



Proficiency Level in the Use of Simple Prepositions Among Senior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

Proficiency with simple prepositions is pivotal for global development and continuous language learning. Hence, this study aimed to determine the proficiency level in the use of simple prepositions among 79 Senior High School (SHS) students from a public secondary school in Negros Island Region during the School Year 2025-2026. The study employed a descriptive research design using a validated researcher-made test. Findings revealed that most of the respondents were male learners enrolled in the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) strand and had parents with higher educational attainment. Findings revealed that SHS learners' proficiency level in using simple prepositions was satisfactory. There was no significant difference in learners' proficiency with simple prepositions when grouped by parents' educational attainment. However, significant differences were found by sex and strand: temporal prepositions by sex and directional prepositions by strand, while no significant difference was found in spatial prepositions. The study concludes that prepositional errors remain a significant challenge among SHS learners and prompts the researcher to develop an action plan to serve as a basis for teachers and administrators to improve learners' mastery.

Keywords: English Language Proficiency; Senior High School Students; Simple Prepositions

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INTRODUCTION

In the Philippine context, English serves as a language of wider communication and professional application, enabling Filipino learners to participate effectively in local and global settings (dela Peña, 2023). Under the Philippine Bilingual Education Policy, English proficiency extends beyond conversational ability to include academic competence, particularly the capacity to write accurately and appropriately. Writing is a communicative process that uses linguistic resources to construct meaning (Fitria, 2024), requiring learners to organize ideas through appropriate syntactic and grammatical structures. Among these structures are prepositions, which connect nouns, pronouns, and phrases to express relationships of time, place, direction, and other meanings (Cai, 2022). Simple prepositions therefore serve as an important indicator of grammatical competence, particularly in academic writing where precision is essential.

Prepositions may generally be classified according to time, space, and direction (Celce-Murcia, 1999), making these categories measurable components of English language proficiency. Assessing learners' competence in these areas is also consistent with broader educational development goals, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4, which promotes quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. However, despite continued exposure to English instruction, learners may still experience difficulty in accurately applying prepositions in writing. Cuyos et al. (2024) noted that second-language interference arising from structural differences between English and Filipino or regional languages can affect learners' grammatical performance. Such interference contributes to difficulties in selecting and using appropriate prepositions, making this aspect of English grammar particularly challenging for learners.

These concerns suggest that exposure to English instruction alone may not ensure mastery of simple prepositions in written communication. Persistent errors in the functional use of prepositions may affect learners' ability to express relationships clearly and accurately in academic writing. Hence, the present study was conducted to determine the proficiency level of Senior High School learners in using simple prepositions, particularly those expressing temporal, spatial, and directional relationships. The findings may provide a basis for identifying areas of difficulty and developing appropriate instructional interventions to strengthen learners' grammatical competence and writing proficiency.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the proficiency level in the use of simple prepositions among Senior High School (SHS) students at a school in a district of a large-sized division in the Negros Island Region during the school year 2025–2026, as a basis for developing an action plan. Specifically, it sought to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, strand enrolled, and parents' educational attainment; assess the students' proficiency in using simple prepositions across temporal, spatial, and directional categories; determine the proficiency level when grouped according to the aforementioned variables; and establish whether significant differences exist in their proficiency levels when grouped and compared according to these variables.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prepositions are widely recognized as one of the most difficult aspects of second-language English learning because their use requires grammatical knowledge, contextual understanding, and familiarity with language patterns. Studies have identified omission, addition, and misformation as common errors among learners, often resulting from inadequate understanding of prepositional rules and interference between the first and target languages (Agustin & Wulandari, 2022; Oguan & del Valle, 2022). Similarly, Al-Hamzi et al. (2023) and Siagian et al. (2024) reported that learners frequently selected incorrect prepositions despite knowing basic grammar rules, particularly when prepositions had similar functions or lacked direct equivalents in their first language.

