CHAPTER III
PRESENTATION OF STRUCTURAL WORDS

The content words or lexical words carry a heavy load of semantic content in them besides their grammatical structure and use. The STRUCTURAL words which form the framework of the language contain more of the grammatical element in them and hence acquire the name, grammatical words. These words enter into closed contrasts unlike the content words that occur in open contrasts. The meanings of structural words are mostly of a general kind. But they find various realizations according to the specific use they are put to. There exists a sort of a cline between grammatical and lexical words.

The new entrants to college have already had grounding in the grammar of the language after several years of school English and are in a position to recognize the various structural words. Yet, their proficiency in actually using these is much disappointing. The learners are in need of guidance to comprehend the complicated structure of the English language as well as to use it in their own writing. Hence more than indicating the parts of speech labels as articles, prepositions, pronouns etc, as in a General English dictionary, the task of the EFL lexicographer lies
in illustrating the generic and specific uses of these grammatical words. Realising the need of their users the learner's dictionaries are elaborate and extensive in their descriptions and illustrations of the various uses of the structural words. Their efficacy lies in the illustrative examples under each category of use and the effective explanations of the uses themselves. The analysis and comparison of the entries on structural words in the four dictionaries under study is quite revealing.

Structural words are constituted by articles and other determiners, prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions etc. The articles and prepositions are taken up for detailed analysis in the present work.

3.1 ARTICLES

Articles are structural words that are used as determiners in noun phrases. The indefinite article a/an is normally used before a countable noun in the singular as a pen, an orange, etc. The definite article functions as (a) an indicator of a specific noun, and (b) the indefinite article in the generic use.

Eg. (a) He bought a new car. The car is imported. (article--first appearance; article--second appearance specifying the car mentioned earlier)

(b) A lion is a dangerous animal. The lion is a dangerous animal. (Both a and the are used in the generic sense.)
Quirk et al. give the following table for the use of the articles with count and noncount nouns (253):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
<th>COUNT</th>
<th>NONCOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>definite</td>
<td>the book</td>
<td>the furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indefinite</td>
<td>a book</td>
<td>furniture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLURAL</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>definite</td>
<td>the book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indefinite</td>
<td>books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second language learners often get confused in using the definite and indefinite articles without comprehending their specific uses in the various contexts. For instance, in the example cited above under (b) "The lion is a dangerous animal," often many second language users have the tendency to say/ write: "The lion is the dangerous animal". To overcome this mistake learners need to be conversant with the various uses of the articles as well as the contexts where the articles are to be omitted.

The structuralists' view that no item is meaningful without contrast with other items, has to be impressed upon the learners. Both the collocational possibilities and the contrasting uses, that is, the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationship of these different articles must be clearly given to the second language learners.
The semantic, pragmatic and grammatical significance of the two kinds of articles is dealt with followed by the treatment of the same in the four dictionaries.

3.1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE INDEFINITE ARTICLES

A/an is used as the determiner with singular countable nouns. A is used before nouns starting with a consonant sound and an is used before nouns beginning with vowel sounds.

In the use of the indefinite article two basic meanings can be distinguished: (1) It can be used to mean 'any; or 'every', that is, a noun preceded by a/an indicates one individual object as representative of a class.

Eg. A camel is a desert animal.
An elephant is a mammal

The plural of a/an used in this sense is zero (-).
( -) Camels are desert animals.
Elephants are mammals.

(2) The most common meaning of the indefinite article is to denote a single specimen or object when the individual specimen or object, etc, is first mentioned.

Eg. This is an exercise.
She is a governess.
I met a girl and a boy in the function.
When the indefinite article is used in this sense it has various plurals like some, several, a few, a numeral or a numeral phrase. Eg.

Eg. (1) There is a White bench in the park.
    There are some/a few white benches in the park,

    (2) I came across a good book on this subject
        I came across a number of/ few/ several good books on this subject.

When the indefinite article is used with the generic sense it is clearly distinct from the numeral one.

(Generic): A taxi can be engaged for the trip.

(Specific): One taxi may not be enough for the trip.

The indefinite article is used in word groups such as a great/ good number/ many (of)/ good deal (of), a lot(of), a large, a huge, etc., and number, quantity, amount etc. It is also used with good and a numeral. But it is not used with plenty (of).

Eg. I have completed a great/good deal of work today.
    There are a good number of applicants for the job.
    You have a large collection of books.
    It's a good ten kilometers (i.e., at least ten kilometers, perhaps more) to the dam.
    There is a lot of fun in this game.
    There is plenty of food.
The indefinite article can be used to mean 'each' and 'every' as in twice a week, one rupee a kilo, fifty kilometers an hour etc.

The indefinite article is also used to mean the 'same' after of and at in phrases such as all of a colour (= all having the same colour) Birds of a feather (= birds of the same kind); and three at a time (= three at the same time).

With two nouns that are considered to be one unit when they are used together, the indefinite article is not repeated with the second noun.

Eg. a table and chair
    a knife and fork.
    a cup and saucer.

These examples may be compared with the following examples of indefinite article used with different nouns.

a dog and a cat.

a pencil and a pen.

The indefinite article may be used after many, such, quite, rather and exclamatory what. Eg.

Many a song had been recorded by him.
It's rather a pity.
What a wonder!

It may also follow an adjective preceded by so, as, too, how, quite, etc.
She's not so great an intellect as she poses to be.
There is as much a space as to keep this.
This is too big a size to manage.
How serious a mistake this could be!

FACTS TO BE LEARNT/ UNDERSTOOD

The following is the summary of the essential facts about the Indefinite articles as enumerated by Thomas and Martinet. (1-3)

1. FORM - A OR AN - CONTEXT FOR EACH OF THE FORM.

2. FUNCTION
   1) To indicate Singular Countable nouns,
   2) To show a singular countable noun as an example of a class of things.
   3) With a noun complement
   4) In certain numerical expressions.
   5) In expressions of price, speed, ratio etc.
   6) with few and little.
   7) In exclamations before singular, countable nouns.
   8) Before Mr/Mrs/Miss & Surname.

3. CONTEXTS WHERE THE INDEFINITE ARTICLE IS NOT USED:

1) Before plural nouns
2) (i) Before uncountable nouns (baggage furniture news etc.)
   (ii) Before Materials (glass, wood, wine etc)
3) Before abstract nouns (beauty, happiness, fear etc.)
4) Before names of meals except when preceded by an adjective (breakfast, lunch, etc.: a good breakfast, an early lunch)

The article is used when the meal is a special 'one given to celebrate something or in someone's honour:
I was invited to dinner (at their house in an) but I was invited to a dinner given to welcome the new ambassador.

3.1.2 ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF THE ENTRIES:
INDEFINITE ARTICLES

All the four dictionaries unanimously take care to specify how the pronunciation of the sound and not the spelling of a consonant is the deciding factor for using either a or an. This crucial information is given either in the usage notes (OALD, LDOCE and WNNCD) or with the special marking (CELD). Often second language learners find it difficult to choose the right indefinite article before nouns whose initial consonant or vowel may have the contrary pronunciation.

Eg. honest (h is silent)
University (U is pronounced/ju/

one-rupee note (O is pronounced/W/ etc.

The compilers of the four dictionaries have worked at length to bring out the various uses of the indefinite article by specifying the contexts and also by providing a number of contexts in their examples. There is uniformity in recording its basic use.

OALD Both (a and an) are used before [c] [c gp] or [sing]ns that have not previously been made specific.

