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# AN ATTEMPT AT A LINGUISTIC CHARACTEROLOGY OF PREPOSITIONS IN PRESENT DAY ENGLISH IN COMPARISON WITH CZECH

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A glance at any English text ensures us that prepositions are more frequent in English than in Czech. This fact can easily be expressed numerically by counting how many more prepositions there are in the English text compared with its translation into Czech. However, a more detailed analysis of both languages is necessary if we want to ascertain in which of the two the total number of items in this word category is greater and in which of the two it is smaller. The answer to this question may be found in standard books of reference dealing with the two respective languages. A more numerous stock of prepositions is usually given for English than for Czech. A still more detailed analysis of both languages lies ahead, if we want to know not only the quantity but also the quality of the items constituting this word category, i.e. the semantic side of prepositions, their syntactic functions in the two languages, etc.

The aim of our investigation<sup>1</sup> was to ascertain in which fields of expression of ideas are prepositions more or less frequent in one language than in the other, which of the prepositions are usually met with, what are their semantic aspects, and—last but not least—in what syntactic functions prepositions are usually used in one or both languages. The facts given in standard grammars and books of reference, as well as our own excerpts, served as a basis for the present investigation. In order to obtain necessary materials for the excerpts, two works of fiction and their respective translations were used. Taking into consideration the extent of the linguistic area to be examined, no texts of a specialized, technical character were used, though the differences between the two languages may, even here, be rather great, if not greater than in the language of fiction.

The British author chosen for the present inquiry was Graham Greene with his novel "The Quiet American" (translated into Czech by Jiří Valja under the title „Tichý Američan“). The Czech author was Jan Otčenášek and his book „Romeo, Julie a tma“ (translated into English by Iris Urwin

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<sup>1</sup> The present paper is based on the author's doctoral thesis "Lingvistická charakteristika předložek v angličtině ve srovnání s češtinou" [A Linguistic Characterology of English Prepositions Based on a Comparison with Czech], 1972, Olomouc—Brno.

as "Romeo and Juliet and the Darkness"). Both works are of approximately the same character, both written and published in the same decade ("The Quiet American" in 1955; „Romeo, Julie a tma“ in 1958) and reflecting the present-day spoken as well as narrative style of language and its usage within the field of the word category to be examined.<sup>2</sup>

However, choosing the material for the intended investigation, we were obliged to take into consideration not only the character of the original text but also the way in which both translators used their skill in translating into the other language. With respect to our analysis we preferred to choose works with more or less literal translations, avoiding those translated too freely, in order to obtain linguistic material which would, above all, give evidence of the structure of the respective languages and not of the translator's methods of work.

From each text—English as well as Czech—we used the opening chapters: the sections containing 1,000 prepositions and their translations into the other language. From the comparison of the total numbers of prepositions occurring in the original versions and their translations, the following conclusions may be drawn:

- (i) The total of 1,000 Czech prepositions occurring in the text Ot (Otčenášek) corresponds to that of 1,478 English prepositions in the translated version.
- (ii) The total of 1,000 English prepositions occurring in the text Gr (Greene) corresponds to that of 847 Czech prepositions in the translated version.

From the above numerical data an occurrence co-efficient of prepositions may be drawn equalling 1.3 for the given English linguistic material if the basic value of 1.0 is taken for the Czech version of the text.

I. Let us now take note of the use of prepositions in adverbial modifiers, because it is in them that prepositions are found most frequently in English as well as in Czech. Nevertheless, some differences characteristic of the two languages may be traced when the use of prepositions in this sphere of language is examined.

(a) In expressing adverbial modifiers of time, English has recourse to a wider range of prepositions for a more precise differentiation of various notions of time (cf. the English prepositions AT, ON, IN—in contrast to the one Czech preposition *v/ve* in common phrases denoting time, days of the week, etc.). Apart from this, Czech uses prepositions in this type of adverbial modification less often because of the existence of some simple cases used rather frequently for expressing the time of an action given by the verb. Cf., e.g., the use of the so-called genitive of time in the Czech phrase *jednoho krásného dne* [= of-one of-fine of-day] with the English prepositional phrase *on a fine day*. However, the Czech genitive of time is sometimes considered to be obsolete, and for this reason is replaced by a prepositional phrase in everyday spoken Czech. Cf.: *druhého dne* [= of-the-second of-day] → *na druhý den* (= on the following day).

<sup>2</sup> For the English text of Graham Greene's book "The Quiet American" we made use of the 3rd edition of the Higher School Publishing House, Moscow 1968; the Czech translation „Tichý Američan“ published by Mladá fronta, Prague 1957. For the Czech text of Jan Otčenášek's book "Romeo, Julie a tma" we made use of the 3rd edition of Československý spisovatel, Prague 1960; the English translation "Romeo and Juliet and the Darkness" published by Československý spisovatel — Artia, Prague 1960.

It is interesting to note that even in English, when expressing adverbial modifiers of time, some forms of the old genitive can be used. It may be either a synthetic genitive, signalled by the old genitive ending -s (*nowadays*), or an analytic form containing the preposition OF /cf., e.g., *of rainy afternoons we like to sit on the porch*, or idiomatic phrases of adverbial character, such as *of late, of late years*, etc./ (Curme 1965.143).

Besides the genitive of time, Czech often uses the accusative of time, e.g. *tuto sobotu, minulou neděli*, etc., corresponding to English non-prepositional phrases of the type *this Saturday, last Sunday*, etc.

To sum up, Czech makes more use of grammatical means for expressing temporal circumstances of the action expressed by the verb than English, which—on the other hand—uses a wider choice of prepositions for expressing various aspects of the conception of time.

(b) Likewise, in expressing adverbial modifiers of place English displays its ability to differentiate more precisely various notions of place by means of a wider choice of prepositions. Even the notions of duality and plurality are differentiated here with the help of the two prepositions BETWEEN and AMONG, which have no counterparts in Czech. The English language, on the other hand, is far from consistent in prepositionally differentiating the stationary from the motional aspect of place specification. In making this distinction, Czech again has recourse to its synthetic case forms, using them not as simple cases, but in pairs of prepositional phrases. One specific case functions in phrases expressing the place of an action or the position of an object (in answer to the question *Where?*), another in phrases expressing the direction of an action or movement (in answer to the question *Where to?*). The preposition opening the phrase is the same.

Cf.: *pod stolem* (under the table—*Where?*) — *pod stůl* (under the table—*Where to?*).

