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PREPOSITIONS: METAPHORICAL EXTENSIONS OF PREPOSITIONS DENOTING ABSTRACT RELATIONS

This article examines the significance of metaphorical motivations and extensions of prepositions denoting abstract relationships. It is noted that prepositions play a crucial role in English, expressing connections between nominative and predicative sentence structures. As a lingua franca, English, and especially prepositions, have been the subject of numerous cross-linguistic studies. It has been determined that prepositions denoting abstract relationships are generally considered the most complex grammatical group of prepositions, as they are more likely to create significant confusion in the use of English from a conceptual integration perspective. Another compelling argument for the increasing complexity of prepositions denoting abstract relationships is the fact that they can expand both in number and meaning through meaning extension. The study revealed that the abstract meanings of prepositions are not only closely linked to context, but also that these extensions of meaning are viewed as metaphorical extensions and are associated with the speaker's thinking and thoughts, rather than being purely linguistic. It has been proven that language manifests itself in various forms according to the linguistic and life experiences of its speakers. In this context, people have witnessed a process of transformation, during which language, describing more materialistic entities, has evolved into one capable of defining less clear and visual phenomena (abstract concepts, namely emotions, feelings, and states).

It has been determined that despite the wide range of meaning expansions, linguistic units and forms have remained the same, containing both original and abstract meanings. Regarding prepositions denoting abstract relationships, two conflicting points of view have developed in traditional and cognitive linguistics. According to the traditional way of thinking, prepositions are viewed merely as indicators of grammatical meaning, in some cases as empty words, arguing that abstract expansions of prepositions are a random process. However, further developments in cognitive linguistics have placed prepositions and their meanings under more diverse perspectives. In the course of contextual analysis of the abstract meanings of prepositions, it was revealed that the said abstract meanings are not random; on the contrary, their motivation follows certain justifications related to the physical world and our life experience.

Key words: abstract relations, prepositions, metaphorical extension, thought, meaning extension, cognitive linguistics.

Introduction. Considering the interplay between various modes of meanings, prepositions denoting abstract relations are proved to be one of the most confusing as well as challenging language units to be conceptually transferred to other languages. First reason for it, is that, they are difficult to understand since the relations they unveil are hard to specify in terms of physical world. Via meaning extensions prepositions denoting abstract relations play a role of a target as its meaning derives from prepositions denoting place and space. Second reason can be defined when comparing different languages. Nowadays, prepositions in English language are studied not only from cognates language perspective but also from non-cognate languages. Under the character of divergence, there can be classified two differences; qualitative and quantitative. In qualitative

difference one of the compared languages doesn't share the same linguistic unit, leading to negative conceptual transference. If we loosely interpret qualitative difference, we can surely exemplify it in the following manner: in comparison with English language, other compared languages may not express relations through prepositions but rather through inflections.

The relevance and topicality of the study. Before the introduction of Computer linguistics and Cognitive linguistics, there were rigorous and clear-cut placement of prepositions in terms of their semantics and interrelation between their grammatical and lexical meanings. A case in the point is the fact that in conventional linguistics prepositions were considered empty words, deprived of any meaningful features. However, many studies were carried out to

deny the fact that abstract meanings of prepositions are random and the metaphorical mappings of abstract prepositions could be interpreted through physical domain [4, p. 163]. In the same line, studies which revealed the inefficiency of conventional ways of teaching prepositions are more present in the scientific world [1, p. 421].

Many cognitive linguists hold the view that meaning is conceptual by nature and abstraction of words is conditioned by conceptual integration, revealing the extra-linguistic nature of meanings. (G. Lakoff & M. Johnson, A. Tyler & V. Evans, G. Fauconnier, R. Langacker, R. Jackendoff) Alongside with this, justification of abstract meanings of prepositions through the lens of Cognitive linguistics, particularly cognitive semantics paved the way for the introduction of conceptual metaphors. The pioneers of conceptual metaphors with certain focus on prepositions initially were G. Lakoff & M. Johnson in the seminal work *The metaphors we live by* and then were elaborated by J. Tyler & V. Evans with the specific inclination towards special prepositions and their semantic network.

The main objective of tracking metaphorical mapping of prepositions denoting abstract relations is that it provides extensive and deep knowledge in mastering using prepositions both in a daily conversation as well as a precise grasp of the relations between different meanings conveyed by prepositions, their interaction with a context in a more academic and poetical setting.

In order to attain this objective, the subsequent tasks should be taken into consideration: to identify the source meaning of prepositions denoting abstract relations; to analyze the transformation path from the source meaning (special prepositions) to target meaning (prepositions denoting abstract relations); to investigate the interaction of a context and prepositions via various literary samples; to justify the abstract mapping and transformation of prepositions from one grammatical group to another;

A methodological basis for the study. In this study predominantly was used contextual and descriptive analysis to investigate metaphorical mappings of prepositions denoting abstract relations. As a source of contextual analysis instances were chosen from Oscar Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray".

