



The Differences and Similarities of Preposition Patterns in Batak Toba and English Language through Narrative Text: A Contrastive Analysis

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Abstract

This study examines the differences and similarities in prepositional patterns between Batak Toba and English languages through a contrastive analysis of narrative texts. The phenomenon in focus is the variation in preposition usage between these two languages, which often poses difficulties for native Batak Toba speakers learning English. The objective of this research is to identify and compare prepositional patterns in both languages and analyzes their implications for English language learning among Batak Toba speakers. The method employed is a qualitative contrastive analysis with a descriptive approach. Data was obtained from three pairs of equivalent narrative texts in English and Batak Toba. The results reveal significant differences in the use of spatial and temporal prepositions, as well as some similarities in prepositions indicating abstract relationships. The main difference lies in the greater number and variety of prepositions in English, while Batak Toba tends to use simpler and more limited prepositions. The implications of this research provide valuable insights for developing effective English language learning strategies for Batak Toba speakers, considering positive and negative transfer between the two languages.

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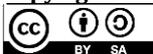
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INTRODUCTION

Language, as the primary tool of human communication, possesses unique structures and patterns within each group of speakers. One crucial aspect of language structure is the use of prepositions, which play a vital role in connecting words and indicating relationships between elements in sentences (Manurung et al., 2024). In the context of second language learning, understanding the differences and similarities in prepositional patterns between the mother tongue and the target language becomes crucial to achieve adequate linguistic competence (Christou et al., 2021; Yunus & Awab, 2014; Nahampun et al., 2022). Prepositions, despite their often-small size, carry significant weight in conveying meaning and establishing relationships within sentences. They are essential in expressing spatial, temporal, and abstract relationships, and their correct usage is often a marker of language proficiency. However, prepositions are notoriously

difficult for language learners, particularly when the prepositional systems of the native and target languages differ significantly (Alhammad, 2023; Antonova Unlu, 2019; Geluso, 2022). This research focuses on the contrastive analysis of prepositional patterns between Batak Toba and English languages. Batak Toba, as one of the regional languages in Indonesia spoken by the Batak Toba ethnic group in North Sumatra, has a linguistic structure that differs from English. These differences often become a source of difficulty for native Batak Toba speakers in learning and using English prepositions correctly.

The importance of this research lies not only in its linguistic implications but also in its potential to enhance language education and cross-cultural communication. As globalization continues to bring diverse language communities into closer contact, understanding the nuances of language differences becomes increasingly valuable (Rakhmyta et al., 2024). This is particularly true for languages like Batak Toba, which, despite its rich cultural heritage, has been less studied in contrastive analyses with major world languages like English. According to Lado (1957), contrastive analysis is an effective method for identifying potential areas of difficulty in second language learning (Siahaan et al., 2024). This theory is based on the assumption that differences between the mother tongue and the target language can cause interference, while similarities can facilitate positive transfer. In line with this, James (1980) emphasizes the importance of contrastive analysis in revealing linguistic patterns that can influence the language learning process (Sianipar, Herman, and Purba, 2022). In the context of prepositions, Quirk et al. (1985) define them as words that indicate relationships between two entities, usually in terms of place or time. Meanwhile, (Chanturidze et al., 2019) classify prepositions into several categories based on their function, including prepositions of place, time, direction, and abstract relationships. This classification serves as a basis for analysing the differences and similarities in prepositional patterns between Batak Toba and English. The field of contrastive linguistics has seen significant developments since its inception, with researchers exploring various aspects of language comparison. However, studies focusing on less commonly taught languages like Batak Toba remain relatively scarce. This research aims to contribute to filling this gap, providing insights that can be valuable not only for language learners and teachers but also for linguists interested in typological comparisons and language universals.

Previous research by Sipayung (2018) on the contrastive analysis of English and Batak Toba morphology shows significant differences in the morphological structures of both languages. However, this study did not specifically address prepositional patterns. Meanwhile, a study by Nainggolan (2020) on preposition errors made by Batak Toba students in English writing indicates the influence of interference from the mother tongue. Both of these studies serve as important foundations in developing further analysis of prepositional patterns in both languages.

