

# The Meanings of the Preposition “BY” in the IX-XIX Centuries with Their Azerbaijani Equivalents

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## Abstract

The article deals with the meanings of the English preposition “by” in the IX-XIX centuries and their Azerbaijani equivalents. During that period the preposition “by” had more than 10 variants of writing.

From the IX to the XIX centuries the preposition “by” was used in 6 main meanings: the meanings were connected with **position, motion (or action), time, mental proximity, circumstances (condition, manner), medium (or means)**. Each of these meanings of the preposition “by” included a lot of small meanings or sub-meanings.

**Keywords:** Preposition, The English language, The Azerbaijan language, Meanings, Motion, Form, Variant, Means, Century, Word

## Introduction

The article is devoted to the preposition “by” which is considered to be one of the main prepositions of the English Language. The theme of prepositions is very debatable in linguistics. As Azerbaijan was one of the former 15 Soviet Union republics, the viewpoints of Soviet scholars or linguists differed from those of the scholars and linguists of western countries. So, in the article one can see different viewpoints of Azerbaijani, Russian linguists or grammarians as well as western ones.

According to prof. Oruj Musayev, the great Azerbaijan scholar, in Modern English the parts of speech are divided into 3 groups. They are: notional parts of speech, structural parts of speech and independent parts of speech. The Russian scholars have approximately the same division, only with slight differences. The preposition is considered to be one of the structural parts of speech. It is a word relating to a group of words. Not having its lexical meaning and syntactical function in a sentence, the preposition is considered a structural part of speech.

In Modern English, from the morphological point of view, the category of case of the noun is weak and the preposition is used to express the grammatical relations which exist between nouns and other parts of speech.

The preposition is a structural part of speech and shows the relationship between two notions, not depending on that whether they are things, ideas or actions.

It is necessary to mention that in the Azerbaijan language there doesn't exist a part of speech called “**preposition**” and in the Azerbaijan language the relation between the nouns and other parts of speech are expressed by case suffixes and some other suffixes. These relations can also be expressed by some lexical means of expression.

## 1. What is the Preposition?

According to some foreign sources (especially I-net sources), in English there exist more than 150 prepositions, (even some sources say that their number is nearly 200) most of which are widely used in spoken language. The prepositions play an important role in the sentence, since without them the sentences would sound not only strange, but also they would acquire extremely confused meanings.

Prepositions are the words denoting the relation or connection between words, i.e. between nouns following them or other words in the sentence. In addition to all these, they don't change in number, gender and case. They precede nouns and pronouns and rarely stand before other words.

Accordingly, it seems that prepositions are always used before their objects. Though in most cases it happens like this, we must add that in many examples prepositions follow their objects. The object of the preposition, whether it is noun or pronoun, is usually in the objective case. In pronouns it reveals by the form of the word. The preposition may be defined as a linking word, denoting the relation of the noun or the noun substitute to another word in a sentence. These relations include: place, direction, time, manner and agent of the action.

So we can summarize the all characteristic features of the preposition like the following:

1. Prepositions usually stand before nouns.
2. Prepositions can be used with all forms (types) of nouns (e.g. with collective nouns, with material nouns, with abstract nouns, etc.).
3. Prepositions are not joined with verbs, but they can be used before gerunds or verbs in the form of noun.

Besides nouns, objects can be expressed by:

1. Pronouns.
2. Adjectives.
3. Adverbs.
4. Phrases.
5. Non-finite forms of the verb (especially Gerunds).
6. Subordinate Clauses.

Prepositions are often joined with verbs, forming phrasal or composite verbs and such kind of prepositions are defined as postpositions.

Prepositions may consist of one word or a prepositional phrase, which functions as a whole unit. A preposition is always followed by a noun, which is the “object” of the preposition. Prepositions and their objects make prepositional phrases, which have the function of adverbial (adjective or adverb).

### *1.1. Types of prepositions according to the meaning*

As it has already been mentioned, in English there exist more than 150 prepositions. According to the viewpoints of Russian and Azerbaijani grammarians the prepositions, according to their meaning, are divided into the prepositions of:

1. place. This type includes **in, on, at, under, near, behind, by**, etc. Most of the prepositions of place also express time when standing before the words denoting time: **at, by, in, on**, etc.
2. time: **at, by, in, after**, etc.
3. direction: **to, into, towards**, etc.
4. abstract relations: **with, by, within**, etc.

