

On the Historical Development of *During*

Minoru FUKUDA

In the present paper, we bring to light some new facts regarding the preposition *during*. Our corpora investigation indicates that *during* is the most frequently used deverbial preposition, but its historical development has not been recognized accurately, including the fact that its prepositional usage is older than its predicative one.

To address unsettled questions on the preposition's development, we argue that the Unaccusative Hypothesis plays a significant role in the historical derivation of both the prepositional and the predicative usages of *during*. This, in turn, clarifies how the two usages derived, as well as why the former preceded the latter in the history of *during*.

Key words: deverbial preposition, *during*, *notwithstanding*, Unaccusative Hypothesis, preposition

Table of Contents

- I Introduction
- II Unresolved Issues
- III The History of *During*
- IV The Unaccusative Hypothesis
- V The Earlier Emergence of the Prepositional *During*
- VI Summary

I Introduction¹

Several English prepositions derive from other lexical categories. For example, according to Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 611), the prepositions in (1) stem from verbs.²

- (1) according, allowing, barring, concerning, counting, excepting, excluding, failing,

following, including, owing, pertaining, regarding, respecting, saving, touching, wanting; given, gone, granted

These prepositions are homonymous with either gerund-participle (i.e. *-ing*) forms or past participle forms of verbs. This fact led Aarts (2011: 79-80) to refer to them as “deverbal prepositions,” meaning prepositions derived from verbs.

II Unresolved Issues

Aarts (2011: 79) observed that the deverbal prepositions in (1) are transitive, being immediately followed by noun phrases (NPs), with examples shown in (2)-(4).

- (2) But to many Londoners, [_{PP} *including* [_{NP} some of the stars gathered here tonight]], these are dangerous times.
- (3) [_{PP} *Regarding* [_{NP} the issue of diagnosis]], Szasz raises two major criticisms concerning the analogy between physical and mental disease, implicit in the medical model.³
- (4) You may even be thinking that [_{PP} *given* [_{NP} your studied ignorance of the matter]], the democratic process will be far better off without your participation, no matter how close all our parliamentary institutions are to meltdown.

However, we would like to point out three linguistically more interesting facts about the prepositions. Firstly, of the deverbal prepositions in (1), *according*, *owing*, and *pertaining* cannot be directly followed by NPs, which suggests that they are not transitive per se. The presence of the preposition *to* is required, as shown in (5).⁴

- (5) a. The children are grouped [_{PP} *according* *(to) [_{NP} age and ability]].
- b. They arrived late [_{PP} *owing* *(to) [_{NP} the rain]].
- c. He owns the house and the land [_{PP} *pertaining* *(to) [_{NP} it]].

Secondly, our investigation into corpora such as BYU-BNC (Brigham Young University British National Corpus) and COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) has revealed that the most frequently used deverbal preposition is *during*, which is not listed

in (1).⁵ The top five deverbial prepositions in BYU-BNC and COCA are shown in (6) and (7), respectively.

(6) BYU-BNC

	count
1. during	42,789
2. including	22,451
3. according	15,188
4. concerning	2,967
5. depending	2,233

(7) COCA

	count
1. during	253,569
2. including	143,832
3. according	113,089
4. regarding	23,941
5. depending	14,092

Finally, *during* differs from *according*, *owing*, and *pertaining* in that it is, in fact, directly followed by NPs, which indicates its transitivity. In other words, prepositions such as *to* are not required to mediate *during* and its NP. Its grammatical pattern, shown in (8), is thus opposite to that in (5).

(8) This street is very noisy [_{PP} during (*to) [_{NP} the day]].

However, as stated in *Taishukan's Unabridged Genius English-Japanese Dictionary* (p. 680), *during* historically comes from the intransitive verb *dure*.⁶ Therefore, it is quite natural to wonder how the intransitive verb *dure* came to be the transitive preposition *during*. This question is our main concern in the present paper.

III The History of *During*

The transitive preposition *during* comes from the intransitive verb *dure*, which has its origins in the Old French verb *durer*, or the Latin verb *durare* in the Middle English period.

During as a preposition came about in the later stage of Middle English. The OED (*Oxford English Dictionary*) identifies its oldest usage around the year 1385 (p. 1134).

- (9) c1385 Chaucer L.G.W. Prol. 283 (MS. Gg. 4. 27) Stedefaste wedewys durynge alle here lyuys.

According to the OED and Solodow (2010: 98-99), the gerund-participle form of *during* is due to the Latin ablative absolute, as in (10), which was also a feature of Old French, as in (11). In terms of structure, the ablative absolute is equivalent to the absolute participial construction in English in structural respects (Kawasoko (1985: 173), Onishi (1997: 220)). Thus, the clausal construction under consideration is of the form “Subject + Predicate (= *during*).”

