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Diplomová práce

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(Non-)prepositional *-ing* complementation of *stop* and *prevent*: a register perspective

Ne/předložková *-ing* komplementace slovesa *stop* a *prevent* z hlediska registru

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Abstrakt

Diplomová práce zkoumá ne/předložkovou komplementaci slovesa *prevent* a *stop*, tj. konstrukci *prevent/stop* + NP + *from* + *-ing* a *prevent/stop* + NP + *-ing*, z hlediska jejich konkurence ve třech registrech a z hlediska strukturních a sémantických faktorů potenciálně ovlivňujících volbu mezi konstrukcí s předložkou a konstrukcí bez předložky (včetně konstrukce s konatelem vyjádřeným posesívem, tj. konstrukce *prevent* + genitive NP + *-ing*). Protože bylo zjištěno, že četnost konstrukce s předložkou a konstrukce bez předložky je do určité míry záležitostí dialektu (v britské a americké angličtině se liší), klade si práce za cíl porovnat četnost těchto realizací komplementů slovesa *prevent* and *stop* z hlediska typu textu, konkrétně ve třech vybraných registrech reprezentujících britskou varietu. Materiál pro analýzu je čerpán z šesti korpusů/subkorpusů, které reprezentují beletrii, akademický jazyk a noviny a časopisy, přičemž každé dva korpusy/subkorpusy reprezentují jeden registr.

Teoretická část práce popisuje komplementaci slovesa *prevent* a *stop* z hlediska synchronního i diachronního a shrnuje výsledky studií zaměřených na užívání konstrukce s předložkou, konstrukce bez předložky a konstrukce s konatelem vyjádřeným posesívem. Kvantitativní část práce porovnává frekvenci těchto třech komplementů v jednotlivých registrech. Kvalitativní část analýzy se na vybraném vzorku dat (840 příkladů) soustředí na strukturní a sémantické faktory ovlivňující volbu komplementu, podle toho, jak byly popsány v sekundární literatuře. Také se zabývá otázkou, zda existuje korelace mezi preferencí jednoho z komplementů v určitém registru a typickými rysy tohoto registru (např. časté užívání trpného rodu v akademickém jazyce).

Výsledky analýzy ukazují, že volba komplementu slovesa *prevent/stop* může záviset na registru. Konstrukce bez předložky je ze tří zkoumaných registrů nejfrekventovanější v korpusech reprezentujících noviny a časopisy, a to jak jako komplement slovesa *prevent*, tak jako komplement slovesa *stop*. Analýza dále ukázala, že preference konstrukce s předložkou může souviset s flektivní formou slovesa *prevent/stop* a s trpným rodem tohoto slovesa.

klíčová slova: ne/předložková komplementace, konstrukce s předložkou *from*, konstrukce bez předložky, konstrukce s konatelem vyjádřeným posesívem, beletrie, akademický jazyk, noviny a časopisy, strukturní a sémantické faktory ovlivňující volbu komplementu

Abstract

The thesis investigates (non-)prepositional *-ing* complementation of *stop* and *prevent*, i.e., the constructions *prevent/stop* + NP + *from* + *-ing* and *prevent/stop* + NP + *-ing*, from the perspective of their competition in three registers and from the perspective of structural and semantic factors potentially influencing the choice between the *from*-construction and the *from*-less one. (including the construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing*, i.e., *prevent* + genitive NP + *-ing*). Since the frequency of the *from*-construction and the *from*-less construction has been proved to be to some extent a matter of dialect (it differs in British and American English), the thesis aims to compare frequency of these realizations of complements of *prevent/stop* from the perspective of text type, namely in three selected registers representing the British variety. Material for analysis was extracted from six corpora/subcorpora representing fiction, academic language, and periodicals, with each two corpora/subcorpora representing one register.

The theoretical part of the thesis describes complementation of *prevent* and *stop* from both the synchronic and diachronic perspectives and summarizes the results of the studies dealing with the *from*-construction, the *from*-less construction and the construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing*. The quantitative section of the thesis compares frequencies of the three complements in the respective registers. In the qualitative section of the thesis, structural and semantic factors influencing the choice of the complement are investigated on a selected sample (840 examples), as they had been described in secondary literature. This section of the thesis also addresses the question of whether there is a correlation between one of the complements in a particular register and typical features of that register (e.g., a frequent use of passive voice in academic language).

