

## New Paradigm on the Investigation of the Prepositions



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**ABSTRACT:** Meaning is one of the most controversial terms in linguistic theory. It is noteworthy to mention that the understanding of this term does not cause any difficulties as it is freely used in teaching, oral and written translation. However, the scientific definition of meaning has become the subject of endless debate, along with the definitions of some other basic linguistic notions such as word, sentence, phrase, etc. Since there is no generally accepted definition of meaning, we have to limit ourselves to a small study of the problem as it is considered in modern linguistics [Barkhudarov, 1975, p. 50-70].

As for the meaning of the word, there have been attempts to define it by linguists in all periods when linguistics existed as a science. The work on the scientific understanding of the meaning of the word is carried out with the aim of a detailed description of the semantics of the words. In the theory of linguistics, there are different definitions of the meaning of a word, which is due to the existence of different approaches to understanding the meaning. Although there are various theories about the meaning of words, most of them are not suitable to describe the meaning of prepositions.

**KEYWORDS:** The difference between a word and a simple set of sounds is that the word has a meaning. The meaning of the word objectively reflects the existing reality. However, the meaning is determined not only by the relationship of the word with the objects of reality (that is, things, events, signs, actions), but also by the place of the word in a specific linguistic system. T. I. Arbekova writes about it, "the meaning of a word can be defined as a mental content common to a certain language collective, assigned to a given sound form, determined by the system of a certain language" [2:52].

Words not only name objects, but also express a socially conscious emotional attitude to the named objects and determine their main features in their meaning, which are combined with the generality of the given class of objects, that is, the main features; it contains the relationship of a group of objects with objects of another class. Therefore, the meaning of the word has volume as well as content. The meaning circle is the set of objects of the same class to which the given word belongs to the name. The content of meaning is knowledge about a certain subject and its features (a set of main features, an emotional-evaluative relationship, an indicator of connection with objects of another class).

All important work on the theory of semantics has, for the most part, been based on referential concepts of meaning. The distinctive feature of this approach is that it distinguishes three different components that are closely related to meaning: the sound form of the linguistic sign, the concept underlying this sound form, and the referent itself, that is, that aspect of reality to which the linguistic sign is connected. The most popular reference model of meaning is the so-called "triangle". The referential approach involves connecting the meaning with the referent in one way or another.

Unlike subject words, linguistic units that indicate properties and relations of objects, especially prepositions, cannot be defined within the framework of the referential approach to the meaning of words. Prepositions do not belong to subject-oriented words as their expressions are different types of relations. The denotations of the prepositions such as *across*, *over* and *through* indicate spatial relationships. Any relationship, and especially spatial relations cannot be subject to reference, and consequently the meanings of prepositions as relational words cannot be determined by pointing to their denotations.

It should be noted that among the supporters of the referential approach, those who believe that the meaning of the language sign is based on the concept, and therefore replace the meaning with the concept in the "triangle". Others identify the meaning with the referent.

Speakers of the language must know the characteristics of the object, which are called prototypes within this concept [Sweet 1892, p.194]. Together, these properties constitute object prototypes. For example, to see the difference between *a helicopter* and other means of transport, it is necessary to know that a helicopter has a propeller, a tail part, chassis-wheels that help to land comfortably on any horizontal surface, etc. This is a prototype helicopter. The most complete correspondence of the object to the prototype indicates that the object belongs to the center of the category. If the object only partially matches the prototype, then it belongs to the periphery of the category. From here it can be concluded that only the semantics of object-oriented words can be

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described within the framework of the theory of prototypes. Idioms do not belong to this class of vocabulary and do not have prototypical properties. The idioms refer to the relationships that exist in the real world and are tested in the human mind.

Proponents of the functional approach believe that the meaning of a language unit can be learned not by its relation to a concept or referent, but only by its relation to other language units. This can be shown very simply: we know that, for example, the words “move” and “movement” have different meanings because they have different functions in speech. When comparing the contexts in which these words are used, it can be seen without a doubt that they occupy different positions in relation to other words. (To) move can be followed by a noun (move the chair), and can be preceded by an adjective (slow movement) and a preposition (movement of smth.). Since the word movement occupies different positions, it can be concluded that they belong to different word classes and have different meanings.

