

THE PREPOSITIONS` POSITIONING IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DISCOURSE AND THEIR MANIPULATIVE FUNCTIONS

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ABSTRACT. This research examines the positioning of prepositions in the English subordinate clauses, specifically comparing the syntactic constructions of "pied piping" and "preposition stranding". The study aims to identify the factors influencing the choice between these variants from the point of view of their manipulative functions through a corpus-based analysis of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), focusing on the preposition *with* across journalistic and conversational styles. The study analyzes texts from 1990 to the present across conversational and journalistic genres. The preposition *with* was selected as the primary material for induction due to its high level of variability in both syntactic constructions. The research employed methods of induction, functional analysis, and contrastive analysis to process approximately 500 samples, manually selecting 100 examples of each construction for the detailed examination.

KEY WORDS: prepositions` positioning, the English language discourse, manipulative functions, "pied piping", "preposition stranding".

INTRODUCTION. The preposition as a functional part of speech serves as a weighty unifying element for linking other language units in the phrase and sentence.

During philological studies of English prepositions, scientists mostly concentrate on the classification and correct usage of prepositions in certain language constructions in connection with numerous differences between prepositional constructions in English. In turn, contemporary researchers prefer to study other aspects of the English grammar, which demonstrate greater variability among native speakers, for example, in different dialects or styles of speech. However, several philological studies at the beginning of this century raised the problem of the positionality of English prepositions, which to this day among scientists contained a considerable amount of variability in the study of English as a foreign language.

The **object** of the study is the positioning of prepositions in the English language from the point of view of their manipulative functions; the **subject** is the factors that influence the choice of preposition placement in subordinate clauses, as well as the range of variability between the two options for their positioning in the English discourse.

The **material** of the study is the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), which includes texts from various genres and styles spanning from 1990 to the present.

The **aim** of the study is to identify the features of preposition positioning in subordinate clauses of the English language based on the material of the Corpus of Contemporary American English, using methods of corpus linguistics.

The following **methods** were employed during the study: induction, literature analysis, comparison, classification, contrastive analysis, and functional analysis.

The practical significance of the research results lies in expanding the field of linguistic studies on the given topic and improving and detailing the material presented during the study of English as a foreign language, particularly concerning the usage of prepositions in both written and spoken communication.

LITERATURE SURVEY. In the subordinate sentences of the English language there are two ways of placing the preposition. First, the preposition may precede the relative pronoun *who*, *what*, *which*, or *whom*. In this case, the design is called "pied piping" (the term was proposed by John Ross in 1967) (23). Secondly, the preposition can stand at the end of a subordinate sentence (thus

forming a construction with the so-called "preposition stranding") (18, p. 258). Examples (1) and (2) demonstrate how the same sentence can be constructed using one of these syntactic constructions:

(1) *I saw a man with whom I used to work.*

(2) *I saw a man whom I used to work with.*

However, for the most part, the indicated positional variants of the preposition are not used interchangeably, therefore, the usage of only one of them will be considered correct. Hoffman notes that "the range of variability in the positioning of prepositions in relative clauses is strictly limited", and points out that among the cases where both syntactic constructions "pied piping" and "preposition stranding" can be used in a subordinate clause, only in 30% of such clauses the speaker can make an equally correct choice, while in all other cases only one of them will be correct (18, p. 288-289).

Roselyne Adejare explored the positionality of prepositions within the Nigerian dialect of English, comparing academic writing and popular literature. Although her research was quite narrow in scope due to the chosen dialect, its results demonstrated several general trends. It turned out that in academic writing, prepositional constructions with "pied piping" predominated, being used in 78% of sentences, whereas in popular literature, these syntactic constructions were used with approximately equal frequency (7, p. 54).

In 1998, after conducting a similar study, Johansson and Geisler found that in cases of variability, speakers tended to choose "pied piping." Moreover, they suggested that "pied piping occurs much more frequently in speech than is commonly believed," while the "preposition stranding" construction was found in only 20% of cases. Thus, "pied piping" can be considered "the more common option even in conversational texts" (21, p. 79).