Simple prepositions may be examined according to their temporal, spatial, and directional functions. Temporal prepositions, such as *in*, *on*, and *at*, are often difficult because their rules overlap and depend heavily on context (Al-Ahdal, 2022; Al-Jarf, 2022). Spatial prepositions likewise present challenges due to subtle differences in meaning and application in sentence construction (Bataineh & Sabiri, 2025; Elkhadiri & Khouya, 2019). Directional prepositions, including *to*, *into*, and *onto*, require learners to understand movement, orientation, and spatial relationships, making them among the more difficult categories for language learners (Huyen & Khuyen, 2025; Herdi & Andriana, 2017). These findings support the need to assess the three categories separately.



Learners' proficiency in using prepositions may also vary according to personal, academic, and family-related factors. Bataineh and Sabiri (2025) emphasized the relevance of individual differences in explaining variations in grammatical competence, while Haris (2023) associated language development with learners' educational backgrounds, exposure, and participation in language-learning activities. Parental educational attainment may influence the home learning environment and language experiences, although Taliancich-Klinger et al. (2018) found that English input and output explained greater variation in learners' prepositional performance than maternal education. These findings justify examining proficiency according to sex, academic strand, and parents' educational attainment.

In the Philippine context, English proficiency remains essential because English serves as a medium of instruction and is important for academic, professional, and social communication (Dela Peña, 2023). Nevertheless, Filipino learners continue to experience difficulties in applying grammatical rules, including prepositions, in oral and written communication (Oguan & del Valle, 2022; Fitria, 2024). Cuyos et al. (2024) and Lalang (2022) attributed some of these challenges to structural interference among Filipino, indigenous languages, and English, as well as differences in classroom exposure and teaching practices. Although Avila et al. (2025) reported a high overall mastery of English prepositions among Senior High School ESL learners, the continuing evidence of grammatical errors indicates the need for localized assessment.

Research further suggests that prepositional competence is influenced by language exposure, contextual practice, and the cognitive demands of expressing time, space, and movement. Limited opportunities to interact in authentic English may hinder learners' ability to formulate grammatically accurate sentences (Haris, 2023; Huyen & Khuyen, 2025). Govindarajoo et al. (2022) explained that prepositions involve abstract cognitive processing, while Wardany et al. (2022) emphasized that contextualized practice is more beneficial than memorization of isolated rules. These findings indicate that learners' proficiency should be examined not only through general grammar knowledge but also through their ability to apply prepositions meaningfully in different contexts.

Finally, assessment and instructional intervention are essential in addressing learners' difficulties with simple prepositions. Diagnostic language assessment provides evidence of learners' competence and identifies specific areas requiring improvement (Afia, 2022; Oguan & del Valle, 2022). Error analysis can reveal recurring patterns of omission, addition, and misformation, which may guide the development of targeted remediation activities. Context-based grammar instruction, communicative language activities, technology-supported learning, and constructive feedback have been found effective in improving grammatical accuracy and self-correction (Alotaibi, 2023; Paudel, 2022; Ismail et al., 2025; Shpit & McCarthy, 2023). Hence, determining the proficiency level of Senior High School students in temporal, spatial, and directional prepositions can provide an evidence-based foundation for developing an appropriate action plan.

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the discussion of the research methodology used, the subjects and respondents of the study, the research instruments used, the validity and reliability of the instruments, the procedure for data gathering, and the statistical tools and procedure for data analysis.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design to determine the proficiency level of Senior High School (SHS) learners in using simple prepositions at a school in a district of a large-sized division in the Negros Island Region during School Year 2025–2026. According to Sileyew (2019), descriptive research provides systematic and accurate information about persons, events, or situations as they exist at the time of the study and supports the classification and analysis of observed characteristics. This design was appropriate for the present study because it focused on describing the learners' existing proficiency and identifying difficulties in the use of simple prepositions, particularly temporal, spatial, and directional prepositions, as they naturally occurred among the respondents. The approach therefore provided a clear basis for assessing learners' current grammatical proficiency and identifying areas that may require appropriate instructional support.

Study Respondents

The respondents in this study comprised 79 Senior High School (SHS) learners enrolled for the School Year 2025–2026. This study considered total enumeration; hence, purposive sampling was employed. According to Creswell & Creswell (2023), purposive sampling involves the deliberate selection of participants who possess specific characteristics or experiences necessary to address the research questions.



