
PREPOSITIONS AND THEIR SYNTACTIC USE IN ALBANIAN AND ENGLISH

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Abstract: A preposition is a word or set of words that indicates location or some other relationship between a noun or pronoun and other parts of the sentence. It refers to the word or phrase which shows the relationship between one thing and another, linking nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence. They are abstract words that have no concrete meaning. They merely show the relationships between groups of words. Within a preposition, there are many different variations in meaning that are conveyed. The proper interpretation of prepositions is an important issue for automatic natural language understanding. Although the complexity of preposition usage has been argued for and documented by various scholars in linguistics, psycholinguistics, and computational linguistics, very few studies have been done on the function of prepositions in natural language processing (NLP) applications. The reason is that prepositions are probably the most polysemous category and thus, their linguistic realizations are difficult to predict and their cross-linguistic regularities difficult to identify. Prepositions play a major role in the syntactic structures of the English language and they often make an essential contribution to sentence meaning by signifying temporal and spatial relationships, as well as abstract relations involving cause and purpose, agent and instrument, manner and accompaniment, support and much more. They are sensitive linguistic elements that are culturally acceptable and very well known to all members of the same linguistic community. According to cognitive semantics, the figurative senses of a preposition are extended from its spatial senses through conceptual metaphors. In a pedagogical context, it may be useful to draw learners' attention to those aspects of a preposition's spatial sense that are especially relevant for its metaphorization processes. Prepositions have type restrictions on their arguments, they assign thematic roles, and they have a semantic content, possibly underspecified. The only difference with the other open-class categories like nouns, verbs or adjectives is that they do not have any morphology.

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SYNTACTIC USE OF PREPOSITIONS IN ALBANIAN

According to the Albanian scholar Mahir Domi (2002), “prepositions are used between two sentence patterns to specify or to emphasize the subordinate syntactic relations between them. They are especially used in accusative and ablative case where the first is identical to the dative and the second to the ablative. The limited number of case forms itself is not sufficient to provide all the syntactic hues in their variety.

According to their **syntactic** relations prepositions are classified into:

- *Nominal:* Është nga Tirana. He is *from* Tiranë.
- *Possessive:* Me anë të një miku arrita të kapërcej kufirin. I managed to cross the border *by* the help of a friend.
- *Accusative:* Mos u ul *mbi* divan. Do not sit *on* the sofa.
- *Ablative:* Ishte *prej* Durrësi. He was *from* Durrës.

The gerung of accusative case is used as a verbal compliment to show intention (with the preposition *për* (*to*);

Rendën *per t'i hapur* derën ne errësirën e natës.

They ran *to open* the door in the darkness of the night.

Some prepositions overlap noun forms and are distinguished by their function (Çeliku, M., 2004.)

Është në *buzë* të lumit. (*Noun*) It is *on* the river bank.

Shëtisnin *buzë* lumit. (*Preposition*) They were walking *along* the river.

Prepositions generally occur before nouns, pronouns, numbers, adverbs and the non-defining gerund.

Me t'u futur brenda, u tmerrua. He was terrified *by* getting in.

The preposition *në* is used to show place mainly before concrete nouns.

Do te shkoj *në* Sarandë. I shall go *to* Sarandë

The preposition *mbi* is used to show the place on which something exists or an action happens.

Po hekuroste *mbi* tavolinë. She was ironing *on* the table.

The preposition *para* is used to show a place, time, limit or comparison.

U përgjigj *para* meje. He replied *in front of* me.

Prepositional clusters like *përpara shtëpisë/in front of the house, me lopatë /with a spade*, are preceded by the prepositions *përpara* and *me*, and are called prepositional nominal clusters or simply prepositional clusters. They can be omitted from the sentence without changing its meaning.

Të gjithë rrinin të qetë *përpara* mësueses së tyre. If we leave out *përpara mësueses së tyre*, the sentence is again meaningful. Të gjithë rrinin të qetë.

- All of them stood calm *in front of their* teacher. All of them stood calm.
- Ata vazhdonin të punonin *me* lopatë. They continued digging *with* a spade.
- Ata vazhdonin të punonin. They continued digging. (no change in meaning)

The object nominal cluster can be preceded by the prepositions: *nga* (from), *te* (at), *tek* (at), *bashkë me* (together with), *pa* (without), *mbi* (on), *në* (in), *nëpërmjet* (through/by/via), *kundër* (contrary to) etc. In this case the verbal cluster is formed by a verb followed by an indirect nominal object with a preposition, e.g;

Besa shkoi atje *bashkë me vëllanë e vet*. (Besa went there *together with (along with) her brother*).