The relevance of the topic of the work lies in the fact that the study of preposition positioning offers a new perspective for linguistic research, which first emerged at the beginning of the 20th century in the works of K. Johansson, K. Geisler, J. Trotta, and T. Hoffman, and later continued to develop in the studies of R. Adejare (7), K. Günther (16), J. Saravanan (24), and others.

VARIABILITY IN PREPOSITION POSITIONING. After analyzing the previous research by N. Hornstein, E. Weinberg, and J. Trotta, Thomas Hoffman gathered the majority of the factors influencing the choice of preposition positioning and classified them into categories that promoted the usage of either "pied piping," "stranding," or allow for the equivalent usage of both constructions, thus exhibiting variability. Summarizing Hoffman's conclusions and supplementing them with the results of studies by S. Grice, K. Günther, K. Johansson, K. Geisler, and J. Ross, we grouped the factors of variability in prepositional constructions into three categories, described below.

1. Factors that necessitate the obligatory usage of "pied piping" in a subordinate clause:

a) Prepositions that cannot form a construction with "preposition stranding," such as certain prepositions of time (e.g., during), place (beyond, under, underneath), manner (by means of), as well as concessive prepositions (because of, due to, owing to, in spite of).

(1) *The lecture during which John finished his homework.*

(2) *The lecture which John finished his homework during.*

(3) *I can't believe the conditions under which people have to work.*

(4) *I can't believe the conditions which people have to work under (18, p. 268).*

In examples 1 and 3, we see the normative usage of prepositions with the "pied piping" construction, while in sentences 2 and 4, we observe grammatically incorrect prepositional constructions using "preposition stranding."

b) Several nouns that precede the preposition and require the obligatory usage of "pied piping," such as manner, way, degree, extent, sense, moment, time, point, etc. A comparison of examples 5 and 6 demonstrates how incorrect the usage of the "stranding" construction can be with one of the aforementioned nouns.

(5) *The degree to which a school does or doesn't have immigrants is irrelevant.*

(6) *The degree which a school does or doesn't have immigrants to is irrelevant (18, p. 269).*

c) Four types of prepositional phrases that express:

- frequency (most often this group is expressed by the nouns *period* and *frequency*).

(7) *We are proposing that in the future irretrievable breakdown should be shown by the lapse of a minimum period of twelve months [during which] the couple would be expected to consider what arrangements should be made in the event of their actually being divorced.*

(8) *After all we are throwing away forty-five years of experience in the postwar period [in which] we have faced dictator after dictator... (18, p. 272)*

The usage of the "preposition stranding" construction in such phrases would be grammatically incorrect: "...the post-war period which we have faced dictator after dictator in..."

- method of action (the most common noun is way).

(9) *I'm not really concerned so much with meaning but the ways [in which] satire is achieved (18, p. 270).*

- interconnection (mostly expressed by the preposition *under*).

(10) *Will he undertake to look at this manner with a view to improving the regime [under which] they seek jobs (18, p. 270).*

- degree (such phrases are constructed using only four nouns: *extent, rate, degree, and amount*).

(11) *That is a very encouraging development and does very clearly demonstrate the extent [to which] employers have increasingly accepted responsibilities in the field of short-term sickness (18, p. 273).*

d) The complexity and semantic load of the sentence.

In some studies, it is asserted that the loading of a subordinate clause with lexical units, complex constructions, or long phrases favors the predominant use of "pied piping." Such a choice is determined by the significant distance of the preposition from the relative pronoun:

(12) *But questions with which committee members taunted bankers appearing as witnesses left little doubt that they will recommend passage of it.*

(13) *But questions which committee members taunted bankers appearing as witnesses with left little doubt.*

(14) *But the questions which he taunted us with left little doubt (18, p. 274).*

Example 12 demonstrates a grammatically correct subordinate clause constructed using the "pied piping" construction, while example 13, which employs "preposition stranding," requires correction: due to the large number of lexical units, the reader loses the semantic connection between the pronoun "which" and the preposition "with." However, if the subordinate clause is significantly simplified, as shown in example 14, the usage of the "stranding" construction will again be grammatically correct.

