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GRADO EN ESTUDIOS INGLESES: LENGUA, LITERATURA Y CULTURA

English and Spanish Prepositional Verbs: A comparative Analysis.

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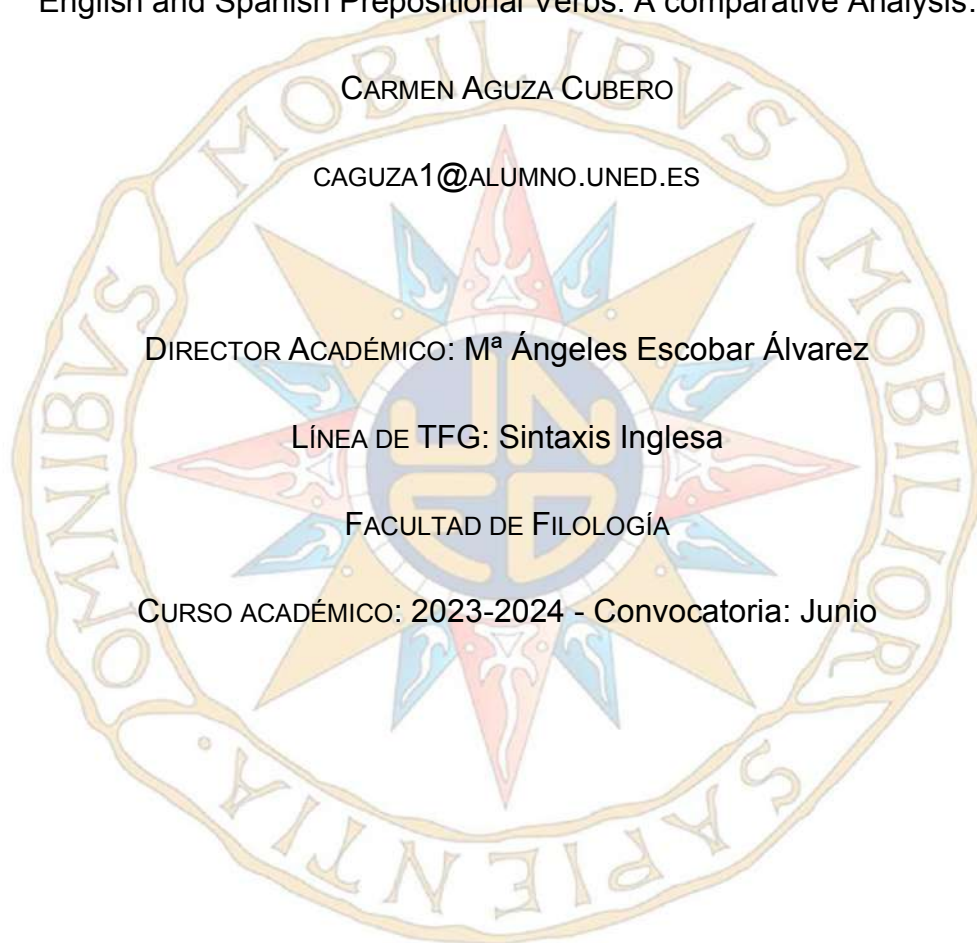


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ABSTRACT

Learning prepositional verbs can be challenging for second language learners, due to factors such as language transfer and insufficient attention in textbooks or lack of guidelines by teachers. This study presents a comparative analysis of prepositional verbs in English and Spanish, focusing on their origins, structures and various studies on error analysis. The ultimate aim is to offer activities that may enhance the teaching of prepositional verbs. The study highlights the importance of prepositional verbs and suggests that publishers, teachers and students should pay more attention to them. It also recommends the use of contrastive analysis between the L1 and the target L2 to deal with the challenge of responding to student difficulties and confusion when finding structures that are not exhibited in their first language.

Keywords: Prepositional verbs, contrastive analysis, error analysis, second language acquisition, teaching.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, there has been a significant increase in demand for second language learners. This phenomenon has been driven by globalization, technological advances that facilitate learning, as well as labor and academic mobility. However, the EPI (English Proficiency Index) report, created by the company EF (Education First) to analyze English language proficiency as a foreign language, suggests that despite an unprecedented increase in demand and investment over the last decade, the overall level of English has not improved. This serves as a reminder that the challenge is not only language acquisition but also language progression, (Education First, 2023).

The process of learning a second language is a challenging task that is influenced by several factors that can be divided into three groups: firstly, individual factors, which are varied and range from the learner's age to motivation. On the other hand, there are internal factors related to the individual's knowledge of the world, mother tongue and linguistic competence and, finally, external factors (mainly input, output and formal teaching) that determine how the learner comes into contact with the target language, (Morto, 2019).

One of the most influential factors in both second language learning and error production, although both are intrinsically linked, is the influence of the mother tongue. In the case of English and Spanish, as two languages from two different language families, learners face challenges in understanding certain aspects such as phonetics or verb tenses. In addition, there are often cases of 'false friends' which can lead to awkward conversations.

Prepositional verbs represent one of the most complex aspects of foreign language learning, with learners exhibiting a high rate of error and doubt. Although some rules can be established for the use of prepositions in relation to criteria such

as place, origin, destination, etc., they are generally not useful when prepositions act as argument functors, as in the case of prepositional verbs and their complements. In such instances, memorization skills must be relied upon exclusively, (Camarero Rojo, 2012).

Here I am to conduct a comparative analysis of prepositional verbs in English and Spanish, highlighting their differences and similarities, and discussing their implications for learners of both languages. To achieve this, the text will be divided into three sections that deal with specific aspects of prepositional verbs. The first section introduces prepositional verbs in both English and Spanish, explaining their origin and structure. The second section reviews different studies analyzing the errors made by L2 learners in prepositional verbs in English and Spanish. This review helps to understand the causes and possible solutions to these errors. Finally, the third section proposes a series of pedagogical activities to enhance the learning of prepositional verbs for both Spanish and English learners.

2. Objectives

Prepositional verbs have been the subject of several linguistic studies in recent decades due to their fundamental role in developing communicative skills. The precise use of prepositions is crucial for effective communication, and mistakes in their application are often observed during the language learning process.

The reasons for undertaking this research are diverse, including personal, academic, and professional motivations. As a current Spanish teacher and potential future English teacher, I believe that having an extensive understanding of prepositional verbs will enhance the standard of my lessons. The second reason relates to my role as an English student, I believe that conducting this research will provide me with an opportunity to improve my language skills. During my learning journey, I have encountered numerous difficulties in learning prepositional verbs, so it is of great interest to me to investigate these grammatical structures and discover effective ways of learning them. Moreover, I believe that researching prepositional

verbs can help me gain a deeper understanding of various other grammatical concepts that I have yet to master.

The aim of this thesis is to conduct a comparative analysis of prepositional verbs in English and Spanish to enhance the learning of these verbs. While there is existing knowledge on the subject, some questions remain unanswered, and there is a growing interest in comprehending the use of these structures. The study has additional objectives. The first aim of this study is the investigation of the origin, development and current use of prepositional verbs in both languages. By understanding the origin of these verbs and comparing their structures, significant differences in their use can be revealed. These differences may help to explain the common errors encountered during the learning process. The second objective is to raise awareness of the importance of paying attention to the learning of grammatical structures, which are prevalent in both languages. By highlighting their relevance, aims to encourage greater dedication and focus on the part of students and teachers towards these crucial elements. The third objective aims to create more effective teaching proposals. After identifying patterns and key aspects in the use of prepositional verbs in English and Spanish, pedagogical techniques can be formulated to improve the teaching and learning of these verbs. This will contribute to more effective communication in both languages.

In summary, this study aims to contribute to the field of applied linguistics by conducting a comparative analysis of prepositional verbs in English and Spanish. The goal is to improve the teaching and learning of these verbs and promote more effective communication in both languages.