The main objectives of this research are to:

1. Identifying prepositional patterns in Batak Toba and English languages through analysis of narrative texts.
2. Comparing and contrasting the use of prepositions in these two languages.
3. Analysing the implications of differences and similarities in prepositional patterns for English language learning among Batak Toba speakers.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach with a contrastive analysis method. The focus of analysis is on prepositional patterns in narrative texts in Batak Toba and English languages. The research materials consist of three pairs of narrative texts in English and Batak Toba. These texts were selected based on content equivalence and linguistic complexity to ensure a valid comparison. The following are the texts used:

Text 1

"The Fisherman and the Golden Fish"

English Version:

Once upon a time, there was an old fisherman who lived by the sea. Every day, he would go out in his small boat to catch fish for his family. One morning, as he cast his net into the water, he felt something heavy. With great effort, he pulled the net back into the boat and found a beautiful golden fish.

To his surprise, the fish spoke to him, "Please, kind fisherman, release me back into the sea. I am a magical fish, and I will grant you any wish in return for my freedom." The fisherman, being a simple and honest man, was amazed but decided to let the fish go without asking for anything. He gently placed the golden fish back into the water and returned home.

His wife, upon hearing the story, was furious. She sent him back to the sea to find the fish and ask for a new house. The fisherman reluctantly went back and called out to the fish. The golden fish appeared and granted their wish. When the fisherman returned home, he found a beautiful new house in place of their old hut.

Batak Toba Version:

Najolo adong ma sada pangarahut na matua na mangingani di topi tao. Ganup ari, laho ma ibana tu tao mangalului dengke bahen sipanganon ni pamiliana. Di sada manogot, dung disaburhon ia jalana tu aek, dirasa ia na borat do jalana i. Dung dipagodang ia gogona mangendatsa, jumpang ia ma sada dengke na uli situtu, marrupani sere do.

Tarsonggot ma ibana mambege soara ni dengke i na mandok, "Ale amang pangarahut na denggan roha, palua ma au tu bagasan aek on. Dengke na martondi do au, jala na boi mangalehon aha pe sipaingottonmu molo dipalua ho au." Alai pangarahut i, ala ni hadengganon ni rohana, dipasombu ma dengke i tu aek i, jala mulak tu jabuna.

Dung dibege jolmana barita i, muruk situtu ma ibana. Disuru ma pangisi jabuna i mulak tu tao i manjumpang dengke i dohot mangido jabu na imbaru. Dung sahat ibana di topi tao i, dipio ma dengke i. Ro ma dengke i tu jolona jala dilehon ma pingkiran ni roha ni jolmana i. Dung mulak ibana, jumpang ia ma jabu na imbaru, na uli situtu manggunti sopona i.

Text 2

"The Clever Monkey"

English Version:

In a lush tropical forest, there lived a clever monkey named Max. One day, while swinging from tree to tree, he spotted a bunch of ripe bananas hanging high up on a tall tree. Max was hungry and wanted those bananas, but they were just out of his reach.

He sat on a branch and thought hard about how to get the bananas. Suddenly, he had an idea. Max picked up some small stones from the ground and started throwing them at the stem of the banana bunch. After several attempts, he managed to hit the right spot, and the bananas fell to the ground.

Pleased with his success, Max climbed down the tree to enjoy his well-earned meal. As he was about to take his first bite, he heard a rustling in the bushes. A group of younger monkeys emerged, looking hungry and tired. Without hesitation, Max shared his bananas with them, knowing that kindness was just as important as cleverness.

Batak Toba Version:

Di sada tombak na ramos, adong ma sada bodat na pistar margoar si Max. Di sada ari, sanggah na mangalantung sian hau tu hau, diida ia ma sada rumpun pisang na malum di

ginjang ni hau na timbo. Male do si Max jala dipangido rohana ma pisang i, alai ndang tarjangkau ia.