The results of the analysis suggest that the choice of the complement of *prevent/stop* may depend on the register. Of the three registers, the *from*-less construction is most frequently found as a complement of both *prevent* and *stop* in periodicals. Moreover, the analysis shows that preference for the *from*-construction may be related to the inflected form of *prevent/stop* and to the passive form of *prevent/stop*.

key words: (non-)prepositional *-ing* complementation, *from*-construction, *from*-less construction, construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing*, fiction, academic language, periodicals, structural and semantic factors influencing the choice of the complement

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Abbreviations

NP	Noun phrase
CP	Complementizer phrase
BAWE	The British Academic Written English Corpus
CAEC	The Cambridge Academic English Corpus
BNC	The British National Corpus
SiBol	The SiBol corpus of English Broadsheet Newspapers
LOB	The Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus
FLOB	The Freiburg–LOB Corpus of British English
BROWN	The Standard Corpus of Present-Day Edited American English
FROWN	The Freiburg-Brown corpus of American English
DCPSE	The Diachronic Corpus of Present Day Spoken English
OED	The Oxford English Dictionary
ABS	Absolute frequency
REL	Relative frequency
BrE	British English
AmE	American English

1 Introduction

The thesis is concerned with the question of register variation in two alternating forms: the construction with the complementizer *from* and the *from*-less construction as a complement of the verbs *prevent* and *stop*, including the construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing*. It aims to contribute to the survey of changes in complementation of lexical verbs that has been attested in recent years. As the alternants under investigation have been shown to represent regional variation (with the *from*-less variant attested and increasing in British English), this study addresses the question of variation across three written registers in British English (fiction, academic language, and periodicals). We assume that the frequency of each type of complement may vary with each register. This would indicate that the preferences for one of the variants may correlate with other characteristics of a register. Based on secondary literature, it is expected that the choice of the complement might also be influenced by the complexity of a noun phrase standing between *prevent/stop* and its complement, and other clause properties (for overview, cf. Section 2.3)

The theoretical part surveys major academic English grammars, namely Huddleston and Pullum (2002) and Quirk et al. (1985), scholarly articles (e.g., Aarts (1990)) and *The Oxford English Dictionary*, to describe the complementation patterns of *prevent* and *stop* from synchronic and diachronic perspectives. It also draws on several studies, for example, the study of Mair (2006), who finds out that in British English the popularity of the *from*-less construction grew throughout the 20th century, while in American English the construction is rare. The surveys conducted by Ong (2011), Sellgren (2007) or Dixon (1991) provide an insight into the investigation of factors determining the choice between the *from* and the *from*-less construction.

My analysis consists of two parts. The quantitative part assesses frequencies of each clausal complement of *prevent/stop* in the six corpora/subcorpora, with each register represented by two corpora/subcorpora. The qualitative part, based on 840 instances, pays attention to structural and semantic factors determining the choice of the complement. These factors are adopted from previous studies. Structural factors included in the analysis are, for example, the complexity of a noun phrase (see Rohdenburg, 1996), transitivity of a verb complementing *prevent/stop* or verb form of *prevent/stop* (i.e., *prevents/prevented/preventing*). The semantic factor concerns the factor of iconicity (see Dixon, 1991).

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Clausal complements of *prevent*

Mair (2002: 112) distinguishes three clausal complementation patterns of the verb *prevent*: the construction with the preposition/complementizer *from* (ex. 1), with a fused participle (ex. 2) and with the gerundial complement *poss-ing* (ex. 3):

- (1) *This prevented me from leaving early*
- (2) *This prevented me leaving early*
- (3) *This prevented my leaving early*

Mair (ibid.) points out that the gerundial complement *poss-ing* is attested very rarely in present-day English with the verb *prevent*.

Quirk et al. (1985: 1194) claim that “the verbs of negative meaning *stop*, *prevent* and *prohibit* have a related ditransitive construction in which the preposition *from* precedes the *-ing* clause as a second object” (ex. 4). In this view, the prepositional *from* is optional.