3. Methods of locating, selecting and evaluating primary studies.

Regarding the methodology used in this study, various search engines were utilized, including Google Scholar, UNED library, Research Gate, and DIALNET. The study aimed to conduct a contrastive analysis of prepositional verbs in English and Spanish. Therefore, the initial step was to search for relevant literature on this topic

using the keywords 'prepositional verbs' and 'comparative analysis'. I was surprised to find that there were very few studies analyzing these two languages. Initially, I read and reviewed papers related to other multi-word verbs, such as phrasal verbs, of which there was a significant amount of literature. This led me to believe that highlighting the differences between the two languages would be crucial to the work.

As I could not find a comparative analysis of prepositional verbs in English and Spanish in my initial searches, I decided to begin by studying the structure and origin of these verbs. To understand the structure of prepositional verbs in English, I consulted *The Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English* by Douglas Biber, Susan Conrad, and Geoffrey Leech, which proved to be very helpful. However, when it comes to prepositional verbs in Spanish, my understanding was greatly enhanced by Lucía Luque Nadal's paper titled *Los verbos preposicionales o verbos que rigen preposición y la gramática de las construcciones*, despite having read several manuals on the subject.

In terms of the etymology of prepositional verbs, I conducted a search using keywords such as 'diachrony' and 'origin', as well as referring to papers cited in other works. In the end, I found several related papers that helped me develop this part, such as *The History of Multi-Word Verbs* by Claudia Claridge or *Viejos y Nuevos Valores de las Preposiciones Españolas* by Hortensia Martínez García.

After completing this section, I conducted a more thorough search by modifying the keywords and narrowing the date range. Since most of the content was over 20 years old, it may not be relevant today. Eventually, I discovered multiple studies that analyzed errors in prepositional verbs, but only one of them focused on English-speaking learners of Spanish. However, I did not exclude the remaining information and instead decided to incorporate it into the paper as it may be relevant for comparison with other languages. The three selected options are presented in section five.

It is important to note that I found the majority of useful papers for my work by searching through the bibliographies of the papers I was reading. This highlights the significance of bibliographies in research, as they provide a foundation for other researchers to build upon.

4. An introduction to English and Spanish prepositional verbs.

4.1. English prepositional verbs

4.1.1. Origin

Prepositional verbs in English can be traced back to Old English, along with other multi-word types such as phrasal verbs. They originated from a complex Old English situation that showed variation and flexible boundaries between any multi-word types that existed at that time. Prepositional verbs occurred with words that could be called prepositions, adverbs, prepositional adverbs, postpositions, separable prefixes, and inseparable prefixes. However, the most significant progress in prepositional verb development occurred during Middle English, when several new collocations emerged, (Claridge, 2000).

By the end of Middle English, the fundamental structure of the current positioning of multi-word verbs had been established, as most syntactic patterns had emerged, including some fully idiomatic cases, (Denison, 1981). One of the main factors driving the origin of prepositional verbs was the deterioration of the old English case system, which favored the closer and more frequent contact between verbs and prepositions, (De la Cruz, 1973). This resulted in a rise in the usage of prepositions, particularly after verbs, and the establishment of a fixed order for SVO elements, which may have had a positive impact on the prevalence of prepositional verbs. The occurrence of verb-preposition sequences may have been influenced by foreign borrowing of French, Latin, or Old Norse verbs followed by a preposition,

(e.g. *tenir a* — *hold in/of*, *dispensare cum* — *dispense with*, ON *fara með/við* — *fare with*, (Denison, 1981).

Additionally, the decline of the prefix system not only facilitated the emergence of phrasal verbs but also allowed verb-preposition sequences to assume some of the roles of prefixes, (Denison, 1981). These factors contributed to a wider range and more frequent use of prepositions in Middle English compared to Old English, (Denison, 1985).

4.1.2 Structure of English prepositional verbs (Biber et al., 2002)

Defining and classifying prepositional verbs, a construction that has been with us for so long should be straightforward. However, there is disagreement among grammarians. Additionally, the terms 'phrasal verbs', 'prepositional verbs', and 'prepositional phrases' are frequently used interchangeably in grammar books and dictionaries (Mahmoud & Jasim, 2020). The inconsistent definition and classification of prepositional verbs, as well as the use of different terms to refer to the same structure, can confuse both students and researchers. Therefore, this text will adopt the definition and classification found in Biber et al.'s book 'Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English' (2002), which is a comprehensive and widely accepted grammar.

Prepositional verbs, such as 'to look at' or 'to talk about', consist of a verb and a preposition. They are part of multiword verbs, which include constructions formed by combining a verb with one or two particles or prepositions, such as 'up', 'over', 'in', and 'down' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2016) These multiword verbs are categorized into four groups: phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs, phrasal-prepositional verbs, and other multiword verb constructions. Of these four groups, prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs are the ones that tend to generate the most confusion and are often used interchangeably. To understand the structures of prepositional verbs, which are the subject of this study, it is helpful to compare them with phrasal verbs. The

criteria for differentiation of these constructions are based on idiomatic meaning, particle movement, and wh-question formation. Phrasal verbs have an idiomatic meaning that goes beyond the literal interpretation of their parts, as seen in expressions like 'shut up' and 'get up'. In contrast, combinations of intransitive verbs such as 'go in' or 'come back' are free and retain the separate meanings of the verbs and adverbs without forming idiomatic expressions.

Particle movement can be used to distinguish between prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs. For example, in transitive phrasal verbs such as 'to get back', the particle can be placed before or after the object noun phrase, indicating that it is a phrasal verb. However, prepositional verbs do not allow for particle movement; the preposition must always come before the object noun phrase.

Phrasal verb:

*I went to Eddie's girl's house to **get back** [my wool plaid shirt].*

*I've got to **get** [this one] **back** for her mom.*

Prepositional verb:

Well, those kids are **waiting for** their bus.

*Well those kids are **waiting** their bus for.

Another way to differentiate between phrasal and prepositional verbs is by using Wh-question formation. This test helps distinguish between a sentence containing a transitive prepositional verb and a free combination. Questions using 'what' or 'who' often contain a transitive prepositional verb, with the subsequent noun phrase serving as the object of the verb. Questions using 'where' and 'when' suggest a free combination, with the prepositional phrase functioning as an adverbial.

Transitive prepositional verb:

*What are you **talking about**? / What are you **laughing at**?*

<compare the statement: I am **talking about** / **laughing at** something.>

Free combination:

Where are you walking? Where will we meet?

<compare the statement: I am **walking to that place**/ We will **meet at that place**.>

However, Biber et al. (2002) acknowledge that distinguishing between verb types may not always be straightforward, and some verbs can function as multiple types depending on the context.

After understanding the difference between phrasal and prepositional verbs, it is essential to examine their structure. Biber et al. (2002) identifies two patterns for prepositional verbs:

Pattern 1: NP +V +prep +NP

*It just **looks like** the barrel*

*I've never even **thought about** it.*

Pattern 2: NP +V +NP +prep +NP

*It **reminds me of** some part of Boston*

*He **said farewell to** us*

Prepositional verbs are frequently used in the passive voice, particularly with the second pattern. In such cases, the direct object takes the subject position, as in 'The media is often falsely accused of many things'. However, there are other prepositional verbs, such as 'apply to', 'connect with', and 'ask for', that can occur in both Pattern 1 and 2.

Ask for with Pattern 1: *But I've **asked for** much too much already.*

Ask for with Pattern 2: *He **asked Stan for** a job.*

There are two ways to approach the structure of a prepositional verb: as a single-word lexical verb followed by a prepositional phrase, where the prepositional phrase functions as an adverbial. This analysis is supported by the ability to often insert another adverbial between the verb and the prepositional phrase in Pattern 1. In these examples, adverbials such as '*exactly*' and '*much*' are placed between the verbs and prepositional phrases.