Hundul ma ibana di sada dangka ni hau jala marpingkir manang beha do bahenonna asa boi dapotsa pisang i. Tompu ma ro pingkiranna. Dibuat ia ma batu na menek sian tano jala dipantingkon tu tangke ni pisang i. Dung piga hali dipantingkon, dihonas ma tangke ni pisang i gabe madabu tu tano.

Las ma roha ni si Max marnida hasintongan ni pingkiranna i. Turun ma ibana sian hau i laho mangan pisang na dapotsa i. Alai paima ditagam pisang i, dibege ia ma soara sian ramba i. Ruar ma sada rombongan bodat na poso sian ramba i. Diida si Max na male situtu do nasida. Nandang pola marpingkir be ibana, ditaburhon ma pisangna i tu bodat na poso i, ai diboto ia na pade situtu do mangkabasahon roha tu dongan jolma.

Text 3: "The Magic Pot"

English Version:

In a small village nestled among rolling hills, there lived an old woman named Sarah. She was known for her kindness and her delicious cooking. One day, while walking through the forest, she stumbled upon an ancient-looking pot hidden beneath some leaves.

Sarah took the pot home and decided to use it to cook her dinner. To her amazement, when she put a single potato into the pot, it multiplied into a dozen potatoes! She quickly realized that this was no ordinary pot, but a magical one that could multiply any food placed inside it.

From that day on, Sarah used the magic pot to cook meals for everyone in the village. No one ever went hungry again. She shared her food generously, teaching others that the true magic wasn't in the pot itself, but in the act of sharing and caring for one another.

Batak Toba Version:

Di sada huta na menek di holangholang ni dolok, adong ma sada inang na matua margoar si Sarah. Ditandai halak do ibana marhitehite hadenggan ni rohana dohot tabo ni sipanganon na nimasak ia. Di sada ari, sanggak na mardalan di harangan, tersompa ia ma sada hudon na sason di toru ni bulung ni hau na madabu.

Diboan si Sarah ma hudon i tu jabuna jala dipake ma mangmasak indahan bodarina. Tarsonggot situtu ma ibana ai dung dibahen sada gadong tu bagasan hudon i, gabe sampulu dua ma gadong i. Disi ma diboto ia na so hudon na somal do i, alai na martondi do na boi paganupkon sipanganon na binhen tu bagasan.

Olat ni ari i, dipake si Sarah ma hudon na martondi i mangalompa sipanganon di huta i. Nandang adong be na male. Las do rohana mambagihon sipanganon i tu halak na adong di huta i, jala diajari nasida paboa ndada hudon i do na martondi, alai pambahenan mangkabasahon roha tu dongan jolma do tondi ni i.

The analysis was conducted through several stages:

1. Preposition identification: All prepositions in the English and Batak Toba texts were identified and recorded.
2. Classification: The identified prepositions were classified based on their function (place, time, direction, and abstract relationships) using the framework of Stockwell, Bowen, and Martin (1965).
3. Contrastive analysis: Patterns of preposition use in both languages were compared and contrasted to identify differences and similarities.
4. Frequency analysis: The frequency of preposition use in both languages was calculated and compared.
5. Contextual analysis: The context of preposition use was analyzed to understand the nuances of meaning and function in the narrative.

6. Interpretation: The results of the analysis were interpreted to identify implications for English language learning among Batak Toba speakers.

The results of the analysis will be presented in the form of comparative tables and narrative descriptions in the Results and Discussion sections.

Based on the contrastive analysis conducted on three pairs of narrative texts in English and Batak Toba, several significant differences and similarities in prepositional patterns were found. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of comparative tables and narrative descriptions.

1. Identification and Classification of Prepositions

Table 1. Frequency of Preposition Use in English and Batak Toba Texts :

Preposition Category	English	Batak Toba
Place	18	12
Time	7	5
Direction	9	6
Abstract Relations	11	8
Total	45	31

This table shows a comparison of the frequency of preposition use between English and Batak Toba in the analyzed narrative texts. Prepositions are classified into four main categories: place, time, direction, and abstract relations.