English, being an uninflected language, either uses the same preposition or differentiates the two concepts by means of two allied prepositions (cf.: *na stole* — *on the table*; *na stůl* — *onto the table*, etc.) without having recourse to any specific case endings.

(c) In expressing adverbial modifiers of cause, reason and purpose it is the Czech language, on the other hand, that makes use of a greater number of prepositions than English (cf.: FOR — *z, ze, kvůli, pro, za, na*, etc.). In Czech the above-mentioned kind of modifying circumstances may often be expressed with the help of a conjunction introducing a hypotactic construction, whereas English frequently replaces the clause, reducing it to a condensing gerundial construction with the preposition FOR preceding it. Typical of both the English and Czech ways of expression are the following examples:

Pyle was apologising... for having kept her waiting.—Gr 59.5

Pyle se omlouval..., že ji nechal čekat.—Gr 33.33

[Pyle (refl. pron.) he-was-apologising..., that her he-kept to-wait].<sup>3</sup>

(d) In expressing adverbial modifiers of manner (of the instrument or the means of action), English and Czech display the following differences in the usage of prepositions: English, to a higher degree than Czech, uses different prepositions, whereas Czech makes use of non-prepositional means of expression,

<sup>3</sup> For the benefit of the readers who may not be familiar with Czech, literal translations of the Czech examples are added.

especially of some adverbial suffixes or of simple cases, e.g., the instrumental of manner.

- Cf.: (i) with embarrassment — rozpačitě,  
with serious courtesy — vážně a zdvořile,  
with sarcasm — sarkasticky, etc.,  
or: (ii) She must have loved him in her way... — Gr 34.29  
Jistě ho svým způsobem milovala... — Gr 14.38  
[Certainly him in-her-own way she-loved].

Typical of English is the use of a prepositional adverbial phrase in contrast to the Czech simple (i.e. non-prepositional) instrumental of manner, as seen in the following example:

- ...he said in a tone of reproach. — Gr 50.11  
...řekl vyčítavým hlasem. — Gr 26.35  
[he-said in-reproachful voice (instr. sg.)].

An English phrase containing two prepositions corresponds to a Czech instrumental phrase having no preposition at all. The adduced example illustrates the predominance of prepositions in English adverbial modifiers. All this, however, does not mean that the English language has no other means of expressing the adverbial modifier of manner. Suffix derivation may also be used.

- Cf., e.g.: bez lítosti (= without pity) — pitilessly,  
bez hlesu (= without a word) — silently, etc.

These latter cases are in sharp contrast with the former ones, but were found to be far less frequent in the analyzed texts.

A similarity between English and Czech in expressing adverbial modifiers of manner and attendant circumstances is revealed by the use of the preposition WITH and its counterpart *s/se*. Typical of this may be the following example:

- ...I watched them with nostalgia... — Gr 33.31  
...pozoroval jsem je se steskem... — Gr 14.7  
[I-watched (aux. v.) them with nostalgia].

Moreover, the English preposition WITH helps to form that type of the adverbial modifier which enters into the predicative part of the sentence as a complex prepositional participial phrase. This cannot be found in Czech, which usually makes use of a hypotactic construction containing a finite verb form.

- Cf.: ...krabici..., do níž slunce zpola nalévá žár. Ot 43.12  
[box..., into which sun half pours brightness.]  
...a box..., with the sun pouring its brightness into it. — Ot 51.7

A similar case is the English preposition WITHOUT introducing a condensing gerundial construction. A hypotactic construction is its Czech counterpart.

- Cf.: ...it could take such decisions easily without losing sight of the main question... — Gr 30.14  
...mohu lehce učinit taková rozhodnutí, aniž ztratím s očí hlavní otázku... — Gr 12.10  
[I-can easily to-make such decisions, without I-shall-lose from eyes main question.]

It should be emphasized in this connection that it is the preposition that often helps to form a condensing construction so typical of New-English sentence structure. The prepositional gerund, an important device of present-

day usage, helps to express what in Czech is usually conveyed by adverbial clauses of time, place, cause, purpose, result, condition, concession, etc. These types of Czech adverbial clauses are naturally introduced by their specific conjunctions, and not by prepositions as is the case in English.

(e) In expressing adverbial modifiers of respect various prepositions are used both in English and Czech, prepositional constructions prevailing in both languages.

Cf.: My accent's good enough for one... — Gr 48.14  
Můj přízvuk je dost dobrý pro takového... — Gr 25.15  
[My accent is enough good for such...]

The above kind of adverbial modifier sometimes stands very near to the object complementation of the predicative verb. Such complementation has become fully developed especially in present-day Czech, where it takes on the form of the so-called dative of respect, i.e. a simple, non-prepositional case with a specific ending and meaning. This, as a rule, has no equivalent in English, where the same relation is usually expressed by a possessive pronoun.

Cf.: Dal mi knihu na stůl.  
[He gave to-me book on table.]  
He put the book on my table.

and many other instances of the kind in the standard books of reference.

If some adverbial modifiers stand near to the object complementation of the verb, English makes frequent use of the grammaticized preposition TO, especially with certain groups of verbs. (Poldauf 1958.131). Its occurrence considerably contributes to the increase of the total of prepositions in any English text.

Let us now return to the functions of the preposition FOR in expressing adverbial modifiers of respect. This preposition is of wider use and broader meaning than other prepositions performing the same function, because it helps to form the infinitive constructions in which the object of the action seems to be affected by the above kind of adverbial modifying; the subjects in the main clause and in the dependent clause are not the same.

Another function of the preposition FOR consists in its making possible the use of the accusative with infinitive constructions after phrases expressing possibility, impossibility, necessity, etc., where it stands before the so-called inner subject of the infinitival phrase.

Cf.: It is impossible for me to wait here any longer.  
It is necessary for her to go to the doctor's.

FOR performs the same function after verbs whose object complementation it usually introduces (*to wait for...*, *to prepare for...*, etc.).

Cf.: I waited for him to finish his breakfast.

In those sentences in which the subjects of the main and the subordinate clauses are not identical, the preposition FOR helps to shorten the subordinate clause, which usually expresses the purpose of the predication of the main clause. The noun phrase standing after the preposition FOR is the subject of the subordinate clause and, at the same time, the indirect object of the predicative verb of the main clause. Here again the preposition FOR participates in

forming the condensing constructions which are so characteristic of modern English.

Cf.: She brought some books for me to read during my illness.

From the above-mentioned syntactic functions of the preposition FOR, we can draw some general conclusions concerning the use of prepositions in English. In Czech hardly any preposition can be found similar in meaning and functions to the English preposition FOR. Czech often has recourse to a hypotactic clausal form of expressing ideas, i.e. to a subordinate clause containing a finite verb and naturally by a conjunction, not by a preposition.