Some verbs can be followed by a first nominal indirect object and a second nominal indirect object with a preposition *nga* (from), *te* (at), *tek* (at), *për* (for), *bashkë me* (together with), *pa* (without), *mbi* (on), *në* (in), *nëpërmjet* (through/by/via), *kundër* (contrary to) etc).

Adela bleu një libër të ri *për* vëllain e vet. Adela bought a new book *for* her brother.

The verbal cluster is formed by a verb and an adverb or prepositional nominal cluster acting as an adjunct, e.g;

Treni u nis *në zonat malore*. The train pulled away *to mountainous areas*.

The prepositional cluster is formed by a simple or extended nominal cluster preceded by a preposition, e.g; Studentet manifestuan *nëpër rrugët e qytetit*.

(The students marched *through the streets of the town*.)

A simple demonstrative sentence is composed of a subject nominal cluster (formed by a noun, a pronoun, or noun and a determiner) and a verbal cluster. Optionally we can add a prepositional cluster.

Fëmijët po luanin *me top mbi* barin e gjelbër. The children were playing *with* a ball *on* the green grass.

The subject verb in active form (Petriti) becomes prepositional object of the verb in passive, preceded by the prepositions, *nga* (from), *prej* (from,by)/ (*nga* Petriti, *prej* Petrit)..

The prepositional indirect object is a nominal cluster (noun or pronoun/ noun and determiner) in nominative, accusative or ablative, always preceded by a preposition, e.g

Ju e fituat ndeshjen *me* lojën tuaj. You won the match *with* your play.

The prepositional indirect object simply completes the meaning of the verb, but it is not a main complement because the verb in the sentence can be used devoid of it, e.g

Ju e fituat ndeshjen. You won the match.

The main prepositions the prepositional indirect object relates to, are; *nga* (from), *te* (at), *tek* (at), *me* (with), *për* (for), *pa* (without), *mbi* (on/over), *në* (in), *nën* (under/below), *nepermjet* (by, via, through), *ndaj* (against), *para* (in front of/before), *perpara* (in front of/before), *rreth* (around/about), *pas* (after/behind) etc.

The prepositional indirect object formed by a noun or a noun and determiner can be replaced by a pronoun:

Ate nate unë po rrija *me Benin*, po bisedoja *me të*. I was staying *with Ben* that night, talking *to him*.

The demonstrative sentence with an indirect prepositional object can be turned into an interrogative one:

Po bisedoja *me Artanin*. Whom/who *were you talking to*?

The prepositional indirect object discerns from the other two objects because it is always formed by a preposition. In its form, it looks exactly like an adjunct, but for the prepositional indirect object we use the question with a prepositional pronoun:

Edlira shkoi *me të motrën*. (Me ke? Me të motrën). Edlira left *with her sister*. (Whom/ Who with? With her sister).

The adjunct is formed by a prepositional nominal cluster.

Bora fillon *nga fundi i dhjetorit*. Snow starts *by the end of* December.

The adjunct nominal cluster of place is often formed by a preposition; these prepositions show movement or place.

- Qëndroj *në* zyrë. Stay *in* the office.
- Hyj *në* zyrë. Get *in* the office.

Prepositions like; *nga*, *që*, *prej* show the origin or the starting point of something;

Ky avion vjen *nga* Londra. This plane comes *from* London.

Adjunct of time - with a prepositional nominal cluster;

Festivali u zhvillua *para një* muaji. The festival took place a month ago.

The continuity of an action can be shown with the help of a prepositional nominal cluster.

Punuam *gjate* gjithë dites. We worked all day *long*.

Adjunct of cause - with the help of a noun /or of a noun and a prepositional complement.

Me kishte ikur gjumi *nga gëzimi*. I was dead awake *of joy*.

Adjunct of purpose - The purpose is denoted by the help of a noun or of a prepositional nominal cluster:

Kemi shkuar jashtë për punë. We went abroad *to work* (for occupation).

