

LONGMAN

GRAMMAR

of SPOKEN

and WRITTEN

ENGLISH

Douglas Biber
Stig Johansson
Geoffrey Leech
Susan Conrad
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FOREWORD BY
Randolph Quirk



Pearson Education Limited
Edinburgh Gate
Harlow
Essex CM20 2JE
England
and Associated Companies throughout the world.

Visit our website: <http://www.longman-elt.com/dictionaries>

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First published 1999
Second impression 1999

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ISBN 0 582 237254

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Longman grammar of spoken and written English / Douglas Biber . . . [et al.];
foreword by Randolph Quirk.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-582-23725-4 (hardcover)

1. English language—Grammar. I. Biber, Douglas.

PE1112.L66 1999

428.2—dc21

99-29033

CIP

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from
the British Library.

Designed by First Edition, London
Set in Minion and Helvetica by Mendip Communications Limited,
Frome, Somerset
Printed in China

Foreword

Douglas Biber and his numerous colleagues are to be congratulated on a book so replete with interesting and innovative features, not least by way of frequency data. For anyone planning corpus-based grammatical study, of any language on earth, the *LGSWE* will rapidly establish itself as indispensable. And since any such study must inevitably involve collaborative teamwork, some examination of Biber's management skills in organizing this huge enterprise will not come amiss either, given the size and diversity of the American and British corpora analysed and the need to coordinate the activity at centres many thousands of kilometres apart.

The co-authors were lucky in being led by a man of such determination, vision, energy, and fine track record in corpus theory and computational practice. But Biber was lucky in his co-authors, too. There was his Arizona colleague, Susan Conrad, who, in addition to a major contribution to the actual writing, invested much time and energy in the relevant research from the earliest stages of the project. There was also, far away in Scandinavia, the highly experienced grammarian, Stig Johansson, who played a key role in the research, planning, and writing. And Biber was especially lucky in having as his partner in the massive task, both of general design and of implementing detailed insights, a scholar of Geoffrey Leech's stature in the fields of semantics, pragmatics, grammatology, and computational linguistics.

Randolph Quirk
University College London
March 1999

Abbreviations and symbols

ACAD	academic prose
AmE	American English
A	adverbial
A _c	circumstance adverbial
A _l	linking adverbial
A _s	stance adverbial
BrE	British English
CGEL	R. Quirk et al., <i>A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language</i>
CONV	conversation
FICT	fiction writing
LDOCE	<i>Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English</i>
LSWE Corpus	Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus
NEWS	news writing
O	object
O _d	direct object
O _i	indirect object
O _p	prepositional object
P	predicative
P _o	object predicative
P _s	subject predicative
S	subject
v.	versus (<i>i.e.</i> contrasted with)
V	verb (phrase)
()	parentheses () enclose an optional part of an example or a formula
<...>	an omitted section of a corpus example
<->	the location of ellipsis (in an example)
<sic>	(in an example) confirmation that the example is accurately reproduced: e.g. <i>Dicken's <sic> famous novel</i>
< >	an editorial comment on an example: e.g. <unclear>
[]	brackets [] in an example enclose either: (a) a grammatically defined constituent, such as a phrase or a clause, or (b) a part of an example highlighted for attention. Primary highlighting is signalled by bold face and secondary highlighting by [].
-	in transcribed speech, a dash at the end of a word signals that it is incomplete, <i>i.e.</i> is a word fragment: e.g. <i>thi-</i> , <i>this</i>
-	in transcribed speech, a dash signals a pause
*	unacceptable: e.g. * <i>They needed not leave.</i>
?	marginally acceptable: e.g. ? <i>a most promising pupil of hers</i>
?*	on the boundary of unacceptability: e.g. ?* <i>excuse me a little</i>
†	truncated example

Preface

Since its planning first began in 1992, this book has gone through a complex process of gestation involving many kinds of collaborative work—computational, editorial, and authorial. The research-based work required for this project has been on a scale probably unmatched in the writing of any previous grammar of the English language. As authors, we ourselves have individually played somewhat varied roles in the research project and the writing of the book. Further, we were aided from the start by the dedicated efforts of several research assistants, and at various points along the way helped by the expertise of academic reviewers and advisers, as well as editors and publishers. In this Preface we briefly explain our own individual roles in the work, and pay tribute to the many friends and associates to whom we owe a great deal for their valued aid and support.

As for our contributions as authors, it should be explained that, although each author took on individual responsibility for the initial drafting of specific chapters, the chapter drafts subsequently went through a number of stages of redrafting and editing. The result is that the volume as it stands is the joint responsibility of all authors. For the record, however, we identify here the author or authors principally associated with each chapter: Chapter 1: DB; Chapters 2, 3, and 4: SJ; Chapters 5 and 6: DB; Chapter 7: EF (first draft), DB, and SC; Chapters 8 and 9: DB; Chapter 10: SC; Chapter 11: SJ; Chapters 12 and 13: DB; Chapter 14: EF (first draft), GL; Appendix: DB. In later stages, GL and DB assumed primary editorial responsibility for the whole book, while DB worked with Meg Davies on the conceptual index and with Jenia Walter and Victoria Clark on the lexical index.

