FUNCTIONAL TRANSPOSITION OF ACROSS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Yurii Kovbasko
Doctor of Philological Sciences,
Associated Professor at the English Philology Department
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University;
Departamento de Letras,
Universidade Estadual do Centro Oeste (Brazil)
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4638-3900
Scopus Author ID: 57219516628
Web of Science ResearcherID: AAM-5966-2020
y.kovbasko@yahoo.com

The paper represents a distinctive endeavour to analyse the interrelationship between the preposition and the adverb ACROSS as the initial and transposed categories in the English language. The research traces back the evolution of the preposition and the adverb ACROSS since the late Middle English period, when the first instances of ACROSS were registered, and throughout Modern English. Thus, the study covers 9 historical time periods and is based on 3 examples from the Middle English texts, 25 examples from the Early Modern English texts, 4 059 examples from the Late Modern English texts, which have been processed by means of the Lancsbox software tool, and the statistical data on 275 093 examples retrieved from the British National Corpus and the Corpus of American Historical English, i.e. from Present-Day English. The research proves that the lexical unit ACROSS is formed as the adverb at the end of Middle English (1420–1500). Formation of the adverb ACROSS is the result of lexicalization and development of a new morphological construction by means of compounding, when the morphemes A/IN/ON and CROSS(E) merged into the compound A/IN/ON(-) CROSS(E) and its modern form ACROSS. At the next stage (1500–1570), the adverb ACROSS becomes the subject to functional transposition into the category of the preposition. The statistics on the transposed category of the preposition in Early Modern English – 44.4%, its further development, which shows gradual rise of the preposition, which reaches its peak (93.1%) in Late Modern English, as well as the fact that since that time, the category of the preposition has plateaued and the current correlation between the initial category of the adverb and the transposed category of the preposition is 8.2% to 91.8%, respectively, testify that functional transposition of ACROSS is more than just justified.

ФУНКЦІОНАЛЬНА ТРАНСПОЗИЦІЯ ACROSS В АНГЛІЙСЬКІЙ МОВІ

Юрій Ковбаско

доктор філологічних наук,
доцент кафедри англійської філології
Прикарпатський національний університет імені Василя Стефаника;
кафедра мовознавства
Центрально-Західний університет штату Парана (Бразилія)

Ключові слова: *функціональна транспозиція, прийменник, прислівник, ранньо-новоанглійський період, пізньо-новоанглійський період, період сучасної англійської мови.*

Стаття є самобутньою спробою проаналізувати взаємозв'язок між прийменником та прислівником ACROSS як вихідної та транспонованої категорій в англійській мові. Дослідження відстежує еволюцію прийменника та прислівника ACROSS починаючи з кінця середньоанглійського періоду, коли були зареєстровані перші приклади одиниці ACROSS, і протягом періоду сучасної англійської мови. Тож, дослідження охоплює 9 історичних часових проміжків та базується на 3 прикладах середньоанглійського періоду, 25 прикладах ранньо-новоанглійського періоду, 4 059 прикладах пізньо-новоанглійського періоду, що були проаналізовані за допомогою програми Lancsbox, та статистичних даних 275 093 прикладів сучасної англійської мови, що були отримані шляхом аналізу Британського національного корпусу та Корпусу американської історичної англійської мови. Дослідження свідчить, що лексична одиниця ACROSS сформувалася в мові як прислівник наприкінці середньоанглійського періоду (1420–1500). Прислівник ACROSS виник шляхом лексикалізації та словоскладення морфем A/IN/ON and CROSS(E), що утворили конструкцію A/IN/ON(-) CROSS(E), а згодом її сучасну форму ACROSS. На наступному етапі (1500–1570) прислівник ACROSS зазнав функціональної транспозиції в категорію прийменника. Статистичні дані транспонованої категорії прийменника в ранньо-новоанглійському періоді – 44,4%, його подальший розвиток, який вказує на поступове зростання прийменника, що досягає свого піку (93,1%) в пізньо-новоанглійському періоді, а також той факт, що з того часу категорія прийменника досягла плато, а поточне співвідношення вихідної категорії прислівника та транспонованої категорії прийменника становить 8,2% та 91,8% відповідно, засвідчують, що функціональна транспозиція була більш ніж обґрунтованою.