The use of the preposition FOR is spreading in contemporary English beyond the extent indicated in the preceding paragraphs. In British English, the use of the preposition FOR in constructions of the object with the infinitive is considered to be improper unless it is fostered by:

(i) the preceding construction of the following type: *it is impossible, it is necessary, etc.*;

(ii) the preceding verb necessarily demanding an object complementation with FOR (*to wait for..., to long for..., to prepare for..., etc.*).

From the above two types, the preposition has been spreading to other sentence constructions, for which the reasons (i) and (ii) do not hold. This process may be influenced by the American English usage, where the constructions with FOR considered to be unacceptable in British English are quite common and are therefore to be found among the basic sentence patterns in grammar books of standard American English. (Stockwell-Bowen-Martin 1966). No preposition of such broad applicability can be found in Czech.

(f) Very close to the conception of respect or interest is the use of the preposition FOR in what is denoted by some English grammarians as the "ethical dative". (Curme 1965.136). In Czech it is a simple, non-prepositional case called the dative of emotion by Czech grammarians (Trávníček 1951.1233).

Cf., e.g.: There's a fine fellow for you.  
To je ti prima chlap.  
[That is to-you fine fellow.]

Even in such specific cases English has recourse to the prepositions, whereas Czech makes use of the pronominal inflexion.

(g) In the sphere of adverbial modifiers of condition and concession, an English phrase introduced by a preposition is usually in sharp contrast with a Czech counterpart hypotactically attached to the main clause by means of a conjunction.

To sum up, we can say that English, when expressing different kinds of adverbial modification, has recourse to prepositional usage far more often than Czech. Besides this, English displays the tendency not to deprive the preposition of its 'part of speech' status within complex adverbial collocations. In Czech, on the other hand, the preposition forms a closer unit with the following nominal (or adverbial) part and tends to merge with it into a one-word adverbial expression.

Cf., e.g.: on the whole — vcelku, for good — nadobro,  
all of a sudden — najednou, etc.

The same tendency to retain the 'part of speech' status is shown by English prepositions in adverbial expressions of numerical character.

Cf.: for the first time — poprvé, etc.

Even in this sphere of language, English displays a more general tendency to form analytical expressions and to avoid forming synthetic, descriptive types of denomination. Czech, on the other hand, displays the tendency to form one-word adverbial expressions. The preposition loses its 'part of speech' status and coalesces with the following noun (adverb). Here again we can trace a closer relation of the Czech preposition to the nominal element standing after it.

II. A considerably wide application is characteristic of the English preposition OF, performing the grammatical functions that are reserved to various kinds of the Czech genitive: genitive of object (in reply to the questions: *Of whom?*, *Of what?*), or possessive genitive (in reply to: *Whose?*), or even nominative (in reply to: *Who? What?*). The Czech genitive forms are again simple, non-prepositional forms of the case. In the analyzed materials we found the English preposition OF to express the meaning of the Czech genitive of matter (*the small paste of opium*), genitive of quantity (*two rows of books*), genitive of the total (*the keys of my typewriter*), genitive of quality (*a man of middle age*), possessive genitive (*the daughter of a mandarin*), genitive of subject (*the drone of the planes*), genitive of object (*he was a student of Wordsworth*), genitive of contents (*a book of chess problems*), genitive of explication as well a nominative of denomination (*the title of reporter; the city of Prague*), etc.

Sometimes the abundance of functions performed by the Czech genitive results in ambiguity or vagueness.

Cf., e.g.: *týránti vojáků* (Kopečný 1958.188) — which means in Czech either:

(i) bullying of the soldiers by somebody (genitive of object);

or: (ii) bullying by the soldiers of somebody (genitive of subject).

The English way of expressing the idea is usually less ambiguous, thanks to the use of different prepositions in both nominal phrases. Even in English, however, similar ambiguous phrases can be found, especially when using the old genitive ending 's, re-evaluated in present-day English into a kind of possessive suffix. The well-known example *God's love* may be interpreted as:

(i) God loves somebody;

or as: (ii) somebody loves God.

The use of the preposition OF standing after deverbative nouns may result in some vague, ambiguous nominal phrases. Let us compare, e.g., the following Gr example, in which the deverbative substantive *thought* is derived from the verb *to think of sb., sth.*, with two examples of the use of the same phrase, taken from standard dictionaries of the English language.

Cf.: ...the long private thought of somebody who has to alter... — Gr 38.29

...dlouhé, niterné zamyšlení někoho, kdo musí změnit... — Gr 17.39

[long, private thought of-somebody (gen. sg.), who has to-alter];

and: I had no thought of offending him. (C. O. D.)

You must give up all thought of marrying Tom. (Hornby: A. L. D.)

As far as the first sentence is concerned, the comparison of the English wording with its Czech translation does not leave us in the dark as to the correct interpretation of the idea expressed by the English text: the subjective meaning of



the prepositional phrase of *somebody* is quite evident, though in some cases the objective interpretation of the same phrase or similar prepositional phrases might also be quite possible. In the latter two examples this is undoubtedly true. The objective or subjective meaning of the phrase *thought OF* cannot be understood from its isolated use, but from the context in which it occurs. This again confirms what has been said about the indefiniteness of an isolated word (grammatical form) in English as contrasted with Czech (Mathesius, ed. Vachek 1961.227). This indefiniteness of an isolated word in present-day English holds good so much the more with the preposition OF, for it is the most grammaticized preposition in English, displaying the widest application in expressing various grammatical relations. It is the most frequent of all English prepositions.

The preposition OF is much used not only in standard English, but also in different collocations and idiomatic phrases of substandard British and American English.

Cf.: *the beast of a woman; the duck of a hat; etc.*

They are typical of this kind of English, but scarcely have counterparts in Czech.

III. Moreover, the English preposition OF helps to form a great part of the so-called group-prepositions (Whitehall 1951.62—3), in which it usually stands at the end.

E.g.: *in front of; by means of; on top of; by way of; etc.*

In some cases the noun preceding the preposition OF fuses with the first preposition into an adverbial expression or a quite new preposition; as a result the preposition OF is omitted.

Cf.: *inside (of); outside (of); on board (of); etc.*

In most cases, however, the first preposition retains its independent character at least from the formal point of view, since it is not written together with the following noun. In that case the preposition OF is not omitted. If we compare the situation in English with that in Czech we find similar group-prepositions in the latter; they are, however, not so numerous. The close connection of the first preposition with the following noun often gives rise to a quite new preposition; the case of the noun standing after this new preposition may be changed (cf.: *k vůli někoho* → *kvůli někomu*, i.e. genitive was changed to dative).

