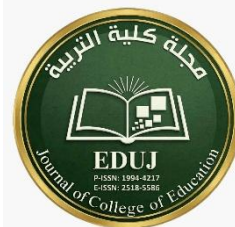


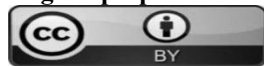


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**Semantic Analysis of the English Preposition at Using Cognitive Linguistic Theory****A B S T R A C T**

The current study is quantitative research by constructing tests to collect the data required. It cognitively tries to focus on the polysemous network the English preposition 'at' and its various meanings. This study aims to determine the difficulties that Iraqi EFL students make mistakes in using English preposition 'at'. It also highlights the causes of those problems. The study was conducted at the Department of the English Language, College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad, Iraq, in the academic year 2024/2025, first semester. The researcher will use SPSS (statistical program) to analyze data. This comprehensive examination of the English preposition 'at' encouraged the researcher to diagnose and analyze its semantic usage, relying on insights from cognitive linguistics (CL) developed by Tyler and Evans (2003). Data were presented using figures and tables. This study examines a preliminary, limited sample and focuses on a specific preposition, 'at'. This approach limits the generalizability of the findings; however, the study serves as a preliminary investigation that enables subsequent research involving additional prepositions and more extensive, diverse participant groups. This study reveals the challenges encountered by Iraqi EFL students in utilizing the English preposition 'at'. This study demonstrates that the cognitive linguistic theory (CL) is useful in accurately comprehending the semantic domains of English prepositions.

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## تحليل دلالي لحرف الجر الإنكليزي (في) باستخدام نظرية ادراكية لغوية

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الملخص

الدراسة الحالية هي بحث كمي من خلال بناء اختبارات لجمع البيانات المطلوبة. يحاول البحث بشكل ادراكي التركيز على الشبكة متعددة المعاني لحرف الجر الإنكليزي "at" ومعانيه المختلفة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد الصعوبات التي يرتكبها طلاب اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق عند استخدام حرف الجر الإنكليزي "at" كما يسلط الضوء على أسباب تلك المشاكل. أجريت هذه الدراسة في قسم اللغة الإنكليزية، كلية التربية للبنات، جامعة بغداد، العراق، في العام الدراسي ٢٠٢٤/٢٠٢٥. استعمل الباحث برنامج SPSS (البرنامج الإحصائي) لتحليل البيانات. شخّص الباحث بعد إجراء الفحص الشامل لحرف الجر الإنكليزي "at" وحلّل استعماله الدلالي، بالاعتماد على رؤى من علم اللغة الادراكي (CL) الذي طوره تايلر وإيفانز (٢٠٠٣). تم تقديم البيانات باستعمال الأشكال والجداول. تكشف هذه الدراسة عن التحديات التي يواجهها طلاب اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق عند استخدام حرف الجر الإنكليزي "at". استنتجت هذه الدراسة أن النظرية اللغوية الإدراكية (CL) مفيدة في فهم المجالات الدلالية لحروف الجر الإنكليزية بدقة. الكلمات الافتتاحية: علم اللغة الادراكي، الدلالات الادراكية، حروف الجر الإنكليزية، حرف الجر في.

## Introduction

Iraqi students learning English as a foreign language face difficulties in correctly differentiating the use of prepositions. This study highlights the difficulties of the English preposition 'at' that face Iraqi students at the university level since they have multiple uses and meanings. For Iraqi EFL students, prepositions are regarded as a problematic issue (Nasser, 2020; Aajami & Gholami, 2025; Aajami, 2018). EFL students in general who are Arabic speakers and have an Arabic background face many challenges while trying to use English prepositions in their language learning journey. Based on research in the field of education and language acquisition, a notable and substantial challenge faced by Arabic-speaking English learners is their understanding of English prepositions (Thyab, 2019).