Despite sufficient arguments regarding the significance of the complexity of the subordinate clause in the choice of preposition positioning, T. Hoffman found in his study that "this factor does not exert an independent influence on preposition positioning" and plays a significant role only in conjunction with other factors (18, p. 274-279). Therefore, in our research, we paid special attention to this factor to confirm or refute T. Hoffman's assumption.

Factors that necessitate the obligatory usage of "stranding" in a subordinate clause:

a) Prepositions that are a part of long expressions consisting of several words, such as phrasal verbs, for example, fix N up with, put N down to, let N in on, put N up to.

(15) *The old car which we fobbed him off with.*

(16) *The old car with which we fobbed him off (18, p. 269).*

Examples 15 and 16 illustrate how the usage of the grammatical construction "pied piping" with the phrasal verb "to fob off with" distorts the correctness of the subordinate clause.

Furthermore, Johansson and Geisler note that obligatory "preposition stranding" is also required by "idiomatic constructions consisting of a verb, particle, and preposition, such as the phrase 'to (get) rid of smth.'"

(17) *... a really old Victorian suite which we got rid of.*

(18) *... a really old Victorian suite of which we got rid (21, p. 77).*

b) The usage of the pronoun "that" or the so-called "zero relativizer" (the absence of the pronoun itself, denoted by the symbol "Ø").

While subordinate clauses using relative pronouns such as who, what, which, or whom generally allow for both "pied piping" and "preposition stranding," in the absence of such a pronoun or when using "that," the second prepositional construction automatically becomes the only correct and grammatically accurate option. Incorrect variants in the examples below are marked with an asterisk.

(19) *They found the knife that the victim had been killed with.*

(20) *They found the knife with that the victim had been killed.*

(21) *They found the knife Ø the victim had been killed with.*

(22) *They found the knife with Ø the victim had been killed (18, p. 258).*

c) Non-restrictive subordinate clauses.

The pronoun "that" and the "zero relativizer" are not used in non-restrictive relative clauses, which provide additional information to the main clause. Thus, the sentence "Kyiv, that has a population of about 2.8 million, is the largest Ukrainian city" would be grammatically incorrect (it can be corrected by replacing "that" with "which"). Therefore, in subordinate clauses of this type with relative pronouns who, what, which, and whom, or the so-called "wh-relativizers," only the "preposition stranding" construction is used:

(23) *Yesterday I met John, who I'm very fond of (18, p. 262).*

Factors that promote variability in preposition positioning:

a) The "mixed" group of prepositional constructions. Joseph Trotta identified categories of prepositional constructions that allow for both "pied piping" and "stranding." Specifically:

- prepositional constructions of place and direction;

(24) *The grass on which they walked was just planted.*

(25) *The grass which they walked on was just planted.*

(26) *The bank to which he was rushing was closed.*

(27) *The bank which he was rushing to was closed (25, p. 182).*

- prepositional constructions expressing accompaniment or the instrument used;

(28) *The group with which I came here has disappeared.*

(29) *The group which I came here with has disappeared.*

(30) *There are many tools with which you can skin a cat.*

(31) *There are many tools which you can skin a cat with (25, p. 182-183).*

b) Writing or speaking style.

According to prescriptivist teachings, some of its representatives believe that "ending a sentence with a preposition is incorrect" (22, p. 627). However, in modern grammatical guides, such a strict rule is absent. Instead, the choice between the constructions "pied piping" and "stranding" usually depends on the style: "pied piping" is recommended for use in formal and scientific contexts, emphasizing the formality of the expression, while "stranding" is suitable for conversational or literary styles.

PREPOSITIONAL POSITIONING IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE. Every day, the number of people learning English as an international language is growing steadily. Along with native speakers, these learners share the version of the grammar they have learnt based on the teaching materials they have used or from teachers who have used certain methods. Let's look at how the topic of prepositional positionality is covered in grammar reference books and exam preparation materials compiled by native speakers and domestic authors.