But the viewpoints of foreign scholars are quite different. They think that there exists another classification of prepositions. They find more than 30 types of prepositions, which include the prepositions of movement, means, comparison, cause, connection, measure and manner, standard, exception and addition, negative condition, reaction, concession, support and opposition, accompaniment, stimulus, source, origin, etc.

One of the main problems concerning the preposition in English is that some prepositions can express several different meanings. It would be useless to try to classify all the prepositions, since they differ very much in their meanings.

The biggest group of the prepositions includes the prepositions of place and time.

The following prepositions are considered the most widely-used prepositions in English: **at, about, after, behind, by, between, in, into, of, off, on, out, to, towards, up, upon, with, within**, etc.

But prepositions often become the cause of many problems, as only prepositions, in comparison with other parts of speech, can substitute one another in most cases, not taking into consideration the shade of meaning.

The most effective method of learning or mastering prepositions is learning the prepositions and remembering phrasal verbs through practice and memorizing. It is especially useful for bilingual students, for whom the use of prepositions seems to be one of the hardest parts of the English language.

## **2. Means of expression of the English Preposition “BY”**

One of the most widely-known prepositions of Modern English is the preposition “**by**”. Before speaking about the origin of the preposition “**by**” and its meanings in the Azerbaijan language, we should speak about some peculiarities of the Azerbaijan and English languages.

As is well known, the English language belongs to analytical languages group, but the Azerbaijan language does to synthetical languages group. Accordingly, different notions in the English language are mainly expressed by different words, but in the Azerbaijan language they are expressed mainly by synthetical elements, e.g. by means of affixes.

According to the above mentioned views, the means of expression of the preposition “by” in Azerbaijan are divided into the followings:

1. Synthetical means, e.g. *suffixes*.
2. Analytical means, e.g. *different words or parts of speech*.

So, investigating the origin of the English prepositions, one can see that they coincide (or they are very alike) with the prepositions belonging to other languages. It is natural, as they may have been borrowed from other languages (OR maybe they had one and the same origin).

### 3. The Meanings of “BY” in the IX-XIX Centuries with their Azerbaijani Equivalents

It must be noted that approximately all prepositions possess more than one meaning. “By” is one of such prepositions. According to its meanings the preposition “by” is connected with 6 main notions or (leading) meanings.

1. with “**position in space**”.
2. with “**motion (or movement)**”.
3. with “**time**”.
4. with “**mental or ideal proximity**”.
5. with “**medium, means, instrumentality, agency**”.
6. with “**circumstances, condition, manner, cause, reason**” (Chiefly developments or weakenings of earlier senses) (in general, stressed and weak (unstressed) forms of the previous meanings).

#### 3.1. The meaning of “position in space”

The preposition “by” is interconnected with the “**position in space**” in the following meanings; **around, about sth** (= *nəyinsə ətrafında/yanında*), **near** (= *nəyinsə kənarında/yaxınlığında*), **in, inside** (= *içəridə, evdə, daxildə*), **above the norm** (= *normadan çox*); **contrary, against, opposite** (= *əksinə, əleyhinə*); **far, in the distance** (= *uzaq, uzaqda*), **on the edge, on the brink** (= *kənar, kənarda*); **on sth** (= *üzərində, -da<sup>2\*</sup>*); **by means of, by the help of** (= *vasitəsilə*); **alone, isolated** (*tək, tənha, təcrid olunmuş halda*).

1. Ceolas stondað bi staðe fæste.

Cold winds continue(d) fast by the estate.

Malikanənin ətrafında tez-tez soyuq küləklər əsməyə başladı (başlayır).

2. Tyll she be stronge to goo by her-self.

Till she is strong enough to go by herself.

O, təkbaşına getmək üçün kifayət qədər güclü olana qədər.

3. Þat engel... stod hemm bi.

That angel stood by him.

O mələk (çapar, kuryer) onun yanında durmuşdu.

#### 3.2. The meaning of “motion”

The preposition “by” expressed the following meanings connected with the meaning “**motion (or movement)**”; **along** (= *nəyinsə boyunca, ilə*); **near, next to** (= *yaxın, yanında*), **till, to** (= *qədər*); **at a distance of** (= ... *məsafədə*).

1. That came vs by and very near, Ascendynge vp into her hyghe sete.

That came us by and very near, ascending up into her high seat.