Introduction. Morphological structure and confined semantic focus of the lexical unit *ACROSS* are entirely determined by its constituents, i.e. the preposition *A (IN/ON/AT)* and the noun *CROSS* – the structure, which served as a basis for a number of other lexical units, viz. *ABOARD*, *ASTRIDE*, etc. (Kovbasko, 2021). The definition analysis of the adverb and the preposition *ACROSS*, see *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online, the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the Macmillan English Dictionary, the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, and the Collins English Dictionary*, shows that both categories share the same initial semantic category of locality. Moreover, the overlapping between the categories of the adverb and the preposition is observed on the basis of the identical meanings, viz. 'on, at, or from the other side of/ opposite' and 'from one side of to the other', which are fully institutionalized by both categories. The category of the preposition is represented by another fully institutionalized definition – '*so as to cross; through/in many parts of*', whereas the initial meaning of the category of the adverb – '*crosswise; crossed*', which was at the source of its lexicalization, is registered only by five out of six dictionaries under study. To my mind, it indicates the process of deinstitutionalization of the category of the adverb, which starts losing its basic meaning. The analysis registers additional three definitions of the adverb and four of the preposition, that are not fully institutionalized in Present-Day English. Despite the fact, that the category of the adverb is suffering the loss of its initial seme of locality, it has not transformed into the adverbial particle, as it often happens with similar lexical units (Kovbasko, 2023). This statement is supported by the statistical data retrieved from the British National Corpus, the Corpus of the Historical American English, and the

Corpus of Contemporary American English, which shows that the use of *ACROSS* as the adverbial particle and the adverb is about 0.1% and 8% respectively.

Therefore, the hypothesis is that *ACROSS* was formed as the lexical unit of locality and, in fact, the seme of locality served as a basis for functional transposition from the category of the adverb into the category of the preposition. The aim of the paper is to study functional transposition of the lexical unit *ACROSS* by tracing back its initial and transposed categories and analysing the interrelation between them in the course of the evolution of the lexical unit *ACROSS*.

Previous studies. Ramat (2019) speculates that the word categories "are not waterproof boxes and transcategorizations are always possible" (Ramat, 2019: 13), but the linguistic approaches towards categorial shifts are possible, variable, and numerous as well. The term "transcategorization" (Ježek & Ramat, 2009) is very close to the terms "transcategoriality" (Robert, 2016) and "recategorization" (Vea, 2015), as they do show what they are referring to, in contrary to conversion, which is used by the majority of linguists instead of them, but which "does not make clear that one is referring to the notion of category" (Ježek & Ramat, 2009: 394).

Nevertheless, the most recognizable and outstanding approach in the word-formation panorama is, by all means, conversion, which "is traditionally viewed as a word-formation technique of forming a word from a formally identical but categorically different word without adding a(n explicit) morphological exponent" (Martsa, 2020: 1). According to the most widespread interpretation, conversion is a kind of derivation by means of a zero affix, i.e. "conversion is a word formation operation that changes the grammatical category of a word in the absence of overt morphology" (Kisselew et al., 2016: 93). On the contrary, the notion of conversion can be delimited from the derivational processes and can be understood as a functional shift, a change in the syntactic behaviour of words, "when an (already) existing word takes on a new syntactic function" (Balteiro, 2007: 15), while its form is not changed. Despite the differences in the approaches, their common denominator, which is underlined by each of the approaches, is the maintenance of the same morphological form/properties. This idea is not novel and was initially discussed by Sweet (1892), who remarked that "in English, as in many other languages, we can often convert a word, that is, make it into another part of speech without any modification or addition, except, of course, the necessary change of inflection, etc." (Sweet, 1892: 38). To my mind, 'the necessary change of inflection', i.e. when a word acquires the same formal characteristics as other words in the category, is nothing but modification, because the forms of words differ when they function as the representatives of other categories. Similar interpretations have led to a conclusion that conversion is "a totally free process and any lexeme can undergo conversion into any of the open form classes as the need arises" (Bauer, 1983: 226), i.e. the emphasis on the categorial shifts between and into open word classes.

But in the language there are examples of categorial shifts when the lexical units do not acquire any morphological signs of another category either in their initial, isolated forms, or while functioning in combination with other words, and, what is more, these shifts are observed between the closed and open or closed and closed word classes. To address this issue, I offer the concept of functional transposition, which is a diachronic-synchronic functional process and its outcome, which presupposes the ability of lexical units, by means of grammaticalization and lexicalization and without addition of any morphological and/or syntactical markers, to acquire and realize functions inherent to other word classes, and, in this way, remain within its original word class.