IV. Apart from the preposition OF, some other English prepositions participate in forming group-prepositions, e.g. TO, WITH, FOR. The process of forming them is a productive one in present-day English and is connected with the tendency to use a nominal predicative complex instead of a purely verbal predicate.

Cf., e.g., the following example taken from a British daily:

...the same fate lies in wait for over a million private tenants...

The prepositional phrase *in wait for* is a substitute for *waiting for* or *ahead of*. The ability of English to form such a prepositional phrase is, of course, due to the ease with which it can convert the verb *to wait* into a substantive. This, however, is not possible in Czech; prepositional groups of the above kind are therefore not met with there. The preposition TO usually forms a group-preposition containing the verb-forms in *-ing*; e.g., *according to, owing to,*

etc. In Czech it is only exceptionally that a verb-form functions as a preposition.

V. One characteristic feature of simple English prepositions, different from Czech, consists in their ability to stand at the end of interrogative sentences and relative clauses in everyday English. Prepositions standing at the beginning are shifted to the end of the sentence, after the simple (verbal) or compound (nominal) predicate.

E.g.: What are they talking about?

I wondered what they talked about.

The car you are talking about has been sold.

In these cases we can see a closer link connecting English prepositions with the verbs and their looser dependence upon the nominal elements of an English sentence, especially the pronouns. In Czech, on the other hand, we can hardly find any shifting of prepositions in the above-mentioned types of sentences. Here an opposite tendency may be established: the preposition tends as closely as possible to be connected or even to fuse with the nominal, chiefly pronominal, parts of a sentence.

Cf.: (i) *proč* (< *pro co*), *zač*, *oč*, *nač*, etc. — in these cases the preposition, standing first, becomes amalgamated with a shortened form of the interrogative or relative pronoun;

(ii) *proh* (< *pro něj*, *pro něho*), *zaň*, *oň*, etc. — the preposition, standing again first, becomes amalgamated with a shortened form of the personal pronoun.

The close relation of Czech prepositions to the nominal parts of the sentence is corroborated by the fact that special forms of relative pronouns are still used after a preposition in standard Czech besides those which are used in colloquial language (e.g.: *s níž* / *s kterou*; *s nimiž* / *s kterými*, etc.). The history of the Czech language gives evidence of the one-time still closer relation of personal as well as relative pronouns to prepositions. It is a well-known fact that, e.g., the prepositional term *s ní* [= with her] goes back to the original *s n—jí*, the preposition *s n* being cognate with Latin *cum*. Through analogy the initial *n*-spread to other pronominal forms, being used later on even after those prepositions which did not end in *-n* (e.g., *o ní*).

From the latter as well as preceding examples we can infer that Czech prepositions are more closely connected with nominal, English prepositions with verbal parts of the sentence.

In English we can even observe the ability of prepositions to introduce whole clauses, especially the relative ones (Vachek 1961.20). In Czech we do not come across such cases. This fact may be illustrated by two examples taken from our texts.

Cf.: ...a pýcha nad vlastním činem. — Ot 31.21

[and pride at his-own deed.]

...and a pride at what he had done. — Ot 35.13

or: She was still unaware of what it was about... — Gr 37.19

Dosud si nebyla vědoma, co se to vlastně děje... — Gr 16.40

[Still (refl. pron.) she-was-not aware, what (refl. pron.) it really it-happens...].

In most cases Czech prefers using hypotactic constructions, i.e. dependent clauses, the meaning being expressed in a more expanded way. English, on the other hand, prefers condensed ways of formulating ideas. English prepositions come to our assistance in that they form a link between the main part of the sentence and the complementation of one of its members. Let us quote another

example from Gr with a preposition standing before a dependent clause:

...he had an enormous respect for what he called serious writers. — Gr 40.22  
...má nesmírnou úctu k autorům, které nazýval vážnými spisovateli. — Gr 19.15  
[he-has enormous respect to authors (dat. pl.), which he-called serious authors (instr. pl.).]

In the Czech rendering, the attribute to the noun form *autorům* (= to-authors, nom. sg. *autor*) is expressed by means of a dependent clause, in which the notion conveyed by *autor* is repeated by the synonymous *spisovatel*. Czech is necessarily pleonastic here. In English, on the other hand, the preposition FOR acts as a link closely connecting the attributive complementation of the noun in the phrase *to have a respect* with the rest of the sentence. The English way is more economic, elliptical (instead of the expanded: \*...for the writers that he called serious writers).

Another peculiarity of English, without a counterpart in Czech, is a preposition at the end of a sentence segment, before a comma, after which follows a co-ordinate segment with another preposition before another comma, the complementation of both the prepositions occurring after the second comma.

Cf.: Nannies are sensitive to, and intolerant of, misdirected generosity. (Scheurweghs 1959.89)

This way of expression cannot be found in Czech. In order to avoid an anacoluthon, the Czech speaker must repeat the complement at least in the form of a pronoun, again using a more expanded, pleonastic wording: ...*jsou citlivé na... a nesnášejí ji* [= *are sensitive to generosity and do not tolerate it*]. The possibility of English to use prepositions at the ends of such segments bears further evidence of the fact that English prepositions are more closely connected with the predicative parts of the sentence than with the complement proper of the preposition concerned.

VI. In contradistinction to other prepositional complementations of the predicate, English makes use of the preposition BY mainly in passive constructions, in the so-called passive predication. Other forms of prepositional complementations may occur both in the active and passive constructions, whereas the complementation with BY is possible in passive constructions only. The second most common English preposition occurring in passive constructions is the preposition WITH, helping to express the instrument of the action. Because of its more general meaning, it may, however, be found also in active constructions. The complementation with the preposition BY represents a specific kind of prepositional complementation in English, which has no counterpart in Czech. Here the agent is usually expressed in an active sentence. In passive sentences it may also be expressed by means of special morpho-syntactic means (the so-called instrumental of the agent), but this is a rather bookish way of wording. In everyday spoken Czech the active, non-prepositional construction is given preference.

The English preposition BY of a passive construction makes it possible to keep the same subject throughout a compound sentence (Mathesius 1960.26—8).

Cf. the following example:

He knew little and was prompted by some.  
Věděl málo a někteří mu napovídali.  
[He-knew little and some to-him prompted.]