The mastery of prepositions is a significant challenge for Iraqi (EFL) learners, mostly due to the extensive quantity of prepositions in the English language and the varying number of meanings associated with each preposition (Jewad, 2014; Shakir and Yassen, 2015; Aajami, 2018, 2019, 2022; Nasser, 2020; Thyab, 2019; Alwan and Fahainis Bt Mohd, 2019; Abdul Abbas, 2022). In Iraq, English is considered a foreign language, and the correct use of English prepositions presents a significant challenge for Iraqi students. Both in spoken and written communication, mastering prepositions is particularly difficult due to differences between English and the students' native languages. Prepositions are crucial linguistic elements that specify spatial relationships between objects, represent abstract concepts, and serve important grammatical functions (Tyler & Evans, 2003). These CL insights are being utilized in the analysis of the English preposition 'at'. This study seeks to assess the effectiveness of the CL technique in precisely and methodically comprehending the English preposition 'at'.

Nevertheless, prepositions are generally identified as functional terms, and their meanings are largely influenced by the specific context in which they are used. For instance, the semantic meanings of the preposition 'at' show dynamic variations based on its co-occurring terms, making it difficult to explain in the absence of contextual data. Although previous studies have examined preposition definitions using structured examples, it is crucial to mention that context plays a significant role in prepositions. Thus, a framework is needed to analyze the link between prepositions' meanings and their specific contexts. Ibrahim (2017) believes that prepositions present a big problem for Arab students of the English language in spite of different prepositions in English that have the same function. Therefore, when learners struggle to understand which preposition to use in a particular phrase, they resort to their native language, resulting in a literal translation of the Arabic preposition into English (Ibrahim, 2017).

As a result, the abstract senses of a word are believed to be derived from its spatial senses through metaphorical semantic extension. In this context, certain characteristics of the source domain, where physical items are associated with physical relationships, are metaphorically extended to the target domain, which may include the temporal domain, control domain, or excess domain.

This study aims to identify the key difficulties Iraqi EFL students face when using the preposition 'at.' It also focuses on examining how the cognitive linguistics approach enhances students' understanding of the multiple meanings of 'at' in diverse contexts. This study tries to explore what the main challenges are for Iraqi university students in using the preposition 'at'? And to what extent does the cognitive linguistics approach improve their comprehension and usage of English prepositions?

## 1. Literature review

The *Cognitive Linguistics (CL)* approach considers a modern school of linguistic concepts and exercises. Tyler and Evans (2007, p.2) assure that the *CL* approach tries to examine the connection between human language, the mind, and socio- physical experience. *Cognitive Linguistics (CL)* is a method that deals with the study of natural language. Additionally, it focuses on the use of language as a tool for the organization, processing, and transfer of information. *Cognitive linguistics CL* covers three fundamental properties: the priority of semantics in the analysis of language, the comprehensive nature of linguistic meaning, and the perspective aspect of linguistic meaning. *Cognitive linguistics* identifies various kinds of fundamental conceptual phenomena, such as prototypes, metaphors, metonymy, personification, perspective, mental spaces, and similar notions (Geeraerts & Cuyckens, 2010). English prepositions are identified by polysemy, which indicates one preposition used to show more than one meaning (Koffi, 2010, p. 233), as will be explored later in this study. In Iraq, English is a second language, so using English prepositions correctly is one of the big challenges that face Iraqi students (Nasser, 2020; Aajami & Gholami, 2025). Tyler and Evans (2003) propose a new approach for realizing prepositions called *cognitive linguistics (CL)*. Many studies as well as linguists have observed that mostly the acquisition of prepositions is considered the main challenge for EFL students (Celce-Murcia and Larsen- Freeman, 1999); thus, *cognitive linguistics* provides a clear analysis of English prepositions.

Tyler and Evans (2003) believe that the *cognitive approach* depends on the idea that language can be elaborative, integrative, and inherently conceptual in nature. It has been declared (as shown in figure 1) that two main areas of *CL* concentration are cognitive grammar and cognitive semantics (Tyler and Evans, 2007, p.5; Evans, 2012). The cognitive approach to grammar is the study of language organization, which deals with modelling the language system (Tyler and Evans, 2007, p.5; Evans, 2012). While cognitive semantics deals with diagnosing the connection between “experiences the conceptual system, the semantic structure encoded by language” (Tyler and Evans, 2007, p.5), which means the study of the conceptual form of language. In other words, Ungerer and Schmid (2001) state that the *CL* approach relies on one’s experience of the world and the way understand and conceptualize it.

