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THE SEMANTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS IN SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

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Abstract. Prepositions are among the most frequently used grammatical units in English and play a crucial role in expressing relationships between words and ideas. This article explores the semantic functions of English prepositions in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes. The study focuses on the most common prepositions found in the stories, including in, on, at, by, from, through, and under, and examines how their meanings change according to context. The analysis shows that prepositions contribute not only to grammatical accuracy but also to the creation of detailed descriptions, logical connections, and narrative coherence. The findings suggest that the effective use of prepositions is one of the linguistic features that support the realism and analytical style of Doyle's detective fiction.

Keywords: prepositions, semantics, Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes, English linguistics, literary language, detective fiction, contextual meaning.

Introduction. Language is a complex system in which even small grammatical elements can carry significant meaning. Among these elements, prepositions occupy a special place because they help establish relationships between objects, actions, time, and space. Although prepositions are usually considered function words, their contribution to meaning is often greater than expected.The study of prepositions has become an important area of linguistic research due to their semantic diversity and frequent occurrence in both spoken and written communication. In literary works, prepositions serve not only grammatical purposes but also help writers create vivid descriptions and organize events logically.Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes provides rich material for such an investigation. The stories are characterized by detailed observations, precise descriptions, and logical reasoning. These features make the text particularly suitable for examining how prepositions function in context.The aim of this research is to identify the semantic meanings of English prepositions in Doyle's stories and to analyze their role in shaping the narrative structure of detective fiction.

Literature Review. The linguistic nature of English prepositions has been discussed by many scholars. Quirk et al. (1985) define prepositions as relational words that express connections between different parts of a sentence. Similarly, Huddleston and Pullum (2002) emphasize that prepositions are capable of conveying a wide variety of meanings depending on their context.Previous studies have demonstrated that prepositions may express spatial, temporal, directional, instrumental, and abstract relationships. Tyler and Evans (2003) argue that most prepositions develop from basic spatial meanings and gradually extend to more

abstract functions.While many researchers have examined prepositions from grammatical and cognitive perspectives, fewer studies have focused on their role in literary discourse, particularly in detective fiction. Therefore, the present study seeks to contribute to this area by analyzing prepositions in one of the most influential detective works in English literature.

Semantic Analysis of Prepositions in The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

Spatial Meanings

The most frequent use of prepositions in Doyle's stories relates to space and location. Holmes often pays close attention to the position of people, objects, and evidence. As a result, spatial prepositions appear regularly throughout the text.

For instance, expressions such as in the room, on the table, under the window, and behind the door help readers visualize the setting and understand the circumstances of a particular event.The preposition in is commonly used to indicate inclusion within a space, while on usually denotes contact with a surface. Likewise, under expresses a lower position relative to another object.These spatial meanings are particularly important in detective fiction because they often provide clues that help solve a mystery.

Temporal Meanings. Another important function of prepositions is the expression of time. In many Sherlock Holmes stories, the exact timing of events is essential for understanding the plot.Examples such as at midnight, during the evening, before breakfast, and after dinner illustrate how prepositions contribute to establishing chronological order.Holmes frequently reconstructs events based on time-related details. Therefore, temporal prepositions play a significant role in presenting evidence and supporting logical deductions.

Direction and Movement. Detective investigations often involve tracking movements and identifying routes taken by suspects. Consequently, directional prepositions occur frequently in the stories.Examples include:

- into the house
- through the window
- across the street
- from London to Surrey

In these constructions, prepositions indicate movement from one location to another. They help create dynamic descriptions and allow readers to follow the actions of characters more easily.

Instrumental and Agentive Meanings. Some prepositions express the means by which an action is performed or identify the person responsible for it.

For example:

- The letter was delivered by a messenger.The door was opened with a key.In the first sentence, by identifies the agent of the action, while with indicates the instrument used. Such constructions frequently occur when Holmes analyzes evidence and reconstructs events.

Abstract Meanings. One of the most interesting aspects of English prepositions is their ability to develop abstract meanings.Examples from everyday English include:

- in trouble
- under pressure
- at risk
- on duty

In these expressions, the prepositions no longer refer to physical location. Instead, they describe situations, states, or conditions.

Doyle uses similar constructions to portray psychological tension, social relationships, and professional responsibilities. Such examples demonstrate the semantic flexibility of English prepositions.

Discussion. The analysis reveals that prepositions in The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes perform functions that extend far beyond grammar. They help create precise descriptions, establish temporal sequences, and support the logical structure of investigations.One notable characteristic of Doyle's writing is his careful attention to detail. Small linguistic elements such as prepositions contribute significantly to this precision. Through accurate spatial and temporal references, readers receive the information necessary to follow Holmes's reasoning process.Furthermore, the frequent use of prepositional phrases enhances textual cohesion. These phrases connect ideas smoothly and contribute to the readability of the narrative.

Conclusion. The present study examined the semantic use of English prepositions in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes. The analysis demonstrated that prepositions express a wide range of meanings, including spatial, temporal, directional, instrumental, and abstract relationships.The results indicate that prepositions are not merely grammatical connectors. In Doyle's detective stories, they contribute to detailed description, logical argumentation, and narrative coherence. Their effective use helps create the realistic and analytical atmosphere that characterizes Sherlock Holmes fiction.

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