*She **looked exactly** [*like Kathleen Cleaver*]. I never **thought** it [*about it*].*

Or as a combination of a verb and preposition considered a single entity, known as a 'prepositional verb'. This interpretation is supported by the fact that prepositional verbs often have idiomatic meanings and can often be replaced by a single transitive verb with a similar meaning.

Thought about it + considered it

Asked for permission + requested permission

Stand for it + tolerate it

In conclusion, this first part describing the origin and structure of prepositional verbs provides a good starting point for developing a more efficient pedagogy for teaching and studying prepositional verbs in English. Understanding the difference between prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs is crucial for efficient language use. It is also important to be aware of the flexibility in language structures.

4.2. Spanish prepositional verbs

4.2.1. Origin (Martínez García, 2012)

Spanish prepositional verbs have their origin in Latin. The prepositions that were most commonly used with Latin cases gave rise to the Spanish prepositions 'a', 'de', 'con', and 'en'. In Spanish, these prepositions became an integral part of many verbs, especially those that required a specific complement to express their full meaning, (Martínez García, 2012).

Although some of these verbs already had their preposition in Late Latin (Cano Aguilar, 1978) the number of this class of verbs increased significantly during Medieval Spanish. It appears that this type of verb became fixed due to analogy or interference, which can still be observed in present-day Spanish, (Martínez García, 1986). This moment in the evolution of Spanish is particularly interesting because it allows us to understand why certain prepositions were semantically attracted to certain verbs, ending up being integrated into their meaning, often displacing other prepositional structures. For example, the preposition 'con' adds the sense of company in verbs that require it (such as 'ajuntar', 'acordar', 'abenirse', 'uarajar', 'ferirse', 'lidiar', etc.). The phenomenon of the preposition 'a' inheriting the feature of prospective direction from the Latin preposition 'ad' can also be observed. This is evident in verbs such as 'esforzarse a', where the action is directed towards a future goal, as seen in expressions like 'esforzarse a ello', (Martínez García, 2012).

The non-locative reference of the noun influenced the preposition to be integrated into the verb. This integration serves to clarify the object to which the verbal action is directed. For instance, the verbs 'traer' and 'ir' replaced the medieval preposition 'en' with 'a' to indicate direction. Similarly, verbs like 'herir', 'matar', and 'adorar' changed their prepositional regime from 'en' to 'a' to indicate the direct object. However, the preposition 'a' no longer retains its original directional meaning and now functions more as a functional marker. In some cases, such as 'ocuparse', 'saber', 'andar' or 'ganar en algo', the directional meaning of 'en' has disappeared in favor of a sense of permanence, although the preposition is still necessary to complete the meaning of the verb, (Martínez García, 2012).

Martinez also notes that in some cases, a verb may require two different prepositions to express its meaning. For example, the verb 'hablar', which was mostly used with the preposition 'en', could also be constructed with the preposition 'de', as could its synonyms 'decir' and 'departir'. The use of one or the other preposition does not imply any significant differences in meaning or form with these verbs. On the other hand, the distinction between 'en' and 'de' lies in the direction of the relation. 'En' prospectively directs the action of the verb towards what is mentioned by the supplement, while 'de' indicates a retrospective direction, interpreting the supplement as the origin of the verbal process.

In the evolution of modern Spanish, the preposition 'de' was imposed in the case of the verb 'hablar'. Meanwhile, 'decir' lost its prepositional regime and came to be constructed with a direct complement ('decir algo'). Additionally, 'departir' adopted the preposition 'con' to express its sense of company ('departir con alguien'). However, the group of verbs that most commonly governed the preposition 'de' were those that required it since medieval times. Many of these verbs have a specific meaning for the preposition 'de', which prevailed over other prepositions such as 'ex' or 'ab'. This meaning refers to physical or conceptual origin or provenance. For example, in the given examples, the preposition 'de' indicates the trigger of the verbal process, such as the memory, fear, and pain in the verbs 'menbrarse', 'temerse', and 'dolerse', (Martínez García, 2012).

Martinez García states that there is a close relationship between prepositional rectification and reflexivity, which can be deduced from the morphosyntactic evolution of several verbs from the Middle Ages. For instance, some verbs, such as 'parecer' or 'semejar', which used to be complemented with a supplement ('el falcon paresçe al falcon nebly') or with an attribute ('A los caçadores parescera que estas reglas son de mas'), are now used as reflexives, such as 'parecerse' and 'asemejarse a alguien o algo'. On the other hand, verbs such as 'fiar' and 'acordar', which used to be prepositive ('podredes vós fiar en!', 'acordé de vos lo enbiar'), are now used reflexively, such as 'fiarse de' and 'acordarse de'. In addition, the medieval

language employed lexical periphrases to reproduce the preposition governed by a certain verb. For example, 'tener fiducia' por 'confiar en', 'tomar atrevimiento' por 'atreverse a' , and 'aver uerguença' por 'avergonzarse de'. Verbs have long used semantic splitting to govern specific prepositions, often the same as the verb's basic form.

Thus far, it has been observed that the prepositions subject to this verbal regency are mainly 'a', 'de', 'con', and 'en'. However, 'por' appears to be required by fewer verbs in both Old and Modern Spanish, possibly due to its more circumstantial meaning, including the causal one, rather than fundamental aspects of the verbal content. Nevertheless, 'por' remains a preposition marked by its agentive-causal meaning, making it susceptible to regulation. In Old Castilian, several verbs adopted the preposition 'por' to be constructed with an attributive of the subject or complement, thus developing new meanings. For example, 'tener por' has the sense of 'considerar', a construction that has remained in use to this day. Other verbs following the same pattern were subsequently lost as prepositional verbs. These are verbs that merge the functions of complement and attribute. The former is characterized by the prepositional rection of the verb, while the latter is characterized by the agreement of the noun or adjective referring to the subject or complement. In summary, there are mainly four prepositions that have abandoned their original meaning to consolidate themselves as simple functional indicators. "A" is an obligatory complement introducer, while "de", "con", and "en" (and to a lesser extent, "por") have mostly been taken over by prepositional verbs, (Martínez García, 2012).

4.2.2. Structure of Spanish prepositional verbs (Luque Nadal, 2021)

When discussing the structure of Spanish prepositional verbs, I will use the categorisation outlined in Luque's essay '*Los verbos preposicionales o verbos que rigen preposición y la gramática de construcciones*', (Luque Nadal, 2021). Luque categorizes the structure of verb + preposition into the following types: 1. Verb (and

other lexemes) followed by prepositional phrases (nexus); 2. Verb and other prepositional lexemes (annex); and 3. Phrasal verbs (idiomatic annex).

1. Verb (and other lexemes) followed by prepositional phrases (nexus):

Verbs followed by prepositional phrases are bimodular constructions. In these constructions, the verb and the prepositional phrase retain their independence, resulting in a combined semantic meaning.

- Ir a/desde/hacia/hasta/por el bosque
- La marcha desde/hacia/hasta/por la ciudad

Luque proposes distinguishing these prepositions from governed prepositions by the possibility of replacing them with a prepositional locution or circumlocution that fulfills a similar relational value, although she indicates that this method is not entirely effective.

- Ir partiendo de/en dirección a /atravesando el bosque
- La marcha saliendo de/ que terminará en / que pasará por la ciudad

In truly prepositional verb constructions, the preposition cannot be replaced by a prepositional locution or a periphrasis, although there are some exceptions in certain contexts where this may be more or less admissible. Furthermore, there are distinct characteristics that differentiate the use of a preposition as a nexus from its use as an adjunct. For instance, when used as a nexus, the preposition can be substituted with a prepositional locution or a relational phrase (e.g. *ir por el parque*, *ir a través del parque*, *ir cruzando por el parque*, *ir atajando por el parque*, *ir atravesando por el parque*).