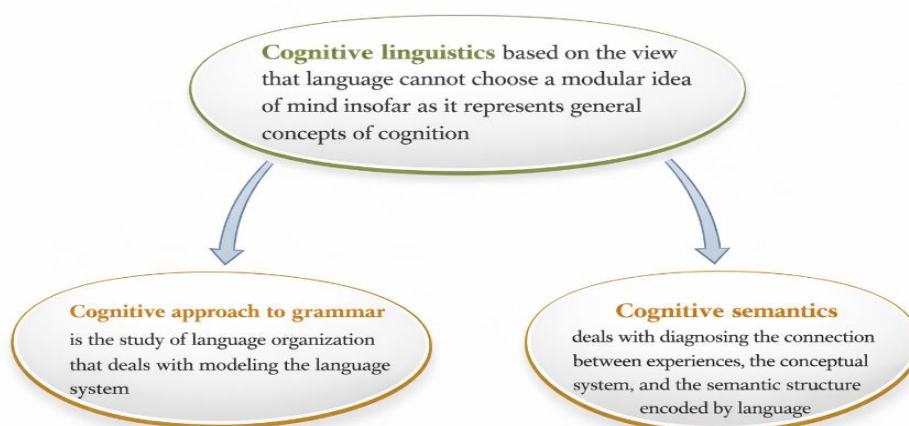


Figure 1 presents theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics and its core components according to Tyler and Evans, 2007 (the figure set by the researcher).

The *cognitive linguistics* approach proposes a semantic analysis for English prepositions. *CL* produces the meanings of prepositions within three dimensions (Tyler and Evans, 2003). The first dimension presents a preposition as a schematized performance of a spatial arrangement between two entities, the second dimension illustrates the abstract concept of the preposition, while the third dimension shows its functional role (Tyler and Evans, 2003). In this scope, Aajami (2022) asserts that the *cognitive linguistic* approach can analyze prepositions not only in the English language but also in other languages. The *cognitive linguistic* method claims that prepositions might be identified using three distinct aspects. These include providing an abstract definition of prepositions, illustrating their functional components, and presenting a schematic representation of prepositions according to a specific configuration involving two or more entities (Aajami, 2022).

### What is a preposition?

Koffi (2010) asserts that polysemy, or one preposition showing multiple meanings, is how English prepositions are identified. A preposition is a linguistic element that indicates a syntactic relationship between the two elements inside a phrase (Zigh and Mekili, 2018). It

means that they function as connectors that indicate the relationship between temporal, spatial, or other relational elements.

Saeed and Yassen (2017) state that Arab students sometimes use expressions without prepositions, for example, "to marry," not "to marry with," and "to discuss," not "to discuss about." For example, understanding how to differentiate between the prepositions, such as "by" and "with," is not clear enough. *Cognitive linguistics (CL)* presents a clear analysis of English prepositions. Koffi (2010, p. 299) states that prepositions are difficult due to their polysemy and the fact that semantic features of words have multiple meanings. Therefore, students feel frustrated while they are trying to identify prepositional meanings and also when trying to use them correctly (Koffi, 2010, p. 299).

English prepositions are problematic since they are polysemous or have multiple meanings (Tyler et al., 2011). Prepositions are words that frequently appear in the English language and have complex usage rules. Therefore, *cognitive linguistics* is structured to address this issue by examining English prepositions and their semantic networks, focusing on figurative sense, spatial sense, and spatial relations (Mueller, 2016).

### **Cognitive-Semantic Approach and Analysis**

*Cognitive-semantic* analysis is very advantageous to overcome the confusion that occurred due to the polysemous nature of the English preposition 'at' and gain precise comprehension of its uses. Rodriguez (2006) clarifies that *cognitive semantics* performs a framework in order to "decompose metonymic and metaphoric language into conceptual input domains, mapping between elements, organizing relations, and systematic entailments. For complex metaphors, it also helps understand the processes involved in invoking imagery, combining visual and linguistic references, and making inferences in conceptual integration."