Instruments

A researcher-developed questionnaire was used to gather the necessary data. It consisted of two parts: Part I collected the respondents' demographic information in terms of sex, strand enrolled in, and parents' educational attainment, while Part II assessed learners' proficiency in using simple prepositions across temporal, spatial, and directional categories, with ten items per area for a total of 30 test items. Each category was interpreted using a five-level proficiency scale from Poor to Excellent, while the overall 30-item test was likewise classified using corresponding score ranges. Content validity was established through the evaluation of three expert jurors, whose assessment focused on the appropriateness, relevance, clarity, and alignment of the items with the intended competencies, guided by the criteria of Good and Scates. The instrument obtained a mean validity rating of 4.81, interpreted as Excellent. Reliability was determined using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20), which measures the internal consistency of test items (Heyliger & Hudson, 2016). A pilot test involving 30 Senior High School learners from a different school yielded a KR-20 coefficient of 0.763, interpreted as Good, indicating that the instrument demonstrated acceptable consistency and dependability for the actual study.

Data Gathering Procedure

To collect the data, a formal letter of permission was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent to allow data collection from the target respondents. When the notice of agreement was returned, the researcher began coordinating with the school principal and directed the class advisers to ensure that time was available and that classes were not disrupted during the questionnaire administration. Upon approval from the class advisers for the scheduled time, the researcher proceeds to conduct the gap-filling preposition test. Each respondent was oriented to the proper procedures before and after answering the test questionnaire. After silently reading the instructions, they were asked to complete the provided gap-filling preposition test, and if they had inquiries, the researcher provided direct assistance. After retrieving all the answered materials, the researcher checked the answers and generated each respondent's score.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

The data in this study were analyzed using descriptive and comparative analytical schemes. For Objective No. 1, a descriptive-analytical scheme employing frequency counts and percentages was used to describe the respondents' profile in terms of sex, strand enrolled in, and parents' educational attainment. Objective No. 2 also utilized a descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine the proficiency level of Senior High School students in the use of prepositions across temporal, spatial, and directional categories. Similarly, Objective No. 3 employed a descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine the students' proficiency level when grouped according to the identified profile variables. For Objective No. 4, a comparative analytical scheme using an independent t-test was employed to determine whether significant differences existed in the students' proficiency in the use of prepositions when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher's and respondents' ethical duties included acknowledging the ethical guidelines that guided the study's conduct. The researcher ensured the respondents' safety and prioritized voluntary participation, informed consent, risk of damage, confidentiality, and anonymity. For voluntary participation, the researcher requested that respondents sign a consent form or indicate agreement. The respondents were allowed to withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

To obtain informed consent, the researcher ensured that the respondents were fully informed about the research procedures and risks. An informed consent form was distributed to respondents aged 18 and above, and a parent's consent form to respondents below 18 years old. To minimize the risk of harm, the researcher did not put participants in situations where they could be harmed as a result of their participation. If that happened, the participants were free to decline to answer any questions and withdraw at any time. For confidentiality, the researcher ensured that the respondents' identifying information would not be disclosed to anyone not directly involved in the study. Furthermore, to ensure the respondents' confidentiality, their names were optionally included in the questionnaire.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data gathered to carry out the objectives of this study. All these were made possible by following certain appropriate procedures so as to give the exact data and solution to each specific problem.

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1

Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	45	57.00
	Female	34	43.00
Strand Enrolled	Academic	34	43.00
	TVL	45	57.00
Parents' Educational Attainment	Lower (Elementary Level/Graduate)	32	40.50
	Higher (High School Level/Graduate and Above)	47	59.50
	Total	79	100.00

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, strand enrolled, and parents' educational attainment. By sex, the findings showed that 45 respondents were male and 34 were female. Male learners comprised a larger proportion of respondents than female learners, suggesting that male perspectives were better represented in the study. This finding is consistent with the observation of Cuyos et al. (2024), who reported variations in learner characteristics among Filipino students due to differences in school population composition and educational contexts.