2. Verb and other prepositional lexemes

Prepositional verbs, along with other lexemes, are collocations that require a specific preposition and are necessary for certain syntactic structures.

- Verb with prepositional extension: *Se ha enemistado con sus socios / He has had a disagreement with his partners.*

- Noun with prepositional extension: *No tiene permiso para estar aquí / He is prohibited from being here*

- Adjective with prepositional extension: *Estoy muy disgustado con tu hermano/ I am extremely dissatisfied with your brother*

- Adverb with prepositional extension: *La cadena montañosa se extiende de norte a sur paralelamente a la costa. / The mountain range runs parallel to the coast in a north-south direction.*

3. Phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs use the preposition as an appendix in an idiomatic construction. These verbs consist of a verb and a preposition and have a non-compositional character, (Rodríguez-Puente, 2011). Examples include '*lo doy por bueno*', '*estoy con él en esta cuestión*', '*respondo por mis acompañantes*'. Some grammarians include these verbs in a general category of idiomatic verbs, which consist of a verb and a particle, regardless of whether it is a preposition or an adverb. For example: *echar abajo*, *echarse atrás*, *echarse adelante*, etc. A phrasal verb can be replaced by another verb or verbal expression (e.g '*nos costó trabajo dar con la casa*' equivale a *encontrar*; *lo dimos por perdido* equivale a *lo consideramos perdido*).

The study of Spanish prepositional verbs reveals interesting structures, including tautological formations in which prefixed verbs control prepositions identical or similar to their prefixes. Although linguists recognize these as examples of redundancy, speakers are usually unaware of them due to the fusion of prefixes with verb roots in Spanish. For instance, '*acostumbrarse a*' or '*confabularse con*' are examples of this phenomenon. In addition, Spanish prepositional verbs exhibit

significant variation. In certain contexts, prepositions can be interchanged without altering the meaning. For example, 'El avión chocó con una montaña en Suiza' (contra) and 'La desgracia se ha cebado en nosotros' (con, sobre). This variability, influenced also by geographical and regional preferences, often reflects the economy of the language, which favors simpler forms. However, these alternations can sometimes lead to ambiguities that require careful interpretation, (Luque Nadal, 2021).

The design of verbs, both semantically and syntactically, is crucial in determining their prepositional complements. Some verbs require specific prepositions due to their semantic properties. Verbs constructed with sociative complements express the union of the subject and the prepositional complement in a conjunctive action, such as 'tropezar con', 'casarse con', 'pelearse con', 'reunirse con', 'juntarse con', etc. Other verbs show more flexibility, especially verbs of motion that allow for a greater number of prepositional combinations more imprecise and generic (ir hacia el frente, desde el frente, por el frente, para el frente, etc., o ir a, por, hacia, a través, alrededor, por el centro del bosque, etc.) Moreover, the compatibility between a verb and its preposition can range from optional to obligatory, influencing the formation of idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs, (Luque Nadal, 2021).

The origin and structure of prepositional verbs in English and Spanish differ due to the linguistic particularities of each language. Therefore, L2 learners often find learning prepositional verbs, to be a challenging and time-consuming task. Understanding the origin and structure is the first step towards improving language learning as it allows to design of more effective didactic programs. In the following section, I present a comparative analysis of prepositional verbs in English and Spanish based on various studies of error analysis. The aim is to provide useful insights for improving the acquisition, learning, and understanding of prepositional verbs.

5. Analysis of the acquisition of prepositional verbs: English versus Spanish

5.1. Error Analysis

The acquisition of a second language (ASL) is a complex process that has been extensively studied by linguists, resulting in numerous theories attempting to explain it. Preston and Young (2000) categorize ASL theories into three groups based on their focus on acquisition factors: the target language, the learner, and the social context. On one hand, there are innatist theories, led by Chomsky and Krashen, which propose that language is innate. On the other hand, environmentalist theories argue that language is a cultural phenomenon that depends on external or acquired factors. Finally, interactionist theories combine innate elements with environmental factors. Despite their differences, all parties agree on the vital importance of error treatment as part of the acquisition process, (Camarero, 2012).

The belief that errors are a natural part of the language acquisition process led to the development of error analysis as a branch of Applied Linguistics in the 1970s. This field focuses on studying and analyzing errors made by second language learners, to identify their underlying causes and understand the strategies employed by learners in their learning process. In 1967, S.P. Corder recommended a series of steps to identify errors in language learning: classifying and describing the errors, explaining their origin by examining psycholinguistic mechanisms or strategies and identifying the sources of each error (including possible mother tongue interference). The severity of the errors should be assessed, and possible treatments or solutions explored, (Centro Virtual Cervantes, n.d.).

However, over the years, the concept of error has evolved, and a distinction has been made between error and fault. Error is related to the speaker's state of learning and is their responsibility, whereas fault is a fortuitous act of performance due to various factors such as distraction or nervousness, (Pastor, 2004).

Here, I focus on the concept of error, rather than fault, made by English and Spanish students when they learn prepositional verbs. The main errors will be analyzed, along with hypotheses for why they occur and possible pedagogies to address them. I focus on three studies related to prepositional verbs to analyze errors, their causes, and possible solutions. The first study examines Japanese learners of English, the second examines Thai learners of Spanish, and the third examines English-speaking learners of Spanish, which also includes a study of Spanish learners of English. By comparing these three studies, we can enhance our understanding of the acquisition of prepositional verbs.

5.2. Error analysis of prepositional verb usage: Literature review.

5.2.1. Where have the prepositions gone? A study of English prepositional verbs and input enhancement in instructed SLA.

This paper (Kao, 2001) examines the acquisition of prepositional verbs in Japanese EFL learners, with a particular focus on issues related to English prepositional verbs and their associated constructions, namely preposition stranding (PS) and pied-piping (PiP).

The study involved 99 university students who were tasked with correcting individual sentences containing prepositional verbs. It indicates that the null-preposition phenomenon is present in students of varying levels, albeit to a lesser extent than in previous research. This is likely because all participants in this study were at an advanced level and received extensive grammar instruction, which is common in Asian countries such as Japan, Taiwan, and Korea. Additionally, the correction task revealed a preference for stranding across all levels. Another noteworthy finding is that students appear to be more receptive to or employ piping constructions in relative clauses than in questions.

According to the author, this outcome can be explained by three hypotheses. The first hypothesis proposes that redundant prepositions in communication are frequently omitted. Klein (1992) suggests that second language learners may omit prepositions due to conflicting examples of their use. Conversely, Rastall (1994) suggests that omitting prepositions may be a communication strategy, as these prepositions often contribute little to the message. Research indicates that learners initially concentrate on comprehending the meaning of sentences rather than analyzing their grammatical structure. Therefore, learners may overlook cases where prepositions are omitted, treating them as errors similar to slips of the tongue. This could explain why even learners with good grammatical knowledge may accept sentences with missing prepositions. This idea is supported by research in first language acquisition, which shows that prepositions can be omitted to facilitate processing, (Kao, 2001).

The second hypothesis suggests that the frequency or prominence of prepositions at the end of sentences in English may lead second language learners to prefer the structure with the preposition at the end rather than at the beginning. This is because in informal English, especially in speech, prepositions at the end are more common and natural. This preference develops through frequent exposure to examples of ending prepositions in spoken English, leading learners to adopt this structure rather than the traditional structure with the preposition at the beginning.