LDOCE: 1....before a noun that names someone or something not already mentioned or known about.
You use a or an at the beginning of noun group... When you do not want or need to say which particular person or thing you mean, or when you have not mentioned the person or thing before.

Used as a function word before singular nouns when the referent is unspecified.

The two distinct meanings of a/an as (i) 'any' or 'every' (i.e., in the generic sense) and as (ii) 'one (single) are given by all the four dictionaries. But the four compilations are not equally explicit or exhaustive in explaining and exemplifying all the different functions of a/an. For instance, OALD in showing the meaning of a/an as 'one' (single) gives the following examples:

"One a man, hotel, girl, committee, unit, u-turn (cf some men, hotels, girls etc). an egg, aunt, uncle hour, x-ray, Mp, L-Plate (cf some eggs, aunts, uncles, hours etc.)"

Here in the examples the compilers indicate that the nouns shown in the singular with a/an can be used as plural nouns. That, with the use of plural forms the plural sense for the nouns is acquired is left to the inference of the dictionary-user.

So also in indicating the generic meaning of a/an as 'any; every'; 'A horse is a quadruped' (cf Horses are quadrupeds). 'An Owl can see in the dark' (cf Owls can see in the dark)\textquotedbl", the fact that the two example sentences in the singular and plural mean the same is not overtly stated.
LDOCE also does not state clearly this distinction though it provides examples:

\[ a \text{ one: a thousand pounds/a dozen eggs.} \]

\[ ...\text{any; every; A square has four sides./ I would say a parcel was bigger.} \]

CELD is explicit in its explanation of the sense of *a/an* as 'any and every':

\[ \text{You can use *a* or *an* instead of the number 'one'. It is often used in front of the numbers 'hundred', 'thousand' million' and 'billion' and in front of fractions such as 'quarter' and 'half' Eg... a million and a half dollars... a year of two ago.. There were no offices on the patrol, just a corporal and six other guys.} \]

\[ ...\text{You use *a* or *an* at the beginning of noun groups when you are saying something that applies to all members of the class, group or type that is described by the noun group. Another way of making statements of this type is to use the plural, so that you can say 'a student has to work hard' or 'students have to work hard'. Eg An ostrich cannot fly... A Cyclist has to pay when he goes over the ferry.} \]

WNWCD is too brief in its entries for this distinction.

\[ \text{used as a function word before singular nouns when the referent is unspecified <a man overboard> and before number collectives and some numbers a dozen.} \]

\[ 3b: \text{Any a man who is sick can't work.} \]

It will be useful for the learners if the learner's dictionaries could clearly mark the distinction of the meanings one (specific use) and any; every (generic use) of the indefinite article.
None of these dictionaries has entered the meaning of a/an as the "same" as in phrases like all of a colour and Birds of a feather except WNNCD:

"2 i same <birds of a feather> <swords of a strength>

Another observation is that only OALD and LDOCE point out the omission of the indefinite article before a noun that occurs with another noun and when both the nouns are considered to be one unit as in a cup and x saucer, a mother and x child, etc.

Among the four dictionaries the entries in LDOCE and CELD are found to be more inclusive. The use of the definite article after such words as many, such, quite, rather and after adjectives that follow so, too, how etc. are entered only in LDOCE and CELD.

Again it is only LDOCE and CELD that record the use of a/an with the mass/uncountable noun when it is referred to as a 'container' or 'unit' or 'one single portion' etc.

LDOCE  Eg. I'd like a coffee please.

CELD  Eg shall I pour you a coffee? ... a fine red wine". Learners must be taught to be wary of this particular use of 'a' since this expression may not be applicable to all the different mass nouns. LDOCE and CELD only point out the use of a/an before the-ing form of verbs when used as nouns.

LDOCE  7b He drove off with a crashing of gears and a screeching of tyres.
...a stamping of feet....A falling-off in business was expected.

The use of a/an before the name of a painter or other artist to indicate that a particular work of art is by a particular artist is also entered only in LDOCE and CELD.

LDOCE 9 This painting is a Rembrandt.
CELD She noticed a Renoir on the wall and two Matisse...There is a new David Lodge out this month.

Of the two entries (ie in LDOCE and CELD) for the use of a/an preceding a particular time, event, day, festival etc., LDOCE has an edge over CELD in comparing its examples with a sentence not using the article.

LDOCE 11b I can't remember a Christmas when it snowed so much (Compare - It always snows at Christmas).
CELD 9 It's on a Friday, isn't it?... a Christmas that I shall never forget.

The presentation of the Semantic and Grammatical aspects of the indefinite article in the four dictionaries is tabulated (Table 4). Information on the Pragmatic aspect is almost negligible as there are only two instances where it is given.

LDOCE records the use of a/an under Number 12 after half/ rather/ such / what as formal or literary.
CELD mentions the use of a/an in spoken English:

You sometimes use a or an in spoken English in front of nouns without any adjective in order to indicate that something is fairly long, great or good in amount, extent, or value. For example, "It rained for a time" means that it rained for a long time and 'that's an idea' means that you think that it is quite a good idea.

3.1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE DEFINITE ARTICLE

The definite article the is used when it is presumed that both the speaker/writer and the hearer/reader know what is being talked about. Leech and Svartvik enumerate four specific and one generic uses of the definite article:

Specific Uses: 1. The definite article is used 'when identity has been established by an earlier mention.

Eg. Rachael bought a car and a scooter but she sold the scooter.

This use has been termed BACK-POINTING use of the.

2. The definite article is used when identity is established by the post modification that follows the noun as in (1) relative clauses (2) preposition phrases, (3) Non-finite clauses of Time, Place, Manner and Reason, Adverbs and Adjectives.
Eg. (1) Did you see the warning that was put up on the notice board?

(2) Did you see the warning on the notice board?

(3) Did you see the warning put up on the notice board?

(4) the fact that she has won the Miss Universe contest has brought her lots of international admirers.

(5) She has built the house where there were fields.

(6) The way in is behind there.

(7) The odd thing about her....

This use is termed FORWARD - POINTING use.

3. The definite article is used "when the object or group of objects is the only one that exists or has existed like: the stars, the earth, the world, the sea, the Northpole, the equator, the Reformation, the human race.

Eg. the Sun and the Moon determine the day and night by their appearance.

This is termed the UNIQUE use of the.

4. The definite article is also used specifically when reference is made to an illustration shared by the community. the radio, the television, the telephone, the paper(s), the train, etc.

Eg. What's on the T.V. tonight? I'll contact you over the phone.
Generic Use: The definite article is also used in a
generic way, referring to what is general or typical for a
whole class of objects. This is found with count nouns.

Eg. The peacock is a beautiful bird. (1)

The Is used here to indicate the class of peacocks and not
one individual member of the class. The following sentences
(2) and (3) also express the same sense as (1):

Peacocks are beautiful birds. (2)
A Peacock is a beautiful bird. (3)

It is observed that when a whole class of objects is dealt
with, the difference between definite, in definite, singular
and plural lose their significance. Thus (1) is the generic
use of the singular definite form. (2) is the general use of
the plural indefinite form and (3) is the generic use of the
indefinite singular.

However, there is a slight difference in the fact that
the peacock (generic) refers to the species as a whole while
a peacock (generic) refers to any one member of the species.
Hence it may be said.

The peacock is our national bird
but not:
A peacock is our national bird.