Regarding the strand enrolled in, the findings revealed that 45 respondents (57%) were enrolled in the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) strand, while 34 respondents (43%) were enrolled in the Academic strand. This implied that TVL learners comprised the larger portion of respondents, reflecting learners' preference for the TVL strand because of its employment-oriented, skills-based curriculum; that the school's category is rural; and that most parents' occupations are in agriculture. This finding supports the result of Fitria (2024), who found that learners from different academic backgrounds may demonstrate variations in language learning experiences due to differences in instructional exposure, learning activities, and academic requirements across educational tracks.



Regarding parents' educational attainment, the findings showed that 32 respondents (40.50%) belonged to the lower category, including parents with elementary-level education or elementary graduates. In comparison, 47 respondents, or 59.50%, belonged to the higher category, which included parents with high school-level education, high school graduates, and those with higher educational attainment. The respondents also showed the highest achievement, with most learners originating from families with higher parental attainment. In this regard, the chances for students to receive academic assistance and the opportunities for their own home learning environment are high. The research supported Siagian et al.'s (2024) argument that a learning environment, particularly one that provides academic support and opportunities, may contribute to learners' success. The respondents consisted mostly of male learners, more VL learners, and most parents who belong to the higher-order group. All 79 SHS learners were included in the test, and these subjects represented their actual group traits, leading to an accurate description and a reliable result that reflects the reality of their being in SHS in the identified study locale.

Proficiency Level in the Use of Simple Prepositions Among Senior High School Students according to Temporal, Spatial, and Directional Prepositions

Table 2

Proficiency Level in the Use of Simple Prepositions Among Senior High School Students according to Temporal, Spatial, and Directional Prepositions

Areas	Mean	Interpretation
Temporal Prepositions	6.37	Very Satisfactory
Spatial Prepositions	4.66	Satisfactory
Directional Prepositions	3.51	Fair
Overall Mean	14.53	Satisfactory

Table 2 presents the proficiency levels in the use of simple prepositions among Senior High School learners across temporal, spatial, and directional categories. The overall mean score obtained was 14.53, interpreted as satisfactory. This implies that SHS learners can satisfactorily identify simple prepositions across all areas, but show slight difference in applying prepositional usage in sentence-making activities with contextual applications.

The finding supports the study by Avila et al. (2025), which found that Senior High School ESL learners generally demonstrated a high level of mastery of English prepositions.

Among the three categories, temporal prepositions had the highest mean score of 6.37, which is interpreted as very satisfactory. This finding implied that Senior High School learners have a better understanding and use of temporal expressions than of other types of simple prepositions. The finding supports Saravanan (2014), who found that students experienced less difficulty with prepositions of time than with prepositions of place and direction.

Meanwhile, spatial prepositions demonstrated satisfactory proficiency, with a mean score of 4.66. This finding reveals that learners' mastery of spatial relationships is still developing compared with their performance on temporal prepositions, since respondents can correctly identify the prepositions in the sentences. The finding is consistent with Elkhadiri & Khouya (2019), who found that Moroccan EFL learners had many difficulties using English spatial prepositions correctly.

In contrast, directional prepositions obtained the lowest mean score of 3.51, interpreted as Fair. This finding implied that Senior High School learners demonstrated adequate but comparatively weaker ability in using prepositions related to movement and direction. Furthermore, learners have acquired basic knowledge of directional expressions; however, their proficiency in this area is less developed, as most of the errors identified are in this area. The finding supports the results of Bataineh & Sabiri (2025), who found that directional prepositions are among the more difficult grammatical structures for learners because they require understanding both movement and spatial relationships.



Generally, Senior High School learners do not demonstrate the same level of mastery across all prepositional functions. The finding supports Siagian et al. (2024), who reported that learners commonly experience varying levels of difficulty across different types of prepositions, particularly those requiring more contextual and relational understanding.