The third hypothesis, reanalysis causes second language learners to favor leaving prepositions at the end of English sentences. Second-language learners of English often struggle to differentiate between multi-word types and frequently mistake them for one another. In certain situations, a single combination of verb and preposition may belong to multiple classes, each with distinct meanings. Learners may struggle to comprehend these nuances and may incorrectly view verbs as cohesive units, resulting in a tendency to place prepositions at the end of sentences. This learning strategy can be taught or encouraged in language acquisition.

Although this study does not provide a comparative analysis between Spanish and English verbs, it offers a general idea of the mistakes made by L2 learners of English. For instance, the phenomenon of null-preposition (an error that will be repeated in subsequent studies) may result from a communication strategy or the preposition itself adding little or no meaning to the verb. Alternatively, the use of preposition stranding at the end of a sentence could be due to the influence of informal English or the challenge learners face in distinguishing between phrasal and prepositional verbs. This research is also significant because it makes us realize how little attention is paid to this type of structure and how much attention is the key to not making mistakes.

5.2.2. Analysis of errors made by Thai students of Spanish as a second language.

This section will address errors commonly made by Spanish learners. The study (Morto, 2019) analyzed errors found in a corpus of 68 written surveys. The surveys were aimed at Thai university students aged between 20 and 30, whose native language is Thai, the official language of Thailand.

In the study, the students were divided into two levels: intermediate, based on the subject 'Intermediate Spanish' (third year), and advanced, related to the subject 'Advanced Spanish' (fourth year). The surveys include different activities in which students have to choose or add the appropriate prepositional verb.

According to the study, intermediate-level students made basic errors, including cross-linguistic errors where they tended to use the preposition 'de' instead of the correct preposition 'con' after the verb 'soñar'. Other errors were due to a lack of understanding of the text and Spanish grammatical rules. Furthermore, the students translated prepositional verbs from their mother tongue literally. It is worth noting that this transfer was not always detrimental. Higher levels of interference with the mother tongue were observed, as well as transfer from both Thai and English.

The researcher concludes that language transfer has a significant impact on error production. Thai learners tend to transfer syntactic and morphological structures from their mother tongue into Spanish, which can cause difficulties in the learning process due to grammatical differences between the two languages. However, it should be noted that certain linguistic similarities can aid in learning Spanish in the initial stages. This transfer is also facilitated by English.

There are two graphs related to the research data that I find particularly interesting and convenient so they are included here. The first graphs (Fig.1 and Fig. 2) show the percentages of omission, addition, and wrong choice as the main errors, and the third (fig.3) shows the most commonly used Spanish prepositions and the errors made. This information will help us determine if the same is true for English-speaking students.

Error rates

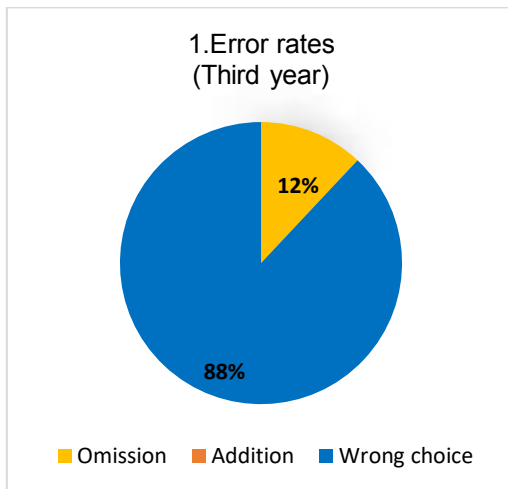


Fig 1. Percentages of omission, addition, and wrong choice (Third year)

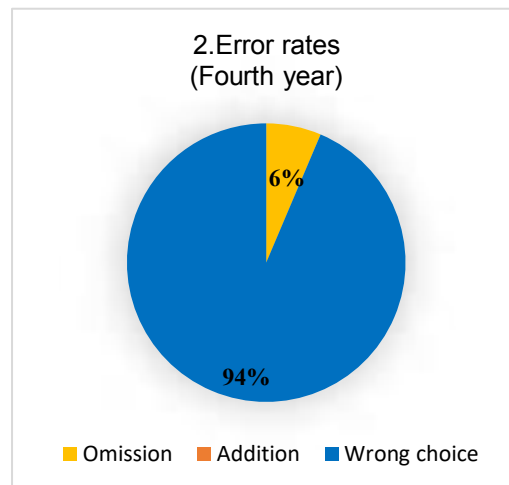


Fig 2. Percentages of omission, addition, and wrong choice (Fourth year)

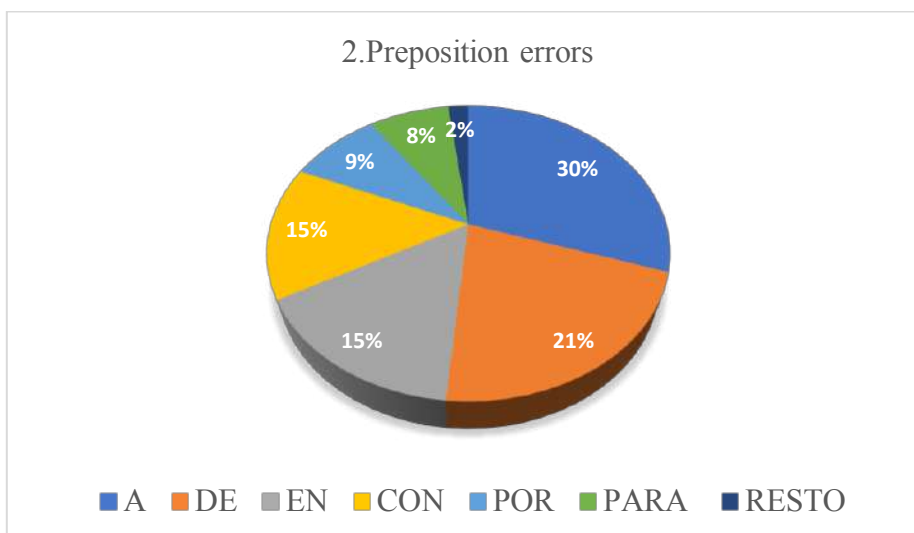


Fig.3. Most common Spanish preposition errors.

To conclude, this study helps us to understand the common mistakes made by learners of Spanish. Again, although these students are Thai, it helps us to compare our results and find similarities with other studies analyzed. Furthermore, this study identifies the phenomenon of language transfer as a determining role in the production of errors (something we will see reflected in the following study), although it also points out that it can facilitate the learning of Spanish in the initial stages. She also notes that language transfer does not only occur from Thai to Spanish but also from English to Spanish, something that is very frequent in ELE students. Morto also points to other factors such as lack of comprehension and knowledge of grammatical rules as possible causes of errors. As for the graphs, I find the first one particularly interesting because it shows that the errors made by fourth-year students are greater than those made by third-year students. It is important to consider that the level of prepositional verbs chosen for the second group was higher, but it is still significant. This leads us to conclude that some errors may be fossilized. The second graph can be used to compare with the following study and determine if errors in prepositional verbs vary among English-speaking learners.

5.2.3. Error analysis of the acquisition of prepositional verbs: English vs. Spanish

This section analyses errors made by English-speaking learners acquiring Spanish prepositional verbs, in contrast to the errors made by Spanish learners acquiring English prepositional verbs. To begin with, Luque & Nadal's (2021) study is addressed since it offers a contrastive analysis of the acquisition of English and Spanish prepositional verbs.

