One of the most intriguing features of languages is that speakers can produce novel grammatical utterances that they have never heard before. Consequently, most linguists agree that the mental grammars of speakers are complex systems that must be more abstract than the input they are exposed to. Yet linguists differ as to how general and abstract speakers’ mental representations have to be to allow this grammatical creativity. This book addresses this issue by empirically investigating one specific construction, English comparative correlatives (e.g., *the more you eat, the fatter you’ll get*). Drawing on authentic corpus data from Old English to Present-day English varieties around the world, it shows how input frequency and domain-general cognitive principles affect the complex mental network of constructions that underlies speakers’ linguistic behaviour. This pioneering and original study will be of interest to scholars and students of English syntax and English historical linguistics.

Thomas Hoffmann is Professor and Chair of English Language and Linguistics at the Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. He is author of *Preposition Placement in English* (2011, Cambridge) and he is currently writing a textbook, *Construction Grammar: The Structure of English*, for the Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics series.
The aim of this series is to provide a framework for original studies of English, both present-day and past. All books are based securely on empirical research and represent theoretical and descriptive contributions to our knowledge of national and international varieties of English, both written and spoken. The series covers a broad range of topics and approaches, including syntax, phonology, grammar, vocabulary, discourse, pragmatics and sociolinguistics, and is aimed at an international readership.

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ENGLISH COMPARATIVE CORRELATIVES

Diachronic and Synchronic Variation at the Lexicon–Syntax Interface

THOMAS HOFFMANN

Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt
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<td>ADVP</td>
<td>adverb phrase</td>
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<tr>
<td>AmE</td>
<td>American English</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUX</td>
<td>auxiliary</td>
</tr>
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<td>BrE</td>
<td>British English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BROWN</td>
<td>Brown Corpus of American English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>independent/protasis clause</td>
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<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>dependent/apodosis clause</td>
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<td>C1/C2</td>
<td>C2C1 clause order</td>
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<td>CMEPV</td>
<td>Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse</td>
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<tr>
<td>COCA</td>
<td>Corpus of Contemporary American English</td>
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<td>COMP</td>
<td>complementizer</td>
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<td>CPR</td>
<td>comparative</td>
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<td>Deg Head</td>
<td>degree head</td>
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<td>DegP</td>
<td>degree phrase</td>
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<td>DM</td>
<td>Dynamic Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTRS</td>
<td>daughters (feature)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as First Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIL</td>
<td>English as International Language</td>
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<td>EModE</td>
<td>Early Modern English</td>
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<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as Second Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLOB</td>
<td>Freiburg-LOB Corpus of British English</td>
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<td>FROWN</td>
<td>Freiburg-Brown Corpus of American English</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCFA</td>
<td>Hierarchical Configural Frequency Analysis</td>
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<td>International Corpus of English</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDG</td>
<td>indigenous</td>
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<tr>
<td>L1</td>
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<td>LIMAS</td>
<td>Linguistics and Automatic Language Processing Corpus, German</td>
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### List of Abbreviations

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<td>LOB</td>
<td>Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus of British English</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Middle English</td>
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<tr>
<td>MGG</td>
<td>Mainstream Generative Grammar</td>
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<td>MTR</td>
<td>mother (feature)</td>
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<td>Sign-Based Construction Grammar</td>
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<td>specifier of quantifier phrase</td>
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<td>settler/ colonizer</td>
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<td>Universal Grammar</td>
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