The reasonable relationships denoted by the prepositional nominal *për*, subordinate of a verb showing movements are interlaced with object ones, e.g

Shkoj për gjah/të gjuaj. Go hunting/ Go to hunt

SYNTACTIC USE OF PREPOSITIONS IN ENGLISH

The syntax of English preposition can be studied on two levels - phrase level and clause level. The basic unit of phrase level is prepositional phrase. Prepositional phrase consists of a preposition which functions as a head governing the phrase, plus prepositional complement. Throughout the history of their development, English prepositions typically came before a noun. The noun does not necessarily come immediately after the preposition, since determiners and adjectives could intervene. Other possible complements were pronoun, adverb (usually followed by a preposition), adverbial (including prepositional phrases) or rarely a clause.

Prepositions occur in the following three main syntactic situations:

- as heads of prepositional phrases
- as an element in verbal compounds (e.g. turn out, give up, etc), where they largely contribute to the semantics of the expression.
- some prepositions function as case markers
- as a 'connector' in nominal compounds
- introducing small clauses.
- preposition may be incorporated to climb (up) versus to climb down, where down is obligatory whereas up may be incorporated into the verb.)

AS HEADS OF PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

Prepositional phrases are phrases with a preposition functioning as the head of the phrase plus a prepositional complement. Prepositional phrases perform the grammatical function of prepositional complement within prepositional phrases, e.g.

- around | in the cupboard
- on | inside the boardroom
- at | behind the refrigerator

Prepositional phrases also most frequently appear as prepositional complements within prepositional phrases functioning as verb phrase complements of prepositional verbs.

PREPOSITIONS AS AN ELEMENT IN VERBAL COMPOUNDS

Verbal compounds are predictable and compositional in meaning and extremely productive.

- The result turned out to be entirely different from what they had imagined.
- It was unbelievable how he gave up at the last minute.

PREPOSITIONS FUNCTIONING AS CASE MARKERS

Functionally, case markers relate the noun to the rest of the sentence. The following table shows the forms of case markers.

Case Marker Name (Abbrev) Rough English Equivalent(s)

	absolutive	(none)
	ergative	(none)
i, e	genitive	<i>of</i>
për në, për	dative	<i>to, for</i>
tek, në, mbi	locative	<i>at, in, on</i>
nga, pa, me	ablative	<i>from, out of, with</i>
me	comitative	<i>With</i>

- The streets *of* New York are too difficult to hang around.
- Everything looked very easy *to* him.
- Police officers were *in* the surrounding place.

- Nothing could be done *out of him*.
- He had decided to go with him to the town.

PREPOSITIONS AS A CONNECTOR IN NOMINAL COMPOUNDS

Prepositions function as connectors, relating one word to another within a sentence. They allow a speaker or writer to express the link between separate items. Prepositions can convey information about location, time, or direction or provide details. A preposition relates the noun or pronoun following it to another word in the sentence, e.g.

- The duck floated on the surface of the pond.
- The dog ran across the yard and hid between the bushes.

In the first example, the duck floated where? (on the surface) It was the surface of what? (the pond) In the second example, the dog ran where? (across the yard) The dog hid where? (between the bushes)

INTRODUCING SMALL CLAUSES

The earliest use of the term ‘small clause’ is in Williams (1975), who uses the term in reference to reduced relatives, adverbial modifier phrases, and gerundive phrases, like these:

- The man [driving the bus] is Norton’s best friend.
- John decided to leave, [thinking the party was over] .
- [John’s evading his taxes] infuriates me.

However, not all linguists do consider these to be small clauses according to the term's modern definition. William introduced the concept of Predication and proposed that the NP and XP's relationship is based on co-indexation, which is made possible by c-command. Williams also believed that the [NP XP] small clause does not form a constituent.

PREPOSITION AS INCORPORATED

The key insight of preposition incorporation, a notion introduced by Gruber (1965), is that in some cases a sentence is interpreted as if it contains a preposition, even though the preposition does not appear overtly. For instance, in the following sentences the verb *climb* appears with a variety of prepositions, e.g.

- William climbed down the ladder.
- William climbed up the mountain.
- William climbed into the tent.
- William climbed along the grass.

It can also appear without a preposition

- William climbed the ladder, etc.

Without a preposition, though, the only interpretation is that William climbed *up* the ladder not *down* it. This is true even though one can say *William climbed down the ladder*, where the preposition *down* is explicitly included. Gruber suggests that the actual preposition *up* is “incorporated” into the verb climb. Although it does not appear overtly, its meaning is nonetheless implicit. It looks simpler to encode the basic relations using ordinary prepositions and to refer to these relations as being the same semantically, even though the preposition does not appear in the sentence.

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