Proficiency Level in the Use of Simple Prepositions Among Senior High School Students according to Temporal, Spatial, and Directional Prepositions when grouped according to Sex, Strand Enrolled, and Parents' Educational Attainment

Table 3

Proficiency Level in the Use of Simple Prepositions Among Senior High School Students according to Temporal, Spatial, and Directional Prepositions when grouped according to Sex

Areas	Male Mean	Interpretation	Female Mean	Interpretation
Temporal Prepositions	5.98	Satisfactory	6.88	Very Satisfactory
Spatial Prepositions	4.64	Satisfactory	4.68	Satisfactory
Directional Prepositions	3.56	Fair	3.44	Fair
Overall Mean	14.18	Satisfactory	15.00	Satisfactory

Table 3 presents the proficiency levels in the use of simple prepositions among Senior High School learners, grouped by sex, for temporal, spatial, and directional prepositions. The results showed that both male and female respondents achieved a satisfactory level of proficiency in using simple prepositions, with mean scores of 14.18 and 15.00, respectively. This finding confirms that male and female SHS learners can correctly identify and use simple prepositions in basic sentences but still need to improve their accuracy in using prepositions for time, place, and direction. This result is supported by Avila et al. (2025), who found that both male and female Grade 12 learners exhibited a similarly low level of mastery of English prepositions. However, male learners recorded a higher percentage of errors on several frequently missed items.

Regarding temporal prepositions, male respondents obtained a mean score of 5.98, indicating a Satisfactory level of proficiency. In contrast, female respondents obtained a mean score of 6.88, indicating a Very Satisfactory level. Female learners demonstrated relatively higher proficiency with time-related prepositions than male learners and made fewer errors. The difference revealed that females outperformed males in terms of proficiency with temporal prepositions. This finding is supported by Nghi et al. (2020), who found that female Vietnamese EFL learners outperformed male learners in using English prepositions, with 60% of female participants performing well in the speaking assessment compared with 49% of male participants.

For spatial prepositions, both male and female respondents achieved a satisfactory level of proficiency, with mean scores of 4.64 and 4.68, respectively. The similarity in performance suggests that male and female learners experienced comparable levels of mastery in expressing spatial relationships, confirming that they understand and develop skills equally for the spatial concept taught in the classroom setting. This finding is consistent with Wardany et al. (2022), who found that learners commonly experience difficulties with spatial prepositions due to contextual differences in meaning and usage, regardless of learner group characteristics.

For directional prepositions, both male and female respondents achieved a Fair level of proficiency, with mean scores of 3.56 and 3.44, respectively. The similar low performance of male and female learners revealed that directional prepositions represent a common area of difficulty among the respondents, as they have not fully understood their directional usage in sentences. This finding supports the results of Bataineh & Sabiri (2025), who found that directional prepositions are among the more difficult grammatical structures for learners because they require understanding both spatial relationships and movement concepts.

Table 4

Proficiency Level in the Use of Simple Prepositions Among Senior High School Students according to Temporal, Spatial, and Directional Prepositions when grouped according to Strand Enrolled



Areas	Academic Mean	Interpretation	TVL Mean	Interpretation
Temporal Prepositions	6.71	Very Satisfactory	6.11	Very Satisfactory
Spatial Prepositions	5.09	Satisfactory	4.33	Satisfactory
Directional Prepositions	4.26	Satisfactory	2.93	Fair
Overall Mean	16.06	Satisfactory	13.38	Satisfactory

The results showed that both Academic and TVL learners achieved a satisfactory level of proficiency in using simple prepositions, with the Academic strand obtaining an overall mean score of 16.06 compared with 13.38 for the TVL strand. This revealed that while both strands demonstrate an acceptable level of competence in using simple prepositions, Academic learners perform better than TVL learners because they are exposed to writing-intensive academic texts. In contrast, TVL learners focus on hands-on and work-ready skills. This finding supports the results of Fitria (2024), who found that learners' grammatical accuracy varies with their learning experiences and exposure to language-based academic activities.

For temporal prepositions, academic learners obtained a mean score of 6.71. In contrast, TVL learners obtained a mean score of 6.11, interpreted as a very satisfactory level of proficiency, with the academic strand showing a slightly higher mean score. Academic learners perform slightly better than TVL learners at using time-related prepositions because they can more readily identify and use them in sentences. This finding aligns with Al-Jarf (2022), who found that learners generally perform better with temporal prepositions than with other prepositional categories because these forms are frequently encountered in written and spoken communication.

For spatial prepositions, the academic strand obtained a mean score of 5.09, while the TVL strand obtained 4.33, both interpreted as satisfactory. The similar proficiency level shows that both Academic and TVL learners receive comparable foundational English instruction that adequately develops their understanding of spatial prepositions. This finding contradicts the study by Wardany et al. (2022), which found that learners commonly experience difficulty with spatial prepositions due to differences in meaning and usage, resulting in moderate proficiency levels among second-language learners.

