

TEMPORAL AND LOCATIVE PREPOSITIONS VERSUS ADVERBS: LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL OVERLAPPING (CORPUS-BASED STUDY)

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The paper focuses on an essential problem of a “part-of-speech” theory, including temporal and locative prepositions and adverbs overlapping in lexical and grammatical perspective. The study is pursued on a corpus-based approach towards prepositions and adverbs overlapping in present-day English (PDE), giving consideration to the complements applied. The latter are divided into two wide groups, namely Noun Phrase and Alternative Complements. To organise the results the comparative-parametric method of linguistic research developed by Sternina was introduced. A comparison has been made between traditional interpretation of complement use and practical corpus-based results in PDE. It has been ascertained that among 94 lexical units treated as one-word prepositions 49 units show overlapping of prepositions and adverbs; however, 39 units bear locative and temporal senses. The results of the PDE corpus-based research show that conventional interpretation of prepositions as lexical units governing Noun Phrase Complements and Adverbs as units correlating with Alternative Complements is deceptive, as it is based on a synchronic syntactic approach, neglecting diachronic syntax and semantics. The hypothesis proposed describes a necessity to reconsider modern PoS division theory, taking into account diachronic approach and analysis of lexical units at the stages of their genesis in Old English and Middle English periods.

Keywords: adverb; preposition; functional-grammatical transposition; complement; lexical and grammatical combinability; corpus-based study.

Introduction

Any language and its units are characterised by a certain degree of responsiveness to various external and internal factors, which influence them. Therefore, it presupposes their dynamic nature and stipulates the fact that all linguistic phenomena, despite their statistical character, are in constant motion and interact with each other at different levels, indicating the permanent development of language in diachrony. In this context, the most distinguished dynamic changes describe transposition phenomenon “which makes possible the use of words as members of other classes than their “logical” or natural “word class” (Ketel, 1991, p. 316). According to Lekant (2007) “there are no and can be no borders between parts of speech (PoS): they possess not only different, opposite, but also common features and that is why in language exist hybrid or transient words, which have not found their own word class or left their category under the influence of various linguistic factors” (p. 19).

Traditionally, such transitivity and subsequent use of lexical units as representatives of different parts of speech are observed among open word classes; however, it is a hackneyed subject. We make an assumption that in modern linguistics one of the most significant, current and open problems is a functional-grammatical transposition between open and closed word classes, while one of its manifestations is a “preposition-adverb” overlapping. Current topic has been partially disclosed in works by Heaton (1966), Kiefer (2009), Kiss (2009), Urogdi (2009) and others. We hypothesise that a nominal complement, which in conventional grammar is believed to be a compulsory constituent of a prepositional phrase and an obligatory characteristic of a preposition as a separate part of speech as opposed to adverbs, which omit it, is an optional element that helps to specify speakers’ intentions and reflections by no means is a dominant peculiarity of a preposition as a word class. Thus, the *aim of the paper* is to analyse lexical and grammatical overlapping of temporal and locative prepositions and adverbs, which exists in present day English (PDE), by means of employing corpus-based and corpus-driven approaches.

Analysis of semantic and grammatical overlapping among the lexical units, which belong to adverbs and prepositions, can shed some light on a general problem of part of speech division that is still an open question. It will also contribute to solving ambiguity, when one and the same lexical unit is defined as a representative of two or more word classes.

Methods

To perform the analysis and implement the objectives of the present paper a “*corpus-based*” approach, which belongs to major the corpus studies, was applied. The research is built on the British National Corpus (BNC), which is a “100 million word collection of samples of written and spoken language from a wide range of sources”.