Comparative analysis of two or more languages is an effective method for understanding the grammatical structures that comprise a language. When comparing English and Spanish prepositional verbs, we find more similarities than differences. As we know, some prepositional extensions are more universal and logical, while others are more idiosyncratic. Luque (2021) divides them into four groups: i) with similar prepositional extension; ii) similar prepositions; iii) Contrasting Spanish verbs; and iv) Contrasting English verbs, as follows:

i) Verbs with the same or similar prepositional extensions:

Acusar de (to accuse of)
Absolver de (to acquit of)
Adornar con/de (to adorn with)
Anunciar a (To announce to)

ii) Verbs with different prepositional extensions:

Absolver de (absolve from)
Abstenerse de (abstain from)
Vivir de (to live on)
Depender de (depend on)
Apurarse con (to worry about)

iii) Spanish verbs with a prepositional extension different from English:

Anticiparse a (to anticipate)

Anteponerse a (to precede)

Aproximarse a (to approach)

Asemejarse a (to resemble)

iii) English verbs with a prepositional extension different from Spanish:

Comentar (to comment on)

Desaprobar (to disapprove of)

Discriminar (to discriminate against)

Operar (to operate on)

It is important to note that some Spanish prepositions can have multiple English translations. For example, the Spanish preposition 'de' can be translated as 'of' or 'from' in English. Similarly, the English preposition 'for' can correspond to 'por' or 'para' in Spanish, while the Spanish preposition 'en' can be translated as 'in', 'into', or 'on' in English, (Luque, 2021).

Keeping in mind this division of English and Spanish prepositional verbs I would like to introduce a study made by Camarero, (2012). The study has as informants English-speaking students living in Spain and Spanish students learning English. The sample of English speakers (Corpus A) consisted of a group of 32 students who came from different countries (Australia, the United States, and Great Britain) and whose mother tongue was English. All of them lived in Malaga and belonged to different mobility programs. Their ages ranged from 20 to 26 years old and they were all university students, 29 women and 3 men, 23 Americans, 2 British, and 7 Australians. Their level of Spanish was upper-intermediate, most of them being intermediate, which is the level used for the test. The participants in Corpus B, who were Spanish learners of English, were all of Spanish nationality and had

Spanish as their mother tongue. The test was administered to 27 English learners from the Official Language School of Malaga, aged between 18 and 45, with varying levels of education, including secondary school, university (in progress or completed), and no higher education. These students had a B2 level of English proficiency.

The written expression test comprised a questionnaire of short, logically sequenced questions, with a minimum of open-ended questions and no ambiguous or confusing phrasing. The questionnaire primarily consisted of grammatical and closed questions, but one open-ended question was included to allow learners more freedom to express themselves. Activity I comprises 24 multiple-choice items, each presenting four options, from which the correct one must be selected. Activity II consists of ten items with multiple-choice gaps, where the correct option must be chosen to fill in the gap from the three options provided. Activity III comprises ten sentences, each with two gaps to be filled by selecting a verb and a preposition from two groups. Activity IV involved creating sentences using prepositional verbs.

A total of 47 prepositional verbs were used in the questionnaire. Verbs were selected for an intermediate level of Spanish, including those corresponding to initial levels, to assess the informants' assimilation. Both pronominal and non-pronominal verbs were included, as well as verbs with equivalent prepositions in English and those without. The test was conducted in two different contexts, which will be differentiated into two parts.

Corpus A was obtained from English-speaking learners of Spanish. It consists of 32 tests with a total of 47 items across activities I, II, and III, as well as 145 sentences produced by the learners in activity IV. About the latter, four individuals did not complete the task, one wrote only one sentence, while two others wrote three sentences each. Nine sentences did not contain any prepositional verbs (e.g. '*No me gusta el té. Para mi un café, por favor.*'). Therefore, after subtracting these sentences, a total of 136 sentences with prepositional verbs were counted.

Discounting the repeated verbs, there were 91 different prepositional verb constructions, of which 47 appeared in activities I, II, and III. Only 44 were new.

Corpus B, obtained from Spanish learners of English, consists of 27 tests. Activities I, II, and III contained 47 items, while Activity IV included 108 sentences of their production. Out of these, 21 sentences do not contain any prepositional verbs, mainly due to the use of phrasal verbs (*Watch out! The floor is very slippery*). As a result, they wrote 87 sentences with prepositional verbs. After deducting the repeated ones, there are a total of 67 different prepositional verb constructions. 47 of these were from previous activities, and 20 were new. As stated, corpus A contains a slightly higher number of prepositional verbs compared to corpus B, along with more new verbs contributed by the learners. This is because Spaniards introduced many phrasal verbs that cannot be considered prepositional verbs, and they also used more verbs from the previous activities.

After analyzing the results of the activities, the author categorizes them and identifies the causes of the errors in Activities I and II. Camarero highlights that one of the most prominent errors involves the use of a different preposition in Spanish compared to the corresponding English form, resulting in the transfer of this preposition in a large number of cases. Another error that stands out is the confusion caused by pronominal verbs. Many of these verbs only govern certain prepositions and do not admit others that their non-pronominal form would. For example, the verb '*confundir*' admits the prepositions '*a*' and '*con*', while '*confundirse*' only governs '*con*'. In the results obtained, the most commonly used prepositions with '*confundir*' were '*de*' and '*en*'. In some cases, some mistakes may be caused by factors such as distraction, physical or mental fatigue, or confusion. These mistakes are not necessarily errors. For example, the generalized use of the preposition '*con*' instead of '*en*' in the case of '*entrometerse en*' (interfere in)

Interference phenomena are also observed in Spanish learners, who may be negatively influenced by their knowledge of Spanish when using English, although

to a lesser extent. This could be attributed to a heightened focus on teaching and learning phrasal verbs, and consequently, prepositional verbs.

Regarding Activity III, it was anticipated that the error rate would be higher, with a significant number of incomplete sentences lacking either the verb, the preposition, or both. The lack of coordination between the pronominal form of the verb and the governing preposition was observed. For instance, in the sentence '*La película se __ hechos reales y muy controvertidos*', the appearance of the pronoun 'se' requires the use of a pronominal verb, such as '*inspiró en*'. However, the corpus shows repeated occurrences of phrases such as '*trató en*' or '*trato de*'. As with previous exercises, errors were made due to the transfer from English. '*El acueducto de Segovia __ __ agua a la ciudad romana durante siglos*'. The correct solution is 'abasteció de', but there was widespread use of the preposition 'con' (80%), which translates to the English phrase 'supplied with'.

Regarding activity IV, the failures are generally representative. However, several lexical-semantic errors are observed, such as the following ones:

- (1) *No voy a gritar de los temas del ambiente contigo*. It is understood that the verb they intended to use is '*discutir con*'.
- (2) *Tus clases de baile intervienen con curso de español*. Probably, the intention was to use '*coinciden con*'.
- (3) *Tengo que ejercer a tocar la guitarra*. The student confused the verb 'ejercer' with 'practicar'.

Out of the 35 lexical-semantic errors, 12 were due to the misuse of verbs or prepositions. This included using a verb without understanding its meaning, confusing it with another verb from the same semantic field, or using an incorrect preposition. Additionally, there were frequent errors with VVPP (e.g. '*pensar en*', '*oler a*', '*depende de*', '*enamorarse de*', '*estar casado con*')at the initial levels.

After analyzing the results, Camarero draws five conclusions. Firstly, most of the errors were due to extra-linguistic interference between English and Spanish, where the similarity of the verb form leads to the transfer of the preposition. Secondly, other errors that appeared to a lesser extent were due to confusion with another preposition that these verbs may carry in other circumstances, such as in the case of pronominal verbs. It is important to note that other factors, such as physical or mental fatigue or lack of confidence, can also contribute to errors. Additionally, in Activity III, errors were observed due to a lack of familiarity with the verb's meaning, which had no similarity to the verb in their mother tongue. Finally, in Activity IV, many participants struggled with prepositional verbs at the initial levels. However, errors were made in them, indicating that fossilization errors have not been corrected.