- (4) *They tried to prevent the plane from landing on the runway*

Aarts (1990: 149) states that “verbs like *prevent* are dyadic predicates, i.e., predicates with two arguments: a subject argument and a direct object argument”. In the following examples (ex. 5-6), *prevent* assigns a direct object role to the NPs:

- (5) *I prevented the accident*
- (6) *I prevented Andrew’s leaving*

What he finds problematic is the construction with *from* (ex. 7-8):

- (7) *I prevented the committee from taking a bad decision*
- (8) *I prevented a bad decision from being taken by the committee* (ibid.: 150)

When the non-finite clause (c) undergoes passivization, the process does not affect the propositional content of the resultant sentence (d). The sentences are synonymous. This strongly suggests that the postverbal NPs *committee* (ex. c) and *a bad decision* (ex. d) are not arguments of the verb *prevent*. Rather, *prevent* assigns direct object role to the whole string that follows it. As *committee* is not a direct object of the verb *prevent*, it must be the subject of a subordinate clause introduced by *from*. The verb *prevent* is dyadic predicate (a monotransitive verb) with *I*

functioning as a subject and the whole string functioning as a direct object of the sentence (ibid.: 150).

Furthermore, Aarts (ibid.: 153) claims that *from* is a complementizer, and thus is optional in the clausal complementation of *prevent*. He gives the following evidence to support his claim:

Firstly, the element *from* does not carry any meaning. Rather, it signals the presence of a subordinate clause.

Secondly, a close relationship has been observed between complementizers and type of clauses they introduce. *From* always introduces a non-finite *-ing* clause (ex. 9), but not a finite clause (ex. 10), nor a non-finite *to*-infinitival clause (ex. 11):

- (9) *I prevented Kate from eating the biscuits*
- (10) **I prevented Kate from ate the biscuits*
- (11) **I prevented Kate from to eat the biscuits* (ibid.)

Thirdly, *from* in *prevent*-type verb constructions can be omitted with active subordinate clauses. This is also a feature of classical complementizers *that* and *for*:

- (12) *I believe that she is marvellous*
- (13) *I believe she is marvellous* (ibid.)

Aarts (ibid.: 158) also claims that inanimate NPs following *prevent* cannot be fronted under passivization, whereas animate NPs can:

- (14) *Andrew was prevented from leaving the house*
- (15) *?*Language theory was prevented from influencing the students*
- (16) **The cake was prevented from being eaten* (ibid.: 158-9)

To account for this fact, he argues that “*prevent* has two subcategorization frames, namely [-, CP] when the postverbal NP is inanimate, and [-, NP [+animate] CP] when the NP is animate” (ibid.: 147). He concludes that “*prevent*-type verbs are verbs which are structurally ambiguous” (ibid.: 164).

Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 657) claim that the verb *prevent* belongs to the group of verbs of prevention and abstention, where the use of *from* “derives via the fairly transparent metaphor of intended action as spatial goals. To hold someone back from an object/location

means to physically hold them in a place that is back away from that object/location and to hold someone back from doing something is to hold them back so that they will not perform the action.”

It is one of many prevention verbs that “permit both a direct object denoting the preventee (ex. 17) and a direct object denoting the action prevented (ex. 18)” (ibid.):

(17) *I prevented him from seeing it*

(18) *I prevented it*

Moreover, it belongs to those prevention verbs that “allow a gerund-participial clausal complement without the *from*” (ex. 19) (ibid.):

(19) *He prevented the boy leaving*

Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1238) also state that for the verbs alternating between gerund-participial only construction and construction containing a preposition (*excuse, forgive, pardon, preclude, prevent prohibit, stop*), “passivisation is restricted to the prepositional construction, except very marginally with *prevent* and *stop* (?*She was prevented/stopped writing to us*)”.

Moreover, they (2002: 468) pay attention to the construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing* (ex. 20):

(20) *No one prevented Kim’s joining the party*

According to them, it is an offshoot from the regular possessive noun phrase, e.g., *Kim’s father*. “What was originally a noun came to be reanalyzed as a verb and to behave as the head of clause rather than an NP.” The genitive functions as a subject of a clause instead of being a possessive determiner in a noun phrase (ibid.).

To sum up, quite a lot of attention has been paid to the variation between the construction with the complementizer *from* and the *from*-less construction as a complement of *prevent*. Aarts (1990: 153) provides evidence to support the claim that the preposition/complementizer *from* is optional and Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1238) point out that *from* tends to be preserved in passive clauses. Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 468) also deal with the historical development of the gerundial complement *poss-ing*, which is rare in present-day English.