The primary goal of the *corpus-based research* was to conduct the analysis of possible correlations within each word group, i.e. adverbs and prepositions in present-day English. It has not been the analysis of a certain author's discourse, text domain, type or category, but a comprehensive research and evaluation of all accessible instances in the language. First of all, our aim was to single out those lexical units, which simultaneously belong to both word classes, i.e. adverbs and prepositions. As prepositions form a closed word class and thus are limited in their number, for instance Essberger (2009) provides the list of 150 prepositions, which is "comprehensive at the time of writing, and represents all the prepositions currently found in a good English dictionary such as the Concise Oxford Dictionary" (p. 6), we used the category of prepositions as a starting point. Thus, 94 lexical units are classified as modern one-word prepositions and namely they formed the bulk for our investigation. Further on, these 94 lexical units were analysed on the basis of the BNC, each unit defined either as a preposition or as an adverb. Next stage comprises research of the units, comparing types of their complements in detail, specifying various forms of them. Such methodology allows drawing generalised conclusions, concerning the problem of overlapping between two lexical-grammatical categories of prepositions and adverbs; conducting subsequent "*corpus-driven*" research on functional-grammatical transposition in PDE.

Results and Discussion

Traditional definition of prepositions as words, which indicate relations between other lexical units and are obligatory clustered with NPs, as their complements let us derive an oppositional assumption – if words, indicating relations between other lexical units, do not use NPs, they cannot be classified as prepositions, and are consequently defined as adverbs. Such hypothesis quite well corresponds with distributional analysis theory, which is based on the position and distribution of separate units in texts, but does not give much attention to full lexical and grammatical meanings of these units. However, the evolution of cognitive, communicative and discursive aspects in language denotes inefficiency of classical approaches towards PoS theory, in particular referring to correlation between open and closed classes. Bearing it in mind and trying to validate our hypothesis we selected 94 lexical units, which conventionally are treated as one-word prepositions. On the basis of the BNC, 94 modern one-word prepositions were shortlisted to 49 lexical units. It was possible as the rest 45 words either were "pure/genuine" prepositions, which did not overlap any PoS or overlapped other word classes, but prepositions, what is not a research subject. As the type of relations, represented by lexical units, may differ a lot we decided to generalise the list and narrow it down only to those units, which bear temporal and locative characteristics, see Table 1. Thus, the final list comprises 39 lexical units, which have temporal and locative senses and can be without distinction defined both as adverbs and prepositions.

The present paper is a corpus-based research, centred on various types of complements which are used in the postposition to the lexical units under study. Quantitative data in Table 1 are to testify reasonableness of the above-mentioned assumptions and hypothesis.

Table 1 is divided into 2 equal parts – the former provides data, concerning lexical items (see column "*Lexical items*") described as prepositions; the latter – as adverbs. In the columns "*Total quantity*" and "*Quantity per mln*" one can find overall number and correlation of lexical items, used as prepositions or adverbs. In the columns "*Noun Phrase (NP) complement*" and "*Alternative (Alt) complement*" we can see total amount of complements used in the postposition to any lexical item.

Table 1 provides data and results of the corpus-based research of complements, which are used in the postposition to 39 lexical units under study. Conducting the research we believe it as reasonable to single out two main groups of complements, i.e. NP complements and Alternative complements. To distinguish between them, let us state that according to traditional grammar, prepositions, as opposed to adverbs, always govern "nominal complements or noun phrases, represented by a noun, pronoun or their syntactic equivalent, a nominal clause or an *-ing* clause, with the exception of *that*-clause and infinitive clause" (Klégr, 1997, p. 52), thus more exactly NPs heads or pre-modifiers are nouns, pronouns, determiners (articles etc.) and modifiers (adjectives etc.). Classical combinations of prepositions and NP Complements are:

1) *On March 27, in Alexandra township outside Johannesburg, at least 14 people were killed when men armed with automatic weapons opened fire on mourners at a night-time vigil* (BNC);

Example 1 provides the combination of *Prep (outside)* and *Noun (Johannesburg)*;

2) *Then when you swing hard at his foot, he lifts it so that your sweep passes underneath it* (BNC);

In sentence 2 we observe the junction of *Prep (underneath)* + *Pron (it)*;

3) *Taunton, Somerset's county town, was founded during the time of King Ine, astride the peaceful, picturesque River Tone* (BNC);

In sentence 3 *Prep (astride)* governs *Det (the)*;

4) Extracts from *The Times* grouped **round major** themes: *Employment, Finance, Trade and Science* (BNC).

In example 4 *Prep (round)* is used together with *Adj (major)*.