For mass/ uncountable nouns there is only one generic form
and that is with the zero article:
Eg. Honey has medicinal value. (generic)
The honey from Marthandam is good. (specific)
The forms of expressing the generic meaning may be summed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERIC MEANING</th>
<th>COUNT</th>
<th>MASS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the peacock</td>
<td></td>
<td>honey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a peacock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peacocks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The definite article with mass nouns, and also with plural nouns is always specific except for some nationality words such as the Germans, the Africans, the Europeans etc. The generic and specific uses are further illustrated in the following few examples with (a) concrete mass nouns (b) abstract nouns and with (c) plural nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Use</th>
<th>Generic Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drink the milk</td>
<td>Milk is a wholesome food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at the dogs</td>
<td>Dogs demand their masters' attention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In English, mass nouns and plural nouns are normally treated as generic and hence are without the definite article when they are premodified. But when they are post-modified, especially by an of-phrase, the definite article has to be present. This is especially essential with abstract mass nouns. Eg:

- Indian culture
- Environmental studies
Adjectives that function as heads of noun phrases usually take the definite article as their determiner. They have generic reference and are used to denote a class of people or an abstract quality.

Eg. A CLASS OF PEOPLE (PLURAL);

- the rich
- the poor
- the unemployed
- the downtrodden

AN ABSTRACT QUALITY (SINGULAR)

- the absurd
- the autobiographical
- the sublime
- the moral

In a parallel phrases when the adjectives are linked by a conjunction or a preposition, the article is sometimes omitted.

Eg. Open Universities offer courses for both young and old.
    The situation changed from bad to worse.

It is interesting to note that in Robert Frost's poem, STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING, the poet is talking about the particular in stanza 2 when he makes reference to the woods by which he stops, with a definite article:

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.
But in the last stanza when he makes use of the same article it is used both in the generic and the specific sense. The woods are lovely, dark and deep.

FACTS TO BE LEARNT/UNDERSTOOD

The following is the summary of facts on the.

1. The definite article the is the same for singular and plural and for all genders; the book, the boys, the ladies.

2. There is difference in pronunciation according to the place of occurrence: Before vowel sounds /ði/ Before consonant sounds /ða/

FUNCTION

1. CONTEXTS WHERE THE DEFINITE ARTICLE IS USED

a. Specific Uses

1) Before a noun that has become definite since it has been mentioned a second time.

2) Before a noun that is only one of its kind.

   Eg. the earth, the sky etc.

3) Before a noun made definite by the addition of a phrase or clause.

   Eg: The day I joined duty, the girl sitting there.

4) Before a noun which represents only one particular thing by reason of locality or familiarity.

   Eg: She is in the garden (= the garden of this house)
   He called the doctor (= his own doctor)
   Pass the salt, please ( = the salt on the table)
5) Before superlatives and first/second etc. and only used as adjectives or pronouns.

   Eg: He is the tallest man here.

   The first person to leave

6) With a specific type of meal.

   Eg: The dinner given yesterday...

b. Generic Uses

1) Before singular nouns used to represent a class of objects:

   Eg: The Cuckoo is a singing bird.

2) Before an adjective used to represent a class of persons:

   Eg: The poor, the dead, the young etc.

3) Before names of seas, rivers, chains of mountains, groups of islands and plural names of countries:

   Eg: the Pacific Ocean, the Cauvery, the U.S.A.

4) Before musical instruments:

   Eg: She is learning to play the violin.

2. Contexts Where the Definite Articles is Not Used

1) Before countries, towns, and proper names:

   Eg: James teaches at Madras in India.

2) Before abstract nouns except when they are uses in a particular sense:

   Eg: we fear death.

   but, the death of her mother...
3) After a noun in the possessive case
   Eg: the father of the boy

4) Before names of meals except when they are specific

5) Before indefinite plural nouns
   Vehicles are not allowed.
   Tigers belong to cat family.

6) Before home, church, market, school, hospital when they are not specified.

3.1.4 ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF THE ENTRIES:
DEFINITE ARTICLE

The four dictionaries are elaborate in indicating the various uses of the definite article. It is found that the specific and generic uses are not listed categorywise but are jumbled up together. It is true that all the four dictionaries start with the description of the definite article as a determiner that denotes a specific or an already known noun. Yet, as they proceed with further uses, the specific and generic uses are exemplified without taking care to discriminate the two in the order of presentation. When the compilers take so much pains to provide the various uses with a number of examples, making the distinction between the two broad uses will definitely go a long way in helping the learner to use the definite article more effectively.
All the four dictionaries uniformly state the most basic use of the definite article as referring to a noun whose identity has been established by an earlier mention or previous knowledge. But in illustrating the uses there is no uniformity: OALD and LDOCE bring out the contrast between the use of the indefinite article and that of the definite article.

OALD

1(When it (noun) has already been mentioned or implied) A boy and a girl were sitting on a bench. The boy was smiling but the girl looked angry. There was an accident here yesterday. A car hit a tree. The driver was killed.

LDOCE

1Used for mentioning a particular thing either because you already know which one is being talked about or because only one exists: Eg We have a cat and two dogs; the cat (= our cat) is black and the dogs (=our dogs) are white/please take these letters to the post office. (=it is understood that you know which post office and where it is) (Compare You can pay your phone bill at a post office) (=any post office)/ the sun (= there is only one sun) is shining.

CELD

the waiter with the droopy mustache...Her face was the colour of chalk...Another mineral was named by the scientist who first examined it...I think I'll keep the information to myself...I asked to see the manager...They continued walking on the opposite pavement.

WNNCD

<Put ~ cat out>

CELD and WNNCD do not care to show this contrast so vividly. Besides this there is a vast difference among the four dictionaries in the description and exemplification of
the various uses of the indefinite article. In this context Sinclair's observation is felt to be very true.

Presently published pedagogical dictionaries have roughly identified a target area and have begun an inventory of what it should consist of. But there are major problems in organising grammatical information for reference....the absence of an agreed professional terminology is also a major handicap. (106)

All the four dictionaries give separate numbers to illustrate the various uses of the. But there is no correspondence between the numbering and uses among the dictionaries. For example in OALD No.1 - "describes the when it (n/n group) has already been mentioned or implied"/ No.2 - "when a noun is followed by a phrase that restricts its meaning," No.3 (a)-"When it has unique reference"; No.3(b)-"used with some parts of the natural world without a preceding adj" No.4- "when the person or thing that is referred to is obvious within a situation." All these uses are under one heading in LDOCE.

"1Used for mentioning a particular thing, either because you already know which one is being talked about or because only one exists:
Eleven illustrative examples in phrases and sentences under this description cover all the four categories mentioned in OALD.

CELD groups these uses under a different numbering:

you use the at the beginning of noun group to refer to someone or something when a reader or hearer knows exactly who or what you are talking about, or when you go on to explain which particular person or thing you mean". Eg..(6 phrases & sentences).

"2...in front of some nouns that refer to something in our general experience of the world". Eg.......(3)

"3... in front of nouns that refer to things, activities or people that are associated with everyday life". Eg....(3)

WNND on the other hand presents most of the specific uses of the before nouns under number1 and has 9 subdivisions for the same as a, b, c, d, upto k. A distinct contrast between WNNND and the other three dictionaries is in its (WNND’s) limited use of illustrative examples.

CELD compilation is based on Sinclair’s views on the use of copious examples from citation:

A grammar has a responsibility to account for a limitless variety of new sentences which have not
yet occurred - hence it cannot be restricted to attestations only. On the other hand a dictionary is a record of how words are used, and provided there is enough evidence to hand, actual citation is much to be preferred to speculation. (108)

OALD and LDOCE also believe in providing a number of examples, be they citations or otherwise.

