural semantics of the preposition “at” with the expression meaning “trên” will be translated into the structural semantics “on” compared to the structural semantics of the corresponding unit in Vietnamese. The structural semantics of the preposition “in” is expressed as the structural semantics of “cause” compared with the structural semantics of the corresponding unit in Vietnamese. The structural semantics of the preposition “on” are perceived as the structural semantics “for” compared with the structural semantics of the corresponding unit in Vietnamese.

Table 2. The prepositions “at, in, on” and the Vietnamese semantic expression in the first difference

N°	Example	English preposition	Semantic expressions	The Vietnamese semantic expression	Semantic expressions
[8]	He also carried his small triangular shield, broad enough at the top to protect the breast, and from thence diminishing to a point (Smith, 1909)	“at”	[positioning indication] the reference framework coincides with two objects close together	phía trên rộng đủ (Tran Kiem, 1999)	[points to a place] - overwhelming reference framework
[9]	The nobles, whose power had become exorbitant during the reign of Stephen and whom the prudence of Henry the Second had	“in”	[indicating impact]	khiến họ ít bị lệ thuộc vào triều đình (Tran Kiem, 1999)	[indicates impact]

	scarcely reduced into some degree of subjection to the crown, had now resumed their ancient license to its utmost extent (Smith, 1909).		framework of reference		the superimposed framework of reference
[10]	I'll tell my big brother about you. (Mark Twain, 2013)	"on"	[indicates impact] superimposed framework of reference	để tao mách anh tao cho mày xem (Nguy, Hoang, & Hong Sam, 2016)	[point of purpose] the framework of reference that overlaps two things

The second difference is that prepositions "at, in, on" are used for *showing the direction of objects*. Accordingly, the semantics of the structure of the prepositions "at, in, on" will be translated with cognitive semantics that is different from the structural semantics of the corresponding units in Vietnamese, but all have different meanings. The specific directional properties such as the structural semantics of the preposition "at" with the expression semantics "lại" will be expressed as the structural semantics "again" compared with the structural semantics of the corresponding unit in Vietnamese. The structural semantics of the preposition "in" with the expression meaning "xuống" is translated into the structural semantics "down" compared to the structural semantics of the corresponding unit in Vietnamese. The structural semantics of the preposition "on" with the expression meaning "vào" will be translated into the structural semantics of "on" compared to the structural semantics of the corresponding unit in Vietnamese.

Table 3. The prepositions "at, in, on" and the Vietnamese semantic expression in the second difference

Nº	Example	English preposition	Semantic expressions	The Vietnamese semantic expression	Semantic expressions
[11]	He ran headlong at me: I felt him grasp my hair and my shoulder; he had closed with a desperate thing. (Bronte, 1930)	"at"	[redirect only] duplicate framework reference coincides with two objects close together	nó xông " lại " (Tran, 1982)	[direction] the framework of reference occupies the space between two objects
[12]	... and seating himself in an arm-chair. (Bronte, 1930)	"in"	[direction] the frame of reference occupies the space between two objects	nó ngồi phịch xuống ghế bành (Tran, 1982)	[indicates impact] the superimposed framework of reference
[13]	Some of us pumped on our heads – mine's damp yet. See? (Mark Twain, 2013)	"on"	[direction] The reference framework coincides with two objects in space.	ngịch phun nước vào đầu bọn cháu. (Nguy, Hoang, & Hong Sam, 2016)	[direction] the framework of reference occupies the space between two objects

5. Conclusion

As stated above, if the DTQC in the locative reference system of the English locative preposition is assimilated with the speaker as DTQC in the locative reference system of the corresponding units in Vietnamese [similar in reference framework referenced in the locative reference system], the translation expression semantics of the locative preposition "at, in, on" will be similar to the expression semantics of the corresponding units in Vietnamese. In contrast, the translational structural semantics of the locating

preposition "at, in, on" will exhibit different shifting features compared with the structural semantics of the corresponding locative linguistic entities in Vietnamese when DTQC in the locative reference system of the English locative preposition is not considered to be the speaker like the DTQC in the locative reference system of the corresponding units in Vietnamese [no similarity in the locative reference frame in the locative reference system in the Vietnamese locative system] [positioning reference]. Therefore, these survey results play a practical role in the process of translating source and target language types through the semantic cognitive mechanism so that it is compatible with the language perception culture according to its own frame of reference with characteristics of each ethnic group, especially in the process of language translation and teaching.

About the Author

Nguyen Thi Tuyet Hanh is a PhD in Comparative Linguistics. She is currently a lecturer at Van Lang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and a visiting lecturer at Ho Chi Minh University of Social Sciences and Humanities. She graduated with MTESOL from Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia. Her main research interests are in educational innovation and information of comparative linguistics.

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