Table 1

Adverb-Preposition Overlapping in PDE

№	Lexical Item	PREPOSITION						ADVERB					
		Total quantity	Quantity per mln	NP Comp		Alt Comp		Total quantity	Quantity per mln	NP Comp		Alt Comp	
				Units	%	Units	%			Units	%	Units	%
1	Aboard	563	5.73	553	98.2	10	1.8	383	3.9	9	2.3	374	97.7
2	About	146934	1494.55	124549	84.7	22385	15.3	44769	455.37	29050	64.9	15719	35.1
3	Above	13165	133.91	12951	98.3	214	1.7	9207	93.65	336	3.7	8871	96.3
4	Across	20635	209.89	19818	96.0	817	4.0	3340	33.97	44	1.3	3296	98.7
5	After	90000	915.44	73556	81.7	16444	18.3	936	9.52	201	21.5	735	78.5
6	Along	11796	119.98	11618	98.5	178	1.5	11647	118.47	1311	11.3	10336	88.7
7	Alongside	2840	28.89	2800	98.6	40	1.4	363	3.69	44	12.1	319	87.9
8	Around	22594	229.82	21961	97.2	633	2.8	20725	210.81	8940	43.2	11785	56.8
9	Astride	115	1.17	115	100	---	0	23	0.23	7	30.5	16	69.5
10	At	521623	5305.71	469194	89.9	52429	10.1	28	0.28	---	0	28	100
11	Before	42148	428.71	27609	65.5	14539	34.5	13618	138.52	609	4.5	13009	95.5
12	Behind	19056	193.83	18578	97.5	478	2.5	3274	33.3	63	2.0	3211	98.0
13	Below	5376	54.68	5219	97.0	157	3.0	8655	88.03	1372	15.9	7283	84.1
14	Beneath	4400	44.75	4365	99.2	35	0.8	368	3.74	10	2.7	358	97.3
15	Beside	5358	54.5	5304	98.9	54	1.1	14	0.14	1	7.2	13	92.8
16	Between	90191	917.38	85851	95.2	4340	4.8	306	3.11	9	3.0	297	97.0
17	Beyond	10119	102.93	9759	96.4	360	3.6	1179	11.99	32	2.7	1147	97.3
18	By	508658	5173.84	440444	86.6	68214	13.4	3522	35.82	89	2.5	3433	97.5
19	Down	9253	94.12	8778	94.8	475	5.2	81125	825.17	18304	22.6	62821	77.4
20	Following	1142	11.62	1124	98.4	18	1.6	445	4.53	359	80.7	86	19.3
21	For	865253	8800.96	792328	91.6	72925	8.4	41	0.43	2	4.9	39	95.1
22	From	424945	4322.35	379358	89.2	45587	10.8	3	0.03	---	0	3	100
23	In	1877602	19098.12	1831336	97.5	46266	2.5	56211	571.75	5256	9.4	50955	90.6
24	Inside	7030	71.51	6923	98.5	107	1.5	4835	49.18	581	12.1	4254	87.9
25	Near	13887	141.25	13621	98.1	266	1.9	2202	22.4	483	22.0	1719	78.0
26	Off	20563	209.16	19821	96.4	742	3.6	46998	478.04	9969	21.2	37029	78.8
27	On	642664	6536.89	616066	95.8	26598	4.2	86714	882.02	10108	11.7	76606	88.3
28	Opposite	1091	11.1	1085	99.5	6	0.5	660	6.71	50	7.6	610	92.4
29	Outside	11921	121.26	11026	92.5	895	7.5	5027	51.13	607	12.1	4420	87.9
30	Over	73796	750.62	69413	94.1	4383	5.9	55962	569.22	30135	53.9	25827	46.1
31	Past	6262	63.69	6079	97.1	183	2.9	2010	20.44	188	9.4	1822	90.6
32	Round	11011	112.0	10749	97.6	262	2.4	13214	134.41	1561	11.8	11653	88.2
33	Since	17475	177.75	14312	81.9	3163	18.1	2803	28.51	81	2.9	2722	97.1
34	Through	71704	729.34	68298	95.2	3406	4.8	9149	93.06	245	2.7	8904	97.3
35	Throughout	11438	116.34	11312	98.9	126	1.1	804	8.18	25	3.1	779	96.9
36	Under	55022	559.66	53349	96.9	1673	3.1	5482	55.76	4589	83.7	893	16.3
37	Underneath	970	9.87	930	95.8	40	4.2	813	8.27	129	15.9	684	84.1
38	Up	7909	80.45	6874	86.9	1035	13.1	199216	2026.34	55471	27.9	14374	72.1
39	Within	44268	450.27	43597	98.5	671	1.5	1277	12.99	25	2.0	1252	98.0