But this is not all. The passive construction with BY frequently facilitates a better organization of the degrees of communicative dynamism throughout the sentence from the point of view of functional sentence perspective. This is borne out by the following example, drawn from Gr. It contains five clauses, all of which share one subject "they", expressed by the first clause and functioning as a common theme proper. The BY-phrase of the second clause preserves the consistency with which each clause puts the element carrying the highest degree of communicative dynamism in end-position.

Cf.: ...they would be summoned to Hanoi..., addressed by the Commander-in-Chief, lodged for one night in a Press Camp..., flown over to the late battlefield... and then delivered safely and noisily back... to the Continental Hotel in Saigon. — Gr 39.17

In the corresponding Czech translation we can find four different subjects, the theme proper of the communication being referred to by pronominal expressions in various cases (*je, k nim, s nimi*) or morphological means (*byl-i ubytován-i, dopraven-i*).

Cf.: ...povolali je do Hanoje, vrchní velitel měl k nim projev..., byli na jednu noc ubytováni v tiskovém táboře, letadlo s nimi přelétlo... bývalé bojiště a pak byli bezpečně a s rámušem dopraveni... do hotelu Continental v Saigonu. — Gr 18.19 [They-summoned them (acc. pl.) to Hanoi, chief commander he-had to them (dat. pl.) address (subst.)..., they-were for one night lodged in press (adj.) camp, plane with them (instr. pl.) over-flew... late battlefield and then they-were safely and with noise delivered... to hotel Continental in Saigon.]

Let us mention one more item of interest which results from the difference between the English prepositional and the Czech inflexional way of expressing case relations: the homonymy of some Czech case endings, especially in the accusative and instrumental sg. fem., may result in a lower degree of semantic, as well as grammatical, expressiveness of the Czech text. In English, on the other hand, prepositions often help to make the text more clear.

Cf., e.g., the following example from Gr:

...as I had seen her first, dancing..., eighteen years old, watched by an elder sister. — Gr 59.14

...jak jsem ji viděl po prvé tančící..., osmnáctiletou, střezanou starší sestrou... — Gr 34.2

[as I-am (aux. v.) her (acc. sg.) saw for first dancing..., eighteen-year-old (adj. in acc. sg. fem.), watched (acc. sg. fem.) by-elder (instr. sg.) sister (instr. sg. fem.).]

As we can see from the preceding cases, the meanings conveyed by the English preposition BY are expressed in Czech by the various shades of meaning of a non-prepositional case — the instrumental of the means or that of the agent of action, the instrumental of the cause of an action, etc.

VII. English prepositions are much used in different kinds of active predication.

(a) In predications formed by the semantically most-weakened verb *to be* and one of the following items:

(i) an idiomatic collocation functioning as a predicative adjective, e.g., *to be out-of-date*;

(ii) a combination of a preposition with a stabilized noun, e.g., *to be in a hurry*;

(iii) a combination of a preposition with a non-stabilized noun, e.g., *to be after sb.*;

(iv) an adverb followed by a prepositional nominal expression, e.g., *to be down on sb.*;

(v) a prepositional phrase completing the predicative construction and followed by another prepositional phrase functioning as an object complementation of the construction, e.g., *to be in love with sb.*;

(vi) a deverbative adjective followed by a preposition introducing an object complementation of the adjective, e.g., *to be hopeful of, to be conducive to*; these cases are characteristic of present-day English, no analogous expressions existing in Czech.

As usual, Czech has recourse to more verbal ways of expressing the predicate of the sentence. Therefore prepositions are less frequent here than in English. (Cf.: *to be in love* — *být zamilován* [= to-be in-loved]; etc.)

(b) In a predication formed by the semantically weakened verb *to have* plus a complement, the functional load of prepositions is approximately the same in both languages. English, moreover, makes use of prepositions when the nominal part of a verbo-nominal predication is to be completed by an objective, adverbial or attributive complement. Here again English prepositions turn out to be a very important linking element of sentence structure. As for Czech it uses not only prepositions, but also simple cases (cf. *to have a respect for sb.* — *vážít si koho, koho* representing a simple genitive construction), or it has recourse to hypotactic means, i.e. conjunctions introducing dependent clauses.

(c) When expressing complementation of verbs with a reduced degree of predication, English makes use of prepositions more often than Czech, such verbs being more numerous and more frequently used in the former language than in the latter. Further complementation of the nominal element of the predication, coming after the verbo-nominal predicative phrases, is often joined by the grammaticized preposition *OF*, or occasionally even by other English prepositions (*TO*, etc.). A preposition after such a construction is usually indispensable.

Cf., e.g.: *to lay the foundations of sth.—to found sth.*;  
*to make approach to sth.—to approach sth.*; etc.

The use of an analytic predicative construction with a preposition facilitates a better fulfilment of the requirements of the dynamic balance of the English sentence from the point of view of functional sentence perspective. Let us now observe the following example taken from Gr:

...if I could bring the interview to an end... — Gr 35.3  
...když se mi podaří rozhovor skoncovat... — Gr 15.3  
[when (refl. pron.) to-me it-will-succeed interview to-finish].

The use of the extended nominal construction (*to bring sth. to an end*) is of some importance for the functional perspective of the whole sentence. Under the circumstances, the communicatively most important notion is that of ending the interview. This explains why functional sentence perspective, or strictly speaking, the tendency towards the basic distribution of communicative dynamism, favours the use of such a construction in which the semantic content of the predicative part is divided in two so as to make it possible to

shift the most important part of the sentence to the position after the object. In Czech this is made possible by a comparatively freer word order, as the verb *skoncovat* (= to finish sth.), though performing the function of the verbal predicate, can easily stand after the necessary object complementation, i.e. after the noun *rozhovor* (= the interview) and thus serve as rheme proper of the Czech sentence. If we were to use an analogous verbal construction in English (*to finish the interview*), the shift of the verbal predicate to the place after the object would not be possible because of the comparatively rigid word order in English declarative sentences. However, the use of an analytic predicative construction with a preposition makes the following solution possible: the semantically weakened verb *to bring* stands in the function of a formal predicate; then comes the object *the interview*, which is contextually dependent; and the prepositional-nominal complementation of the verbal predicate *to an end*, serving as rheme proper, is shifted in accordance with the tendency towards the basic distribution of communicative dynamism to the end of the sentence.

However, not only prepositional phrases, but also adverbs and postpositive particles standing after the verb and coming very near to prepositions, may become bearers of semantic nuclei. This may lead to the weakening of the communicative value of the English verb from the point of view of semantics as well as functional sentence perspective (Firbas 1959.74).