Metaphorical extension of prepositions denoting abstract relations. Before exploring meanings conveyed in prepositions, we should consider various viewpoints on meaning. According to L. Bloomfield, even the shallow analysis of semantic change reveals the fact that all abstract

meanings were identified by a language through more concrete meanings and objects. By furthering his ideas on meaning, L. Bloomfield distinguished 2 main types of meaning – one central/normal meaning (language users understand the form) and the other metaphorical/transferred meaning (in some practical situations language users are obliged to find another more appropriate meaning) [2, p. 149]. S. Lindstromberg when discussing meaning of prepositions identified two terms, *meaning* (with bigger contrast between meanings of a prepositions) and *sense* (with subtle distinctions between meaning of a preposition) [7, p. 18].

Recently, majority of studies are conducted through the lens of anthropocentric perspective under the influence of cognitive linguistics, particularly related with cognition of people as human was considered as a major mediator in the process of understanding the objective reality. Naom Chomsky underlined the term of linguistic competence which a person develops throughout his life [8, p. 102].

According to cognitive scientist Gilles Fauconnier "When language expressions reflect objective events and situations, as they often do (and often do not), they do not reflect them directly, but rather through elaborate human cognitive constructions and construals" [3, p. 8]. Therefore, during the analysis of languages alongside lexical and grammatical difficulties, the cognitive difficulties also should be considered.

One of the most elemental ways of our understanding the outer world is our body movements and spatial orientations. According to J. Taylor and V. Evans, all abstract prepositions took its grounding from spatial prepositions after which their spatial meaning was projected to more abstract level. David Ritchie developed the concept of grounding with the following lines "The attributes that provide a basis for comparing vehicle to topic are sometimes referred to as a "ground" of the metaphor. Ground itself is metaphorical as something solid and basic" [6, p. 7]. Interpreting conceptual metaphors introduced by Johnson & Lakoff, David Ritchie compared topic to vehicle. According to his interpretation vehicle carries some metaphorical meaning related to the topic.

The conceptualization of abstract relations with respect to more clear and physical objects was termed as grounding by A. Taylor & V. Evans. A. Tyler and V. Evans were pioneers in investigating prepositions in English from point of view of cognitive linguistics. First and foremost, their work posits the strong relevance of people's spatial experience with their usage of a

language and mental processes. By implementing new methodology, they distinguished between traditional and contextual meanings of English prepositions. They explained in their investigation how one linguistic form can be linked to not only one meaning, but also many diverse meanings related to each-other on conceptual level, forming semantic network as well the nature of meaning projections from physical things to non-physical concepts. A. Tyler and V. Evans claimed in their work *"The Semantics of English prepositions; Spatial scenes, embodied meaning and cognition"* that even simple sentences should be examined not only by mere linguistic expressions but also with context and logical relations as simple sentences can also have different perspectives. According to them conceptualization can manifest itself not only in meaning but also in a language itself and the very fact that language is conceptual indicates its subjectivity. Conceptualization on a language level, enables to interpret common high frequency sentences along with preposition in them from different mental angles. They have illustrated various conceptualizations with the following instances.

The preposition **in** in the phrase **in the box** can have various conceptualizations.

The present is in the box with the blue lid and She peeked in the kittens in the box. In these examples, reader can assume that the first box was covered from all sides while in the second example it is not surprising to think of this box as being open from one side. The following instances are also interesting in their work:

Jane stood in the flower-bed. Jane stood on the flower – bed [10, p. 21]. The conceptualization of these two instances is different. In former sentence the flower-bed was grounded as a container where Jane enters and is surrounded by the flowers and edges/constraints of flower-bed (flower-bed serves the function of containment), whereas in the latter example the upper external boundary was emphasized and on here implemented the function of contact with the outer limit of entity.

Had any foot marks been found on the flower-beds, the gardeners would have reported it [11, p. 221] – in the given example the marks on the flower-bed indicates the visual contact with the surface of a flower-bed as the speaker is concerned about the visible marks of intrusion. The same conceptualization approaches we can observe in other instances; in the ground – on the ground; *There were dozens of graves in the ground* (the graves were

buried inside of the ground), meaning that the ground was dug and graves were placed within the certain edges of the ground.

What is that said the painter, keeping his eyes fixed on the ground [11, p. 11] (the painter's eyes have only superficial contact the upper layer of the ground)

Another pattern with the usage of prepositions *on* vs *in* in different forms can be viewed in the following examples. For example, the face when serving the role of container is used to store the emotions the person is experiencing. In this case predominantly *in* is used. When the action is related with superficial contact as of something more physical *on* – or other equivalents *over*; *upon* is used.

