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Preposition Placement in English

Preposition placement, the competition between preposition-stranding (*What is he talking about?*) and pied-piping (*About what is he talking?*), is one of the most interesting areas of syntactic variation in English. This is the first book to investigate preposition placement across all types of clauses that license it, such as questions, exclamations and *wh*-clauses, and those which exhibit categorical stranding, such as non-*wh* relative clauses, comparatives and passives. Drawing on over 100 authentic examples from both first-language (British) and second-language (Kenyan) data, it combines experimental and corpus-based approaches to provide a full grammatical account of preposition placement in both varieties of English. Although written within the usage-based Construction Grammar framework, the results are presented in theory-neutral terminology, making them accessible to researchers from all syntactic schools. This pioneering volume will be of interest not only to syntacticians, but also to second-language researchers and those working on variation in English.

THOMAS HOFFMANN is Assistant Professor of English Linguistics at the University of Osnabrück, Germany. His main research interests are Construction Grammar and the syntactic and phonetic variation in World Englishes. He has co-edited the volume *World Englishes: Problems, Properties and Prospects* (2009; with Lucia Siebers) and together with Graeme Trousdale is currently co-editing the *Oxford Handbook of Construction Grammar.*

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THOMAS HOFFMANN
University of Osnabrück

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Abbreviations

AdjP	Adjective Phrase
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
AVM	Attribute-Value Matrix
BIRM	Birmingham corpus
BNC	British National Corpus
BROWN	Brown Corpus
CFA	Configural Frequency Analysis
CP	Complementizer Phrase
DP	Determiner Phrase
FTF	Fuzzy Tree Fragment
GHFP	Generalized Head Feature Principle
GLM	Generalized Linear Model
HCFA	Hierarchical Configural Frequency Analysis
HPSG	Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar
ICE	International Corpus of English
ICECUP	ICE-GB retrieval software
ICE-EA	International Corpus of English (East Africa)
ICE-GB	International Corpus of English (Great Britain)
ICN	Instant Chunk Number
LF	Logical Form
LLC	London–Lund Corpus
MCN	Mean Chunk Number
ME	Middle English
NP	Noun Phrase
OE	Old English
P	Preposition

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PASS	Passive
PP	Preposition Phrase
PRO	Pronoun
PST	Past (tense)
REL	Relative
SpecC	Specifier of Complementizer Phrase
SpecFocus	Specifier of Focus Phrase
SpecT	Specifier of Tense Phrase
SpecTopic	Specifier of Topic Phrase
V	Verb
VP	Verb Phrase
XP	Unspecified phrase (NP, VP, AdjP, etc.)

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Acknowledgements

> L – – d! said my mother, what is all this story about?——
>
> A COCK and a BULL, said Yorick —— And one of the best of its kind, I ever heard. (Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*)

Hopefully the present book does not turn out to be a 'cock and bull' story but qualifies as valid scientific analysis of preposition placement in English. Also I would not go as far as labelling it 'one of the best of its kind', but the current version is definitely better than any of the earlier drafts. This has to do with the great number of friends and colleagues who constantly provided invaluable feedback and support.

First and foremost, I have to thank Edgar W. Schneider for his continuing support and friendship throughout the various stages of this project. It was he who suggested preposition-stranding as a potential topic for an MA thesis seven years ago, and little did we both realize at the time that it would eventually lead to a PhD thesis and, finally, end up as a book in CUP's *Studies in English Language* series. The relationship between my MA and PhD theses can probably be best described as loose family resemblance: both deal with preposition-stranding, but while the former limited itself to relative clauses, the PhD investigated all constructions exhibiting the phenomenon in present-day English. Furthermore, in contrast to the MA study, for the PhD thesis I corroborated corpus data with psycholinguistic experiments and focused not only on British English but compared it to the second-language variety of English spoken in Kenya. Finally, while the syntactic description of preposition placement in my MA thesis was couched in arcane Minimalist Program terminology, the PhD opted for an arcane Construction Grammar analysis. From this short overview of the numerous changes that the work has undergone in the past few years it will be obvious that supervising my theses was not an easy task. Edgar, however, put up with all these linguistic mood swings. In addition to having him as my thesis supervisor, for the past five years I have also had the pleasure of working for Edgar's research team. Both as a supervisor and as a boss he not only allowed me a great deal of freedom to pursue my own linguistic research, but also offered support whenever I needed it (be it for grant applications or comments on earlier

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