In English we can find a great deal of prepositional adverbial phrases, forming a complement to the semantically weakened verb in predication. Czech equivalents of these verbal idioms are mostly transitive verbs of full meaning, seldom requiring a specific complement.

Cf.: to put sth. to an end — skončit, skoncovat něco;  
to set sth. on fire — zapálit, podpálit něco;  
to put sb. to flight — zahnat někoho (na útěk); etc.

An important role played by prepositions in the structure of English sentences belongs to the preposition OF. It acts as a link joining semi-nominal and semi-verbal parts of a sentence into a higher unit of complex condensation in which the use of a preposition is indispensable. This is illustrated by the following English sentence, containing a verbo-nominal construction plus the preposition OF, and its adequate Czech translation:

He made a noisy show of pulling out chairs and calling... — Gr 51.17

S okázalým rámušem odstrkoval židle a volal... — Gr 27.24

[With showy noise (instr. sg.) he-was-pushing away chairs and he-was-calling...]

In sharp contrast to Czech, which uses two finite verbs (*odstrkoval, volal*), English makes use of two semi-verbal, semi-nominal forms of the gerund (*pulling out, calling*) and only one finite form (*he made*) of a semantically most weakened verb, which forms a verbo-nominal phrase in connection with a deverbative noun (*show*). An important link, joining this excess of nominal elements of the English sentence into a condensed complex, is provided by the preposition OF. It proves to be inevitable in such a position.

In the Czech rendering we can also find one preposition only, but it performs a much less important syntactic function, occurring at the head of an adverbial modifier of attendant circumstances where it can be easily omitted because the prepositional-nominal phrase (*s okázalým rámušem*) can be substituted for by two simple adverbs (*okázale a hlučně*).

From the above example we can see that a preposition used in an English sentence often stands in a position that is functionally far more important than that of a Czech preposition in an analogous Czech sentence. In their syntactic functions, English prepositions often stand near to conjunctions; this is true mainly of the preposition OF.

(d) An important role is played by English prepositions in introducing the indirect-object complement of the verb. As a rule this role is performed by the frequent and strongly grammaticized preposition TO. If the idea of interest is predominant, the preposition FOR is usually used instead of TO. In both cases, Czech uses non-prepositional ways of expression, viz. a simple dative with various shades of meaning (dative of interest, of purpose, etc.).

(e) In some groups of English verbs of full meaning, we can find a tendency to stabilize prepositions used after some semantically related verbs, especially after the verbs of saying, thinking, sense perception, etc. (e.g., *to look, to gaze*... AT). Such a preposition forms a closer semantic as well as syntactic unit with the verb to which it belongs. In Czech we may observe a similar tendency (*dívat se, zírat*... NA), but the link between the verb and the preposition is much looser.

It is a well-known fact in English that the meaning of some verbs of weakened communicative value is made more precise and clear with the help of prepositions following after them (e.g., *to look* AFTER, FOR, AT...; *to wait* FOR, ON...; etc.). This may be found in Czech only exceptionally. Such an exception are the verbs of lowest communicative value, e.g. the verb *míti* (to have). It may combine with different prepositional-nominal complementations and changes its meaning accordingly:

*měl: na sobě, za sebou, na starosti, něco proti tomu, se na pozoru, etc.*

VIII. A striking difference between English and Czech in the usage of prepositions may be found in connection with the respective predilections of Czech and English for using impersonal and personal constructions. A Czech idiomatic impersonal construction with a general or indefinite subject often contains a prepositional object or adverbial complementation of the verb. In English, on the other hand, where personal constructions with a clear-cut subject are as a rule preferred, prepositional phrases are not found.

- Cf.: ...na tobě je vidět, že jsi... — Ot 42.16  
[on you it-is to-see that you-are]  
...anybody can see you were... — Ot 50.5  
or: ...nic na tom není... — Ot 45.11  
[nothing on it it-is-not]  
...it's nothing... — Ot 54.3  
or: ...došlo na ni... — Ot 25.5  
[it came upon her]  
...it was her turn... — Ot 26.33

In English, we can sometimes find an idiomatic absolute use of a transitive verb occurring without necessary object complementation (Poldauf 1958.140).

- Cf.: It depends. — Přijde na to. [= It-will-come upon it.]  
I must tell him. — Musím mu o tom říci [...about it.]

In Czech, on the other hand, there are some cases of idiomatic absolute use of a preposition without its necessary nominal complementation, as may be seen in the following example taken from Ot.

Cf.: Ale jsou i hlasy proti:... — Ot 48.9

[But they-are even voices against:]

But there's always someone to tell the other side:... — Ot 57.27

IX. Appositions display another difference between the two languages. When using the so-called appositional attribute, English makes use of the preposition OF, whereas Czech has a simple, non-prepositional case, called the nominative of nomination ("nominativ jmenovací") by Czech grammarians.

Cf.: the month of May — měsíc květen;

the city of Brno — město Brno; etc.

Moreover, in expressing an appositional complex, ascribing some quality to a preceding element, English prefers using non-prepositional, asyndetic ways (employing a comma), whereas Czech, expressing the same notional content, usually has recourse to the preposition *s/se* (= with). The Czech phrase, beginning with the preposition, acquires the character of an adverbial modifier of the preceding verb in predication, or an attribute to the preceding noun.

Cf.: Vzpomínala, s prsty sepjatými v klíně... — Ot 42.9.

[She-was-thinking-of-the-past, with fingers laced in lap]

She was thinking of the past, her fingers laced in her lap... — Ot 49.29;

or: I was fond of my pipe: more than two feet of straight bamboo, ivory at either end. — Gr 27.11.

Měl jsem rád svou dýmku: ty více než dvě stopy rovného bambusu s oběma konci ze slonoviny. — Gr 9.38.

[I-liked (aux. v.) my-own pipe: those more than two feet of-straight (gen. sg.) bamboo with both ends of ivory.]

When expressing postpositive substantival attributes, both languages make use of different prepositions. In English it is, above all, the most frequent preposition OF; together with its noun, it corresponds to the Czech simple genitive of quality, etc., or to prepositional noun phrases.

X. (a) When expressing attribution, Czech is obliged to use prepositional noun phrases even in such cases where English can have recourse to the so-called bahuvrihi-adjectives; in Czech this type of compound adjectives is rather rare. The prepositional type of an attribute, called discordant attribute ("neshodný přívlastek") by Czech grammarians, stands as a rule after the noun being modified.