The analysis shows that every prepositional verb contains at least one error made by the students, and the number of errors is significant. It can be concluded that the learners have not yet mastered this aspect of grammar. The main reason for these errors is often the influence of the learners' mother tongue. Non-native speakers often make errors when choosing prepositions in English due to the lack of generalizable rules. They may turn to their mother tongue for guidance, resulting in mistakes. This can be attributed to a simple transfer of the preposition or the absence of a corresponding pronominal form in English.

This study includes an appendix containing all corpus data analysis. I have selected two relevant results from the appendix to use in the pedagogical proposal section. These results show the errors made by English learners of Spanish and Spanish learners of English in prepositional verbs. Considering these types of studies and data can assist teachers and publishers in creating materials for better learning of prepositional verbs in both languages.

1. Table I. Error results of activities I, II, III. (Corpus A), (Camarero, 2012).

%	Errors	Activity	Prepositional Verb	%	Errors	Activity	Prepositional Verb
0	0	II	hablar de	56,2	18	I	deducir de
12,5	4	I	identificarse con	56,2	18	I	decidirse a
18,7	6	I	gritar a	56,2	18	I	querer decir con
18,7	6	I	adaptarse a	59,4	19	II	soñar con
18,7	6	I	referirse a	59,4	19	II	contar con
18,7	6	I	residir en	59,4	19	II	acusar de
28,1	9	I	depender de	62,5	20	I	confundir con
28,2	9	III	asistir a	62,5	20	I	intervenir en
31,2	10	I	insistir en	62,5	20	I	sumarse a
34,3	11	I	concentrarse en	62,5	20	III	conducir a
37,5	12	I	pertenecer a	65,6	21	I	enamorarse de
43,8	14	II	traducir de...a	65,6	21	I	despedirse de
43,8	14	II	convertirse en	65,6	21	I	ocuparse de
43,8	14	II	basar en	65,6	21	II	reírse de
46,9	15	I	convencerse de	68,7	22	I	ejercer de
46,9	15	I	concordar en	68,7	22	I	vengarse de
46,9	15	II	llenarse de	71,9	23	I	oler a

46,9	15	III	relacionar con	71,9	23	III	consistir en
46,9	15	III	participó en	75	24	II	pedir prestado a
50	16	III	protestar por	87	28	III	inspirarse en
56,2	18	I	entrometerse en	87	28	III	abastecer de
56,2	18	I	reducirse a	96,9	31	III	tratar con

2. Table II. Error results of activities I, II, II. (Corpus B), (Camarero,2012).

%	Errors	Activity	Prepositional Verb	%	Errors	Activity	Prepositional Verb
3,70	1	II	talk about	62,96	17	I	yell at
7,41	2	I	fall in love with	62,96	17	I	intervene in
7,41	2	I	agree with	62,96	17	I	smell of
11,11	3	I	refer to	62,96	17	I	convince of
11,11	3	I	say goodbye to	66,67	18	I	interfere in
14,81	4	I	adapt oneself to	66,67	18	I	be limited to
18,52	5	II	translate from..into	66,67	18	II	filled (up) with
18,52	5	II	borrow sth	66,67	18	III	complained

			from				about
18,52	5	II	based on	66,67	18	III	dealt with
22,22	6	I	insist on	70,37	19	II	counts on
22,22	6	I	identify oneself with	70,37	19	III	participated in
22,22	6	I	depend on	70,37	19	III	consisted of
22,22	6	I	belong to	74,07	20	III	inspired by
22,22	6	I	deduce sth from	74,07	20	III	supplied with
37,04	10	III	accused of	81,48	22	I	take revenge on
40,74	11	I	deal in / with	81,48	22	II	mean by
48,15	13	I	concentrate on	88,89	24	I	practise as
59,26	16	II	laughing at	92,59	25	III	linked to
59,26	16	III	were present at	100,00	27	I	mistakes for
3,70	1	II	talk about	62,96	17	I	yell at
7,41	2	I	fall in love with	62,96	17	I	intervene in
7,41	2	I	agree with	62,96	17	I	smell of

6. Proposal for improving the teaching of prepositional verbs

Camarero (2012) notes that while the ELE manuals do not focus on prepositional verbs, they should still be used as a guide and supplemented with activities throughout the course to help students acquire these verbs. It is recommended not to include these activities within any particular unit, but that learners create a personal list of examples and translations into their mother tongue. This list should be kept at hand and consulted when necessary. It is also suggested that the solution to this issue involves the cooperation of multiple parties. Publishers are encouraged to provide more comprehensive coverage of prepositional verbs, while teachers should focus on teaching the proper usage of these verbs. Finally, students are urged to make a concerted effort to improve their understanding and application of prepositional verbs.

Considering everything I have learned in this work and the didactic proposals created by Camarero (2012) and Morto (2019), I have developed some activities to aid in the acquisition of prepositional verbs.

The following activities consider the findings presented in the previous sections. The first text is designed for intermediate English-speaking learners of Spanish, while the second is intended for intermediate Spanish-speaking learners of English. The proposal includes a series of activities that focus on prepositional verbs. These exercises are designed to be completed individually or as a group in class, as well as at home. These activities are designed to be completed at different times throughout the course, rather than as a specific didactic unit.

1. **Grammar explanation.** One lesson will be devoted to explaining the structures of the most common prepositional verbs. Then, together we will translate the prepositional verbs presented and divide them into prepositional verbs with the same grammatical extension, with different, without, and with extensions in different languages. Paying attention to this difference and the structure is key to internalizing

the prepositional verbs. The result of this activity will be placed in a space in the classroom where the students can fill in throughout the course.

2. **Find your pair.** This activity is designed for active group work. The class will be divided into two groups, one with verbs and the other with their prepositional extensions. They will have to find their partner and go to a previously indicated point in the class. Once finished, the students who have found their partner will have to create a sentence to make sure they understand its meaning.

3. **Writing Exercises.** The appendix contains exercises designed for individual work in class or at home. [Annex 1](#) includes three exercises on matching, sentence and/or preposition completion, and word order for Anglophone students, while [Annex 2](#) is for Spanish students. The exercises can be varied in content and form throughout the course, taking into account the specific difficulties faced by the students.

7. Conclusions

The aim of this study is to enhance the acquisition of prepositional verbs in Spanish and English by conducting a comparative analysis of these structures in both languages. It is widely acknowledged that prepositional verbs pose a significant challenge for second-language learners. These errors are caused by various factors, including language transfer and the absence of effective pedagogy.

To analyze this problem, a contrastive analysis of the verbs in English and Spanish has been conducted. Firstly, the text details the different origins and structures of the verbs in both languages. In the case of English, prepositional verbs originated in Old English and developed significantly in Middle English. The deterioration of the case system and the influence of foreign languages such as French, Latin, and Norse were key factors in this development. In terms of structure, it is important to note that prepositional verbs that follow the pattern of verb +

preposition are part of the group of multi-word verbs, which also include phrasal verbs. However, it is important to distinguish between these two structures as they can confuse. This paper will highlight the differences and guide how to differentiate between a prepositional verb and a phrasal verb. Two mechanisms differentiate between prepositional and phrasal verbs: particle movements and wh-question formation. Prepositional verbs do not allow particle movement, and wh-questions, such as 'what' or 'who', often contain a transitive prepositional verb. However, recognizing whether a verb is prepositional or phrasal can be challenging, and there is some flexibility in the structures.

Regarding prepositional verbs in Spanish, their origin can be traced back to Latin, although the number of these structures increased significantly during Medieval Spanish. This paper highlights the most commonly used prepositions, namely 'a', 'de', 'con', and 'en', and discusses the difference between their original and current meanings. Many of the prepositions that were originally used to indicate direction or location now serve as functional markers. It has been noted that there is a strong correlation between prepositional rectification and reflexivity. Some verbs, such as 'parecer' or 'semejar', which used to take a complement or an attribute, are now used reflexively (*parecerse*, *asemejarse*). The same is true for verbs that used to be prepositional, such as 'fiar' and 'acordar', which are now used reflexively, such as 'fiarse de' and 'acordarse de'. Finally, it is worth noting that in medieval language, lexical periphrases were used to reproduce the preposition governed by a certain verb. For example, 'tomar atrevimiento' was used to mean 'atreverse a'.

