

## REMARKS ON CAUSAL COMPLEX PREPOSITIONS

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the study of the semantic properties of complex prepositions with causal meaning in modern English, one of the current problems of linguistics. The semantic specificity of complex prepositions is related to the nominal components included in them or the dictionary meaning of the words forming them, and directly determines their inseparable word formation and lexical-semantic relations with other important words. The level of de-semanticization of the nominal base of complex prepositions with a causal meaning predetermines not only their semantic specificity, but also the degree of prepositionalization of their combinations used to express a special type of causal semantics in speech.

**Key words:** complex preposition, semantic change, obligation, cause, semantic stability, cognitive approach, semantic expansion, causal meaning.

The question of the status of the preposition has been and still is the cause of many debates among linguists. At first, linguists emphasize the preposition as an independent word group and pay attention to its consideration at the syntactic level as a means of forming verb and noun phrases.

At the end of the 60s of the 20th century, attention to the semantics of prepositions began to increase. The question of the communicative nature of the language, the problems of semantics, which are the focus of modern linguistics, force linguists to turn to the little-studied area of the meaning of prepositions.

In general, semantic change is a complex process, and its passage requires the interaction of formal and substantive aspects of linguistic units. V.I. As Kodukhov notes, "semantic change occurs during the use of linguistic tools and the formation



of contextual units or when the form and content of these units undergo contextual shifts" [1, 6].

Semantic changes are somewhat more systematic and general than those at other levels. Research conducted in recent years shows that emotional transitions are largely based on general cognitive principles. Scientists recognize that there is a possibility of cognitive adaptation to ensure movement from concreteness to abstraction in a certain group of semantic units [12, 201].

Efforts to identify the mechanisms that control changes in meaning and the manifestation of meaning itself in the process of cognitive activity are ongoing.

Also, linguists recommend using the method of Source Determination Hypothesis to determine the systematicity of semantic changes occurring in the process of grammaticalization [1, 9].

The content of this hypothesis is as follows: "the meaning of the structure undergoing grammaticalization uniquely determines the direction of this process and, as a result, ensures the formation of grammatical meaning" [1, 10]. In this regard, it is recognized that there is a close relationship between the source and the derived meaning [5], [3].

It seems that until now, in the studies conducted on the study of the system of prepositions with complex content in the English language, the issue of determining the status of these prepositions has been given priority.

In this article, we plan to study a group of complex prepositions that create causal relations such as owing to, due to, because of, thanks to, by reason of, formed on the basis of different word groups, at the intersection of synchronic and diachronic approaches.

The significant relationship between the original and derived meanings can be seen in the semantic development of the structures owing to, due to, thanks to. After all, this or that denotation - the acquisition of a new meaning of the concept goes back to the conceptual space of the source



It should be noted that the semantic expansion of these structures was in the direction of "obligation and cause". It is clear that the initial meaning of complex prepositions in this group, "obligation", followed the same path of spiritual development.

As for the semantic changes in the structure of the complex prepositions because of and by reason of, which have the meaning of causality, it turns out that the semantic expansion of the element of reason (factual ground motive ground) is similar to that of the element of because (cause reason). There is no way to explain these changes within the previously mentioned hypothesis.

The emergence of semantic innovations in the composition of early structures can continue even after the grammaticalization process is over. According to P. Hopper, a certain linguistic unit does not completely lose traces of its original lexical meaning after undergoing the process of grammaticalization leading to the fulfillment of a grammatical task, and this is reflected in the task it performs [6]. In this respect, the meaning of the prepositions owing to and thanks to is strictly observed.

Although the causative preposition owing has lost its meaning characteristic of its source - a free word combination, it has retained the residual meaning of "obligation" in the source. Below we can see the scope of application of complex prepositions of the presence of semantic stagnation states

Amount of use of complex causative prepositions

<b>Complex prepositions</b>	<b>MICASE</b>
because of	354
by reason of	0
do due to	107 (due - 79)
owing to	0 (owing - 10)
thanks to	5



The table shows that in the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) the complex preposition *due to* occurs 107 times, while the preposition *owing to* does not occur even once.

Similarly, the adjective *due* is not used once in the meaning of "obligation", but it is activated 79 times in other meanings. It was found that the stem verb *owe* was used 10 times.

These numbers indicate that the complex preposition *due to* has lost its meaning in the source, and the preposition *owing to* has preserved it to some extent.

Preservation of source meaning encourages speakers not to use the preposition *owing to* when expressing causality. This, in turn, is a manifestation of egocentrism, because people avoid the emotions (obedience, dissatisfaction) associated with the meaning of "freedom".

The preposition *thanks to*, which refers to a positive cause, is also limited in scope. This preposition is found mainly in sentences where the "trace" of the original lexical meaning of the word "thank" has been preserved. This causes the complex preposition *thank to* to be used less than the preposition *due to*. Compare:

Over the past few years even badly managed luxury groups have made a profit, thanks to a booming world economy (BNC);

The match ended 5-3 in Reptons favour, thanks to two goals by Richard Basnett and others from Jim McDonald, Jimmy Tipper and Robin Powell (BNC).

Because of, which is one of the causative complex prepositions, acquired the meanings "for a certain reason", "according to the purpose" and "for such and such thing" in the process of meaning development. However, the new meaning did not completely replace the previous ones, but was activated side by side for a long time [6, 21].

At the same time, *because of* gradually became active in different contexts under the influence of meaning generalization, and we can see the proof of this in its use in the largest number (354).



It should be said that the degree of activation of complex prepositions in different functional styles is not uniform. For example, the preposition "by reason of" is rarely used in formal texts.

For example:

The applicant was employed by a company from 1959 to 1987 until she was dismissed by reason of redundancy when she was a few months over 60 (BNC);

The Infanticide Act 1938 extended the definition the killing of a child within twelve months of its birth by a mother whose mind is disturbed either by reason of her not having fully recovered from the effect of giving birth to the child or by reason of the effect of lactation consequent upon the birth of the child (BNC).

The complex preposition "by reason of" taken from texts related to journalism and social sciences is used in the meaning "based on a specific reason".

In the research process, we mainly referred to the data collected in the British National Corpus (BNC), sometimes for the purpose of comparative analysis, the corpus material of the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English was also used.

The British National Corpus is the largest corpus of the modern English language, containing information on about one hundred million words in use at the end of the last century. The second (MICASE) corpus consists of information about more than one million seven hundred thousand words that are activated in oral communication activities. While the BNC has been used to determine the degree of subjectivity of complex prepositions that express causation in the English language system, the MICASE corpus material is being used to determine the degree of subjectivity of these types of prepositions.

Thus, it should be noted that the semantic changes in complex prepositions with the meaning of causality move in the direction of "obligation cause" and acquire the meanings "for a certain reason", "according to the purpose" and "for such and such a thing", and gradually become active in different contexts under the influence of generalization of meaning. This is an important factor for determining



the level of subjectivity of complex prepositions that realize causal relations in the English language system.

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