STUDENT USAGE OF PREPOSITIONS: CONSIDERATIONS FAR BEYOND POR AND PARA

By Emilie Hall
THE PROBLEM WITH INDIRECT OBJECT PRONOUNS

- Function differently in Spanish than in English
  - New concept, harder to grasp

- They’re taught with fake sentences
  - Les escribo cartas a mis amigos

- Or taught with verbs like “gustar”
  - Me gusta la playa

- Often no real-life examples are given
The Problem with Learning Prepositions in Spanish

- Students given list of Spanish-English prepositions
  - A = to; En = on/in; De = of/from; Sobre = over, about
  - Por / Para = for

- Spend most of the time focusing on Por vs. Para

- List of verbs with certain prepositions
  - Aprender a; Insistir en; Depender de etc.

- No explanation that in both languages prepositions can be used in different ways
THE MEANING OF “A”

“A” can mean:

- **To**: Jorge gave a motorcycle to his brother
  Jorge le regaló una moto a su hermano

- **For**: He did Jorge’s homework for him
  Le hizo la tarea a Jorge

- **In**: He noticed a newfound happiness in David
  Le observó una nueva alegría a David
“A” can mean:

- **On**: She put the shoes on her daughter
  Le puso los zapatos a su hija.

- **From**: The professor demanded more from his students
  El profesor les exigió más a sus estudiantes.

- **Nothing**: Dogs scare them
  Les dan miedo los perros (a ellos).
THE RESEARCH QUESTION

- When translating do we know how to properly use prepositions or indirect object pronouns?

- Method:
  - 30 sentences, all with a “Le+A” construction
    - Used 18 for basis of data
  - 21: 600 (pre-study abroad)
  - 17: 700/800 (post-study abroad)
Jorge gave a motorcycle to his brother
- Jorge le regaló una moto a su hermano
He recited a poem to Alejandro
- Le recitó el poema a Alejandro
He gave the recipe to his daughter
- Le dio la receta a su hija.
Laura wrote to her brother
- Laura le escribió a su hermano
He showed Angela the photos (He showed the photos to Angela)
- Le mostró las fotos a Angela
# Break Down of Responses for English “To”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Le+A</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Le</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<tr>
<td>700/800</td>
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<td>87</td>
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He did Jorge’s homework for him
  - Le hizo la tarea a Jorge

He cooked the tamales for his brother
  - Le cocinó los tamales a su hermano

He bought his girlfriend flowers. (He bought flowers for his girlfriend.)
  - Le compró flores a su novia
# RESPONSES TO ENGLISH “FOR”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Le+A</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Para: 52 Por: 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>63</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>700/800</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Para: 15 Por: 2</td>
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ENGLISH “IN/ON”

- He saw a certain melancholy in his grandma
  - Le observó cierta melancolía a su abuela
- He noticed a new found happiness in David
  - Le observó nueva alegria a Jorge
- Maria put the blanket on her brother
  - Maria le puso una manta a su hermano
- She put the shoes on her daughter
  - Le puso los zapatos a su hija
## RESPONSES FOR ENGLISH “ON/IN”

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She hid the present from Manuel
- Le escondió el regalo de Manuel

The professor demanded more from his students
- El profesor les exigió más a sus estudiantes

Jorge took the hat from his brother
- Jorge le quitó la gorra a su hermano
# Responses for English “From”

<table>
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RESPONSES TO SENTENCES IN WHICH NO ENGLISH PREPOSITION WAS NEEDED

- He scared Fernando
  - Le dio susto a Fernando
- He stole Guillermo’s money
  - Le robó el dinero a Guillermo
- Dogs scare them
  - les dan miedo los perros
## RESPONSES TO NO ENGLISH PREPOSITION

<table>
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CONCLUSION

- Studying all prepositions are important
- Spend less time on “Por vs. Para” and more time on all prepositions in general.
- Need to learn them prior to studying abroad
  - If learned before than you can spend your study abroad experience...
Spend time with reading.
- “Un beso que le estaba robando a Angélica” *La dama del Alba*

Listening
- Telenovelas with your host mom
- Animated movies at the cine