In the coverage of the different uses of the definite article-specific and generic categories the four dictionaries are not equally adequate. OALD is moderate. LDOCE and CELD present a wider coverage and WNNCD is the least adequate mainly because of its limited examples. But there are instances where what is omitted in OALD is covered in WNNCD. For example, the use of the in the possessive sense is illustrated by LDOCE, CELD and WNNCD but is not mentioned in OALD.

LDOCE

2 One's She hit him on the (=his) ear./ How's the (your) arm today?/ The (=my) Car broke down again today/ (infml) Have you met the (=my) wife?

CELD

You can use the instead of a possessive determiner especially when you are talking about a part of some one's body or a member of their family. Eg. He took Sam by the hand... How's the family?

WNNCD

1 used as a function word before names of some parts of the body or of the clothing as equivalent of a possessive adjective. <how's ~ arm today?>
Similarly the use of the before nouns indicating human activities is given only in LDOCE, CELD and WNNCD.

**LDOCE**

5 used before words for human activities, esp. musical, but usu. not including sports: He's studying the law/ I am learning the piano (= learning to play piano)/ She plays the violin (Compare She plays tennis.)

**CELD**

11 You use the in front of nouns referring to musical instruments, dances or sporting or physical movements when you are talking about them generally. Eg. Do you play the violin? ...We were dancing the cancan.

**WNNCD**

1f used as a function word before the name of branch of human endeavor or proficiency (law)

It is worth noticing that LDOCE illustrates the usage more clearly with its elaboration than the other two.

The use of the in spoken language is indicated only in LDOCE and CELD.

The use of the before the numerals that indicate the decades (the twenties, the sixties etc) is illustrated in LDOCE and CELD and before the ordinals (the first, the last etc.) is given in OALD and CELD.

LDOCE alone gives the use of the with a noun that stands for the activity connected with it.

8 Eg. He took to the bottle (= began drinking a lot of alcohol)/ a campaign to bring back the electric chair (= the system of punishing people by death in an electric chair).
LDOCE alone provides a separate USAGE note (along with the entry for the) that illustrates instances where the definite article is not needed. These examples will be very useful for the learners.

Moreover LDOCE is unique in giving a three page LANGUAGE NOTE on Articles, both indefinite and definite. These three pages are filled with useful and practical guidance to learners to fully understand the generic and specific uses of the articles with countable and uncountable nouns.

The types of articles and their uses are clearly explained by distinguishing their need with countable and uncountable nouns by the help of a chart. Questions such as "Are you talking about things and people in general?.... Are you talking about things and people in particular?...Does the noun follow a special rule for the use of article?" etc. are raised and are answered with suitable examples.

Moreover the pragmatic information given along with the entry for a noun which is always used with a particular article is also followed by illustrations. For example the word French when it denotes the people of France is always used with the definite article and in the plural sense. This is indicated in the dictionary entry as follows.
French²n', (the+P) the people of France............" A noun that does not take up an article is also indicated: "Fleet street/n/....

The last sentence on the Language Note advises its user:

When you look up a word in this dictionary, check the entry and read the examples to see whether there is any special information about the use of the article.

OALD and CELD also have the practice of indicating the use of the with a noun that is always singular or with a noun that is always plural. Egs:

OALD  French:  n1 the French [pl v]
       arts: n2 the arts [pl]
       reverse: n1[sing] the ~ (of sth)

LDOCE  French: French²n1[the+P]
       arts: n[the+P]
       reverse: n1[the+S]

CELD  French: ³The French N PLURAL
       arts: ³The arts N PLURAL: the+N
       reverse: ⁸The reverse N SING: the+N

WNCD  French: (use of article--not specified)
       arts: (use of article not indicated)
       reverse: (use of article not given)

With its elaborate Language Note LDOCE makes its entries more clear to understand and utilize than the other three.
3.2 PREPOSITIONS

It is commonplace knowledge that the grammatical system of English differs from that of the mother tongue of the second language learners in our colleges. Naturally learners experience difficulty in internalising the system and the structure of the English language. The most commonly found areas of difficulty among the structural words are the use of the articles and the PREPOSITIONS. Many learners often have doubts or incorrect knowledge of the use of prepositions and of the omission of the same in places where they are not required. Often learners speak and write 'called to him' and 'told to him' instead of 'called him' and 'told him'. Second language learners are definitely in need of direction and guidance in assimilating the meaning, use and the grammar of the prepositions. Learner's dictionaries take care to provide the vital information on this functional category. The meaning, function and the collocation of prepositions and the presentation of these by the lexicographers of the four learner's dictionaries are analysed here.

"Prepositions are words which as their name implies are PLACED BEFORE a noun phrase" (Leech and Svartvik, 275). The most common class of prepositions are SIMPLE prepositions that consist of one word:
The other class is COMPLEX prepositions which consists of more than one word:

Egs: according to due to by means of
along with except for in front of
as for out of in relation to
because of owing to on top of

The meanings that these two categories signify are manifold: The prepositions indicate PLACE with specific reference to position, direction, movement/motion, etc. that denote various spatial relations and dimensions. Both static and dynamic positions are indicated. The prepositions also show TIME with reference to time position, duration etc. that indicate various temporal relations and dimensions. Besides these two meanings, prepositions also exhibit other ranges of meaning in the CAUSE/PURPOSE spectrum and the MEANS/AGENTIVE spectrum. The prepositional meanings are also inclusive of various other areas.

The most striking feature is that such wide ranges of meaning are expressed through a limited number of prepositions; that is, the same preposition is used
(polyseemously) to denote different meanings. For example, the preposition *at* denotes

- **TIME** in *Meet me at 2 o'clock*;
- **PLACE** in *We will meet at the bus stop*;
- **STATE** or **CONDITION** in *she is at work, and stand at ease*;
- **RATE** or **SPEED** in *The car sped at 100 km per hour.*

Many of the prepositions carry more than one meaning according to the context of their use. This is a real complication for the second language learners. Apparently opposite meanings are sometimes expressed by the same prepositions. For example,

- *out of* means *with/having*: *out of love* for his children he endured all hardship

- *without/not having*: She is *out of work* now and He has fallen *out of favour*.

Unless learners are familiar with the different uses of the prepositions it may be difficult for them to comprehend the exact meaning and to use the prepositions correctly in their expressions. More than comprehension, which is often aided by the context, production demands clear and accurate knowledge.

### 3.2.1 PREPOSITIONS OF PLACE

The preference for a particular preposition is often determined by the way an object is seen. That is, when an
object is seen as a POINT in space (x), the choice of the prepositions is restricted to a select few. Similarly when an object is viewed as a LINE (—) or a SURFACE (\
\(_{-}\_\)) different set of prepositions is used. Again when an object is observed with reference to its or surrounding AREA (\(\square\)) and VOLUME (\(\bigotimes\)) a particular group of prepositions are required. According to these factors governing the choice of prepositions the prepositions are further classified.

The prepositions that are used to indicate a place as a POINT are termed At-type prepositions. Here, a place is identified quite generally without being thought of in terms of length, width or height. The prepositions that belong to this group are to, at (away) from, and away from.

Eg: He went to the theatre.
    He stayed at home.
    He came (away) from the clinic.
    He lived away from the town.

Another category is the On type prepositions. Under this are grouped, the prepositions that are used to indicate a place as a LINE ie a place thought of in terms of length but not breadth or height (depth) and those that indicate a place as a SURFACE, ie a place thought of in terms of length and width but not height or depth. Here the surface is not restricted to flat or horizontal positions alone.
on (to) on off off across, over and along

are the prepositions that indicate a place as a LINE. Egs:

1. The ball rolled on to the goal-line.
2. Tiruchirapalli is on the Cauvery.
3. The car turned off the main road.
4. Sri Lanka is an island off the coast of India.
5. She flew across the mountains.
6. They strolled along the river bank.