The Cambridge Grammar of English: a Comprehensive Guide is considered to be one of the most famous and reliable sources of learning English grammar. In addition to categorizing prepositions into simple and compound ones, explaining how prepositions are related to other parts of speech, describing the direct and figurative meanings of prepositions and the functions of prepositional structures in a sentence, this English grammar guide introduces the construction of prepositional stranding. The authors note: "Classical textbooks often advise against ending a sentence with a preposition, avoiding "stranding". However, the problem of using prepositions is much more complicated than it may seem. The authors argue that preposition stranding is used in special questions, subordinate clauses, indirect special questions, sentences using the passive voice or

infinitive constructions, giving the following examples:

(32) *Who did you talk **to**?* (special question)

(33) *It's the only garage which we have any confidence **in*** (subordinate clause)

(34) *Tell me what they are so afraid **of*** (indirect special question)

(35) *It's being looked **into*** (passive voice)

(36) *It's too slippery to walk **on*** (infinitive construction) (10, p. 468-469).

In addition, the guide notes that the construction 'preposition stranding' is widely used in informal styles of speech, while in texts of the opposite style the preposition is not detached from the relative pronoun (however, the authors do not use the term 'pied piping').

(37) *He is the officer we'd been talking **with*** (informal)

(38) *He is the officer **with whom** we'd been talking* (formal) (10, p. 469).

Some prepositions, according to the authors, are still not used with the 'stranding' construction. They cite *during* and *since* as examples.

(39) ***During which of the terms** did it happen, spring or autumn?*

(40) ***Which** of the terms did it happen **during**?* (marked as a false option) (10, p. 469).

In contrast, reference books by some authors pay much less attention to the topic of prepositional positionality, and the factors of variability often differ in different teaching materials or contain simplified and not always correct explanations of the choice of one of the positional options.

Describing the prepositions of the English language, O. Chernenko focused on the general characteristics and types of prepositions in terms of structure and meaning with a detailed description of each category, as well as examples of the use of other parts of speech with prepositions and stable prepositional phrases and expressions. The author also gives an overview of the place of a preposition in a sentence, noting the following: "In questions, the preposition can be placed at the end of the sentence or at the beginning:

- Where did she come *from*?
- Which school did you go *to*?
- *To* whom did you give your number?

The preposition can also be used at the end of an exclamatory sentence and in passive constructions:

- That's what she's talking *about*!
- She doesn't like to be shouted *at*. (6, p. 35-36).

G. Verba and L. Verba in their 'Grammar of Modern English' note that 'a preposition in English can stand not only before the word to which it refers, but also at the end of a sentence or infinitive clause.' (2, p. 176). According to the authors, this construction is used in the following cases:

a) At the end of direct and indirect questions, if the preposition refers to 'who(m)', 'what', 'which' and 'where':

(41) *What are they talking **about**?*

(42) *You don't know what you are talking **about**.*

However, if the preposition refers to the pronouns 'whom', 'what', 'which', it can also come before them:

(43) ***About** what are you talking?*

(44) *You don't know **about** what you are talking.*

But the variant with the preposition at the end is more common, especially in oral speech. (2, p. 176).

b) At the end of indicative subordinate clauses with the pronouns 'whom' and 'which'

(45) *The poem **which** you are talking about was written in the war years.*

'Pied piping' (the authors do not mention this term) is mentioned here as a possible option, but 'unless a connecting pronoun is used, the preposition can only be placed at the end of a subordinate clause':

(46) *He is not the man I am looking **for**.*

c) With a verb in the passive voice

(47) *This fellow is very much talked **about**.*

d) At the end of an infinitive phrase that serves as a determiner:

(48) *I'll give you the money to go back with* (2, p. 177).

Let's also look at the study materials for preparing for some exams, namely the comprehensive edition for the 2014 external independent assessment. In addition to general information about the preposition, the authors note the following: 'A preposition can be placed at the end of a sentence, especially an interrogative sentence, if it is used with the pronouns who/whom, what, which or with the adverb where.'

(49) *What are you looking at?*

(50) *What did you talk about?* (1, p. 60).

Thus, summarising the explanations of the preposition position in grammar dictionaries by authors, we can assume that in the process of learning and teaching a language as a foreign language, most attention is paid to the correct usage of certain categories of prepositions. However, even if the positional nature of this part of speech is mentioned in teaching materials, the explanations are mostly simplified and generalised to make it easier for readers to understand the material. In foreign literature, by contrast, this topic is discussed in a somewhat more extensive and detailed manner.

