1 PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE COMPLEMENTS OF VERBS

We put it [in the box].  (transitive preposition)
We brought the chairs in.  (intransitive preposition)

• some verbs (e.g. refer to) select for a particular preposition = selected / specified preposition
• others (e.g. fly + goal / source / path) select for a complement of a specific thematic type regardless of the actual preposition used (unselected / unspecified preposition)

Prepositional verbs take a PP complement (as well as possibly other complements):

congratulate NP [PP on NP]
come [PP across NP]
skate [PP over NP] ’ignore’
wade [PP through NP] ’deal with with difficulty’

Note that the verbs skate and wade are prepositional only in idiomatic meanings.

1.1 Syntactic differences between mobile and fixed prepositional phrase complements

1.1.1 Fronting of PP
In various constructions involving movement or analogous relations (relative clauses, wh-clauses and pseudoclefts), pied-piping is possible only with unselected or mobile prepositional phrases:

the city to which I flew  (unselected preposition)
the book to which I referred  (mobile selected preposition)
*the letters across which I came  (fixed selected preposition)
the letters which I came across  (only stranding possible with fixed selected prepositions)

1.1.2 Coordination
Coordination is possible only with unselected or mobile prepositional phrases:

I flew to New York and to Boston.
I referred to her book and to several others.
*I came regularly across new examples.

1.1.3 Position of adjuncts
Adjuncts (e.g. time adverbs) may intervene between the verb and the prepositional phrase only if the PP is unselected or mobile:

I flew regularly to Boston.
I referred repeatedly to her book.
??I came regularly across new examples.
1.2 Examples of the two types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mobile PP-complements</th>
<th>Fixed PP-complements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>refer to</td>
<td>come across</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe in</td>
<td>dispose of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fall for</td>
<td>stand by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel for</td>
<td>make for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some PP-complements allow raising of the object of the preposition in the passive; some don’t, but the difference does not correlate with the fixed vs. mobile distinction:

Chomsky’s work is often referred to.

*John was felt for by all his friends.

All my spare books have been disposed of.

*Mistakes are frequently come across in his work.

1.3 Constituent structure

Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 277) regard these as having the same structure:

\[ \{ \{ \text{referred} \} \{ \text{to the book} \} \} \]
\[ \{ \{ \text{came across} \} \{ \text{the letters} \} \} \]

This isn’t entirely satisfactory, because \(\text{across the letters}\) is a constituent according to this analysis, but it fails to behave as a constituent for movement (1 and 3 would be explained if it wasn’t a constituent), hence its exceptional behaviour must be stipulated.

Another possibility would be posit a difference in constituency:

\[ \{ \{ \text{referred} \} \{ \text{to the book} \} \} \]
\[ \{ \{ \text{came across} \} \{ \text{the letters} \} \} \]

This correctly predicts the syntactic differences between the two types, but cannot easily be extended to transitive cases of fixed prepositions:

He got me through the linguistic exam.

It also wrongly predicts heavy NP shift of the object of the preposition should be possible:

*I came across in the attic a box of old letters that had lain there for a hundred years or more. (cf. I discovered in the attic a box of old letters that had lain there for a hundred years or more.)

2 PARTICLE VERBS

2.1 Particle verbs

‘Particle verbs’ involve an intransitive preposition after the verb. The verb itself may be intransitive or transitive:

John put in his application early.
John gave in.

Intransitive prepositions (particles) can in some cases occur between the verb and its object where adverbs cannot:
Mary brought down the bed.
*Mary brought downstairs the bed.

(cf. normally English verbs and their direct objects show an adjacency requirement:

*John ate slowly the apple.)

The particle verb construction may be transitive or intransitive:

Poirot found out the details.
The prices came down last month.

Ditransitives and other more complex [e.g. predicative] variants are also possible:

Susan poured the man out a drink.
They made John out a liar.

**2.2 Crosslinguistic variation**

Particle verbs occur in all Germanic languages:

Sie sagten das Konzert ab.
they said the concert off
'They called the concert off.' (German, Dehé 2002: 1)

Han gav sine studier op.
he gave his studies up
'He gave up his studies.' (Danish, Dehé 2002: 1)

The details of their syntax differ significantly from language to language: Norwegian and Icelandic have word order alternations like English; Danish allows only the discontinuous order; Swedish allows only the continuous order etc.