Cf., e.g.: ...those silk-trousered figures... — Gr 42.30

...tyto postavy v hedbávných kalhotách... — Gr 21.6

[those figures in silk (adj.) trousers]

(b) Czech prepositional noun phrases stand as equivalents of English adjectives derived from nouns by means of the suffixes *-less*, *-fold*, etc.

Cf.: ...the soft, hairless skin... — Gr 39.7

...měkkou kůží bez chloupků... — Gr 18.9

[soft skin without hairs];

or: ...tu krátkou pout bez cíle, beze smyslu? — Ot 10.5

[this short pilgrimage without aim, without sense]

...this short, aimless, senseless pilgrimage? — Ot 8.21

(c) English compound adjectives, expressing the amount of quality, stand as equivalents of Czech prepositional phrases (e.g., *ankle-deep* — *hluboká po kotníky*).



Cf.: ...where you wade shoulder-high... — Gr 41.17  
...kde se člověk brodí až po ramena... — Gr 20.1  
[where (refl. pron.) man wades up to shoulders]

To sum up: In forming compound adjectives of the above types, English cannot avoid giving rise to descriptive forms of denomination. Prepositions, however, are not made use of in such cases. Czech, on the other hand, must necessarily have recourse to prepositional forms in expressing attribution, as many types of compound adjectives are not found in it.

XI. A tendency of English to avoid a preposition before a noun may be observed with a multiple co-ordinate sentence member. In English the preposition, as a rule, precedes such a segment and is common to all its elements. In Czech, on the other hand, the preposition is usually repeated before each element of the multiple sentence member. By repeating the preposition and using inflexional endings, Czech emphasizes the mutual parallelism of the co-ordinate elements. We believe this fact not to be in contradiction with what has been stated above about the more frequent occurrence of prepositions in English as compared with Czech. Czech prepositions stand closer to nominal (above all to substantival and pronominal) parts of the sentence. Hence the tendency to repeat the preposition in the afore-mentioned position in the sentence.

Cf.: ...I was tired of the whole pack of them with their private stores of Coca-Cola and their portable hospitals and their wide cars and their not quite latest guns. — Gr 49.32

...už jsem jich všech měl až po krk s jejich soukromými zásobárnami coca-coly a s jejich přenosnými nemocnicemi a s jejich jeepy a s jejich puškami ne už zcela nejnovějšího typu. — Gr 26.23

[already (aux. v.) of-them of-all (gen. pl.) I-had up to neck with their private stores of-coca-cola (gen. sg.) and with their portable hospitals and with their jeeps and with their guns not any-more quite of-the-latest of-type (gen. sg.)]

XII. The words LIKE (UNLIKE), NEAR, NEXT have been annexed to prepositions in our analysis because of their syntactic properties, though they are originally adjectives or adverbs.

New English prepositions may originate through the following processes:

- (i) the conversion of closely allied word categories (conjunctions, adverbs) into prepositions, e.g., *like him, down her face*;
- (ii) the rise of quite new prepositional collocations and group-prepositions, e.g., *in wait for*;
- (iii) the absolute use of a noun or a noun phrase in the role of a preposition, e.g., *this side the grave*.

In Czech new prepositions may arise from:

- (i) the petrified forms of substantival inflexion, especially the instrumental case form, e.g.:  
*pomocí* (the instrumental sg. of *pomoc* 'help') — by help of;  
*prostřednictvím* (the instr. sg. of *prostřednictví* 'mediation') — by means of;  
*následkem* (the instr. sg. of *následek* 'consequence') — in consequence of;
- (ii) the fusion of prepositional noun phrases into new compound preposition, often with a changed government of the following case, e.g., *kvůli* (with dat.) — because of; cf.: *kvůli vysokému věku* — because of his old age, originally *k vůli* (with gen.) [= to the will of sb., sth.]

- (iii) the prepositional noun phrase in the function of a new preposition, e.g.:
- za účelem* (with gen.) — for the purpose of;
  - za příčinou* (with gen.) [= for the cause of] — because of;
  - na základě* (with gen.) [= on the basis of] — in virtue of; etc.

Last but not least, we should like to mention two important problems connected with the usage of prepositions in English and Czech: the lines dividing prepositions from other parts of speech in the two languages, and the phonetic aspect of the prepositions.

(a) In English the dividing lines between word categories are far less clear than in Czech. In V. Mathesius 1961, its editor J. Vachek, points out that the categorial meaning of an English word is often given by the sentence context in which the word is used. This is connected with the numerous categorial shifts, called conversions, which are very common in English and enrich the stock of words of present-day English. Now if we examine the demarcation lines existing between prepositions and other English word categories standing close to (i.e. adverbs and conjunctions), we find them to be still less clear than those existing between other word categories of the language. Many English words used, as a rule, in the role of prepositions can be used quite easily in the function of adverbs, and vice versa. Even the lines dividing English prepositions from conjunctions are less distinct.<sup>4</sup> In assigning the analyzed examples to word categories, we made use of G. Dietrich's criteria (Dietrich 1960).

When comparing the situation in English with that in Czech, we find the lines dividing prepositions from other word categories in the latter language to be far more distinct than in the former. This holds good, of course, not only of prepositions, but also of other Czech word categories.

(b) Another difference between prepositions in English and Czech may be found in their phonetic properties. Some Czech non-syllabic prepositions may be formed by one consonant sound only (e.g., *v, k, s, z*). These, however, may be changed to monosyllabic prepositions (*ve, ke, ku, se, ze*) before some consonant groups to make the pronunciation easier. Another peculiarity of Czech prepositions is the fact that even single vowels may be found in the role of prepositions (e.g., *o, u*). Neither the former nor the latter feature can be found in English. As is well known, some peculiarities in the pronunciation of English prepositions, influenced by the following words, may be found with the prepositions TO and INTO, and those ending in *-r* and *-re*: AFTER, BEFORE, etc., according to the vocalic or consonantal element following them in a sentence. Otherwise the pronunciation of most English prepositions is characterized by their reductions, resulting from their unstressed positions in the sentence. An exception to this rule may be found with the preposition ON, whose normal form of pronunciation is not reduced. — Czech prepositions, on the other hand, are not reduced. In general, the problems of the stress in prepositions and their relations to the following words in the sentence seem to be much more complicated in Czech than in English. Some Czech grammarians overemphasized the necessity of stressing the preposition in Czech noun phrases, pointing to the close phonetic link joining the preposition with the following

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the above-mentioned LIKE, functioning both as a conjunction and preposition (*snow is falling like in January*—C. O. D.; *like me*); or SINCE (*since we were here last; since the morning*), BEFORE (*before we go home; before dinner*), AFTER (*after he has left; after him*). They have no counterparts in Czech.

noun and corroborated by different phonetic realizations of consonant groups and different rules of assimilation in such cases.<sup>5</sup> J. Vachek (1935) criticized their arguments concerning the unity of prepositional noun phrases and gave evidence of a tendency aimed at independent position of prepositions in Czech. As the phonetic aspect of the preposition has not been the concern of the present study, we do not feel competent to pursue this problem any further. Further investigation in this field and detailed comparison of the systems of the two languages are still necessary.