A PRACTICAL STUDY OF THE POSITIONAL NATURE OF PREPOSITIONS. The analysis of previous studies by different authors has shown that one of the key factors that directly affect the positionality of a preposition in a subordinate clause is the style of speech or writing, namely, how formal or colloquial the discourse is.

However, from the point of view of the level of formality, the media are of particular interest. Often, different types of media (television versus social media news), newspapers (tabloids versus broadsheets) or even articles within the same news service (depending on the subject matter) can have different levels of formality.

In addition, the media, especially online news, is actively used by pupils and students as a source of normative language with relevant advanced-level vocabulary and the usage of various grammatical structures, as well as by student translators who practice translating authentic texts of various subjects. The news also has a direct impact on the usage of English in general, as the number of people learning and using English as a foreign language is steadily increasing.

The above factors suggest that the usage of ' pied piping' or 'stranding' in news may differ from the results of previous studies and influence the prevalence of these syntactic constructions in general. Thus, using the materials of the corpus of modern American English, we will try to investigate the usage of two variants of prepositional positioning in online news, their correlation and the factors influencing the choice of one of them in writing or in spoken language, comparing the results with spoken discourse.

The choice of the American English corpus is due to the variety of genres, among which the spoken section and the news section contain an equally rich base on which to conduct research. In addition, the Corpus of Contemporary American English includes modern grammatical constructions and lexical items that have appeared in recent decades, such as the so-called 'like constructions'. Thus, with the help of such a corpus, it is possible to trace the latest trends in the variation of prepositional positionality.

According to Roselyn Adedjare (7, p. 40-410) some prepositions can facilitate the usage or even determine the usage of only one of the positional variants, so for the study we chose only one preposition 'with', which demonstrates variability and is used both with the construction ' pied piping' and 'stranding'. Let us take a look at the methodology of our study.

Firstly, search queries were made in the English corpus to demonstrate the usage of 'prepositional pied piping' ('with_pnq', where the second character denotes relative pronouns - the so-called 'whrelativizers') and 'prepositional stranding' ('with_PUNC' - the corpus finds all cases where a preposition is followed by a punctuation mark, i.e. either the whole sentence or its subordinate clause ends with a preposition).

Secondly, having received the search results for both of the above queries, up to 500 samples were reviewed. The technological difficulty was that it was quite difficult to formulate the query more precisely and to get a specific prepositional construction that would meet our requirements.

For example, by searching for ‘with PUNC’, among the sentences we needed, we also got several dozen cases in which the preposition was followed by direct speech, but the preposition itself was not preceded by a construction with ‘stranding’ (the search included quotation marks as punctuation marks, because it is currently impossible to make a more specific query and reject only some of the selected categories for technical reasons).

Therefore, the next step was to manually select 100 examples for each query that actually contained grammatical constructions with ‘pied piping’ and ‘stranding’. The selected samples (100 examples of ‘pied piping’ and ‘stranding’ in the news section and the same number in the colloquial texts) were then analysed to exclude those in which only one variant of the preposition position could be used. To determine which of the samples demonstrate variability, we used the categories collected from the studies of previous authors, described in the first subsection of the first chapter.

Finally, after collecting and analysing 100 samples each, some categories (such as question sentences and quotes) were extracted from those showing variability to look at the factors that influence variability. Let us consider the results for each of the prepositional constructions separately.

□ **Preposition pied piping**

Among the samples with this variant of positionality, only the relative pronoun whom was found in all cases. Out of 100 samples from the section with colloquial texts, 68 showed variability (i.e. these sentences could be reworked using the construction ‘stranding’), and thus ‘pied piping’ was chosen intentionally in these samples. Four of the above sentences were interrogative:

(51) *With whom was Johnny having an affair?* (COCA 230090)

In addition, after analysing the factors that influenced the choice of a particular construction in the selected samples, it was found that in 30 selected samples, the replacement of ‘pied piping’ with ‘stranding’ was impossible precisely because of the load of lexical items or grammatical turns of phrase in the sentence. Most of them were time and place circumstances; massive constructions with the use of nominalisation or gerunds; vocabulary that supplemented what was said with precise information, such as proper names or numerals; and various parts of speech that expressed additional details to the main idea of the sentence (these elements of the semantic load of the text are underlined in the examples).

