

## The Russian Preposition 'za': A Cognitive Linguistic Approach

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**Abstract :** Prepositions have long been considered to be one of the major challenges for second language learners, since they have multiple uses that differ greatly from one language to another. The traditional approach to second language teaching supplies students with a list of uses of a preposition that they have to memorise and no explanation is provided. Contrary to the traditional grammar approach, the cognitive linguistic approach offers an explanation for the use of prepositions and provides strategies to comprehend and learn prepositions that would be otherwise seem obscure. The present paper demonstrates the use of the cognitive approach for the explanation of prepositions through the example of the Russian preposition 'za'. The paper demonstrates how various spatial and non-spatial uses of this preposition are linked together through metaphorical and metonymical mapping. The diversity of expressions with za is explained by the range of spatial scenes this preposition is associated with.

**Keywords :** language teaching, Russian, preposition 'za', cognitive approach

**Conference Title :** ICFLTAL 2015 : International Conference on Foreign Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics

**Conference Location :** London, United Kingdom

**Conference Dates :** January 19-20, 2015