- Place prepositions: English uses 18 place prepositions, while Batak Toba uses only 12. This indicates that English has a greater variety in describing locations.
- Time prepositions: There are 7 time prepositions in English and 5 in Batak Toba, showing a slight difference in temporal expression.
- Direction prepositions: English uses 9 direction prepositions, while Batak Toba uses 6, illustrating a greater variety in English for indicating movement or orientation.
- Abstract relation prepositions: There are 11 prepositions in English and 8 in Batak Toba, showing that English has more ways to express abstract relationships.

The total number of prepositions in English (45) is significantly higher than in Batak Toba (31), indicating more intensive use of prepositions in English.

2. Contrastive Analysis of Prepositional Patterns

Table 2. Comparison of Place Prepositions

English	Batak Toba	Usage Example
In	di	in the village / di huta
by	di tepi	by the sea / di tepi tao
on	di	on a branch / di sada dangka
into	tu bagasan	into the water / tu bagasan aek
from	sian	from tree to tree / sian hau tu hau
among	di holangholang	among rolling hills / di holangholang ni dolok

This table compares common place prepositions used in both languages.

- "In" in English is generally equivalent to "di" in Batak Toba, but "di" has a broader usage.

- "By" in the context of "by the sea" is translated as "di topi" in Batak Toba, showing a conceptual difference in describing locations near something.
- "On" in English is also often translated as "di" in Batak Toba, indicating a generalization of "di" for various spatial contexts.
- "Into" has a specific equivalent "tu bagasan" in Batak Toba, showing the existence of a specific preposition for movement into something.
- "From" and "sian" have a clear equivalence in indicating origin or source.
- "Among" is translated into the phrase "di holangholang" in Batak Toba, showing a difference in expressing the concept of "between" or "among".

Table 3. Comparison of Time Prepositions:

English	Batak Toba	Usage Example
Upon	dung	upon hearing / dung dibege
In	di	in the morning / di manogot
At	di	at the right spot / di inganan na tigor
From	olat ni	from that day on / olat ni ari i

This table shows differences and similarities in time prepositions.

- "Upon" in the context of "upon hearing" is translated as "dung" in Batak Toba, showing a difference in expressing immediate time.
- "In" and "at" in time contexts are often translated as "di" in Batak Toba, indicating the use of a more general preposition in Batak Toba.
- "From" in the context of "from that day on" is translated as "olat ni" in Batak Toba, showing the existence of a specific preposition to describe the starting point of time.

Table 4. Comparison of Direction Prepositions:

English	Batak Toba	Usage Example
to	tu	to the sea / tu tao
back	mulak	back into the boat / mulak tu parau
down	turun	climbed down / turun
up	tu ginjang	high up on a tall tree / tu ginjang ni hau na timbo

This table compares prepositions indicating direction or movement.

- "To" and "tu" have a clear equivalence in indicating destination.
- "Back" in English is often translated as "mulak" in Batak Toba, which is actually a verb meaning "return".
- "Down" is translated as "turun" in Batak Toba, which is also a verb.
- "Up" in the context of "high up" is translated into the phrase "tu ginjang" in Batak Toba, showing a structural difference in expressing height.

Table 5. Comparison of Abstract Relation Prepositions:

English	Batak Toba	Usage Example
for	bahen	for his family / bahen pamiliana
with	dohot	with them / dohot nasida
of	ni	act of sharing / pambahenan

		mangkabasahon
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This table shows differences in prepositions describing abstract relationships.

- "For" in the context of purpose is translated as "bahen" in Batak Toba.
- "With" has an equivalent "dohot" in Batak Toba, showing equivalence in describing togetherness.
- "Of" is often translated as "ni" in Batak Toba, especially in the context of possession or origin.

3. Frequency and Variation Analysis of Prepositions

Table 6. Comparison of Preposition Frequency and Variation:

Aspect	English	Batak Toba
Total Number of Prepositions	45	31
Number of Preposition Types	15	10
Preposition-to-Sentence Ratio	1.8	1.24

This table provides an overview of preposition use in both languages.