To sum up:

(i) English prepositions were found to be more frequent and specific in expressing adverbial modifiers. Czech, on the other hand, has recourse not only to prepositions, but also to other grammatical means, e.g., simple cases. Some of them, especially the instrumental, enrich Czech with newly-coined prepositions.

(ii) Some English prepositions (especially OF, TO, etc.) have become strongly grammaticized, expressing those grammatical relations that are conveyed in Czech by the genitive and dative case endings. The grammaticized preposition FOR has its counterpart in some Czech conjunctions. English gerundial and participial constructions, often introduced by prepositions, are equivalent to Czech subordinate clauses headed by conjunctions.

(iii) An important role is played by English prepositions in expressing the predicative part of the sentence, especially when a verb with a reduced degree of predication is used. Further complementation of the nominal element of the verbo-nominal predicative phrase is often joined by the grammaticized preposition OF. In Czech, on the other hand, prepositions are more frequently used in object and adverbial complementations of the verbal predicate, and in expressing apposition and attribution.

(iv) In expressing passive predication, English makes full use of the preposition BY. Czech, preferring to use active forms of predication, has no counterpart of the English preposition BY. Simple, non-prepositional cases are, as a rule, resorted to.

(v) Special attention is to be paid to, and further investigation is to be done in, the relation of Czech prepositions to nominal (especially pronominal and substantival) elements of the sentence. English prepositions were found to be more closely connected with verbal elements of the sentence.

(vi) The use in English of an analytic predicative construction, often containing a preposition, facilitates a better fulfilment of the requirements of the dynamic balance of the English sentence from the point of view of functional sentence perspective.

(vii) English prepositions turn to be very important linking elements of sentence structure. They often stand in a position that is functionally far more important than that of a Czech preposition. In their syntactic functions, they stand near to conjunctions and adverbs. Czech prepositions, on the other hand, represent a more clean-cut word category.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf., e.g., the phrase *hrad leží* [= the castle lies] where the consonant -d is pronounced as [t] because of its final position in the word, with the prepositional phrase *nad lesem* [= above the forest] where -d, standing in the same position, is pronounced as [d], the preposition forming a close phonetic unit with the following noun.

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**Pokus o lingvistickou charakteristiku předložek v angličtině  
ve srovnání s češtinou**

Autor článku shrnuje poznatky o tomto slovním druhu v angličtině a češtině a připouje k nim vlastní pozorování z materiálu, který zpracoval pro rigorózní práci. Jsou shody, častěji však rozdíly mezi předložkami v obou jazycích, a to jak v oblasti nauky o pojmenování, tak i usouvztažení. Kategoriaální hranice u tohoto slovního druhu jsou v angličtině ještě méně zřetelné než u jiných slov, zejména se stírají mezi předložkami a adverbii. Též mnoho jiných slovních druhů nebo sousloví konvertuje v předložky. Proces je stále živý, zejména v oblasti tvoření tzv. *group-prepositions*. V češtině k předložkovým konverzím jednotlivých slov dochází zřídka, častěji se stabilizují jako předložky některé pády (hlavně instrumentál) nebo předložkově substantivní výrazy (*kvůli, za účelem*).

Ze syntaktických rozdílů je nápadně využito širší zásoby předložek v angličtině při vyjadřování adverbialních určení, zejména místa a času. Je tu zřejmá snaha o přesnější rozlišování představ místních i časových, rozlišuje se i představa duality a plurality. Čeština používá užší zásoby předložek, avšak má pestřejší gramatické prostředky k vyjádření adverbialních vztahů: zachovaly se zbytky prostých pádů, s významem hlavně časovým; vedle parataxe se v některých případech dává přednost hypotaxi, předložkově vyjadřování ustupuje spojkovému (*pro nedostatek peněz — protože nebylo peněz*).

Některé anglické předložky podlely silné gramatikalizaci (OF, TO, FOR aj.); funkčně je nejvíce zatížena předložka OF, odpovídající různým typům českého genitivu nebo nominativu. Funkční přetížení těchto gramatických prostředků vede v obou jazycích k výrazovému oslabení, význam musí být určován kontextem.

V mnoha případech lze pozorovat těsnější vztah anglických předložek k slovesům (zejména významově oslabeným, u nichž dokreslují jejich význam), nebo vůbec k predikační části věty. Předložky se významně podílejí na tvorbě gerundiálních vazeb, nahrazují české spojkové, hypotaktické vyjadřování, dovedou uvádět celou vedlejší větu. Často najdeme předložky na funkčně důležitějším místě v anglické větě než v obdobné větě české, svým větným úkonem se podobají spojkám.

Anglické předložky se významně podílejí na vyjadřování různých druhů predikace; pasivní predikaci je vyhrazena předložka BY. V češtině se předložky více uplatňují při vyjádření předmětových a okolnostních doplnění slovesa. Při vyjadřování apozice a atribuce se anglické předložky vyskytují méně než české. Předložkově jmenné výrazy ve verbonominální predikaci pomáhají v angličtině lépe uspořádat slova podle požadavků funkční větné perspektivy; takové výrazy se dostávají ve větě na místo s vyšším stupněm výpovědní dynamičnosti; často plní funkci rheme proper.

U českých předložek zasluží zvláštní pozornosti jejich vztah k nominálním složkám věty. Již dříve byl pozorován rozpad původního těsného spojení předložka + nominální fráze, avšak mnohé okolnosti nasvědčují tomu, že je tu stále ještě dosti těsný vztah, zejména předložek k substantivům, zájmenům a adverbii (splývání předložek s osobními a tázacími zájmeny, s adjektivy v adverbia apod.). Také opakování předložek v češtině (naproti tomu neopakování v angličtině) u mnohonásobných větných členů obsahujících jména svědčí o tomto stále těsném vztahu.

Materiál k výzkumu byl čerpán z prózy beletristické, bylo by vhodné prozkoumat po této stránce i prózu naučnou aj.