For directional prepositions, the academic strand learners obtained a satisfactory level with a mean score of 4.26, while the TVL strand learners obtained a Fair level with a mean of 2.93. This indicates that directional prepositions are a more difficult grammatical area for TVL learners than for academic learners, as the lower mean score suggests greater difficulty in identifying and correctly applying them. This finding is consistent with Herdi & Andriana (2017), who found that students' ability to use prepositions of direction was at the Fair level, particularly demonstrating limited proficiency in this category.

Table 5

Proficiency Level in the Use of Simple Prepositions Among Senior High School Students according to Temporal, Spatial, and Directional Prepositions when grouped according to Parents' Educational Attainment

Areas	Lower Mean	Interpretation	Higher Mean	Interpretation
Temporal Prepositions	6.56	Very Satisfactory	6.23	Very Satisfactory
Spatial Prepositions	4.69	Satisfactory	4.64	Satisfactory
Directional Prepositions	3.25	Fair	3.68	Fair
Overall Mean	14.50	Satisfactory	14.55	Satisfactory



Table 5 presents proficiency levels in using simple prepositions among senior high school students, grouped by parents' educational attainment, for temporal, spatial, and directional prepositions. The results showed that learners from both lower and higher categories in terms of parental educational attainment obtained a satisfactory overall rating, with the lower category obtaining a mean score of 14.50 and the higher category obtaining 14.55. The comparable proficiency indicates that foundational knowledge of simple prepositions is consistently developed among learners, regardless of differences in their parents' educational attainment, because this topic is explicitly taught and reinforced through regular classroom instruction. This finding aligns with the study by Cuyos et al. (2024), which found that parental background alone does not necessarily determine language proficiency outcomes.

For temporal prepositions, learners under the lower category obtained a mean score of 6.56, while those under the higher category obtained 6.23, with both groups interpreted as very satisfactory. This implies that learners from both parental educational attainment groups have limited proficiency with time-related prepositions, suggesting that they have developed these skills through instruction. This finding aligns with Taliancich-Klinger et al. (2018), who found that English input and output accounted for most of the variation in English preposition performance. In contrast, mothers' education contributed less to learners' preposition scores.

For spatial prepositions, the lower category obtained a mean score of 4.69, while the higher category obtained 4.64, with both groups interpreted as satisfactory. This implies that classroom instruction, language exposure, and practice opportunities may play a more important role in developing these skills. The result is consistent with Taliancich-Klinger et al. (2018), who found that mothers' education contributed less to English preposition performance than did language-specific English input and output.

For directional prepositions, the lower category obtained a mean score of 3.25, while the higher category obtained 3.68, with both groups interpreted as Fair. This revealed learner has not yet developed mastery of using time-related prepositions. This finding supports Siagian et al. (2024), who found that learners frequently misused directional prepositions because these structures require understanding of both movement and spatial relationships.

Comparative Analysis in the Proficiency Level in the Use of Simple Prepositions Among Senior High School Students according to Temporal, Spatial, and Directional Prepositions when grouped and compared according to Sex, Strand Enrolled, and Parents' Educational Attainment

Table 6

Difference in the Proficiency Level in the Use of Simple Prepositions Among Senior High School Students according to Temporal Prepositions when grouped and compared according to Sex, Strand Enrolled, and Parents' Educational Attainment

Variable	Category	N	Mean	t-value	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex	Male	45	5.98	-2.154	0.035		Significant
	Female	34	6.88				
Strand Enrolled	Academic	34	6.71	1.381	0.171	0.05	Not Significant
	TVL	45	6.11				
Parents' Educational Attainment	Lower	32	6.56	0.748	0.457		Not Significant
	Higher	47	6.23				



Table 6 presents the difference in proficiency levels in the use of temporal prepositions among Senior High School learners when grouped by sex, strand enrolled in, and parents' educational attainment. In terms of sex, male respondents obtained a mean score of 5.98, while female respondents obtained a mean score of 6.88. The computed t -value was -2.154 with a p -value of 0.035, which is below the 0.05 significance level. In terms of strand enrolled, academic learners obtained a mean score of 6.71, while TVL learners obtained a mean score of 6.11, with a computed t -value of 1.381 and a p -value of 0.171. Meanwhile, learners under the Lower parental educational attainment category obtained a mean score of 6.56. In comparison, those under the higher category obtained 6.23, with a computed t -value of 0.748 and a p -value of 0.457. Based on the obtained p -values, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in proficiency in the use of temporal prepositions among Senior High School learners is rejected when grouped by sex, but accepted when grouped by strand enrolled in and parents' educational attainment.