- (10) Latin
vita durante
life during
‘while life endured or endures’
- (11) Old French
vie durant
life during
‘while life endured or endures’

The ablative absolute was used in Middle English as well, with the OED citing its oldest instance around the year 1440.

- (12) c1440 *Jacob's Well* (E.E.T.S.) 271 Sche was comoun to alle þat wolde haue here, xv. 3ere durynge.

Regarding the prepositional usage of *during*, an important point of interest is the OED statement quoted in (13).

- (13) The participle also often stood before the sb., e.g. L. *durante bello*, F. *durant la guerre*, Eng. *during the war*; in which construction *during* came in the modern langs. to be treated as

2. *prep.* Throughout the whole continuance of; hence, in the course of, in the time of.

The description has two significant implications: first, that the predicative (i.e. ablative absolute) usage of *during* chronologically preceded the prepositional one; and second, that the word order “*during* + NP” arises from “NP + *during*” through a preposing operation on *during*.

However, we would like to point out that the first implication is not borne out by the evidence, as the prepositional usage of *during* (see (9)) is older than the predicative one (see (12)), and it is not self-evident why this should be so. Furthermore, with respect to the second implication, it is not clear at all why *during* should be preposed in front of the NP, raising the question whether there is a principled reason for this.

In the following two sections, we develop two hypotheses to provide answers to these questions. For ease of explanation, let us first deal with the second question.

IV The Unaccusative Hypothesis

To address the question of why *during* is preposed in front of the NP in the modern construction, we would like to adopt the Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter (1978)), which categorizes intransitive verbs according to the positions of their subjects in the underlying structure. This hypothesis has been widely adopted in current syntactic analyses.

(14) The Unaccusative Hypothesis

Unergative and unaccusative verbs are syntactically differentiated; while unergative verbs have nonderived subjects (i.e. surface subjects are generated as subjects at D-structure), surface subjects of unaccusative verbs originate as direct objects. (Kuno and Takami (2004: 19))

Nakajima (2011: 21-22) provides the following examples of unergative and unaccusative verbs, shown in (15) and (16), respectively.


(15) Unergative verbs

- a. dance, go, listen, run, swim, walk, work, ...
- b. cry, grumble, scream, shout, talk, ...

- c. laugh, sigh, smile, ...
 - d. breathe, cough, dream, sleep, sneeze, snore, ...
- (16) Unaccusative verbs
- a. appear, arise, arrive, emerge, exist, happen, occur, remain, ... / die, disappear, vanish, ...
 - b. drop, fall, float, glide, move, rise, roll, sink, slide, ... / hang, sit, stand, ...
 - c. break, collapse, dry, freeze, grow, melt, open, shut, ...
 - d. begin, end, start, stop, ...

In light of this, it is natural to presume that the intransitive verb *dure* should be an unaccusative verb for the following two reasons. First, it represents a nonvolitional event involving a nonhuman subject. Second, it expresses the continuous state. As these properties are typical of unaccusative verbs, the intransitive verb *dure* should be considered unaccusative.

Given this application of the Unaccusative Hypothesis to *dure*, we can assume the word order of the ablative absolute to be derived as depicted in (17).

- (17) a. Underlying structure:
during + NP
- b. Derived structure:
 NP + *during* + ____
- 

It follows from this hypothesis that it is not *during* that is moved to the left of the subject NP, but the subject NP that is moved to the left of *during*. We propose that this movement operation is attributable to the universal principle of Chomsky's (1982, 1995) Extended Projection Principle, which requires the presence of the subject in a clause (i.e. the ablative absolute). As such, with the application of this hypothesis, the second problem posed in Section III has been successfully addressed.

V The Earlier Emergence of the Prepositional *During*

It follows from the unaccusative analysis of *during* that its prepositional usage stems from

the structure indicated in (17a), and its predicative one from the structure in (17b). We can thus go on to argue that the derivational steps depicted in (17) lays the foundation for the historical emergences of *during*. The relevant historical derivation can roughly be illustrated as in (18).

(18) [_{VP} *during* NP] → [_{PP} *during* NP] (Cf. (9))

↓

[_S NP [_{VP} *during* ___]] (Cf. (12))

As pointed out in section III, the prepositional usage of *during* was established before the predicative usage emerged. In fact, this chronological order is not peculiar to *during*. As Fukuda (2015, 2017) points out, a similar fact can be observed in the case of the deverbal preposition *notwithstanding*. According to the OED and Rissanen (2002), the occurrence of the prepositional *notwithstanding* preceded its predicative usage.

Given the above observation, we hypothesize that the formation of the underlying structure serves as an instant input to grammaticalization, which turns the verbal *during* into the prepositional *during*. This hypothesis enables us to explicate why the prepositional *during* (as well as *notwithstanding*) appeared before the predicative one. Recasting (18) as (19), we argue that there were two stages in the historical development of *during*.