Nasser (2020) mentions that *cognitive linguistics* shows that different senses of prepositions are systematically related and connected to a prototypical sense, which is able to help EFL students realize the different senses of prepositions. This enables Iraqi EFL students to establish conceptual connections between multiple users of a target preposition (Nasser, 2020). Aajami (2019) reported that *cognitive semantic* studies concerning English prepositions were performed in Iraq to achieve the goal of obtaining the polysemy of the English prepositions. However, Sotiloye et al. (2015) argue that the *Proto-Type Approach* focuses on "teaching words in an explanatory and systematically based manner." According to Tyler and Evans (2003), prototype theory deals with the categorization of objects. Lakoff (1987) asserts that factors related to prototypical meanings shape polysemy networks and lexical categories. That means special meanings or senses related to special words, such as prepositions, can be connected to prototypes (Tyler and Evans, 2003). Moreover, the concept of prototypicality is based on the primary sense, which is connected with a polysemy network, and it is very helpful in understanding the relationship between cognition and perception (Tyler and Evans, 2003). The theory declares that in the matter of prepositions, particularly in the spatial, physical meaning, the prototype will be the one. Nasser (2020) states that prepositions have various meanings, but the prototypical meaning is treated as a link between an object and a line on the surface.

This theory emphasizes the polysemous feature of prepositions based on the analysis of the prototypical meanings, while all non-prototypical meanings can be related to the prototype through metaphorical expanding (Lindstromberg, 1996, p. 228; Tyler and Evans, 2007). Research has shown that prepositions acquire a central meaning that reflects the mental concept of spatial relations (Tyler and Evans, 2003; Evans and Tyler, 2005). Therefore, when the central meaning of a preposition exists, it can be stated that the variety of various meanings is organized within a polysomic network referred to as the semantic

network by Tyler and Evans (2003) *semantic network*. This phenomenon shows that various meanings can be formed with the central meaning and systematically connected to the meaning (Nasser, 2020). Thus, those different meanings can be arranged into a network or a web, separating them from the central meaning (Tyler and Evans, 2003). This conclusion represents that prepositions consider polysemous elements with different but close senses and meanings. The relationship between the *cognitive* approach to the *semantic* study of the spatial preposition and the systematic identification of meanings illustrates the cognitive approach's relevancy (Langacker, 2008; Svorou, 1994). In other words, Langacker (1987) declares that entities will be determined only where an "asymmetrical relation" is noticed. Talmy (2000, p. 184) tries to describe this asymmetrical connection by offering the notion of *ground* (*G*) and *figure* (*F*), where (*F*) indicates the entity identified and (*G*) refers to the entity due to what the first is being illustrated. Similarly, Tyler and Evans (2003); Tyler et al. (2011); Tyler and Evans (2007) try to clarify the concepts of *ground* (*G*) and *figure* (*F*). Cognitive theories perceived the mind as a functioning system and utilized functions to define cognitive processes (Ahmed, 2023).

*Cognitive semantic* analysis reveals that the English preposition 'at' possesses various matrix domains and sub-domains of meaning within distinct categorizations. The matrix domains include place, time, value, condition, direction, and distance. These domains generate sub-domains of meaning, such as time, state, precise location, outward movement, unit of measurement, reference, reaction, and others. Tyler and Evans (2003) assert that the primary meaning of 'at' forms a spatial relationship between two close entities; for example, "the child is sitting at the corner." In their semantic study, Tyler et al. (2011) concentrate on two interpretations of the preposition 'at': the functional sense and the intensity sense. The functional sense occurs when the focus element is a human being. If an individual interacts with an inanimate element, that individual does so for a specific purpose. There exists co-location between humans and inanimate elements. The focus element, the human being, has the ability to interact with the ground element.

Tyler and Evans (2004) contend that prepositions are most effectively represented using the CL approach, since this approach physically illustrates the relationship between a trajector and a landmark, encapsulating abstract concepts, as shown by "A man shouted at the boy." In this case, the preposition 'at' conveys an abstract meaning through the verb "shouted."

It comprehends physical and abstract concepts that may expose spatial scenes and metaphorical hints. As mentioned before, in spatial scenes, there are *figure* (*F*) and *ground* (*G*). Tyler et al. (2012); Tyler and Evans (2003) assert that meanings cannot occur separate from themselves, away from the people who produce and use them. Furthermore, Tyler and Evans (2003) try to clarify the connection between people and meanings as a proto-scene. As a result, the proto-scene presents a *cognitive linguistic* insight that elicits explanations of recurring human experiences through explanations of the spatial configuration of entities in the world (Tyler and Evans, 2003).