On the contrary, Alternative Complements are represented by other parts of speech like verbs, adverbs, conjunctions and prepositions, which in accordance with classic grammar and PoS theory cannot be governed by prepositions. Quite a significant place is occupied by certain kind of punctuation used immediately after a preposition, as it is a sign of applying various clauses, which in fact are not governed by prepositions as well. However, adverbs “modify verbs, clauses, adjectives and other adverbs” (Downing, 2006, p. 503).

5) *How far **behind are** the galleries and critics?* (BNC);

In sentence 5 the author combines *Adv (behind)* and *Verb (are)*;

6) *They steadfastly refused to come anywhere **near close** enough* (BNC);

In example 6 *Adv (near)* is used with *Adj (close)*;

7) *He had not expected to run across Tubby Walters again, not **within only** two years of their end-of-war farewells in London, and certainly not in Ireland* (BNC);

Sentence 7 show the example of *Adv (within)* and *Adv (only)* combination;

8) *DTS claims the Accommodator system, as well as handling telephone traffic and the facilities mentioned **above**, makes an important contribution to housekeeping, maintenance and billing functions* (BNC).

In example 8 we observe the sample of a clause, where *Adv (above)* is followed by *Pun (,)*.

Therefore, such correlation between lexical units and their complements forms the grounds for the analysis and the results are represented in Table 1.

To organise and investigate the obtained results we employed basic elements of comparative-parametric method of linguistic research, developed by (Sternina, 2015, p. 92), (Pankratova, 2015, p. 9) and others. Pursuing intralingual research within the frame of the comparative-parametric method, Sternina (2013) developed a special grading rank for the rate of the phenomena under analysis (p. 208).

According to it, if the index weight equals 0 – it testifies the absence of the phenomenon;

from 0 to 9.99% – low degree;

from 10% to 29.99% –noticeable degree;

from 30% to 49.99% – vivid degree;

from 50% to 69.99% – considerable degree;

from 70% to 89.99% – high degree;

from 90% to 99.9% – hyperhigh degree;

100% index weight means absolute quantitative rate.

This grading rank is used for the subsequent research to figure out the quantitative rate of every lexical unit under study, whether their correlation with different types of complements conforms to their traditional grammar definition. It is rather necessary as almost every lexical unit in Table 1 is defined either as a preposition or as an adverb and can govern each type of a complement to various extents. We employed this scheme as believe it to be quite relevant for comparing units on the basis of the identical characteristics and its numbers are seen as plausible ones.

The first conclusion to be made on the basis of Table 1 is that most lexical units under study are traditionally registered in dictionaries and grammars as prepositions, but not adverbs – only **5 units** from the total number of **39 units** display higher frequency of use as adverbs than prepositions, namely: **up (96.2 / 3.8)**, **down (89.7 / 10.3)**, **off (69.5 / 30.5)**, **below (61.7 / 38.3)**, **round (54.6 / 45.4)**.

2 lexical units – **around (52.1 / 47.9)**, **along (50.3 / 49.7)** show almost the same key figures, a bit higher for prepositions.

Other **32** lexical units are more frequently used as prepositions than adverbs – the range is from **54.4%** as to **underneath** and up to **99.99%** as to **at, for, from**.