Methods. "Languages change gradually and therefore their historical development is a continuum, rather than a set of chronologically ordered neat and homogenous boxes, divided by clear-cut borders" (Kopaczyk, 2013: 233). In order to represent this continuum as smooth as possible, the historical time spans must be detailed enough to capture the flow of changes, on the one hand; but not too fragmented, on the other, as the excessive numbers of stages do not expose any additional features, it will just baffle readers.

Therefore, it is offered to study functional transposition in the English language on the basis of 16 historical scopes, see Table 1, each of which covers from 70 to 100 years. Such a range is substantiated by the time the transpositional shift requires to be actualized in the language and differs due to the need to balance the research in terms of the manuscripts and lexical units under study.

This classification in no way challenges the traditional periodization into Old, Middle, and Modern English, but expands it. Old English (hereinafter – OE) is represented by the first 4 historical scopes (–850–1150); Middle English (hereinafter – ME) is illustrated by the next 4 scopes (1150–1500); the remaining 8 scopes (1500–2020) constitute the Modern English (hereinafter – ModE) period, which is subdivided into Early Modern English (hereinafter – EModE) from 1500 to 1710, Late Modern English (hereinafter – LModE) from 1710 to 1920, and Present-Day English (hereinafter – PDE) from 1920 to 2020.

The research is represented by the Helsinki Corpus of English Texts: Diachronic and Dialectal (HCET) – a diachronic corpus that covers the texts (c. 1.5 m words) from early Old English to the end

Table 1

Key historical scopes of the English language in studying functional transposition

№	Time span	№	Time span	№	Time span	№	Time span
1	*–850*	5	*1150–1250*	9	*1500–1570*	13	*1780–1850*
2	*850–950*	6	*1250–1350*	10	*1570–1640*	14	*1850–1920*
3	*950–1050*	7	*1350–1420*	11	*1640–1710*	15	*1920–1990*
4	*1050–1150*	8	*1420–1500*	12	*1710–1780*	16	*1990–2020*

of Early Modern English (–850–1710); the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (CLMET), which comprises c. 15 m words in formal British English from 1710 to 1920, varying in genres and styles; the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), which contains over 475 m words, but the research focuses only on one of its subperiods (1920–1990), and the British National Corpus (BNC) – a collection of 100 m words of British English from the late 20th and early 21st centuries (1990–2020). The research also benefits from the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), which provide a number of examples that have been analysed and added to the overall statistics.

Thus, the procedure of the diachronic corpus analysis of functional transposition is the following: 28 examples from the HCET have been manually analysed and tagged as the corresponding PoS; 4 059 examples from the CLMET which have been automatically tagged by the Lancsbox software tool; the statistical data on 275 093 examples have been retrieved from the COHA and the BNC. The analyzed statistical data for each historical scope are represented in the relevant tables, while the graph showcases the general process of functional transposition of *ACROSS* in the English language.

Analysis and findings.

1. Functional semantics of ACROSS in diachrony

1.1. The preposition ACROSS

The preposition *ACROSS* appeared in the first half of the EModE period and represented the direction of the movement or position, i.e. denoted the seme of locality, c.f. '*from side to side of; quite through, over, in any direction except lengthwise, across the country: straight through between two points*':

1) *I charge thee waft me safely crosse the Channell.* (OED: Shakespeare, W.: *The first part of Henry the Sixth* iv. i: 114);

2) *When my good Falcon made her flight a-crosse Thy Fathers ground.* (OED: Shakespeare W.: The Winter's Tale iv. iv: 15);

In fact, further development of the lexical unit *ACROSS* as a constituent of the phrasal verb *TO COME ACROSS* is based on this meaning, e.g.:

3) *We come across more than one incidental mention of those wars.* (OED: Freeman, Edward: The History of the Norman Coquest III. Xii: 191);

This meaning gave rise to the metaphorical representation of *ACROSS* – '*to reach the audience or*

the public, to make oneself or itself understood or appreciated', which, in the beginning, was represented directly, e.g.:

4) *I want to see how ... they succeed in getting across the footlights.* (CLMET: Shaw, B.: Collected Letters: 443);

5) *Tell a fellow now, did I get it across?* (CLMET: Kipling, R.: A Diversity of Creatures: 190);

Another widely spread meaning, which appeared on the basis of the initial meaning, was '*from one side of (a country, etc.) to the other; throughout*', e.g.:

6) *He was directed to hasten thither across the country.* (OED: Macaulay, T.: *The history of England from the accession of James II*: 573);

All the aforesaid meanings are characterized by a mutual component, i.e. all of them denote the seme of locality by representing the direction of the movement. At the same time, the preposition *ACROSS* discloses locality by indicating the place of the object – '*on the other side of, beyond, over*', e.g.:

7) *The King across the water!* (OED: Jacobite Toast);

Nevertheless, on the contrary to the functions, which are based on the direction of the movement, in this case the function has been transposed from the category of the adverb.