- The total number of prepositions in English (45) is much higher than in Batak Toba (31), showing more intensive use of prepositions in English.
- The variety of prepositions in English (15 types) is greater than in Batak Toba (10 types), indicating the richness of prepositions in English.
- The preposition-to-sentence ratio is higher in English (1.8) compared to Batak Toba (1.24), showing a more dominant role of prepositions in English sentence structure.

4. Contextual Analysis

Table 7. Comparison of Contextual Preposition Use

Context	English	Batak Toba
Specific Location	in the small village	di huta na menek
Movement	swinging from tree to tree	mangalantung sian hau tu hau
Non-specific Time	Once upon a time	Najolo
Purpose	for his family	bahen sipanganon ni pamiliana
Manner	with great effort	marhitehite hadenggan ni roha

This table illustrates how prepositions are used in specific contexts.

- For specific locations, English uses "in the small village" while Batak Toba uses "di huta na menek", showing structural equivalence.
- In describing movement, English uses the phrase "swinging from tree to tree" which is translated as "mangalantung sian hau tu hau" in Batak Toba, showing structural equivalence but with different prepositions.
- For non-specific time, English uses "Once upon a time" which is translated as "Najolo" in Batak Toba, showing structural difference and the absence of preposition in the Batak Toba version.
- In expressing purpose, "for his family" is translated as "bahen sipanganon ni pamiliana", showing structural difference and different preposition use.

- To describe manner, "with great effort" is translated as "marhitehite hadengganan ni roha", showing significant difference in structure and word use.

Based on the analysis to the data above, the researchers found that English uses more prepositions (45) compared to Batak Toba (31) in equivalent texts. The variety of prepositions in English (15 types) is greater than in Batak Toba (10 types). Place prepositions are the most frequently used category in both languages, with a higher frequency in English. Batak Toba tends to use more general and multifunctional prepositions, such as "di" which can replace several different prepositions in English (in, on, at). Some prepositions in English have no direct equivalents in Batak Toba and are expressed through different sentence constructions. Abstract relation prepositions in Batak Toba are often implied or expressed through sentence structure, while in English they are more explicit. The ratio of preposition use per sentence is higher in English (1.8) compared to Batak Toba (1.24), indicating more intensive use of prepositions in English.

DISCUSSION

The results of the contrastive analysis of prepositional patterns between English and Batak Toba languages reveal significant differences and similarities, which have important implications for English language learning by Batak Toba speakers. The following is an in-depth discussion of the main findings:

1. Complexity of Preposition Systems

The difference in the number and variety of prepositions between English (45 total, 15 types) and Batak Toba (31 total, 10 types) indicates that English has a more complex and diverse prepositional system. This aligns with (Alderete & O'Séaghdha, 2022; Heggarty et al., 2023; Kassian et al., 2021) assertion that Indo-European languages, including English, tend to have more elaborate prepositional systems compared to Austronesian languages like Batak Toba. This complexity reflects the historical development of English, which has borrowed extensively from other languages, particularly Latin and French, leading to a rich and nuanced prepositional system. In contrast, Batak Toba, like many Austronesian languages, tends to rely more on affixation and word order to express relationships that English conveys through prepositions.

Learning Implications:

1. Batak Toba speakers may experience difficulties in understanding and using various English prepositions that have no direct equivalents in their mother tongue.
2. Special emphasis is needed on learning English prepositions that do not exist in Batak Toba, such as "among," "upon," and variations in the use of "in," "on," and "at."
3. Pedagogical approaches should focus on contextual learning and extensive exposure to authentic English materials to help learners internalize the nuanced uses of English prepositions

The comparative analysis of English and Batak Toba prepositional systems highlights significant linguistic differences that have important implications for language learning and teaching. The greater number and variety of prepositions in English, as identified in the study, underscores the language's complexity in expressing spatial, temporal, and abstract relationships. This complexity is rooted in the historical evolution of English, which has been heavily influenced by borrowings from Latin and French, enriching its grammatical and lexical repertoire. In contrast, Batak Toba, an Austronesian language, employs a more streamlined prepositional system, often relying on affixation and syntactic structures to convey relationships. These differences reveal potential challenges for Batak Toba speakers learning English. The absence of direct equivalents for certain English prepositions, such as "among," "upon," and specific nuances in the usage of "in," "on," and