Thus, it is possible to say that the function of creating a connection between words in the language falls on prepositions. In modern English, prepositions are considered as words belonging to a closed lexical category. In English, these parts of speech are sometimes called prepositions and sometimes adpositions [4]. They function as the leading (head) element of preverbal compounds and are mainly used in noun compounds. From the semantic point of view, prepositions mainly express concepts of time and space, and from the morphological point of view, they are mostly in the simple form that does not accept inflection.

As already mentioned, the most frequently used group of prepositions in modern English includes prepositions denoting abstract relations. There are certain means in our language to express this group of prepositions. These tools can be divided into two parts:

I. Synthetic means (suffixes).

II. Analytical means (lexical tools).

Analytical means of expression of abstract prepositions in modern English consist of words belonging to different parts of speech. These words belong to the following parts of speech:

1. Connectors.

In modern English, some subordinating conjunctions are among the means of expression of prepositions expressing abstraction with conjunctions.

a) The subordinating conjunction “despite” meaning *concession*. English prepositions expressing this meaning are as following: *in spite of, despite, for all*. For example: *For all his complaining, I think he actually enjoyed the day.*

b) Subordinating conjunction “if” meaning *condition*. The only English preposition that conveys this meaning is the following: *but for*. For example:

*But for his injury, the defendant would join the match.*

2. Attachments.

a) The attachment (*goshma* in Azerbaijan) “because” meaning *reason-purpose*. The English preposition that expresses this meaning is: *because of*.

b) The attachment “for” meaning *reason-purpose*. The English preposition that expresses this meaning is: *for*.

c) The attachment “like” meaning *simile*. English prepositions expressing this meaning are: *like, in manner*.

d) The attachment “with” meaning *togetherness*. English prepositions expressing this meaning are: *with, by*.

e) The attachment “mainly” meaning *reference*. English prepositions expressing this meaning are: *with regard to, with (in) reference to, as for*. For example:

*It requires learners to provide a word to fill a blank in reference to a given picture.*

f) The attachment “except” meaning *exclusion, separation*. English prepositions that express this meaning are *except for, with the exception of, apart from, aside from*.

g) The attachment “other” meaning *exception, exclusion*. English prepositions that express this meaning are: *except for, with the exception of, apart from, aside from*.

h) The attachment “belongingness” meaning “about”. English prepositions that express this meaning are: *on, about*.

i) The attachment “about” meaning *relevance*. English prepositions that express this meaning are: *on, about*.

j) The attachment “about” meaning *belonging*. English prepositions that express this meaning are: *on, about*.

3. Words.

a) Through the words “Because of the reason” meaning *reason*. The main English prepositions that express this meaning are the following: *because of, on account of, from, for*.

b) Through the word “Against” meaning *contradiction*. The only English preposition with this meaning is: *against*.

As it can be seen, both synthetic (mainly case suffixes) and analytical (mainly conjunctions) tools are used as the counterparts of prepositions expressing the concept of abstraction existing in modern English. While the case suffixes of nouns dominate among synthetic means, conjunctions come first among analytical means. Finally, it should be noted that both counterparts of English prepositions expressing abstractness are practically and pragmatically in constant use in our language.

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### DISCUSSION

*The role of prepositions in the formation and acquisition of sentences and texts*

Prepositions in modern English are valued as words belonging to a closed lexical category. In English, these parts of speech are sometimes called prepositions and sometimes adpositions [4]. They function as the leading (head) element of preverbal compounds and are mainly used in nominal compounds. From the semantic point of view, prepositions mainly express concepts of time and space, and from the morphological point of view, they are mostly in the simple form that does not accept inflection.

Although a prepositional noun is the only word that precedes a conjunction and expresses spatial relations, the class of prepositions includes more than this limited concept. It can be divided into types according to whether or not the preposition receives a complement, what type of complement the preposition receives, on which side of the preposition the complement is, and whether the preposition consists of one or more words. Prepositions that accept the complement of a noun combination are called *active prepositions*, and those that do not are called *passive prepositions*.