With regard to Spanish prepositional verbs, a distinction is made between verbs as a nexus, as an adjunct, and as an idiomatic adjunct. It is also noted that verbal and prepositional constructions can be distinguished and that the preposition cannot be substituted with a prepositional locution or a periphrasis, with some exceptions. On the other hand, the study of prepositional verbs reveals interesting and determinant structures for learning them such as tautological formations, in which prefixed verbs control prepositions identical or similar to their prefixes.

Additionally, prepositional verbs in Spanish exhibit significant variation, which can be influenced by geographical and regional preferences. Understanding the origin and structure of prepositional verbs can be crucial for improving the learning of these verbs and designing more effective curricula.

After discussing the origin and structure of prepositional verbs, this paper examines three studies that employ error analysis, a branch of applied linguistics developed in the 1970s, to analyze the errors made by learners in relation to prepositional verbs. The text focuses on three studies: one based on Japanese learners of English, another on Thai learners of Spanish, and the last on English-speaking learners of Spanish. Additionally, it includes a section dedicated to Spanish learners of English.

The studies' conclusions are varied but interesting. The first study shows that the null preposition is present in students at different levels. This may be because the preposition is redundant or contributes little to the message. On the other hand, it is worth noting that there is a preference for preposition stranding, which involves moving the preposition to the end of the sentence. This is because, in informal English, especially in speech, prepositions at the end are more common and natural. Pied-piping is also present, but less frequently, and is more commonly found in relative clauses rather than in questions.

The second study analyses errors made by Thai learners of Spanish and identifies language transfer as a key factor in error production. However, language transfer is not always detrimental, as it can be useful when the grammatical constructions of the source language are similar to those of the target language. The study also notes that language transfer does not only occur from the mother tongue but also from English, a factor observed in most ELE classes. Additionally, the study includes percentages for omission, addition, and incorrect choices. Similar to the previous study, the percentage of addition is zero, but the percentage of omission remains significant. It is worth noting that fourth-year students make more errors

than third-year students. This observation is noteworthy because it suggests that some errors may have fossilized and that insufficient attention is being paid to correcting them.

Finally, the last study used English-speaking learners of Spanish as informants. It highlighted similar errors to those discussed above, emphasizing linguistic transfer as a key factor in these errors. Additionally, the study identified confusion caused by pronominal verbs, which only govern certain prepositions and not others that would be used in their non-pronominal form. For instance, the Spanish verb 'confundirse' can be used with the prepositions 'a' and 'con', while 'confundirse con' only takes 'con'. Spanish learners of English are also affected by extralinguistic factors, but they make fewer errors compared to English-speaking learners. This may be due to a greater emphasis on teaching and learning phrasal verbs, including prepositional verbs. It should be noted that learners had difficulties with early-level prepositional verbs, indicating the presence of fossilization errors that have not been corrected, as in the previous study.

In conclusion, these studies demonstrate that learning prepositional verbs in both Spanish and English remains problematic. However, in the latter group, errors occur less frequently. Linguistic transfer, the redundancy of prepositional constructions, and the lack of grammatical knowledge of both languages in general seem to be the key factors in the production of these errors. In the last section of the paper, I have created a series of activities that may be useful for learners of both Spanish and English to improve their knowledge of prepositional verbs.

In order to solve this problem, I believe that publishers, teachers, and learners should pay more attention to prepositional verbs by including them in both syllabuses and grammar textbooks. Prepositional verbs are used frequently and should not be a challenge for L2 learners. Understanding the origin, and structure, and conducting further comparative analysis of these constructions in different languages can be a useful approach for improving the learning of prepositional verbs.

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Annexes

Annex I: English test activities

Activity 1. Select the appropriate preposition for each sentence.

1. Her latest novel was inspired ____ her travels through Spain.
a. in b. with c. at d. by
2. Olivia never expected to fall in love ____ her best friend.
a. about b. by c. with d. for
3. Please do not laugh ____ him. He is only five years old.
a. by b. in c. at d. with
4. I completely agree ____ you! We shouldn't wait any longer to tell her.
a. in b. with c. by d. for
5. Let's talk ____ your plans for the summer.
a. on b. for c. at d. with
6. She is often mistaken ____ her sister because they look very similar.
a. in b. by c. for d. at
7. You can always count ____ me for help. I am your best friend.
a. by b. on c. about d. with
8. You should concentrate ____ your studies. The exams are in two weeks.
a. about b. in c. on d. for

Activity 2. Match and complete the sentences.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. We should talk | a. with this problem on my own. I think I will solve it eventually. |
| 2. The film is based | b. of cake. Is it for me? |
| 3. I have to deal | c. on going to the cinema this weekend |
| 4. The kitchen smell | d. with this sportswoman. I think it is because of her background. |
| 5. This land belonged | e. about our children, their behaviour has been strange lately. |
| 6. John participated | f. in a 20k race last weekend |
| 7. Olivia insist | g. on the adventures of Queen Marie. |
| 8. A lot of people identify | h. belonged to my grandmother. She was incredibly rich. |

Activity 3. Form sentences according to the example. Choose the correct preposition.

1. Accused/ money. She was accused of stealing money from the company.
2. Agree / colleague
3. Yell / people
4. Consist/ recipe
5. Adapt / culture
6. Smell/kitchen
7. Insist / innocence
8. Intervene/ government

Annex II: Spanish test activities

Actividad 1. Coloca la preposición correcta para cada una de estas frases.

1. Lucía siempre ha soñado _____ ser cantante
a. en b. sobre c.a d.con
2. Las diferentes organizaciones animaron a la gente a sumarse _____ la campaña contra el cambio climático.
a. en b. por c.a d.con
3. Por fin Laura se decidió _____ montar su propia empresa.
a. de b. en c.a d.con
4. Tus problemas de salud están relacionados _____ una mala alimentación.
a. en b. sobre c.a d.con
5. Pedro sigue protestando _____ los recortes en educación.
a. en b. por c.a d.con
6. Es fácil enamorarse _____ de esta ciudad, lo tiene todo.
a. en b. sobre c.de d.con
7. Mi madre siempre se ríe _____ mi hermana cuando baila.
a. de b. en c.a d.con
8. Juan dice que se inspiró _____ su historia familiar cuando escribió su segundo libro.
a. en b. por c.a d.con

Actividad 2. Relaciona y completa las frases:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Juan fue acusado | a. en Madrid desde hace tres años. |
| 2. El trabajo consiste | b. en la vida de Julia, ya es una persona adulta. |
| 3. No deberías entrometerte | c. de robar en el supermercado de la esquina. |
| 4. Esa colección de libros pertenecía | d. en ir de vacaciones a Cadiz, es su ciudad favorita. |
| 5. Mi prima Olivia reside | e. de Juan. Prefiero dejar que el tiempo pase. |
| 6. No me gusta depender | f. en completar todas las tareas en el menor tiempo posible. |
| 7. Pedro siempre insiste | g. a mi abuelo pero la heredé cuando él murió. |
| 8. No me voy a vengar | h. de nadie, por eso prefiero viajar sola. |

Actividad 3. Forma frases según el modelo. Elige la preposición correcta.

1. Oler/casa. Mi casa siempre huele a Jazmín.
2. Ejercer /abogado.
3. Despedirse / seres queridos
4. Ocuparse / asuntos
5. Gritar / jefe
6. Concentrarse / trabajo
7. Participar /congreso
8. Basar / historia