In the process of investigating the referred units, we assume the following: such lexical units as **up, down, off, round, around, along** initially denote motion or direction from one point to another (end) and thus another point is usually omitted if there is no need to specify it. For instance:

9) 5.45pm — They finally turn **up** (BNC);

In sentence 9 the place where people appeared is clear from the discourse and there is no need to repeat it;

10) The Shah was equal to these demolitions: 'If we pulled one **down**, he set up three' (BNC);

In sentence 10 "pull down" refers to the monuments again there is no sense to use "ground";

11) 4.00pm — We set **off** again; this time via Tony's home to collect a variety of possessions, finally arriving at hospital no.3 (BNC);

The idea of the travelling is already known, thus there is no specification after "off" in example 11;

12) She chases him **round** and round (BNC);

In example 12 "round and round" in fact means direction of movement, described in the previous sentence;

13) And I was scouting **around** vaguely aware that, in fact, I'd actually located it (BNC);

The idea of "around" from sentence 13 is explained earlier in the discourse;

14) Don't go **along** in a dirty T shirt and floppy gym shoes or try to over-impress or be antagonistic (BNC);

Again there is no need to specify "along" in the sentence as it has an abstract meaning in sentence 14.

These lexical units take Alternative Complements as there is no need to specify the place or direction, but it is necessary just to name it, generalize it.

Nevertheless, when such a need occurs, these words are traditionally described as prepositions, since they govern the point of specification. In case with other units from the list they either don't have a clear local or temporal point of reference or are characterised by quite a wide range of semantics, which requires specification within a word combination, sentence or discourse. For instance:

15) I would follow the police officers escorting the prisoner or prisoners **up** a flight of stairs into the small but impressive court-room ... (BNC);

In sentence 15 "a flight of stairs" is used by the author just for the stylistic value and specification, as even without it the direction of movement could be decoded;

16) Dog at his heels as he went off **down** the road (BNC);

In example 16 “down the road” is used to emphasise that a person leaves in the opposite direction, away from the speaker;

17) *One day I would write it — and them — **off** the face of the earth* (BNC);

“The face of the earth” in sentence 17 is a stylistic figure used for emphasis; likewise it could be substituted by “my mind” without any grammatical or semantic changes;

18) ***Round** the corner was Dixon's Blazes, a blast furnace, and the Workers' Circle, where dreams of socialist emancipation were debated ...* (BNC);

Specification in sentence 18 is necessary as the unit “round” is characterised by a wide range of semantics and must be specified either in the sentence or in the discourse;

19) *By working co-operatively, long-term, with the people **around** me, I hope to continue for some time yet* (BNC);

In sentence 19 specifier “me” is used to limit the number of people the speaker is talking about, as if used without it, the sentence would mean “people around the speaker at the moment”;

20) *Between these two ridges the fire of the sunset falls **along** the trough of the sea, dyeing it with an awful but glorious light ...* (BNC).

In example 20 the author deliberately underlines the place, where the fire of the sunset falls.

Therefore, in every sentence the authors for the sake of discourse completeness and coherence and to transfer the idea use complements, which disclose authors’ intentions.

Speaking of the unit *below*, which usually does not govern NP Complement, we believe that the explanation lies in the original structure of *below* – a combination of *be* (*Prep*) + *low* (*Adj/Noun*) and its semantics, as “*low*” initially meant “*Situated not far above the ground or some other downward limit; not elevated in position*”, while “*be*” was a preposition of place “*on, at, near etc.*” (Hall & Meritt, 2008).

Due to this explanation *below* always defines a distinct point of location of an object, i.e. *under the point of reference* and there is no need to specify it additionally, see example 21. If another local point is used in a complement, see example 22, it means that additional specification is required.

21) *From my place on the gallery I could keep a watch on Claire's door and on what was happening in the hall **below*** (BNC);

In sentence 21 “below” distinctly represents the position of the object “*under foot*”, and does not require any other additional references;

22) *In this, as in Western perspective, the horizon line is somewhere **below** the middle of the picture* (BNC).

In sentence 22 historical meaning of “below” is modified and requires clarifications, without which the recipient may understand that the horizon line is “*not below the middle of the picture*”, but just “*not far above the ground*”.

“Below” is an obvious indicative and illustration of semantic substitution and transposition, when one and the same word in diachronic perspective started acquiring other semantic components without any structural changes. However, it is not the case of “*below*” only, other lexical units under study either consist of two or more components, the semantics of which should be taken into consideration, or are one-word units, initial semantics of which might undergo transformations.