The initial three or four years of the project were largely taken up with planning and research. Authorial/editorial meetings took place at Cambridge, London, Feusisberg (Switzerland), Flagstaff (Arizona), and Lancaster. DB, as lead author, took on the principal role of organizing and directing the corpus investigations at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, on which most of the quantitative information in this grammar is based. At the same time, other authors had access to the LSWE Corpus at their own universities, and were able to undertake their own corpus-based research at their home site. Although the authors were widely separated in geographical terms, they kept in close and detailed contact throughout the project by electronic mail and other means. *The work of the international team was thus well balanced and integrated in terms of the spread of effort between North America and Europe.*

One curious minor dilemma which the team faced, in trying to produce a book giving equal weight to American and British English, was in the choice of spelling standard: should we adopt British or American spelling conventions? Either choice would appear to contravene the ideal of an objectively international view of the English language. In the end we resorted to a chapter-by-chapter solution to this dilemma: each chapter was printed in accordance with the spelling conventions adopted by its main author or authors.

At Northern Arizona University, in addition to the growing contribution of Susan Conrad (who began as a research assistant but became a co-author during the course of the book's composition), very important contributions to the research project were made by Marie Helt and Erika Konrad, who became key members of the Arizona project team. In addition, Marie's PhD research on discourse markers provided a significant intellectual input to Chapter 14. Other contributions were made by Susan Carkin, Sarah

Rilling, Jennifer Rey, and Jena Burges. Also at NAU, Jenia Walter and Victoria Clark helped with the compilation of the lexical index.

At an early stage in the preparation of the book, the authors benefited from the comments of distinguished academics who reviewed the plan, and read one or two ‘trial’ chapters: Florent Aarts, Paul Bruthiaux, Paul J. Hopper, Yoshihiko Ikegami, Graeme Kennedy, Christian Mair, Keith Mitchell, Randolph Quirk (Lord Quirk), Jan Svartvik, and Michael Stubbs. We also received valuable comments from Bengt Altenberg and Gunnel Tottie, who read draft versions of individual chapters. (Bengt’s online *ICAME* Bibliography also provided us with an extremely useful starting point for our own Bibliography.) At a later stage, pre-final draft chapters were presented to the Longman Lindex Advisory Committee, where again a strong impetus to improve the book’s content and presentation was provided by valuable and (often) trenchant critiques from a group of leading British linguists, under the chairmanship of Lord Quirk: Rod Bolitho, Gillian Brown, David Crystal, Philip Scholfield, Katie Wales, John Wells, and Yorick Wilks. Alan Tonkyn offered useful advice and information on C-units (Chapter 14).

Our indebtedness to Lord Quirk goes further: we acknowledge our debt to *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, by Randolph Quirk, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik (Longman, 1985), as a previous large-scale grammar of English from which we have taken inspiration for a project of similar scope. From *CGEL* we have also borrowed, with few exceptions, the grammatical framework of concepts and terminology which has provided the present book with its descriptive apparatus. While advances in corpus technology have allowed us to go beyond *CGEL* in important ways—particularly in the exemplification and quantitative investigation of grammar across different language varieties, spoken and written—*CGEL*’s attention to detail and comprehensive coverage is something to which this grammar does not attempt to aspire. In many ways, the two grammars complement rather than compete with each other.

To one member of the Lindex advisory committee we owe a special debt—Philip Scholfield, who, when the book was being assembled for publication, went through it with a fine-tooth comb in his capacity as editor for style and presentation. This reference to ‘style and presentation’ does not adequately represent Philip’s contribution, which led to much redrafting in the interests of consistency of style, terminology, layout, and level of detail. We also owe a special debt to Meg Davies for assuming primary responsibility for the conceptual index and compiling the index under very strict time constraints.

Finally we take the opportunity of this Preface to pay tribute to members of the Longman staff and editorial team who have steered this project from its inception to the final stages of publication. Sheila Dallas, although she came late to the project, played a crucial role in seeing the book from final draft stage through several proofs into print: she dedicated herself to the success of the project, working beyond the call of duty to get chapters edited to strict deadlines. Adam Gadsby, the publisher in charge of this book project from beginning to end, was a dependable and supportive colleague, motivating us through thick and thin in the progress of the book. He not only kept us on track organizationally, but also contributed a great deal to the conceptual development of the grammar. Last but far from least, we express our gratitude to Della Summers, the Director of Longman Dictionaries, as prime mover of this project who, at a time when the idea was as strange to us as to the rest of the world, inspired us to plan a truly corpus-based grammar, and persuaded us to turn that vision into a reality.