The same set of prepositions are used to make a place to be seen as a surface.

on(to) on off off across, over and through

1. The pen fell on(to) the floor.
2. She put a name tag on the parcel.
3. He took the stamp off the cover.
4. That's an island off the map.
5. He was jogging across the fields.
6. I looked through the window.

Here the surface is often the top of some object. Hence on may be equated with on top of. For example, she was lying on the bed; The jar fell on the table. However, it is to be remembered that on is also used with the public transport. Eg:

There were few passengers on the bus/train.
On is also used in the sense of attached to as in

The mangoes on the tree.
The ring on her finger.

In-type prepositions. When a place is seen as an AREA or as a VOLUME the in-type prepositions are used. Usually an AREA of ground or territory is enclosed by boundaries. The prepositions belonging to this group are

\[
\text{in(to)} \quad \text{in} \quad \text{out of} \quad \text{out of and} \quad \text{through}
\]

Eg:
1. The mob crowded into the streets.
2. She owns a flat in the city.
3. He went out of the room.
4. He lives out of the city.
5. They walked through the park.

The same set of prepositions are used with a place as a VOLUME. A VOLUME is thought in terms of length, width and height (or depth).
Eg:
1. They hurried into the house.
2. The bottle is in the cupboard.
3. He came Out of the water.
4. She was Out of that room.
5. The wind blew through the trees.

Inside and outside are used sometimes in the place of in (to) and out of. Eg:

She was hiding inside the building.
He was watching outside.

Within is a more formal word than in and it often shows a location bounded by limits or by a given distance. Eg:

Strict discipline is maintained within the walls of the campus.
The bus stop is within 2 km.

The types of prepositions of place are categories that are typically or most commonly used. However there are a number of overlaps between types of prepositions. Eg:

He works at the post office
but:
I left my purse at/in the post office.

At is used instead of to when the noun that follows it is treated as a target:
He threw the ball at me (= He tried to hit me).
He threw the ball to me (= for me to catch).

Similarly

She shouted at me (= she was angry with me).
She shouted to me (= she was trying to communicate with me from a distance).

The overlap can also be between out-type and in-type. This overlap could be because either there is a difference between SURFACE and VOLUME as in:

They sat on the grass (SURFACE: because the grass is short).
They sat in the grass (VOLUME: because the grass is long).

There is a difference between SURFACE and AREA as in:

Robinson Crusoe was marooned on a desert island (SURFACE: the island is small).
She was born in Sri Lanka (AREA: Sri Lanka is a large island and a separate country).

The prepositions of PLACE may also be viewed as prepositions of Position, prepositions of Motion and prepositions of Direction.

Prepositions of Position. Position is a relation between two or more objects. The prepositions that are commonly used to indicate position are above, below, by, beside, over, on top of, under, beneath, underneath, in front of and behind.
The main difference between over/under and above/bellow is that over and under indicate a direct vertical relationship or nearness and above and below simply mean that one object is on a higher or lower level than the other. Eg:

He was leaning over the wall.
The building was raised above a weak foundation.
She placed the card under the book.
This town is below the sea level.

Some other prepositions relating to positions are between, among and amid. Among these amid is a formal expression. Opposite means 'facing' as in Her place is opposite mine.

(A)round refers to surrounding position or motion.
The police were standing about/around the house.
There are not many houses about/around here.

It is noteworthy that in American English, about is rarer and more formal in this sense than around.

Prepositions of motion. Different aspects of motion are pictured as follows: (Leech and Svartvick 88)
The same prepositions used to indicate positions (STATE) can also signify MOTION to the position concerned.

Eg:

She dashed **behind** the bush to hide herself.
The children ran **underneath** the trees when it started raining.
The car drove **over/across** the bridge. The earth moves (a)round the sun.

Prepositions of direction. Up **down**, along and across/over represent motion with reference to a direction or axis.

Repeated motion is expressed by joining two prepositions with and.

He walked **up and down** the room.
She danced **round and round** the room.
The semantic aspect of Place-Prepositions. From the descriptions above it can be observed that prepositions of PLACE have the meaning of a STATE and the meaning of MOTION. When over and through are preceded by all they acquire a PERVASIVE MEANING. Eg.

He painted (all) over the walls (= He covered the walls with paint)
The noise could be heard all over/through the building.

Through is restricted to area of volume and throughout can be used instead of all through. The epidemic has spread throughout the country.

Many of the prepositions of place are also used in ABSTRACT SENSES that have a metaphorical relation to their basic sense. Eg:

(i) In and out of indicate condition or inclusion:
in danger; out of danger; in a group; out of practice.

(ii) Above below and beneath indicate level:
above the average; below his dignity; beneath him (=lower status).

(iii) Over and under signify power or surveillance: under suspicion; under orders; absolute power over the subjects.

(iv) up and down show movement on a scale: up the scale; down the social ladder.

The lexicographers have the task of explaining the basic meaning as well as the extended meaning. Thus they
must specify and illustrate all the possible meanings of prepositions. Besides, the pragmatic information such as the formal and informal use, the American and British variants, the dropping of prepositions where they are superfluous etc. should also be given. As accuracy goes hand in hand with appropriateness in effective communication, the exact usage (grammatical information) with typical collocations etc is another vital aspect to be dealt with in the dictionary entries.

3.2.2 PREPOSITIONS OF TIME

Another class of prepositions are the prepositions of TIME. Time at a particular point or for different periods are expressed by different prepositions. At is used for points of time and on and in are used for periods of time. In general on is used for day and in (or during) is used for periods longer as shorter than a day: Eg:

at 6 o'clock; at 5.30 pm; at noon on Sunday; on the previous day; in/during the morning; in April; in 1946; in the twentieth century.

There are a few exceptions to these general uses. For example, at can be used for periods that are identified vaguely. Such as at that time, at breakfast time and at night. At is also used for short holiday periods as; at Christmas, at Easter. At the weekend is commonly used in
British English and on the weekend is used in American English.

On is used before morning, afternoon, evening and night when such periods are identified by the day that is specific to them. Eg.

On Monday evening. On the following day but In the evening. The preposition during may be replaced by by in idioms such as by day and by night instead of during the day/night.

This happens in connection with some activities such as travelling, revelling. Eg:

We travelled by night. Paris by night.

Time relationships are also shown by the help of the prepositions of TIME. Before and after indicate relations between two times or events. Eg.

They quarrelled after their marriage.
She finished her work before he arrived.

By refers to the time at which an event comes to an end. Eg:

Please deliver the goods by next week (i.e. I want the goods not later than next week).
She should have learnt it by now.

The preposition in (or within formal) can mean 'before the end of'. Eg.

Contact me within a week.
He reached Paris in two days.
Prepositions denoting time may be summed up as follows:

Time Position: at, on, in, by
Duration: for, during, over, (all) through, though
Duration: from...to, until, upto, before, after, since till, until between...and by.

Omission of the preposition. Before phrases beginning last, next, this, that and before today, yesterday and tomorrow almost invariably the preposition is dropped.

Did you meet her last week?
I'll tell you more next time.
Mangoes are less this year.
I don't remember what I did that day.

In informal English, in phrases pointing to a time, related indirectly to the present moment, or to a time before or after a definite time in the past or future, the preposition is often left out. Eg.

We met him the April before last, the day after his exams.
The function will be organized the day after tomorrow in the following week.

In American informal English, preposition is often omitted directly before the day of the week: Eg.

I'll see you Friday. Sunday we go to the seaside.