**2.3 Syntactic differences between particle verbs and verb + PP-complement**

**2.2.1 Reversal of word order**

Particles can often be reversed with the NP, whereas PP-complement cannot:

Mary took the label off.
*Mary jumped the wall off.

**2.2.2 Unstressed pronouns**

Unstressed pronouns cannot follow a particle:

*Mary took off it.
?Mary jumped off it.

**2.2.3 Movement tests**

A PP-complement can be fronted, whereas a particle + NP sequence cannot:

*the label [off which] Mary took t
the wall [off which] Mary jumped t

But: NB fixed PP-complements are exceptions to this.
2.2.4 Coordination
Only PP-complements can be coordinated:

*Mary took off her hat and off her coat.
Mary jump off the wall and (then) off the embankment.

2.2.5 Adverbs
Manner adverbs can be inserted between the verb and a PP-complement, but not between a verb and a particle:

*Mary took slowly off the label.
Mary jumped slowly off the wall.

2.3 Structural ambiguity
There is a great deal of potential for syntactic ambiguity between the two types:

The students turned in their essays on time. (particle)
The students turned in the wrong direction. (PP-complement)

2.4 Syntactic analyses
2.4.1 Small clause analyses (Kayne 1985) draw an analogy between particle-verb constructions and small clauses:

John looked [SC the information up].
John considered [SC Bill honest].

They conclude that the particle is an independent head, with the postverbal noun phrase as its subject. Effectively:

John put the cat out. = John did a putting action so that the cat ended up out(side).

Evidence for this: they behave alike in nominalisation and in wh-extraction from the subject of the small clause:

*John’s consideration of Bill honest
*their looking of the information up

*Who did they consider the brother of t a fool?
*What did they look the information about t up?

According to this analysis, the discontinuous order is the underlying one.

2.4.2 Complex-head analyses (Johnson 1991) treat the particle-verb combination as a single complex head:

Mary [ took off ] [ the label ]
Mary [ jumped [ off the wall ] ]

The evidence in favour of this is that it can undergo morphological processes:

• nominalisations (Mike’s looking up of the reference)
• adjective formation (the dusted off table)
• middles (These cars break down easily)
Furthermore, the selectional properties are those of the verb+particle not just the verb e.g. *make out* and *fill in* allow a clausal complement, whereas *make* and *fill* do not.

They also coordinate with simple verbs:

He picked up and threw the ball.

Some of the syntactic differences (above) are also standard tests for constituency, and seem to indicate that PP-complements are constituents, whereas the particle does not form a constituent with the following noun phrase.

### 2.5 Factors influencing word order

- **syntactic**
  - nature of the object (*pronoun, ?demonstrative in continuous order)
  - length of the object:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>length of object</th>
<th>% discontinuous in words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lohse, Hawkins & Wasow 2004, selection of written journalistic and spoken corpora)

- **semantic**
  - compositionality of verb+particle meaning

They lifted up the child => They lifted the child.
They carried out a repair => They carried a repair.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>length of object</th>
<th>% discontinuous</th>
<th>% discontinuous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in words</td>
<td>dependent</td>
<td>independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lohse, Hawkins & Wasow 2004: 248, selection of written journalistic and spoken corpora)

Lohse, Hawkins & Wasow (2004) link this to processing efficiency.

- **pragmatic**
  - givenness / focus: preparticle position is for old information / topic, whereas postparticle position is for new information / comment:

  We’ll make up a parcel for them… On the morning of Christmas Eve together we made the parcel up.  
  (Dehé 2002: 123)

- **sociolinguistic**
  - medium: with longer direct objects, frequency of discontinuous order
falls more sharply in written medium:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>length of object</th>
<th>% discontinuous in words spoken</th>
<th>% discontinuous written</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lohse, Hawkins & Wasow 2004: 258)

READING
Huddleston & Pullum, chapter 4, section 6, 272–90.