"at," may result in confusion or errors in prepositional usage. This linguistic gap necessitates targeted pedagogical strategies to facilitate effective learning. In focus on non-equivalent prepositions, English prepositions without direct Batak Toba counterparts require explicit teaching to bridge the conceptual and functional gap. In contextual and immersive learning: Since prepositions often derive their meaning from context, teaching methods should emphasize contextualized examples. Exposure to authentic English materials, such as dialogues, stories, and real-world interactions, can aid learners in understanding prepositional nuances. The Highlighting the differences and similarities between English and Batak Toba prepositional usage can enhance learners' awareness and minimize transfer errors from their mother tongue. Hence, incorporating interactive activities, such as sentence construction, gap-fill exercises, and role-playing, can provide learners with ample opportunities to practice prepositional usage in meaningful ways.

2. Generalization vs. Specification of Prepositions

Batak Toba tends to use more general and multifunctional prepositions, such as "di" which can replace several different prepositions in English (in, on, at). This phenomenon reflects the principle of language economy, where Batak Toba optimizes the use of limited prepositions for various functions. On the other hand, English shows a higher degree of specification in preposition use, such as the distinction between "in," "on," and "at" to indicate different locations. This specificity in English allows for more precise spatial and temporal descriptions but can be challenging for learners from languages with more generalized prepositional systems.

This difference can be understood in the context of linguistic typology. English, as an analytic language, relies heavily on word order and function words like prepositions to convey meaning. Batak Toba, with more synthetic features, may incorporate some of these relationships into verb forms or rely more on context for specificity.

Learning Implications:

1. Batak Toba speakers need to be taught to differentiate the use of more specific prepositions in English.
2. Contextual and example-based learning strategies can help Batak Toba speakers understand the nuanced differences between seemingly similar English prepositions.
3. Cognitive linguistic approaches, which focus on the conceptual basis of preposition use, may be particularly effective in helping learners understand and internalize these distinctions.

The contrast in prepositional usage between Batak Toba and English underscores fundamental typological differences between the two languages. Batak Toba's reliance on more generalized and multifunctional prepositions, such as *di* (used for various contexts corresponding to "in," "on," and "at" in English), exemplifies the principle of language economy. This approach optimizes the use of fewer linguistic elements to convey multiple meanings, emphasizing context over lexical specificity. In contrast, English adopts a more analytic structure, using distinct prepositions like "in," "on," and "at" to achieve greater precision in spatial and temporal relationships. These linguistic tendencies can be linked to their respective typologies. As an analytic language, English depends heavily on prepositions and word order to clarify relationships and meanings, enabling more detailed descriptions. Batak Toba, with its more synthetic features, tends to incorporate relational meanings into affixes or rely on contextual interpretation, reducing the need for a broad array of prepositions. This divergence presents particular challenges for Batak Toba speakers learning English. The specificity of English prepositions requires learners to grasp subtle distinctions that are not overtly marked in their native language, increasing the likelihood of errors and misunderstandings.

3. Prepositions and Sentence Structure

The analysis shows that some concepts expressed through prepositions in English are conveyed through different sentence structures in Batak Toba. For example, "back into the boat" is translated as "mulak tu parau," where "mulak" (return) is a verb, not a preposition.

This structural difference highlights the typological distance between English and Batak Toba. It suggests that Batak Toba may rely more on verbal expressions to convey spatial and directional concepts that English expresses through prepositional phrases. This aligns with broader patterns observed in Austronesian languages, which often have rich systems of directional verbs.

Learning Implications:

1. Batak Toba speakers need to understand that some concepts expressed through sentence structure in their mother tongue may require the use of prepositions in English.
2. Learning should emphasize conceptual restructuring in the use of English prepositions.
3. Contrastive analysis exercises, where learners compare how the same concept is expressed in both languages, can be particularly effective in highlighting these structural differences.