Apart from their use as indicating PLACE and TIME prepositions denote other meanings as well. "Fields of prepositional meaning are notoriously difficult to classify,
and in some cases it is better to think of a range or spectrum of meaning, first as a single category, then as broken up into separate overlapping sections" (Quirk et al. 695)

3.2.3 OTHER TYPES OF PREPOSITION

The cause/purpose spectrum. At one end of the cause/purpose spectrum are found prepositions expressing either the material cause or the psychological cause (motive) for a happening. Phrase of cause, reason and motive answer the question why...?

The complex prepositions, because of and on account of are used to express/indicate cause. Eg: We could not go out because of the heavy rain. On account of his sudden illness the minister cancelled his visit. Other simple prepositions used to express cause are from, out of, for and through. Eg: They felt weak from fear of punishment. They helped the victims out of pity. I am not sure whether she did it for fear or favour. She lost her rank through carelessness. On account of is a more formal alternative to because of as an expression of cause or reason. Out of and for are mainly restricted to the expression of motive—psychological cause: out of gratitude/kindness. For is found with a relatively small number of expressions. Eg. for fear/love/joy/ sorrow. He offered to fix the sink for nothing/free.
Prepositions of purpose, intended destination. The preposition for is used to express purpose or intended destination. Eg. He'll do anything for money. Everyone ran for shelter For the journey they packed enough food. He set out for London. Book two tickets for Delhi. This train is bound for Madras.

Prepositions of recipient goal/target. The prepositions for to and at are used to show the recipient, goal and target. When for is followed by noun phrases denoting persons or animals, the meaning is one of INTENDED RECIPIENT. Eg. He laid a trap for his enemies. She made a beautiful doll for her daughter. He cooked a dinner for her.

Negative condition is expressed by the preposition but for. But for the football match (He was watching the match on the TV) we would have missed him. (=If it had not been for the foot ball match...) Many people use except for in the same way as but for to denote negative condition. However, except for normally denotes exception.

3.2.4 PREPOSITIONS AND CASE GRAMMAR

The second language learners in the Colleges in Tamil Nadu have Tamil as their first language. In Tamil language Case Grammar operates in noun phrases. Most of the prepositions that are used with the nouns in English can
find their translation equivalents in the post nominally operating case endings in Tamil. These Tamil cases are comparable with the declensions found in Greek, Latin and Old English. But in modern English the declensions had been drastically reduced to a vestigial existence. The only surviving declensions are found in personal pronouns that also indicate gender:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominative</th>
<th>Accusative</th>
<th>Dative</th>
<th>Genitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>my/mine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>your/yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>him</td>
<td>him</td>
<td>his</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>her</td>
<td>her</td>
<td>her/hers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td>us</td>
<td>us</td>
<td>our/ours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td>them</td>
<td>them</td>
<td>their/their</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other than these and who, whom, whose etc., the functions performed by case declensions found in languages like Tamil are performed by prepositions in modern English. Eg:

- **To him:** (prep.) (n) avanukku - avan + ku
  (accusative case ending)

- **by him:** (prep.) (n) avanaal - avan + aal
  (instructive case ending)

- **with him:** (prep.) (n) avanode - avan + odu
  (commutative case ending)

- **Book of Job:** (prep.) (n) Yobudaiya - Yobu + udaiya
  (genitive case ending)
Palmer (1971) talks of NOMINATIVE, VOCATIVE, ACCUSATIVE, GENITIVE, DATIVE and ABLATIVE cases and defines CASE as a feature of the noun, associated with a variety of largely unrelated semantic and grammatical features, but illustrated by the translations boy(subject), of a boy, to or for a boy, from or by a boy. (84)

The post-nominal modifications in Tamil in contrast with the position of the prepositions in English may cause difficulty to the learners in internalising the various uses of the English prepositions. Hence a clear statement of the different uses of the prepositions is a prerequisite in the entries made in learner's dictionaries. English as an analytic language in contrast with synthetic languages has to be shown clearly (Baugh 64).

3.2.5 PREPOSITIONAL VERBS

Another crucial knowledge for the learners of English is about the PREPOSITIONAL VERBS or the prepositions that are attached to verbs. "A number of English verbs which are intransitive, and which therefore cannot take an object of their own, are followed by a preposition and its object. The preposition must not be omitted, otherwise the sentence will be incorrect" (Wood 61). Eg. He pointed the tree. He pointed to the tree. He pointed at the tree.
Similarly, we listened to the music. Prepositional verbs bear close resemblance with phrasal verbs. Yet the two sets are markedly different: e.g., "(a) They Called up all young men. (= conscripted). (b) They Called on their friends. (= Visited)" (Leech and Svartvik 264)

Leech and Svartvik establish four distinct differences between prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs. The first distinction lies in the stressed condition of the adverb and the preposition, i.e. The adverb in (a) (phrasal verb) is normally stressed and has nuclear stress in end-position. The preposition in (b) (a prepositional verb), however is normally unstressed: (a) They called up all young men. All young men were called up. (b) They called on their friends. Their friends were called on.

The second difference is that the preposition in a prepositional verb always occurs before the prepositional object. But a phrasal verb allows the adverbial particle to take a final position. (a) They called up all young men. PHRASAL VERB They called all young men up. They called them up. (b) They called on their friends PREPOSITIONAL VERB They Called on them.

The third distinction is that the prepositional verb allows an adverb to be placed between the verb and the
preposition. Whereas the phrasal verb cannot do that.  
PHRASAL VERB (a) They called early up all young men.  
PREPOSITIONAL VERB (b) They called early on their friends.

The fourth and the final difference lies in a prepositional verb accepting a relative pronoun after the preposition and the phrasal verb rejecting such a structure.

PHRASAL VERB (a) All young man up whom} they called

PREPOSITIONAL VERB (b) The friends on whom} not at home

In English there are quite a number of prepositional verbs that have to be identified for both understanding and using them.

3.2.6 PREPOSITIONAL ADVERBS

"A prepositional adverb is an adverb which behaves like a preposition with the complement omitted". (Leech and Svartvik 275)

A car drove past the gate (past = a preposition). A car drove past (past = a prepositional adverb). Prepositions consisting of one syllable are normally unstressed, but prepositional adverbs are stressed: He' stayed in the house. He stayed in. All the simple
prepositions listed (except at, beside, for, form, into, of, till, to, until and with) can act as prepositional adverbs.

Most place prepositions (except the at-types prepositions) correspond in form to prepositional adverbs. Some examples: We stopped the bus and got off. (= off the bus). Have you put the cat out? (= out of the house?). (The child ran across in front of the car. (= across the road). When they reached the bridge, they crossed over looking down at the water beneath.

Some prepositional adverbs have special uses: They travelled on (= they continued their journey). The thieves snatched her handbag and ran off. (=away). A man came up (ie approached) and introduced himself. You don’t see many trams about nowadays. (=about the place).

In the last example about is so vague as to be almost meaningless. In addition to up and down the following adverbs of direction can be noted. upward (s), downward(s); forward(s) backward(s) inward(s) Out ward(s)

3.3 ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENTATION OF PREPOSITIONS

It is true that a dictionary is not a grammar book. However a learner’s dictionary strives to promote the internalisation of the nuances of the Semantic realm, of the subtlety of the Pragmatic use and of the intricacies of the
Grammatical components in order to increase the communicative competence in the language learners. Therefore it is definitely obligated is bring out all the necessary details in its compilation.