Thus, we may conclude that in most cases functional transposition has been occurring, in diachronic perspective, from a closed word class (prepositions) to an open word class (adverbs), see (Kovbasko, 2015). Further diachronic research of this phenomenon may be of great significance and interest as it can support or refute our leading hypothesis that lexical units under study initially are prepositions, which in their majority have been formed due to grammaticalization and in the course of time due to functional transposition started to function as adverbs.

Another assumption to be made on the basis of Table 1 is that according to the comparative-parametric method only 1 word – *astride* – is characterised by an *absolute* quantitative rate; however **30 lexical units** are designated as *hyperhigh* units; **7 words** – are typified by a *high* degree; while 1 word – *before* – is characterised as a unit with a *considerable* degree. It means that in the majority of cases the lexical units under study function as prepositions, governing NP Complements (**94.2% of the total amount**) and in rare cases – Alternative Complements (**5.8% of the total amount**) – i.e. the combination: *Prep + NP Complement* is characterised by a hyperhigh degree of quantitative rate. Let’s analyse the outermost cases.

Astride, being at first glance a semantically limited word as it means “*with the legs stretched wide apart, or so that one leg is on each side of some object between*”, has evolved a wide range of figurative meanings, especially when someone speaks of geographical places and other objects and implies “*to extend/spread out*”, and thus it needs that “geographical” or any other specification, see example 23:

23) *Arlington Mill, in this picturesque Cotswold village **astride** the River Coln, has been both a corn and fulling mill in its time* (BNC).

Before, being both a locative and temporal lexical unit, does not require direct specification as very often the place/time can be constructed from discourse, where these events are usually described.

24) *It has all happened **before**, he wrote, and it will all happen again* (BNC).

If analysing the use of lexical units as adverbs governing Alternative Complements, see Table 1, it is possible to state that according to the comparative-parametric method only **2 words** – **at**, **from** – are determined as those of **absolute** quantitative rate, **18 words** belong to the group of **hyperhigh** units; **13 words** are characterised by **high** degree; **2 words** – **around**, **astride** – belong to a group with a **considerable** rate; **2 words** – **over**, **about** – are determined by a **vivid** degree; **2 words** – **following**, **under** – have a **noticeable** degree. These results show that there is no such unanimity as to the use of complements among the lexical units defined as adverbs, and the combination **Adv + Alternative Complement** is actual in **83.4%** of examples (**high degree**), while **NP Complements** are used in **16.6%** (**noticeable degree**).

Despite the fact that **at** and **from** are characterised by an **absolute** quantitative rate their total number in the language is unrepresentative – 28 and 3 units respectively. Thus, we suppose it would make more sense to analyse other subsequent lexical units – **across**, **within**. Both words imply direction and location correspondingly, see examples 25 and 26 however this information can be specified by authors, in case of necessity:

25) *I went **across** and grabbed her by the lapels* (BNC);

In example 25 the meaning of **across** is disclosed in the previous sentence;

26) *Amnesty's job is to breach these walls, to discover the truth **within**, and then to act* (BNC);

In example 26 the meaning of **within** can be decoded from the previous words in the sentence.

These data testify that the lexical units under analysis often govern NP Complements in comparison with Alternative Complements. This proves the hypothesis that functional-grammatical transposition has been occurring within the word class of prepositions.

Conclusions

The corpus-based approach to local and temporal prepositions and adverbs overlapping in PDE refutes general bias in interpreting prepositions as lexical units, which necessarily govern NP Complements, while adverbs fail to do this.

We assume that POS division in PDE should be based not on synchronic syntactic rules and principles of word correlation, but on diachronic analysis in general and analysis of lexical units in Old English and Middle English periods. This is because the main syntactic and semantic changes have been taken place throughout the process of their evolvement, and nowadays researchers just acknowledge them not even bothering to get to the root of the phenomena either literally or metaphorically. Thus, current preposition-adverb overlapping is the result of functional-grammatical transposition, which has been occurring over the language development in terms of “preposition → adverb” line, what is proved by the undertaken diachronic analysis and PDE corpus-based research; yet nevertheless further OE analyses are eligible and potential.

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