(52) *Yolanda is not sure, she says, whether she got the virus from her former husband or from the only other man **with whom** she has had relations in the past decade.* (COCA 235250).

(53) *We have friends **with whom** we share values in Europe and Asia* (COCA 4030124).

(54) *A lot of businesses are coming here to sort of underwrite lunches with Congresspeople and so on **with whom** they will expect to have legislation or will have to deal at some point* (COCA 176168).

(55) *Congress wants to know the identity of the people from outside the government **with whom** the vice president’s energy commission conferred in developing your energy plan* (COCA 16286).

(56) *Jonathan Winters’ improvisation helped inspire the work of Robin Williams, **with whom** he briefly played in “Mork and Mindy”* (COCA 146990).

In the section of media texts, 44 out of 100 selected sentences demonstrated variability, where only one was an interrogative. In 49 out of 100 samples, the use of stranding was not possible due to the complexity and semantic load of the sentence, similar to the results of the spoken section. Instead, in the news texts, the complexity of the samples was due to the use of time, place and reason circumstances, additional subordinate clauses, as well as various constructions that added additional information to the sentence.

(57) *Dykes, police say, then killed Mr. Poland and grabbed Ethan, **with whom** he then escaped to a home-dug 8-by-6-foot bunker in a rural area nearby* (COCA 4129478).

□ **“Preposition stranding”**

In linguistics, preposition stranding occurs when a preposition is left "hanging" at the end of a clause because its object has been moved or omitted. While often criticized by prescriptivists, it

serves several powerful manipulative and pragmatic functions in communication.

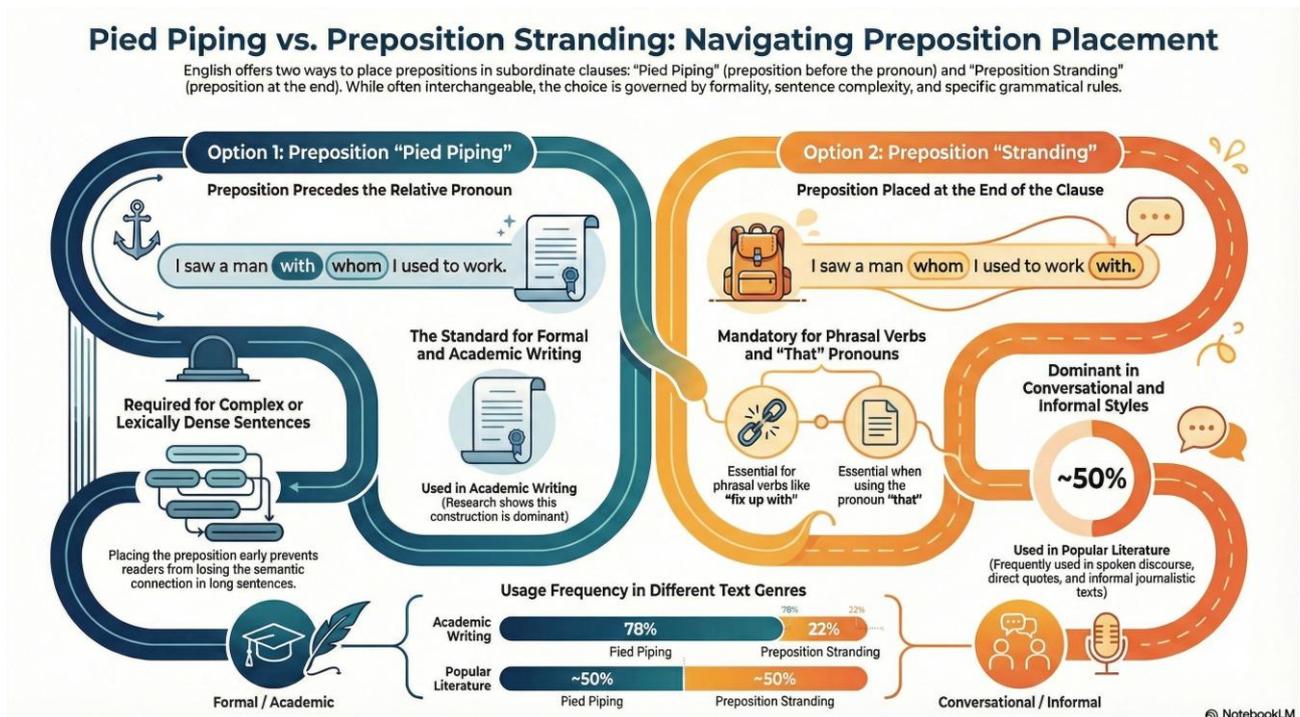
Most of the samples that were excluded from the study as not showing variability contained phrasal verbs (*come up with, deal with, to get along with, to come to terms with, end up with*), which in this study turned out to be one of the key factors requiring the use of the stranding construction exclusively.