In the four dictionaries the structural words are interspersed with the lexical words in an alphabetical order. This inevitable arrangement is because of the need for easy access to the words as individual entries. But such an arrangement imposes very severe constraints on the lexicographers. It prevents the compilers from grouping the functional words of the same parts of speech together so that their common meanings and the differences in meaning for the same forms could be presented at one place. The usage patterns could also be discussed under distinct combinations. However, in the absence of such a facility the lexicographers resort to the next best practice of indicating/repeating the meanings functions and patterns for each of the single, individual structural words that remain scattered all through the compilation. As a result imparting a comprehensive knowledge of the structural words becomes very difficult.

3.3.1 SEMANTIC ASPECTS

In the case of the PREPOSITIONS, the distinction of simple and complex prepositions gets ignored. Though this
is not of a serious consequence, there are other more complex problems to follow. The dictionaries take care of distinguishing all the different meanings either related or opposite to each other at the entries for the individual prepositions. But the different prepositions that share a common meaning get 'scattered' and it becomes very difficult to indicate their semantic relatedness and possibilities of substitution or otherwise in different contexts. For example in the entry for the preposition at its meanings as preposition of place, time and all the other ranges may be diligently presented. But their interrelatedness to and the distinction from other prepositions such as in and on may not be fully stated.

All the four dictionaries label the prepositions in their entries. The use of the simple prepositions as adverbs or sometimes adjectives or nouns are given separate entries. The complex prepositions also enjoy a similar status. But most of the complex prepositions are grouped under idioms in OALD. Examples are by means of, in comparison with, in front of, in relation to, on top of, as for, along with, etc. Many of the complex prepositions are left out in WNNCD. Egs. as for, away from, out of, by means of, in comparison with, etc. The learner's dictionaries under study have worked at length to bring out all the possible shades of meaning of the prepositions they list.
But it is observed that the different meanings are not ordered in a planned sequence. For example the meaning of prepositions as indicating place and time are not separately grouped. They are found jumbled up in a random order. This may result in a long search to get information on time or place as a whole. For instance the entry for the preposition the ordering of meanings is as follows:

OALD refer to place "1(a) in the direction of (sth); towards: Walk to the office. I am going to the shop..." (b) the sth (of sth) located in a specified direction (from sth): There are mountains to the north/south/East/West of here..."

2 Specifies the meaning towards a condition state, quality etc., 3(a) denotes Place and (b) indicates abstract ideas; 4 shows time; 5 talks of using to introduce the indirect object; 6 records the meaning as belonging to 7 deals with a comparison or ratio; 8 is on adding upto and thus the numbering goes on and No.12 is again indicative of Place: 'close enough to be touching (sb/sth); facing; dance cheek to cheek. With an ear to the door. sit back to back.

In LDOCE the arrangement is reasonably good. In CELD the reference to TIME is made in entry no 4, 7 and 8 and the reference to PLACE is at 1, 2 and 17. WNNCD has the most orderly arrangement. It groups the meanings related to PLACE together under no.1. with subdivisions a,b,c,d and e and TIME AT NO.3 with two subdivisions a and b.

There is no uniformity among the four dictionaries in the use of the descriptive terms in enunciating meaning.
For example the following are the entries on *On* as a preposition indicating the use of a public transport:

**OALD**
2 in or into (a large public vehicle) Eg. on the plane from London to New York, have lunch on the train travel on the bus, the tube, the coach etc.

**LDOCE**
8 using as a means of travelling Eg. on foot/horse back/on ship/ on the 9o'clock train.

**CELD**
6 to say that someone is boarding a particular form of transport in order to begin a journey = onto Eg. She was the only passenger on the plane... I preferred to enter on foot... on the midnight train from London...on horse back...on a bicycle.

**WNND**
2c to indicate means of conveyance (< the bus>

Because of the differences in the descriptive terminology, the groupings of the overlapping become different. Compare the following entries on *on*:

**OALD**
7 regularly consuming something: Eg. Most cars run on petrol. The doctor put me on these tablets live on bread and water on (ie addicted to) heroine.

**LDOCE**
9 by means of Eg They live on potatoes/ A car sums on petrol/to hear it on the radio/to speak on the telephone/ He cut his foot on (=against) a piece of glass 10 supported by. He went round the world on the money him aunt gave him./ on the dole on welfare/she's on drugs.

**CELD**
17.2 you use on to specify the kind of job that you are doing or the kind of life that you are living Eg. I applied for a job on the railway... They were on the dole. 17.5 to specify what you are eating or drinking or what you are giving as food to someone else or to an animal. Eg. Soon they were feasting on steak and chips...what do you feed your
dog on. 17.6 to say that you are taking medicine or drugs regularly Eg I'm not on the pill on the moment... He was on drugs”.

WNNCD 16 used as a function word to indicate a source of dependence <you can rely ~ me> <feed ~ insects> <lives ~ a pension>.

The dictionaries do take care to record and specify the core meaning and the extended meaning. But the relatedness of meaning of the contrast among the preposition is not always clearly stated by all the dictionaries. Semantic equivalence is often found among prepositions. Leech observes, “the prepositions to, onto, and into are respectively the dynamic equivalents of at, on and in” (Leech 191).

“He has gone to the station" implies "He is at the station."

"He has gone to the platform" implies "He is on the platform."

But the dictionaries do not systemically indicate these equivalences in their entries. CELD merely records with the symbols and = to show semantic equivalence and = to show the opposite of it. For example, about, in, upon, onto, against, for, etc., are shown as semantic equivalents in the EXTRA COLUMN at the entry for on.

OALD records the example phrase under 1b“have something on one's mind' as (fig) = figurative, and LDOCE also marks the sentence 'I wonder what's on his mind' in the entry for
the preposition on as (fig). OALD does not make any attempt to draw the distinction between the use of on and in in the same context. Whereas only LDOCE gives the meaning of its example sentence 'I wonder what is on his mind' as "(what is worrying him)" and it also draws the attention of the dictionary user to the use of in in the same construction. "(Compare I wonder what's in his mind?)" LDOCE does not overtly state the meaning of it. But the pointing may set the learner to think.

There is no entry for 'on one's mind' or 'in ones mind' in either CELD or WNNCD.

It is only OALD and LDOCE that try to give the equivalence in meaning and use and the equivalence in meaning but difference in meaning et among different prepositions.

Eg. OALD makes a distinction of the uses of above and over with the help of the NOTE ON USAGE at above:

When they indicate a position higher than something, above and over can often be used in the same way: They built a new room above/over the garage/. 2 When there is movement across something only over can be used: she threw the ball over the fence. Jump over the stream 3 over can also mean 'covering' Pull the sheet over the body. Throw the water over the flames. 4 Over and above can mean 'more than' in number measurement etc. Above is generally used in relation to a minimum of standard: 2000 ft above sea level above average
intelligence/height. two degrees above zero. He's over fift'y. She's been here over two hours."

LDOCE also records the same difference in the USAGE note under above:

The prepositions above and over can often be used in the same way: Let's hang the painting over/above the fire place. If there is an idea of movement over is used: The bird flew over the lake/ The sheep jumped over the wall. Over is also used if there is an idea of covering: He pulled the blanket over his head and fell asleep./ They built a roof over the courtyard.

CELD does not make any such clear similarity of use or distinction of meaning between above and over.

It marks in its extra column at above 1.2 as over (ie. similar to above) and at above 7 as = over (ie, synonymous with above)

WNNCD enters at above 1:

in or to a higher place than: OVER and does not give any illustration for above and nor does it make any comparison of above and over. At its entry for over" also it just equates over with above in its definition and does not make any comparison of their uses: Used as a function word to indicate motion or situation in a position higher than or above another <towered ~ his mother> <flew ~ the lake> <rode ~ the old Roman road>.