O, o qadının hündür oturacağına qalxaraq, bizim yanımıza gəldi və daha da yaxınlaşdı.

2. An angill come & hem forbad To wend by hym [Herod] eny way.

An angel came and forbade him to go by him anyway.

Mələk gəldi və ona onun (Herodun) yanında getməyi qadağan etdi.

3. There is nother castel nor towne by xx myles nyghe aboute it.

There is neither castel, nor town by xx miles near about it.

Yaxınlıqda xx mil məsafədə nə qəsır, nə də şəhər var.

### 3.3. The meaning of "time"

The preposition "**by**" expressed the following meanings connected with the meaning "**time**"; **during, in, at** (= *ərzində, müddətində; -da<sup>2\*</sup>*), **not later than** (= *gec olmayaraq*), **for** (= *üçün*).

1. He ded shuld be, And ly in erthe by dayes thre.

He should be dead, and have lied on earth by three days (= for three days).

Gərək ki, o, ölüb, və 3 gündür ki, yerdə uzanıb qalıb.

2. He bryngiþ in newe [servants] þat done werse bi litil tym.

He brought in the new servant who has done worse by little time.

O, az vaxt ərzində pis iş görmüş yeni qulluqçunu içəri gətirdi.

3. Heold Crist hiss fasste ... Bi daꝓhes & bi nahhtess.

Crist held fast to the son (= young man, warrior) by days and by nights.

Krist gündüzlər və gecələr (ərzində) oğlunun (cavan insanın, döyüşçünün) yanından əl çəkmirdi (ondan bərk yapışmışdı).

### 3.4. The meaning of "mental or ideal proximity"

The preposition "**by**" expressed the following meanings connected with the meaning "**mental proximity**": **by the help of, with, according to; about, connected, in connection with, because of** (= *üçün, görə, səbəbindən*), **in view of** (= *nəzərə alaraq*), **in connection with, in connexion with** (= *əlaqədar olaraq*), **in light of, owing to** (= *səbəbindən, görə*), **as a result of, on the grounds of** (= *səbəbindən, bəhanəsilə, əsasla*); **against, opposite** (= *əksinə*); **across the street/road/way** (= *küçənin/yolun o biri/əks tərəfində və ya küçəni/yolu keçdikdən sonra o biri tərəfdə*); **on the contrary** (= *əksinə*).

1. No such Merchand ... should put any Herring to Sale **by** Barrel,

Demy-Barrel, or Firkin.

Həç bir belə tacir gərək siyənək balığını çəlləklə (vasitəsilə), yarım-çəlləklə və ya kiçik çəlləklə satışı qoymasın.

2. **By** means of their Brokers they buy **by** the great, and sell them againe **by** the piece.

By means of their Brokers they buy great portions and sell them again by pieces.

Onlar öz brokerləri vasitəsilə böyük hissələrlə alırlar və yenidən kiçik hissələrlə satırlar.

3. **By** him and **by** this woman heere, what know you?

What do you know in connexion with him and in connexion with this woman here?

O kişi və buradakı bu qadınla bağlı siz nə bilirsiniz?

### 3.5. The meaning of "medium, means, instrumentality, agency"

The preposition "**by**" expressed the following meanings connected with the meaning "**environment, means, ways**": **from** (= *-dan<sup>2\*</sup>*); **with** (= *ilə, -lə<sup>2\*</sup>*), **under** (= *altında, altında*); **by means of, together with** (= *vasitəsilə, ilə, ilə birgə*).

1. Shephurdes **by** the seuen sterres Wisten ..whenne hit shoude reynen.

Shepherds knew (= learned) by means of seven stars when it should rain.

Çobanlar yeddi ulduz vasitəsilə yağışın nə vaxt yağacağını öyrənirdilər.

2. Brut... sones hadde þre **By** hys wyf.

Brut had three sons from his wife.

Brutun öz arvadından 3 oğlu var idi.

3. Nether to be allurid by prommissis nor persuadid bi wurds.

Neither to be allured by promises, nor persuaded by words.

Nə vədlərlə ovsunlanmaq, nə də sözlərlə əmin edilmək (yola gətirilmək).

3.6. *The meaning of “circumstances, condition, manner, cause, reason”.*

This meaning chiefly includes the developments or weakenings of earlier senses. In general, they are the stressed and weak (unstressed) forms of the previous meanings.