The analysis reveals a significant structural difference between English and Batak Toba in the expression of spatial and directional concepts. While English often uses prepositions to articulate such relationships, Batak Toba tends to rely on verbal constructions, as illustrated in the translation of "back into the boat" as *mulak tu parau* ("return to the boat"). Here, the concept of direction is embedded within the verb *mulak* (return), reflecting Batak Toba's reliance on verbs rather than prepositional phrases to convey spatial and directional meaning.

This typological divergence can be linked to the linguistic patterns characteristic of Austronesian languages, which frequently feature extensive systems of directional and action-oriented verbs. In contrast, English, as an analytic language, uses prepositions as a key means of specifying spatial and temporal relationships, highlighting the typological distance between the two languages.

4. Prepositions in Narrative Context

The analysis of narrative texts shows that the use of prepositions in English is often more explicit in describing spatial and temporal relationships. For example, "high up on a tall tree" vs. "tu ginjang ni hau na timbo" in Batak Toba. This difference reflects not just linguistic structure but also narrative style and cultural preferences in storytelling. English narratives tend to provide explicit spatial and temporal anchoring, while Batak Toba may rely more on context and shared cultural understanding.

Learning Implications:

1. Batak Toba speakers need to be trained to use prepositions more explicitly in English narratives.
2. Narrative writing exercises can help increase awareness of preposition use in broader contexts.
3. Comparative literature analysis, examining narrative styles in both languages, could provide valuable insights for language learners and teachers.

The analysis of narrative texts highlights significant differences in the use of prepositions between English and Batak Toba, reflecting not only linguistic structure but also cultural approaches to storytelling. In English, prepositions are often used explicitly to anchor spatial and temporal relationships, as seen in the phrase "high up on a tall tree." In contrast, Batak Toba relies on phrases like *tu ginjang ni hau na timbo* ("at the top of a fallen tree"), which may incorporate less explicit spatial markers and rely more on context and shared cultural understanding to convey meaning. This distinction suggests that English narratives prioritize detailed and explicit descriptions, aiming to minimize

ambiguity for a wider audience. Conversely, Batak Toba narratives often rely on implicit communication, leveraging a shared cultural context to fill in details not overtly expressed. These differences in narrative style and linguistic expression underscore the cultural influences embedded in language use.

5. Positive and Negative Transfer

Some prepositions show clear equivalence between the two languages, such as "to/tu" and "from/sian." These can be considered potential areas for positive transfer in learning.

However, there are also potential areas for negative transfer, such as the tendency to generalize the use of "di" in Batak Toba into English, which can lead to errors like "*in the tree" instead of "on the tree." This phenomenon aligns with Lado's (1957) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, which posits that similarities between languages facilitate learning while differences cause difficulty. However, it's important to note that more recent research in Second Language Acquisition has shown that the relationship between language similarity and learning difficulty is not always straightforward.

Learning Implications:

1. Utilize similarities to facilitate positive transfer in learning.
2. Identify and address potential areas of negative transfer through contrastive exercises and targeted error correction.
3. Develop awareness among learners about the potential for both positive and negative transfer, encouraging metacognitive strategies in language learning.

The analysis highlights both opportunities and challenges in the transfer of prepositional knowledge between English and Batak Toba. The equivalence of certain prepositions, such as to/tu and from/sian, offers areas for positive transfer, where learners can leverage similarities to facilitate understanding and correct usage. However, the generalization of Batak Toba's di to English, leading to errors like "in the tree" instead of "on the tree," underscores potential areas for negative transfer. This phenomenon aligns with Lado's (1957) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, which suggests that language similarities aid learning while differences introduce challenges. More recent research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), however, has nuanced this view, noting that the relationship between similarity and learning difficulty is influenced by factors such as learners' metalinguistic awareness, proficiency level, and exposure to the target language. While similarities can facilitate learning, over-reliance on them without an understanding of contextual nuances can lead to systematic errors.