(19) Stage 1: [_{VP} *during* NP] → Grammaticalization → [_{PP} *during* NP]

Stage 2: [_{VP} *during* NP] → NP-preposing → [_S NP [_{VP} *during* ___]]

In the first stage, the verbal *during* was rendered prepositional by means of grammaticalization. Later, in the second stage, the NP was preposed to fulfill the Extended Projection Principle, giving rise to the predicative *during*.

VI Summary

In the present paper, we bring to light some new facts regarding the preposition *during*. Our corpora investigation indicates that *during* is the most frequently used deverbal preposition, but its historical development has not been recognized accurately, including the fact that its prepositional usage is older than its predicative one.

To address unsettled questions on the preposition's development, we assume that *during* comes from the unaccusative verb *dure*. We argue that the Unaccusative Hypothesis plays a significant role in the historical derivation of both the prepositional and the predicative usages of *during*. This, in turn, clarifies how the two usages derived, as well as why the former preceded the latter in the history of *during*.

Notes

- ¹ This paper is a by-product of my earlier work on *notwithstanding*, presented as Fukuda (2015, 2017). All of the work, including the present paper, was supported by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) (No. 26370570).
- ² Quirk et al. (1985: 667) observe the same type of preposition, referring to them as “marginal prepositions.” They list the prepositions given in (i).
 - (i) bar, barring, concerning, considering, excepting, excluding, failing, following, given, granted, including, pending, regarding, respecting, save, touching, wanting
- ³ Aarts (2011: 79) does not deal with *concerning*, which is another deverbal preposition according to (1).
- ⁴ Thus, it is more accurate to identify *according to*, *owing to*, and *pertaining to* as complex prepositions.
- ⁵ BYU-BNC and COCA are based on British English and American English, respectively.
- ⁶ However, the intransitive verb *dure* is no longer used in present-day English. Hayashi (2016) observes that it was last used in 1882.

References

- Aarts, Bas (2011) *Oxford Modern English Grammar*, Oxford University Press.
- Chomsky, Noam (1982) *Some Concepts and Consequences of the Theory of Government and Binding*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Chomsky, Noam (1995) *The Minimalist Program*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Fukuda, Minoru (2015) “Eigo-no kochishi nitsuite” (On the Postpositions in English), paper presented at the 31st annual meeting of the Konan English Literary Society, held at Konan University, Kobe, Japan, on July 11, 2015.
- Fukuda, Minoru (2017) “Zenchishi *Notwithstanding* nitsuite” (On the Prepositional

- Notwithstanding*), *Fushigi-ni michihta Kotoba-no Sekai* (The world of languages full of wonders), ed. by Ken-ichi Takami, Isamu Gyoda, and Hideki Ono, 131-135, Kaitakusha, Tokyo.
- Hayashi, Tomoaki (2016) “Eigo-mo ikiteiru!” (English is also alive!), Poster presentation at the Academic Day, held at Kyoto University, on September 18, 2016.
- Huddleston, Rodney, and Geoffrey K. Pullum (2002) *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*, Cambridge University Press.
- Kawasoko, Shogo (1985) *Laten-go Nyumon* (Introduction to Latin), Tairyusha, Tokyo.
- Kuno, Susumu, and Ken-ichi Takami (2004) *Functional Constraints in Grammar: On the Unergative-Unaccusative Distinction*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam.
- Nakajima, Heizo (2011) *Fandamentaru Eigogaku Enshu* (Fundamental Seminar in English Linguistics), Hituzi Syobo, Tokyo.
- Onishi, Hidefumi (1997) *Hajimete-no Laten-go* (First Latin), Kodansha, Tokyo.
- Perlmutter, David M. (1978) “Impersonal passives and the Unaccusative Hypothesis,” In *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, ed. by Farrell Ackerman and Jeri J. Jaeger, 157-189, Berkeley Linguistics Society, University of California, Berkeley.
- Quirk, Randolph, Sydney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvic (1985) *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, Longman (Pearson Education Limited), London.
- Rissanen, Matti (2002) “Despite or notwithstanding? On the development of concessive prepositions in English,” *Text Types and Corpora: Studies in Honour of Udo Fries*, ed. by Andreas Fischer, Gunnel Tottie and Hans Martin Lehman, 191–203, Gunter Narr, Tübingen.
- Solodow, Joseph B. (2010) *Latin Alive: The Survival of Latin in English and the Romance Languages*, Cambridge University Press.

Dictionaries

- Taishukan's Unabridged Genius English-Japanese Dictionary*, 2001.
- The Oxford English Dictionary*, Volume IV, 1989².