The preposition “**by**” expressed the following meanings connected with the meaning “**circumstances, condition, cause (in general, stressed and weak (unstressed) forms of the previous meanings)**”: **from** (= *-dan<sup>2\*</sup>*); **with, in a manner, like** (= *-da<sup>2\*</sup>*; *təzadə, halda, kimi*); **with, together with** (= *ilə, -lə<sup>2\*</sup>*); **because (of), on account of** (= *səbəbdən, -dan<sup>2\*</sup>*):

1. Though flewme of himself **be** thicke and vnsauery by strengthe of heete.

Though his flame was thick (high) and it was unsavory because of the strength of heat.

Baxmayaraq, onun öz atəşi çox idi və istiliyin şiddətindən xoşagəlməz idi.

2. Me lihtede candles to æten **bi**.

I lighted the candle to eat **by** (the light of) it.

Mən şam işığıda yemək yemək üçün onları yandırdım.

3. Be þam þe he fader is and laford he him self cwed **be** þe witie...

a) By them his father and the lord (master) himself is remarked on by the wise men.

Onun atasına və ağasına onlarla birlikdə müdrik insanlar tərəfindən irad tutulur.

b) By them his father is and the lord (master) himself is remarked on by the wise men.

Onun atası onların yanında (onlarla birlikdədir) və ağasına müdrik insanlar tərəfindən irad tutulur.

4. By that hee calis him virum mortis, I may lawfully conclude, etc.

Because of that he calls him virum mortis (= dead man), I may lawfully conclude, etc.

Bu səbəbdən o, onu virum mortis (ölmüş adam) adlandırır, mən hüquqi baxımdan belə nəticəyə gələ bilərəm və s.

Besides all these meanings, the preposition “**by**” and some old forms of it exist and are still used in some expressions. For instance;

*by cas* (= *by case*), *by guess*, *by, might, by, consequence*, *by force*, *by chance*, *by cause of*,

*by means of*, *by way of*, *by reason of*, *by virtue of*, *by the hands of*, *by no means*, *by that*, *by the by*,

*by one's self*, *by the way*, *by name*, *by particular*, *by occasion*, *by common*, *by ordinary*, *by metaphor*, etc.

1. He vel of is palefrey, & brec is fot bi cas.

He fell off his palfrey (horse) and broke his foot by case.

O, öz atından yıxıldı və təsadüfən ayağını sındırdı.

2. This Manna followed the Israelites whatsoever the earth was: and by name in the wilderness.

This man followed the Israelites whatsoever the earth was: and by name in the wilderness. ...

Bu insan İsraililəri hansı torpaqda olursa olsun izlədi, və səhra adlanan yerdə ...

3. I am not speaking by metaphor and Asiatically.

Mən metafora vasitəsilə və asiyaşayağı danışmıram.

4. He hathe us up lyfft By the means of hys sonne callyd Emanuell.

He had us guided by means of his son (called) Emanuell.

O, bizə öz Emanuel adlı oğlu vasitəsilə bələdçilik etdirdi.

5. The Parliament is adjoined by virtue thereof [the Comission].

Partlament Komissiya vasitəsilə onunla qonşuluq edir.

#### 4. Summary and Concluding Remarks

As a conclusion, we must note that each of the meanings of the preposition “**by**” had several means of expression during the IX-XIX centuries. These means included other simple prepositions which were closer to the preposition “**by**” in meaning, some phrasal prepositions and some expressions. While looking through the meanings of the preposition “**by**” in Modern English, we can come across with such a fact that the preposition “**by**” still retains most of its old meanings.

When speaking about the expressions with “**by**”, it should also be mentioned that approximately all of them are still in use in Modern English, but some of them had only slight changes, such as *by cas*, *by one's self*, etc.

When speaking about the Azerbaijani equivalents of the preposition “**by**”, we should note that they consist of analytical and synthetical ones. So, one fact is evident that in the Azerbaijan language analytical equivalents form a greater layer than synthetical ones. Azerbaijani equivalents are expressed by case suffixes, notional (mainly adverbs) and secondary (helping) parts of speech, especially *goshma* which doesn't exist in other languages, including English.

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#### Notes

\* (The number two denotes the same suffixes having two forms. For instance **-dan<sup>2</sup>** has one more form - **-dən<sup>2</sup>**). The first one is added to the words having hard vowels, but the second one is added to the words with soft vowels. E.g. **səhərdən** – since morning, **torpaqdan** – from the ground.