Symbols and notational conventions

1 Reference to corpus examples

By far the majority of examples and text extracts given in this book are of authentic discourse taken from the texts and transcriptions in our Corpus (see sections 1.1, 1.4 of Chapter 1). These examples are marked as coming from one of the four main subdivisions of the corpus:

(CONV)	<i>conversation transcription</i>
(FICT)	<i>fiction text</i>
(NEWS)	<i>newspaper text</i>
(ACAD)	<i>academic text</i>

Some examples are truncated to save space. These are marked with an icon (†) occurring after one of the above abbreviations:

(CONV †), (FICT †), (NEWS †), (ACAD †)	<i>truncated examples</i>
--	---------------------------

Truncated examples, showing an incomplete sentence or conversational turn, are used only when the omitted parts are judged to have no bearing on the grammatical point being illustrated, and where overly long examples might distract rather than help the reader. For example:

- a *Every atom **has** a dense nucleus.* (ACAD †)
- b *Every atom **has** a dense nucleus that contains practically all of the mass of the atom.* (ACAD)

Example *a* is a truncated version of the complete sentence in example *b*. Note that even with truncation, dispensable material is almost always omitted from the beginning or end of an example, not from the middle. In this sense, virtually every example quoted is a continuous 'slice of linguistic reality'. Occasional cases of medial omission are marked by the insertion of <...> at the point where the omission occurs: an example can be seen in Text sample 1, 1.2.1.

<...>	signals <i>a part of an example where words have been omitted</i>
-------	---

Other abbreviations used to label examples (and also used in running text) are:

AmE	<i>American English</i>
BrE	<i>British English</i>

These abbreviations are also used more generally, in referring to American and British varieties of English, as represented in the American and British parts of our Corpus.

2 Reference to invented examples

In a few cases, invented examples which are not from the Corpus are used to show a contrast between two variant sentences, one of which is authentic and the other reconstructed to act as a comparison. These invented examples are signalled negatively, by the fact that they are not followed by a bracketed label such as (CONV). The following warning symbols are sometimes attached to invented examples:

* [preceding]	<i>an example which is unacceptable in English</i>
? [preceding]	<i>an example which is marginally acceptable</i>
?* [preceding]	<i>an example which is on the boundary of unacceptability</i>

e.g.: **They needed not have.*
 ?*a most promising pupil of hers*
 ?**excuse me a little*

3 Symbols and conventions used within examples

bold face	marks	<i>the main item highlighted for attention in an example.</i>
[]	marks	1. (where needed) <i>a second element highlighted for attention.</i>
	or	2. the boundaries of grammatical units (phrases, clauses, etc.).

e.g.: 1. *Watch out!* [*Here*] **comes Amanda!** (CONV)
 2. *I hope* [[*you*][*can talk*][*to me*][*about it*]] (CONV†)

<->	marks a point in the text where an ellipsis occurs (see 3.7)
< >	1. occasionally marks ellipted words in examples (given in <i>italics</i>) 2. otherwise marks a comment relating to an example, e.g.
<sic>	(in an example) confirms that the example is accurately reproduced, in spite of appearances.

e.g. *Dicken's* <sic> *famous novel*

4 Symbols and conventions used in transcriptions of speech

A:	} Where spoken examples contain contributions from <i>different speakers</i> , these are indicated by different capital letters (A = first speaker, B = second speaker, etc.)
B:	
etc.	
-	1. A dash at the end of a word signals that it is incomplete . 2. Where the dash is surrounded by spaces, it indicates a pause .

e.g. 1. *thi-*, *this*
 2. *What is the name - or?*

{ }	In Chapter 14, { } are used to mark the beginning and end of overlap between speakers (i.e. simultaneous speech)
/	Also in Chapter 14, / is used to indicate the location of speaker overlap , where the exact beginning and end of the overlap is unimportant for the purpose of the example.

Other punctuation in the transcriptions (. , ? !) follows conventional orthographic practice, and has no fixed prosodic or linguistic significance.

5 Grammatical symbols

() signals *optional elements* (in formulae and occasionally in examples)

Elements of clause structure are represented by the following symbols:

A	adverbial
A _c	circumstance adverbial
A _l	linking adverbial
A _s	stance adverbial
O	object
O _d	direct object
O _i	indirect object
O _p	prepositional object
P	predicative
P _o	object predicative
P _s	subject predicative
S	subject
V	verb, verb phrase (V is also sometimes used for verb as a <i>word class</i>)

Clause structures are represented by a combination of the above symbols; e.g.:

SV	subject + verb
SVA	subject + verb + adverbial
SVO _i O _d	subject + verb + indirect object + direct object
SVP _s	subject + verb + subject predicative

Phrase types:

NP	noun phrase (see 2.7.1)
VP	verb phrase (see 2.7.2)

6 Other abbreviations or symbols

CGEL	R. Quirk et al., <i>A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language</i>
LDOCE	<i>Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English</i>
LSWE	Longman Spoken and Written English (Corpus)

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4

Nouns, pronouns, and the simple noun phrase

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