The significant difference in temporal preposition proficiency by sex revealed that it is a factor to consider when developing classroom activities that provide sufficient practice and support to strengthen learners' ability to express time accurately in sentences. Meanwhile, there are no significant differences by strand and parents' educational attainment. This implied that learners from different academic strands and parental educational backgrounds have acquired the same exposure in language activities. This finding aligns with Al-Jarf (2022), whose study found that learners generally differ in their performance in temporal prepositions due to variations in language exposure and individual learning experiences.

For the strand enrolled, there is no significant difference in learners' ability to use temporal prepositions. This implied that respondents had greater opportunities to learn the temporal prepositions from the subjects and teachers who taught them. This finding is consistent with Cuyos et al. (2024), who found that Filipino learners may exhibit similar grammatical performance despite differences in educational classifications when they receive comparable language-learning experiences.

Regarding parents' educational attainment, the non-significant difference indicates that parents' educational background did not significantly influence learners' mastery of temporal prepositional structures. This implied that learners' development of temporal preposition skills varies based on their individual learning experiences in the classroom instruction and exposure to English prepositions. This finding supports Ridwan & Karmila (2024), who found that multiple factors influence learners' grammatical proficiency and that demographic characteristics do not independently determine language performance.

Table 7

Difference in the Proficiency Level in the Use of Simple Prepositions Among Senior High School Students according to Spatial Prepositions when grouped and compared according to Sex, Strand Enrolled, and Parents' Educational Attainment

Variable	Category	N	Mean	t -value	p -value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex	Male	45	4.64	-0.074	0.941		Not Significant
	Female	34	4.68				
Strand Enrolled	Academic	34	5.09	1.736	0.087	0.05	Not Significant
	TVL	45	4.33				
Parents' Educational Attainment	Lower	32	4.69	0.112	0.911		Not Significant
	Higher	47	4.64				



Table 7 presents the difference in proficiency levels in the use of simple prepositions among senior high school students, grouped by spatial prepositions and compared by sex, strand enrolled in, and parents' educational attainment. In terms of sex, male learners obtained a mean score of 4.64, while female learners obtained a mean score of 4.68, with a t-value of -0.074 and a p-value of 0.941. For strand-enrolled academic learners, the mean score was 5.09, while TVL learners had a mean score of 4.33; the t-value was 1.736, and the p-value was 0.087. For parents' educational attainment, learners under the lower category obtained a mean score of 4.69. In comparison, those under the higher category obtained 4.64, with a t-value of 0.112 and a p-value of 0.911. Based on the obtained p-values, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in proficiency in the use of spatial prepositions among Senior High School learners is accepted when grouped by sex, strand enrolled in, and parents' educational attainment.

The absence of a significant difference according to sex implies that male and female learners demonstrated comparable proficiency in spatial prepositions, suggesting that sex was not associated with meaningful differences in their performance in this grammatical area. This finding is consistent with Avila et al. (2025), who reported no significant difference between male and female Grade 12 learners in their mastery of English prepositions.

For the strand enrolled in, the absence of a significant difference implies that Academic and TVL learners performed comparably on spatial prepositions despite their different academic tracks. This finding is consistent with Wardany et al. (2022), who found that learners demonstrated similar performance levels in spatial prepositions despite differences in learner characteristics.

For parents' educational attainment, the absence of a significant difference implies that learners from the lower and higher categories performed similarly in spatial prepositions regardless of their parents' educational attainment. This finding is consistent with Taliancich-Klinger et al. (2018), who found that parental educational background contributed less to English preposition performance than learners' language-specific English input and output.