Even when comparisons and distinctions are drawn between pairs of prepositions, uniformity of statement is not found among the dictionaries. The USAGE notes and
entries for among and between in the four dictionaries may be compared:

OALD  Note on USAGE at among: Among is used of people or things considered as a group: Share out the books among the class. They talked among themselves while they waited. Standing among the crowd at the foot ball match. "Between is used of people or things, either two in number or more than two considered individually: One book between two (Pupils). She divided her possessions equally between her four children. They hung flags across the street between the house. There is a lot of disagreement between the two main political parties on this issue. (Compare: There's a lot of disagreement among politicians on this issue)

LDOCE USAGE at between: Compare among and between When you are talking about only two things (or people) use between: He divided the money between the two children. If you are talking about a group of three or more things (or people) use among: He divided the money among the three children? The mountains were hidden among the clouds.

CELD among 10 If something is divided among three or more people, it is divided between them, usually so that they = between all hare an equal share. Eg Half a chicken among four won't go very far... The estate was divided among his brothers and sisters". "Between 12 when something is divided or shared between two or more people, they share it, usually equally. Eg. The land was divided equally between them.

WNMCD usage at between: There is a persistent but unfounded notion that between can be used only of two items and that among must be used for more than two. Between has been used of more than two since old English: it is esp appropriate to denote a one-to-one relationship, regardless of the number of items. It can be used when the number is unspecified <economic cooperation> between nations when more than two are enumerated
between you and me and the lamp post partitioned between, Austria, Prussia and Russia - Nathaniel Bencheey> and even when only one item is mentioned <but repetition is implied pausing between every sentence to rap the floor - George Eliot> among is more appropriate where the emphasis is on distribution rather than individual relationships <discontent among the peasants> when among is automatically chosen for more than two, some strain on English idiom can result. <a worthy book that nevertheless falls among many stools - John Simon> <the author alternates among mod, slang, cliches and quotes from literary giants A.H Johnson.>

It is also true that synonymous expressions become so vast and varied by taking off from one preposition to another. It may be impossible to list all the equivalences. For instance among and between lead on to think of among and of. Among them and of the two and then to of and out of.

While going through the entries for the preposition with there are found contexts where with may be substituted by, of, by, against, because of. Specifying all the similarities and all the contrast may be a near impossible task.

Another observation in the presentation of meaning in the dictionaries is on the metalanguage used in CELD. Some of its definitions in the discursive style sound very odd:

Eg at¹ "If something happens or is situated at a place, that is the place where it happens". at 8 'If something
happens at a particular time, that is the time when it happens". at 9 "If you do something at a particular age, you do it, when you are at that age,"

3.3.2 PRAGMATIC INFORMATION

The learner's dictionaries are making just a beginning in presenting the pragmatic meaning. This is evident from the disparity in entering this significant information in the four dictionaries. The following list exemplifies the differences in judgment of formality/informality found in the four entries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>OALD</th>
<th>LDOCE</th>
<th>CELD</th>
<th>WNNCD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Within</td>
<td>3fml</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a fairly formal word</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. amid</td>
<td>dated or fml</td>
<td>fml or bit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(use of To use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>not given</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>not recorded.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. beneath</td>
<td>fml</td>
<td>fml</td>
<td>1.1 a slightly literary or formal word</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. upon</td>
<td>fml</td>
<td>fml</td>
<td>in rather formal English you use upon in place of on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is mainly OALD that make pointed distinctions of formality of style differences among expressions:

OALD makes a NOTE ON USAGE on about and on at about:
Both about and on can mean 'on the subject of'. A book, film or lecture on Chinese art, education or prehistory suggests a serious academic presentation. A book discussion or TV programme about China, schools or dinosaurs is of more general interest and more formal.

LDOCE also presents a USAGE note at on:

A book on rabbits is probably more formal and scientific than a book about rabbits which might for example be a children's story.

CELD just equals on with about and does not make any distinction between the use of the two either at on or at about. At about¹ it just states

If you talk or write about a particular thing, you talk or write on that subject. They'll talk about anything, no matter who's there... The programme is all about nuclear power...

In WNND there is no mention of the relatedness or the pragmatic distinction of on and about:

on 9c - used as a function word to indicate the subject of study, discussion or consideration <a book - insects> <reflect - that moment> <agree - price>.

At the entry for about also there is no statement.
The differences in the American and British usages are also not systematically recorded in the dictionaries; there are just a few entries here and there.

However, the collocation of prepositions with words in specific ways are indicated in OALD, LDOCE and CELD along with the entries for the individual words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eg.</th>
<th>OALD</th>
<th>LDOCE</th>
<th>CELD</th>
<th>WNNCD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(v)</td>
<td>graduate</td>
<td>graduate</td>
<td>graduate</td>
<td>graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(in sth), (at/from sth)</td>
<td>(from)</td>
<td>(to, from)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n)</td>
<td>ground(s)</td>
<td>ground(s)</td>
<td>ground</td>
<td>ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(for sth)</td>
<td>(for)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(adj)</td>
<td>harmful</td>
<td>harmful</td>
<td>harmful</td>
<td>harmful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(to sth/sb)</td>
<td>(to)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It may be noticed that OALD and LDOCE are more regular in supplying crucial information than CELD. WNNCD never specifies the collocation. To get the full benefit of this relevant language information incorporated in the entries in the three dictionaries learners have to be trained to develop the reference skills.
3.3.3 GRAMMATICAL INFORMATION

The second language learners need more information on grammar than just the parts of speech label. They have to be informed of typical usages, collocations etc.

Wood presents the following table of correct and incorrect sentences as examples of omitting the prepositions: (65)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORRECT</th>
<th>INCORRECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He refused to answer me.</td>
<td>He refused to answer to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could not answer the question.</td>
<td>I could not answer to the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We approached the house</td>
<td>We approached to the house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I asked him a question.</td>
<td>I asked a question to him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They attacked the town.</td>
<td>They attacked against the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dog attacked the child.</td>
<td>The dog attacked against the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We entered the room.</td>
<td>We entered into the room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The animal resembled a rat.</td>
<td>The animal resembled to a rat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is true that the second language learners come out with such incorrect expressions listed in the second column. The dictionaries do not mention about the omission of prepositions.
However LDOCE alone presents the usage and the omission of the prepositions to and at with the word 'home' in a note on USAGE at home as an adverb:

When speaking of movement towards home use the adverb form without to: I'm coming home. Henry'll be (=come) home before seven. When there is no movement the usual form in British English is at home: Let's stay at home this evening. Is Henry at home? In American English home is often used without the preposition: Let's stay home this evening. I've been home all day.

None of the other dictionaries make any overt statement about the dropping of the prepositions with the word 'home' used as an adverb though their example sentences exhibit the usage.

OALD and LDOCE are more systematic than CELD in illustrating and indicating the combination of the specific prepositions with nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. The collocational possibilities are given within brackets immediately next to the noun, verb etc. in OALD and LDOCE. CELD records this information in the extra column. But this recording is not as regular as in OALD and LDOCE. CELD examples illustrate the usage/collocation and learners have to infer the grammar on their own. The following is a sample of the entries given in the four dictionaries:
It is only LDOCE that gives a separate Language Note on Prepositions. It gives a comprehensive idea of their meaning, use and the syntactic possibilities. The language note is a two page summary that gives answers to the following questions: "What are prepositions used?" and "What do prepositions mean?" It also talks about 'Prepositions in fixed phrases' and 'word order' in using prepositions.