One he read several times over, and then tore up with a slight look of annoyance in his face [11, p. 181]. *Dorian walked to the door with a look of pain in his face* [11, p. 218].

A spotted handkerchief had been placed over her face [11, p. 230].

Metaphor and metonymy were regarded as forms of semantic change by L. Bloomfield. While with metaphors compared entities should be different and far from each other, conversely in metonymy we compare related entities. After certain contextual analysis the significant role of prepositions in conveying metaphorical and metonymic concepts was showcased.

Metonymic concepts of *The Part for the Whole* and the *Whole for the part* are primarily associated with portraits, paintings, picture, photos and images, by showcasing one part namely the face in the picture people are claiming that they have seen this person and therefore in this pattern we are referring seeing the part for the whole or vice versa. In examples of these metonymic concepts the preposition **of** has been used repeatedly. *When he caught the sight of Lord Henry a faint blush colored his cheeks for a moment* [11, p. 22]. *He is never more present in my work than when no image of him is there* [11, p. 18]. *When they entered, they found hanging upon the wall a splendid portrait of their master* [11, p. 248].

To above mentioned examples, we can apply metonymic concept part for the whole or the whole for part with the following expressions – the sight of, the image of, the portrait of -whether the whole body was replaced with a face or the opposite.

Metaphors are mediators in understanding ourselves as human beings and the language as its users, as well as our surroundings as the habitats of the outer world since metaphors are referred to as one of the most fundamental ways of understanding. *The essence of metaphor is understanding and*

experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another [4, p. 5]. Although there are various approaches in identifying the notion of metaphor, while majority of linguists are consistent with the idea that metaphor is an implicit comparison of two different objects (David Ritchie, Aristotle, Z. Kövecses), while E. Semino argued that metaphor was an attribute of thought.

G. Lakoff and M. Johnson in their book “*Metaphors we live by*”, argued the importance of orientational metaphors (up-down, on- off, in-our, front-back-. and structural metaphors in our understanding the objective reality around us. The following orientational metaphors were examined in their work: *Happy is Up, Sad is Down (to feel up and to feel down)*; *Conscious is Up, Unconscious is Down (to be up, to be under hypnosis)*; *Health is Up, Sickness is Down (to be way up there, to come down with flu)*; *Having Control or force is up, Being subject to control is Down (to be under control, have control over)*; *More is Up, Less is Down*; *Good is up, Bad is Down*; *Rational is Up, Emotion is Down*; *Virtue is Up, Bad is Down*. [5, p. 15–16].

They justified their theory by mere human body and how human’s body response to mentioned emotions, that is, when person is happy and confident, feel the control they stand straight when feeling sad, emotional, being controlled their shoulders tend to be less straight, they seeming hunch feeling depressed. When applying David Ritchie’s theory of topic and vehicle to the orientational metaphor More is up, More becomes a topic and up is a vehicle. They reported that humans understand the objective reality by experiencing it through their bodies and movements and these perceptions continue in a more abstract platform. The oppositions of *Harry is in the kitchen* and *Harry is in love* illustrated the comment made by G. Lakoff & M. Johnson. They analyzed numerous instances applying their structural metaphors. One of their most common structural metaphors are related with a container concept.

– People see their bodies as a container when using abstract prepositions.

For example, *an ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style*. [11, p. 6]. *There is a soul in each one of us*. [11, p. 238]. *He was dimly conscious that entirely fresh influences were at work within him*. [11, p. 26].

In these examples the body of an artist is regarded as a container for an emotion – sympathy. Preposition **in, within** in its original local meaning is conceptually transferred to person’s body. Whereas, containers can be not only the whole body of a person but also its separate parts.

But he suddenly started up, and closing his eyes, placed his fingers upon the lids, as though he sought to imprison within his brain some curious dream from which he feared he might awake [11, p. 8]. *You will bitterly reproach him in your own heart and seriously think that he has behaved very badly to you*.

– The eyes are containers for the emotions;

There was a look of a fear in his eyes, such as people have when they are suddenly awakened [11, p. 28].

– Physical and emotional states are entities within a person –*Each of us has Heaven and Hell in him*. [11, p. 175]. *The mad passions of a hundred animal stirred within him* [11, p. 176].

– States are containers. – *I believe he is in love*. [11, p. 196] *James Vane stood on the pavement in horror* [11, p. 212].

– Having control is Up. – *He has a very bad influence over all his friends, with the single exception of himself*. [11, p. 20] *Who had made him a judge over others?* [11, p. 205]. Occasionally abstraction takes double manifestations not only physical part of the body is taken as a container but also less delineated emotions are classified as a container, forming a part of the body. When Basil Hallward in “*Picture of Dorian Gray*” explains Lord Henry his reluctance of displaying his portrait he says –

I can’t really exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it. Lord Henry perceives this sentence very literally assuming that Basil speaks of physical appearance and adds: *I can’t see any resemblance between you and this young Adonis*.