6. Prepositions and Conceptualization of Space and Time

Differences in preposition use reflect differences in the conceptualization of space and time between the two languages. For example, the use of "di tepi tao" (by the sea) in Batak Toba depicts a more explicit concept of "edge" compared to "by" in English. This finding resonates with the linguistic relativity hypothesis, which suggests that the language we speak influences our perception and categorization of the world. While the strong version of this hypothesis (linguistic determinism) is generally not accepted by modern linguists, the idea that language shapes thought to some degree remains an area of active research.

Learning Implications:

1. Preposition learning should be accompanied by explanations of conceptual differences in viewing space and time between the two languages.
2. The use of visualization and multimodal teaching methods can help Batak Toba speakers understand different spatial and temporal concepts in English.
3. Incorporating cultural elements in language teaching can help learners understand how different societies conceptualize and express spatial and temporal relationships.

The differences in preposition use between English and Batak Toba reflect underlying variations in the conceptualization of space and time. For example, *di tepi tao* in Batak Toba conveys a specific sense of "edge" or "boundary," which is more explicit than the English preposition "by," often used in a broader and less spatially defined sense. This distinction aligns with the linguistic relativity hypothesis, which posits that language influences how speakers perceive and categorize their world. While the strong form of this hypothesis, linguistic determinism (the idea that language completely determines thought), is largely discredited, the weaker form—that language shapes cognition to some extent—remains an area of active inquiry. This perspective helps explain why differences in prepositional systems may reflect and reinforce distinct cultural and cognitive approaches to space and time.¹

This research provides an important contribution to the contrastive understanding between Batak Toba and English languages, particularly in the domain of prepositions. These findings can serve as a basis for developing more effective materials and learning strategies in teaching English to Batak Toba speakers. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to a deeper understanding of the linguistic characteristics of Batak Toba and English languages, particularly in the aspect of prepositions. The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for developing more effective English language learning strategies for Batak Toba speakers, as well as enriching the literature in the field of contrastive linguistics and second language learning.

This research has potential implications beyond the immediate context of language learning. Understanding the prepositional patterns in Batak Toba can contribute to the preservation and documentation of this important regional language. It can also provide insights into the cognitive processes involved in spatial and temporal conceptualization across different linguistic communities. The findings of this study have broader implications for Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory. They support the idea that language transfer is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple factors, including linguistic typology, conceptual differences, and individual learner variables. The study also highlights the importance of considering language-specific features in SLA research. While much SLA research focuses on major world languages, studies of less commonly taught languages like Batak Toba can provide valuable insights into the universals and particulars of language learning processes.

CONCLUSION

This research has analysed the differences and similarities in prepositional patterns between Batak Toba and English languages through a contrastive analysis of narrative texts. Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, several main conclusions can be drawn the complexity of prepositional systems: English has a more complex and diverse prepositional system compared to Batak Toba. This is reflected in the higher number and variety of prepositions in English, which has implications for the challenges faced by Batak Toba speakers in learning English. Generalization vs. Specification: Batak Toba tends to use more general and multifunctional prepositions, while English shows a higher degree of specification in preposition use. This difference requires special attention in the learning process to avoid overgeneralization. Structural Differences: Some concepts expressed through prepositions in English are conveyed through different sentence structures in Batak Toba. This indicates the need for conceptual restructuring in learning English prepositions for Batak Toba speakers. Narrative Context: The use of prepositions in English narrative contexts tends to be more explicit in describing spatial and temporal relationships compared to Batak Toba. This emphasizes the importance of narrative writing practice in learning English. Linguistic Transfer: There is potential for both positive and negative transfer in learning English prepositions by Batak Toba speakers. Identifying these areas is crucial for designing

effective learning strategies. Conceptualization of Space and Time: Differences in preposition use reflect differences in the conceptualization of space and time between the two languages, which requires a learning approach that considers cognitive and cultural aspects. Pedagogical Implications: The results of this study highlight the importance of contrastive approaches, corpus-based learning, production exercises, cognitive approaches, and focus on form in teaching English prepositions to Batak Toba speakers.

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