

Preface

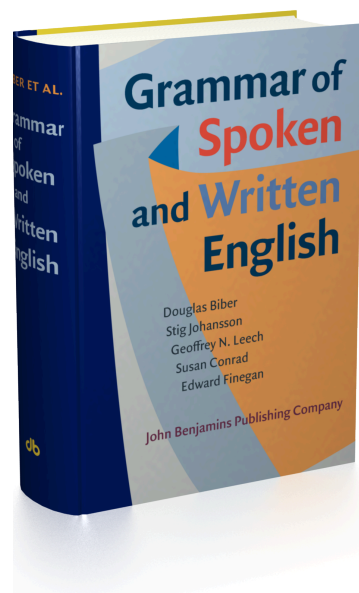
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Grammar of Spoken and Written English
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Preface

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 Linglex 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 Linglex 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.

DB SJ GL SC EF