However, after reading all context cognitive readiness of readers comes into play and readers understand that Basil speaks about revealing his emotions toward Dorian Gray through the portrait.

In some cases, abstraction of words and prepositions are considered as extralinguistic activity since it is more connected with speaker’s thought which is realized outside of the sentences, underlining the correlation between context and prepositions. When the reader reads one simple sentence “*Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril*” [11, p. 6] readers can associate this sentence with more physical activity like diving and going under water and consider the preposition of **beneath** as spatial one. However, if we add original context the preceding sentence in which the line reads: “*All art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril*” [11, p. 6].

Then the reader makes association in their thoughts with more abstract notions and now the preposition *beneath* changes its group into

prepositions denoting abstract relations, showcasing similar experience (beneath of something) but different conceptualization.

Conclusion. Complete comprehension of the usage of prepositions poses extreme challenges for non-native speakers of English as predominantly they exhibit the features of negative conceptual transference. While native speakers of the English language can be regarded as native to prepositions as they were born with them and started the exploration of their surrounding world with the help of special prepositions, owing to qualitative distinctions between languages non-native speakers are deprived of absolute immersion into the world of prepositions. Given this context, there were attempts to investigate prepositions through the lens of human’s cognition.

In our study, the contextual analysis of various sentences revealed certain characteristic aspects of prepositions in particular how they get their abstract meaning through meaning extensions.

It has been seen from contextual analysis of sentences within one macro context that prepositions denoting abstract relations can be accurately understood, provided that it is materialized in the context with proper preceding and following sentences and therefore, for readers isolated sentences are not sufficient to grasp all the picture presented by the context. Not only context but also reader’s thought and certain mental processes contribute to the revealing certain features of prepositions, let alone their stylistic nature by being presented in conceptual metaphors and metonymic concepts.

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Гасанова Н. Х. ПРИЙМЕННИКИ: МЕТАФОРИЧНІ РОЗШИРЕННЯ ПРИЙМЕННИКІВ, ЩО ПОЗНАЧАЮТЬ АБСТРАКТНІ ВІДНОШЕННЯ

Стаття присвячена значенню метафоричних мотивацій та розширень прийменників, що позначають абстрактні відносини. Наголошено, що прийменники відіграють дуже важливу роль в англійській мові, висловлюючи зв'язки між номінативними та предикативними структурами речення. Будучи лінгва-франком, англійська мова, особливо прийменники, були предметом дослідження для багатьох крос-лінгвістичних досліджень. Визначено, що найбільш складною граматичною групою прийменників зазвичай вважаються прийменники, що позначають абстрактні відносини, оскільки з точки зору концептуальної інтеграції вони з більшою ймовірністю створюють набагато більше плутанини при використанні англійської мови. Встановлено, що ще одним переконливим аргументом на користь зростання складності прийменників, що позначають абстрактні відносини, є той факт, що вони можуть збільшуватися як у кількості, так і в значенні за допомогою розширення значення. У ході дослідження було виявлено, що абстрактні значення прийменників не тільки тісно пов'язані з контекстом, але й ці розширення значення розглядаються як метафоричні розширення і пов'язані з мисленням та думками того, хто говорить, а не є суто лінгвістичними. Доведено, що мова проявляється у різних формах відповідно до мовного та життєвого досвіду її носіїв. У цьому контексті люди стали свідками процесу трансформації, під час якого мова, описуючи більш матеріалістичні сутності, перетворилася на мову, здатну визначати менш ясні та наочні явища (абстрактні поняття, а саме емоції, почуття та стани). Визначено, що незважаючи на широкий спектр розширень значень, мовні одиниці та форми залишилися колишніми, що містять як вихідні, так і абстрактні значення. Щодо прийменників, що позначають абстрактні відносини, у традиційній та когнітивній лінгвістиці склалися дві суперечливі точки зору. Згідно з традиційним способом мислення, прийменники розглядаються лише як індикатори граматичного значення, у деяких випадках як порожні слова,

стверджуючи, що абстрактні розширення прийменників є випадковим процесом, тоді як подальший розвиток когнітивної лінгвістики поставило прийменники та їх значення під різні кути зору. У ході контекстуального аналізу абстрактних значень прийменників було виявлено, що зазначені абстрактні значення не випадкові, навпаки, їх мотивація слід певним обґрунтуванням, пов'язаним із фізичним світом та нашим життєвим досвідом.

Ключові слова: абстрактні відношення, прийменники, метафоричне розширення, думка, розширення значення, когнітивна лінгвістика.

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