1.2. The adverb ACROSS

Taking into account, the semantics of the components of the lexical unit *ACROSS*, the basic meaning of the adverb *ACROSS* is in no way a mystery, c.f. '*in the form of a cross, crosswise, crossing each other, crossed*', e.g.:

8) *Syr hugh spencer ... fell doune vpon the grounde by the see bank acros with his armes and thryes kist the grounde.* (OED: Caxton, W.: The Chronicles of England cxciv: 170);

9) *He fonde Rolland expyred, hys hondes in crosse vpon hys vysage.* (OED: Caxton, W.: *The lyf of Charles the Grete*: 240);

10) *He layed hys armes vpon hys body in maner of a crosse.* (OED: Caxton, W.: *The lyf of Charles the Grete*: 239);

The abovementioned examples are found in the OED, where they are referred to as the adverbs. It raises no doubts in case of sentence 8, where *ACROSS* functions as a pure adverb. The combination of the preposition *IN* with the noun *CROSS* and the adverb *UPON* after it, see example 9, can serve as a vivid instance of how lexicalization leads

to formation of the adverb *ACROSS*, but in general, it is possible to speak of the adverbial function of this combination. Sentence 10, to my mind, is more than controversial, as this example represents the use of the noun *CROSS* in combination with the article *A*. This combination does not function as an adverb, though this is possible in case of the phrase '*in maner of a crosse*'.

Being based on the aforesaid meaning, the adverb *ACROSS* acquired the seme of locality, which is represented by the meaning '*in a position or direction crossing the length-line of anything, transversely; from side to side, through*', e.g.:

11) *The whiche blyster must be slytte with a knyfe a-crosse.* (HCET: Fitzherbert, A.: The Boke of Husbandry: 5);

12) *I found it impossible to saw it directly a-cross.* (OED: *Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society* LXIV: 355);

In the future, the seme of locality is denoted not only by the initial position of the object and the direction of the movement, but also by the endpoint of the movement – '*in a position actually or potentially the result of crossing anything; on the other side*', e.g.:

13) *Lord Evandale ... was no sooner across than he was charged by the left body of the enemy's cavalry.* (OED: Scott, W.: Old Mortality: 146);

It is worth noting that the adverb *ACROSS* is formed as the result of lexicalization of the constructions *A/IN/ON CROSS* in the meaning of '*in the form of a cross*', and later it acquired the seme of locality and could serve the basis for functional transposition into the category of the preposition. Therefore, to depict a stepwise development of the process of functional transposition, it is necessary to conduct a diachronic corpus analysis of the preposition and the adverb *ACROSS*.

2. Corpus analysis of ACROSS in diachrony

The adverb *ACROSS* appeared in the language in the late ME period, see 8, however, it became frequently used only at the beginning of the EModE period, e.g.:

14) *… suche as stande directly one against the other, when twoo lines be drawen acrosse,* (HCET: Record, R.: The path-way to knowledg, containing the first principles of geometrie: 13);

15) *And all the lines that bee drawen crosse the circle,* (HC: Record, R.: The path-way to knowledg, containing the first principles of geometrie: 34);

Examples 14–15 showcase the use of *ACROSS* in its basic meaning '*in a form of a cross, in any direction except lengthwise*', both in cases of the preposition and the adverb. This period is also characterized by formation of the metaphorical meaning, when the adverb *ACROSS* serves as a constituent of the phrasal verb *TO GO ACROSS*, e.g.:

16) *When king and queen saw things thus go across,* (OED: *Mirror. A myrroure for magistrates:* 344);

Throughout the following periods, the new meanings of *ACROSS* have been formed and this created preconditions for creating other phrasal verbs, e.g.:

17) *The squint-eyed pharisees looke a-crosse at all the actions of Christ.* (OED: Hall, J.: *Contemplations upon the principal passages of the holie storie.* iii. vii: 64);

Functional transposition of the adverb *ACROSS* into the category of the preposition took place at the same historical period as formation of the adverb and that testifies of its significance. This conclusion is supported by the statistics of the preposition *ACROSS* in the ModE period, see Table 2, when its frequency has been constantly increasing.