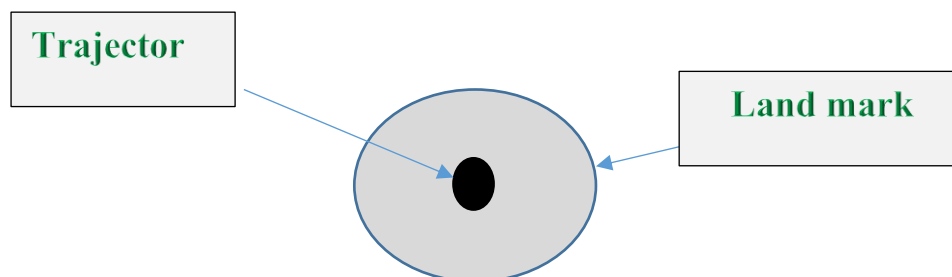
## 2. Semantic analysis of the preposition at

This section highlights the semantic analysis of the preposition 'at', as improved by Tyler and Evans (2003). Cognitive semantic analysis can assist in overcoming the confusion and difficulties caused by the polysemous meaning and quality of English prepositions, as well as gaining appropriate comprehension of their uses and senses (Nasser, 2020). Prepositions in the English language represent many polysemous words, and they reflect a conceptual ontological category (Tyler and Evans, 2003; Shakir and Yaseen, 2015). As a result, EFL students find it very difficult to use the correct prepositions. Accordingly, using prepositions

poses a significant challenge that affects the grammatical proficiency and accuracy of EFL students.

According to Tyler and Evans (2004), spatial sense can be interpreted physically based on the observer's perspective. This physical perspective is based upon the observer; hence, no two vantage points are similar. For example, “*my husband is at home*”. *Home* is a landmark (LM), and it refers to a place. *At* indicates a particular place, which is a “*home*”, i.e., it determines the place of “*my husband*”, while the trajector (T), “*my husband*,” is inside the land mark “*home*”. This discussion can be represented in figure 2, which is set by the researcher.

Figure 2 shows the spatial connections, like in “*the daughter is looking at her mother.*” In this example, ‘*at*’ represents a different entity, namely ‘*her mother*,’ and conveys alternative meaning. There are two entities (Tyler and Evans, 2003): the first one is stable, but the second one is movable. That means there is a target and action with a non-physical object; the “*daughter*” uses her vision to watch “*her mother.*” The following sentence, “*Bill throws the ball at Rami,*” contains a spatial sense comprising physical objects. This suggests that the boys are playing together and collaborating to achieve a common goal. Furthermore, there is another sense, which is motion. A cognitive linguistic approach primarily addresses these senses, stimulating subjective and diverse conceptualizations of meaning (Tyler and Evans, 2003).



**Figure 2 represents the relationship between landmark and trajector.**

Another sense of the preposition ‘*at*’ can be realized in the following sentence: “*The stars are amazing at night.*” There is a formalization of a mental image and a spatial sense, which is determined by time. The preposition ‘*at*’ determines the most suitable time for seeing the “*stars.*” It also notifies a vertical-horizontal axis relying on the location of the “*stars.*” It is obvious that physical vantage points cannot convey the same view, but it indicates the duration of time as shown in figure 3



**Figure 3 represents the vertical-horizontal axis of the preposition ‘at’**

This figure indicates that the night began and ended at particular marks. Metaphorically, there is a superlative idea of seeing “stars” at “night” and not at other times.

- 1- *Sara is good at Spanish.*
- 2- *John is good at shooting.*
- 3- *The father is angry at his wife.*

These sentences indicate skill, degree, direction, value, condition, and scale. That is, “good at shooting” represents the sense of average, degree, or level as a sub-domain of the matrix domain of condition (Albahrani and Al-Robuye, 2016). On the other hand, “angry at his wife” conveys a sense of reaction, which is a sub-domain of the matrix domain of condition.