Table 8

Difference in the Proficiency Level in the Use of Simple Prepositions Among Senior High School Students according to Directional Prepositions when grouped and compared according to Sex, Strand Enrolled, and Parents' Educational Attainment

Variable	Category	N	Mean	t-value	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex	Male	45	3.56	0.316	0.753		Not Significant
	Female	34	3.44				
Strand Enrolled	Academic	34	4.26	3.755	0.000	0.05	Significant
	TVL	45	2.93				
Parents' Educational Attainment	Lower	32	3.25	-1.191	0.238		Not Significant
	Higher	47	3.68				

Table 8 presents the difference in proficiency in the use of simple prepositions for directional prepositions among Senior High School learners, when grouped and compared by sex, strand enrolled in, and parents' educational attainment. In terms of sex, male learners obtained a mean score of 3.56, while female learners obtained a mean score of 3.44, with a t-value of 0.316 and a p-value of 0.753. For strand-enrolled academic learners, the mean score was 4.26, while TVL learners had a mean score of 2.93; the t-value was 3.755, and the p-value was 0.000. For parents' educational attainment, learners in the lower category had a mean score of 3.25, while those in the higher category had a mean score of 3.68; the t-value was -1.191, and the p-value was 0.238.



Based on the obtained p-values, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in proficiency in the use of directional prepositions among Senior High School learners is rejected when grouped by strand enrolled, but not when grouped by sex or parents' educational attainment.

The absence of a significant sex difference implies that male and female learners demonstrated comparable proficiency in directional prepositions, despite the slight difference in their mean scores. This finding is consistent with Avila et al. (2025), who reported no significant difference between male and female Grade 12 learners in their mastery of English prepositions.

For the strand enrolled, the significant difference implies that Academic learners demonstrated higher proficiency in directional prepositions than TVL learners, indicating that the two strands differed in performance in this grammatical area. This finding is consistent with Herdi & Andriana (2017), who reported that students' proficiency in using prepositions of direction was only at the Fair level, demonstrating that directional prepositions remain an area in which learner performance can vary.

For parents' educational attainment, the absence of a significant difference implies that learners from the Lower and Higher categories demonstrated comparable proficiency in directional prepositions despite the difference in their parents' educational attainment. This finding is consistent with Taliancich-Klinger et al. (2018), who found that mothers' education contributed less to English preposition performance than language-specific English input and output.

CONCLUSION

The study found that most respondents were male Senior High School learners from the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) strand and had parents with higher educational attainment. Overall, the learners demonstrated a Satisfactory proficiency level in using simple prepositions across temporal, spatial, and directional categories. When grouped according to sex, strand, and parents' educational attainment, learners generally maintained a satisfactory level, although directional prepositions were rated Fair among both male and female learners, indicating greater difficulty in identifying prepositions that express movement or direction. No significant difference was found in proficiency when grouped according to parents' educational attainment, while significant differences were observed according to sex in temporal prepositions and according to strand in directional prepositions; no significant difference was found in spatial prepositions. Overall, the findings indicate that SHS learners possess adequate proficiency in using simple prepositions but still require targeted instruction and practice, particularly in temporal prepositions according to sex and directional prepositions according to strand, to improve accuracy and strengthen their application of prepositions across different contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions of the study, it is recommended that contextualized and career-oriented prepositional learning activities be implemented to provide real-world contexts and develop job-ready language skills, particularly among male TVL learners. Learner-centered activities should also be conducted to improve students' accuracy in selecting and using appropriate prepositions in sentence construction across temporal, spatial, and directional contexts. In addition, structured and interactive directional activities should be integrated to strengthen learners' ability to use prepositions that express movement and direction, complemented by activities that reinforce mastery of spatial and temporal prepositions. Finally, targeted learning activities on temporal prepositions should be provided for male learners, while focused directional-preposition exercises should be implemented for TVL learners to address the specific areas where greater difficulty was identified.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares the absence of any conflict of interest that could have influenced the content or conclusions of this paper. She affirms that no financial, personal, or professional relationships with other individuals or organizations have compromised the objectivity, integrity, or impartiality of the research work. As a final point, no external parties influenced the study design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation.

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