In the spoken section of the corpus, only 13 out of 100 samples showed variability, 6 of which were interrogative sentences. The most frequently used relative pronouns in these samples were ‘who’ and ‘what’, while the pronoun ‘which’ was used only twice. By stranding the preposition, we isolate the object, making it the undeniable center of attention and it serves a manipulative function.

(58) *What age group do you work with?* (COCA 140897)

In the news section, 7 out of 100 examples showed variability, with only 1 of the sentences being interrogative. In addition, all seven samples were direct speech or quotes. Among the relative pronouns, ‘who(m)’ was used most often, followed by ‘what’ and ‘which’. As in the colloquial texts, in the news section, the samples using the ‘stranding’ construction were not distinguished by complexity and semantic load: two or three words were usually used after the relative pronoun, as in the example below, where three subordinate clauses using the ‘preposition stranding’ are presented in a row. In this case, the relative pronoun was separated from the preposition by a personal pronoun and a verb. The principle of end weight suggests that complex or "heavy" information should come at the end of a sentence to make it easier to process. Preposition stranding allows the speaker to keep the "light" preposition at the end while clearing the middle of the sentence for more complex ideas, it prevents the sentence from becoming "top-heavy" or clunky, subtly guiding the reader's processing speed.

(59) *A good part of what we do, who we purchase from, who we work with, who we sell to, includes spectrum of companies from large to small* (COCA 3068982).



Picture 1. "Navigating Preposition Placement"

Thus, according to the results of the study (Picture 1), a smaller percentage of intentional choice of the ‘preposition pied piping’ construction in cases of variability is observed in spoken discourse. Despite the diversity of topics in articles, interviews or other types of information presentation in the media, the authors of news texts mostly use ‘pied piping’. The use of the phrase ‘stranding’ did not show any significant differences between texts of different styles, but the use of this construction was mainly due to the factors mentioned in the first subsection of the first chapter.

CONCLUSIONS. Through the analysis of previous studies, it was possible to identify three main categories, namely the factors that contributed to the usage of exclusively ‘preposition pied piping’, ‘preposition stranding’, as well as those that allowed for variability in the choice of prepositional constructions.

The analysis of educational and methodological literature has shown that the coverage of the topic of preposition positionality differs depending on how close the grammatical construction of a foreign language is to similar constructions in the native language of students. Due to the fact that not all languages are a priori characterized by the construction ‘preposition stranding’, its usage and distinction from ‘pied piping’ requires more attention, detailed explanations and visual demonstration of the usage of both constructions in colloquial, official business or journalistic discourses.

The study of prepositions in texts of two different styles has shown that, with a slight advantage, ‘pied piping’ is still used more often in journalistic news texts and even in oral interviews. However, at the same time, the media texts also use the phrase ‘stranding’ with a fairly high frequency, which indicates the versatility of news discourse and the potential of its usage for learning English or translation practice as it demonstrates the usage of different grammatical constructions in various life situations, from everyday conversations (through quotes and direct speech) to official business texts and interviews. The preposition stranding serves a manipulative function. It is used to “soften” a command or a statement. By separating the preposition from its object, the speaker creates a slight delay in the completion of the thought, which can make a confrontation feel less “pointed” than the formal alternative.

FUNDING. This research is part of the project *Innovative Technologies of the Mass Consciousness Manipulation: A Polyparadigmatic Linguistic Dimension*, Reg. No. 0124U004832, funded by the National Research Foundation of Ukraine.

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