Furthermore, the fourth sense of the English preposition ‘at’ can be explained as in the following example (Ajami, 2018): “*The teacher and students waved to each other.*” It is clear that the motion in this sentence is reciprocal between two entities. The first entity sends, and the other one receives; then the second entity responds to the first entity. That means there is a spatial sense, which requires spatial connections between the entities that show the metaphorical sense, like a higher-case position acting and a lower-case reaction (Tyler and Evans, 2003; Ajami, 2018). So the sentence reflects the “lateral viewer a horizontal axis between two entities” (Tyler and Evans, 2003). It can be shown that there is an abstract sense if one focuses on the status of the two entities; “*the teacher*” shows a higher rank than “*students.*” Figure 4, sets by the researcher, represents these connections.



**Figure 4 shows horizontal axis between two entities**

To a native speaker, the preposition ‘at’ denotes the introduction of a complement conceptualization. Due to researchers, like Hawkins (1988), the conceptual meaning of the preposition ‘at’ owns a general locative sense. While Cienki (1989) believes that ‘at’ has a specific function in the interaction of humans; in other words, the dynamic uses of the preposition ‘at’ express activity and motion and involve a sense of spatial configuration.

Tyler and Evans (2003) show that the main meaning of the preposition ‘at’ forms a spatial scene between two entities, such as “*the ball is at the corner.*” All around their semantic analysis, Tyler et al. (2011) concentrate on two senses of the preposition ‘at’. The intensity sense is illustrated by the close connection between humans, who serve as focus items, and inanimate objects; for example, “*the players are fighting at the basket.*” In this sentence, the players are engaged in both attacking and defending the basket to achieve their objectives. In contrast, the functional sense manifests when the focus element (F) is a human.

### 3. Methodology

This study employs quantitative methodologies for its analysis. Statistical, mathematical, and logical techniques can be used in quantitative research to generate hard facts and numerical data (Ahmad et al., 2019). Thus, this study is quantitative in nature.

The participants of this study include 19 Iraqi EFL students who were chosen randomly in their third year in the Department of English Language, College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad, Iraq. This study was carried out during the academic year 2024–2025. In this study, the researcher adopted tests to get reliable data. According to Grabe (2009), gap-filling questions are the most useful in measuring comprehension of some target structures, such as prepositions. The tests contain fifteen sentences about the English preposition 'at'. The students have been asked to fill the gaps with the correct prepositions. Although the test and most sentences in the test were taken from the students' textbook "*A University Grammar of English*" by Randolph Quirk, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik. Longman, 1993. SPSS (a statistical program) analyzed the collected data from both tests.

The study conducted a one-group pretest-posttest design lacking a control group, appropriate for exploratory research but constraining causal assumptions. The limited sample size (N=19) limits statistical power; hence, the findings should be regarded as suggestive rather than conclusive. A paired-sample t-test was employed for statistical analysis to compare pre- and post-intervention scores, with statistical significance assessed via the p-value.

#### 4. Pre-test

This study tries to examine if a *cognitive linguistic* approach to meaningful teaching of the English preposition 'at' can be effective. The primary focus is on assessing students' proficiency in the use of the preposition 'at' to identify the challenges encountered by students in the Department of English, College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad, in that it uses accurate English prepositions. The pre-test results indicated a score of nineteen marks obtained by the researcher. The result indicated that students were unable to distinguish between the usage of 'at' and other prepositions. The score revealed that the subjects were significantly inadequate in identifying spatial sense and expressing spatial connections or the figurative meaning of prepositions inside a sentence. The final score indicates that the participants relied on their prior understanding of the preposition as well as its uses. Furthermore, the participants fail to identify the spatial relationships or structural elements inside the sentences or images. They also fail to select the appropriate choice in the multiple-choice question using the right preposition.

#### 5. Post-test

Eight weeks have been devoted to discussing and defining the meaning of the target preposition 'at', the cognitive linguistic approach, and doing the semantic analysis of the preposition 'at'. Throughout this time, the students watched movies that explained the cognitive linguistic approach, collaborated in groups, and were tasked with providing instances and explaining them. The researcher shows the students the images and asks for their interpretation, focusing on the spatial relationships and connections observed in each one. Afterwards, when the test started, the students performed the identical task separately. The post-test findings indicated significant progress in the analysis of semantic senses. They were capable of identifying among several prepositions and selecting the correct option in multiple-choice tests.

#### 6. Discussion

Table 1 indicates the differences between pretest and posttest results. The marks weren't included here to save space. The SPSS statistical program was utilized to analyze the data gathered from both tests.