In modern English, there are 5 types of prepositions in terms of structure: *simple, derivative, compound, verb-adjective combination* and *phrase prepositions*.

We consider it necessary to draw the attention to the definition of the prepositions as part of speech. It is necessary to highlight that different definitions have been given to the problem. The scientists such as L.S. Barkhudarov, D.A. Shtelling and some others characterize the functional part of the speech as following:

“Prepositions are auxiliary words that relate to the subject. In a sentence, as a rule, the preposition indicates the relation to the noun or nominalized pronoun, as well as to the verb form of substantive origin, which preserves the sign of the noun, that is, in the present tense” [Burlakova 1971, p. 249].

N.A. Kobrina, E.A. Korneyeva, M.E. Ossovskaya, K.A. Guzeyeva defined the prepositions like this: “The preposition is an auxiliary word that expresses the relationship between two main words according to its meaning. Its semantic importance is revealed when different prepositions are used with one and the same word” [Kobrina 1985, p. 160].

Prepositional speech is a linguistic unit characteristic of Indo-European languages (Russian, French, German, Italian, Spanish, etc.) as one of the auxiliary parts of speech. Despite the fact that this part of speech has been studied by experts in many languages, it should be noted that there are still some issues waiting to be solved regarding the prepositions.

Based on the scientific literature, the researches have shown that, in general, the following issues related to prepositions have not been fully resolved in linguistics: whether prepositions have a nominative meaning, whether prepositions express the connections and relationships among words or sentences. The most prominent of these issues is whether prepositions have nominative or lexical meaning, and there is disagreement among researchers in linguistics about this. Some linguists note that prepositions have only a grammatical meaning, without a nominative meaning, while some experts note that they have a lexical meaning as well as a grammatical meaning.

H. Sweet used the term “Form-words” which refers to prepositions. According to him, words such as *the* and *is* are freely used in form, but they are not free in meaning [Sweet 1892, p. 22]. He calls such words “Form Words”. But H.Sweet right here shows that there is a type of “these form words and notes that if “form Words” (form or formal words) are completely devoid of meaning, then we call them “Empty word” [Sweet 1892, p. 22-23]. By empty words, the author means a group of words that have no lexical meaning and can be used freely.

As for prepositions having a nominative meaning, H. Sweet made a general opinion about this in his classification, stating that prepositions have “only a non-specific lexical meaning”.

J.S. Nesfield gave the it the following definition: “If any word expresses some relationship between two pronouns or objects, that word is called a preposition” [Nesfield 1918, p. 2-3].

J.S. Nesfield, in this definition, emphasized that prepositions have the function of expressing a grammatical relationship, but he did not touch on the issue of prepositions having a nominative meaning, he noted that they are simply grouped according to space and time.

R.Quirk, S. Greenbaum showed that prepositions create a grammatical connection, but they did not comment on their lexical meaning and characterized the preposition as following:

“In the most general terms, a preposition denotes a relationship between two entities or objects, one of which is expressed through a prepositional completeness” [Quirk 1982, p. 134].

In the book authored by English linguist W.Cobbett the definition given to the preposition is the following. It should be noted that he defined the prepositions only in terms of position, but he did not suggest that they have any other meaning.

So, he writes about them: “The word is derived from the combination of two Latin words – “pre” and “position”, which means “in front” and “place”. This name was given to words of this kind because they usually precede nouns and pronouns” [Cobbett 1984, p. 16].

As it can be seen, the prepositions in the grammar section of the modern English language, as well as their classification in terms of meaning, have been the object of research by many specialists and continue to be so up today.

The preposition is considered to be one of the functional parts of speech.

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Prepositions are words or groups of words used before a noun, a pronoun, or a noun phrase to indicate direction, time, place, and spatial relationships, or to introduce an object. Some examples of them are words like *in*, *at*, *on*, *of* and *to*.

Many prepositions in English are known to be idiomatic. Although there are some rules for usage, the use of many prepositions is expressed in fixed expressions. In these cases, it is better to memorize the phrase instead of the individual prepositions.

Some verbs and adjectives are followed by certain prepositions. Sometimes verbs and adjectives are followed by different prepositions and can give different meanings of them.

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