Table 2 includes the last stage (1420–1500) of the ME period in order to represent the exact historical period when the unit *ACROSS* was formed. The frequency growth of the transposed preposition *ACROSS* is observed up to the early 18th century, when it reached its peak, plateaued and stabilized its correlation with the adverb. The correlation between the categories has been stable for more than 2 centuries already and the corpus analysis proves that there are no grounds for any dramatic shift in their correlation. The adverb *ACROSS* acquired its last meaning in the early 20th century, see 18, and its application as a constituent of phrasal verbs, see 19, is not extremely productive:

18) *We now have ... the first two letters of No. 7 across.* (OED: Layng Cross-Word Puzzles, 7);

19) *It is so brilliant, it's creative in getting across a very important* (OED: ABC News: Good Morning America);

This conclusion is supported by the statistics, which shows that *ACROSS* as a constituent of phrasal verbs is used in 0.5%, i.e. within the frame of a statistical error. The general correlation of the initial and transposed categories of the adverb and preposition *ACROSS* respectively, is illustrated by figure 1.

Table 2

ACROSS as the preposition and the adverb in Middle and Modern English

PoS	1420–1500	1500–1570	1570–1640	1640–1710	1710–1780	1780–1850	1850–1920	1920–1990	1990–2020
Preposition	----	*44.4%*	*60%*	*71.3%*	*92.4%*	*93.1%*	*89.7%*	*90.5%*	*91.8%*
Adverb	*100%*	*55.6%*	*40%*	*29.7%*	*7.6%*	*6.9%*	*10.3%*	*9.5%*	*8.2%*
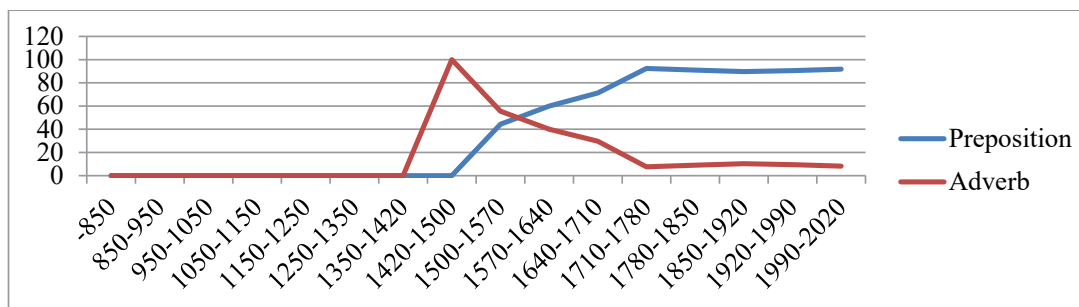
Fig. 1. Functional transposition of ACROSS in the English language

Figure 1 illustrates that the adverb *ACROSS* is formed in the language in the late MEperiod and at the beginning of the EModE period, it becomes the object to functional transposition into the category of the preposition. The transposed category of the preposition is immediately institutionalized in the language and continues its gradual but swift growth reaching the peak in the mid of the LModE period. On the contrary, the loss in frequency of the initial category of the adverb is dramatic and the prolonged stagnation, which can be observed on the Graph 1, shows no signs of improvement, as the correlation between the initial and the transposed categories has reached the plateau and stabilized.

Conclusions. The research proves that the case of the lexical unit *ACROSS* is the demonstrable example of productive and reasonable functional transposition, when the transposed category overtakes the initial category.

The lexical unit *ACROSS* appeared in the language as a result of lexicalization of the *PREP+NOUN* construction *A/IN/ON(-)CROSS(E)* and its modern form *ACROSS* in the late ME period (1420–1500), which functions as the adverb. Functional transposition into the category of the preposition started at the beginning of the EModE period (1500–1570) and the statistical correlation between the initial and the transposed categories, 55.6% and 44.4% respectively, testifies that functional transposition was absolutely justified at that time. This conclusion is additionally substantiated by their further statistical correlation, which shows a stable growth up to the mid of the LModE period (1780–1850). Since that period, the category of the preposition has plateaued, but it still has a tendency to increase its frequency due to the fundamental nature of locality on which it is based, whereas the adverb *ACROSS* cannot find any semantic (prolonged absence of new meanings) or functional (non-productive as a constituent of phrasal verbs) 'reserves' to boost its frequency in discourse. So, any categorial shift into another category is marked by an increase or a decrease in the characteristics of the transposed category what happens at the expense of the initial category.

Therefore, further research in the field must be devoted to the linguistic and extralinguistic factors which specify the use of *ACROSS* as the adverb and the preposition in discourse, as well as the factors which triggered the dramatic shift in the frequency of use of the initial and transposed categories.

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