Table 1 shows *Descriptive Statistics and One-Sample t-Test Results for Pre-test and Post-test Scores*

Test Stage (Group)	Sample Size (N)	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Std. Error (SE)	t-value	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Significance (p)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval (Lower – Upper)
Pre-test	19	6.63	3.303	0.758	8.091	18	< .001	6.132	4.54 – 7.72
Post-test	19	12.21	1.988	0.456	25.673	18	< .001	11.711	10.75 – 12.67

*Note.* All differences were statistically significant at  $p < .001$ .

Table 1 presents the number of participants, which is nineteen. The average of the pre-test is 6.63, and the average of the post-test is 12.21. The participants show progress with 5.58 marks. As a result, the difference in the two averages of both tests revealed a progress of more than 0.05, indicating that this study is acceptable and valid (the study is invalid if the differences between the two tests are smaller than 0.5). The study is valid if the differences are more than (0.5).

The participants demonstrated enhancements in understanding the semantic significance and the relationship this preposition establishes, along with the ability to identify visual representations that incorporate the preposition in question. The students demonstrated an impressive understanding of the significance and uses of the preposition 'at'. Moreover, the students were able to form relationships between the entities and their connections. The students successfully expressed the figurative meaning derived from the context.

## 7. Results

The findings of the current study, derived from a data analysis of nineteen Iraqi EFL participants, indicated that Iraqi students have challenges with the use of English prepositions overall, with a specific emphasis on the preposition 'at'. The quantitative results demonstrate substantial improvement, while a qualitative analysis of student responses indicated that the most significant improvements were noted in the spatial and temporal applications of 'at'. Nonetheless, specific abstract uses, especially those using metaphorical extensions, caused difficulties for numerous participants. Further studies should integrate comprehensive qualitative analysis to help clarify these patterns.

Table 1 indicates that there are 19 students, the average of the pre-test is 6.63, and the average of the post-test is 12.21. Progress has been observed in students' scores of nineteen marks. The difference between the pre-test and post-test results indicates a development of more than 0.05 (5.58); hence, this study is valid. Consequently, the findings of this study align with the research conducted by Evans and Tyler (2003).

The *cognitive linguistic* approach indicates a significant improvement in students' comprehension of English prepositions. The experiment aims to change how students perceive the preposition 'at'. This perspective improves their understanding of the importance of English prepositions by employing various methods. It can enhance students' proficiency in utilizing schema diagrams and identifying entities, as well as spatial and non-spatial relationships. The *CL* approach can enhance conceptual thinking.

The findings of both tests indicated that the *cognitive linguistic approach (CL)* plays a significant and effective role in language learning. This method can be viewed as a unique, distinctive, and persuasive approach that elucidates meaning through novel patterns. The

*cognitive linguistic* approach (*CL*) provides a superior explanation for learning English prepositions compared to standard techniques in second language acquisition. Furthermore, *CL* conveys the personal conception of meanings.

## 8. Conclusion

The study indicates that English prepositions, especially the preposition 'at', provide considerable difficulties for EFL learners in general and for Iraqi students in particular. This challenge is especially evident among Iraqi students. The results indicate that utilizing the cognitive linguistics approach to clarify the meaning and application of the preposition 'at' is effective. This method tries to explain and clarify the diverse applications of the preposition, thus improving students' comprehension and contextual awareness.

The findings highlight the essential function of cognitive linguistics in enhancing learners' comprehension of prepositions and, more generally, in the process of second language acquisition. Cognitive linguistics facilitates learning by associating meaning with context, so offering interpretive tools that enhance accessibility.

The research demonstrates that the importance of cognitive linguistics in learning prepositions is obvious, since it has shown efficacy in mitigating the learning challenges encountered by students. This facilitates opportunities for additional research on the implementation of cognitive linguistic techniques in the instruction of other linguistic components.

In conclusion, the current study offers preliminary evidence that cognitive linguistics-based instruction effectively improves Iraqi EFL students' comprehension and application of the preposition 'at'. The results are encouraging, but they are constrained by the small sample size and the concentration on a single preposition. Further studies ought to involve larger samples, control groups, and a more extensive variety of prepositional targets to enhance the generalisability and depth of findings.

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