2.1.1 Clausal complements of *prevent* in British and American English

Traditionally, the construction with a fused participle (*prevented me leaving*) is considered common in British English and rare or even incorrect in American English. In a prescriptive American grammar *The Origins & Development of the English Language*, the *from*-less variant is regarded as incorrect: “It is doubtful that either Sir Richard or Daniel would pass American College Board Examination, for Sir Richard also says ‘prevent him getting back next term’...” (1964: 241). Dixon (1995: 217) notes that *from* can be omitted after *prevent*, *stop*, *save*, and *spare* in British and Australian English, but not in American English, and that American English may be the only variety that prefers the construction with *from* among the various varieties of English in the world.

Rohdenburg (2009: 211) points out that verbs of leaving which often occur with the preposition *from* (e.g., *depart*, *resign* and *escape*) contain negative features. He finds a parallel between verbs of leaving and verbs of negative causation such as *prevent*, *stop* and *save*. In American English, the *prevent*-type verbs have followed a trend where negative orientation is marked by *from*. British English has followed this trend in the passive, while in the active voice, these verbs “can get away without this marking and have been even reversing the older trend to some extent” (ibid.).

Mair (2002: 112) uses the *LOB*, *FLOB*, *Brown* and *Frown* comparable corpora to investigate the variation between *prevent NP from -ing* and *prevent NP -ing* in British and American English.

Corpora sampling years	British English	American English
1961	34:7	47:0
1991/92	24:24	36:1

Table 1: Raw frequency of *prevent NP from -ing* (on the left) and *prevent NP -ing* (on the right) in the *LOB*, *FLOB*, *Brown* and *Frown* (Mair, 2002: 112)

In British English, the *from*-construction shows a decrease between the 1960s and 1990s (from 34 to 24 instances), while the construction *prevent NP -ing* increases significantly (from seven to 27 instances). In American English, there is not much change between the two periods. The frequency of the *from*-construction decreases (from 47 to 36 examples) and the construction without the complementizer *from* is absent in both periods.

Moreover, Mair (ibid.: 112) finds out that the situation in spoken language mirrors that in written language. In the *London-Lund Corpus*, with its bias towards middle- and upper-middle-class speakers, he finds six cases of the *from*-construction and five of the *from*-less one (in half a million words). The spoken-demographic component of the *BNC*, with broader social coverage of speakers, contains six examples of each construction (in a sample containing ca. four million words). In contrast, the *Corpus of Spoken Professional American English* (more than two million words) contains 35 cases of the NP *from -ing* and none of the NP *-ing* pattern.

Spoken British English is investigated also by Geoffrey Leech et al. (2009). Using the *DCPSE* corpus, they find out that the construction *prevent NP from -ing* prevails over *prevent NP -ing* in the older (1959–1977) material, whereas the preference is reversed in the recent (1991-1993) data (2009: 194). Thus, we observe the same trend as in written data. Leech et al. (ibid.) add that the problem with the verb *prevent* is that the number of examples in spoken corpora is too low to draw reliable statistical conclusions.

2.1.2 Historical perspective on clausal complementation of *prevent*

There are three different main senses for clausal complementation of *prevent* listed in the *OED*:

1. to stop, keep, hinder a person or other agent from doing something	
NP <i>from -ing</i>	1758 S. HAYWARD <i>Seventeen Serm.</i> xvii. 528 <i>To conduct every circumstance so as to <u>prevent the designs of Satan from taking effect.</u></i>
NP <i>-ing</i>	1807 R. SOUTHEY <i>Let. to N. Lightfoot</i> 24 Apr. <i>Circumstances have <u>prevented me going to Portugal.</u></i>
NP (ellipsis)	1758 BLACKSTONE <i>Comm.</i> I. 24 <i>The intention is evidently this; by <u>preventing private teachers</u> within the walls of the city...</i>
2. to preclude the occurrence of (an anticipated event, state, etc.); to render (an intended, possible, or likely action or event) impractical or impossible by anticipatory action	
NP	1836 W. Irving <i>Astoria</i> III. 213 <i>Should anything occur...to <u>prevent his return.</u></i>

-ing	1769 GOLDSM. <i>Hist. Rome</i> (1786) I. Pref. 6 <i>It was found no easy matter to <u>prevent crowding the facts.</u></i>
poss-ing	1744 J.PHILIPSS <i>Jrnl. Exped. Anson</i> 179 <i>He had provided a Netting-deck to <u>prevent our boarding him.</u></i>
<i>that</i> + subjunctive	2002 J. POTTIER <i>Re-imagining Rwanda</i> 1. 28 <i>The population of the zone of Walikale has elected me to <u>prevent that the zone be invaded by Tutsi.</u></i>
3. to use preventive measures	
<i>that not</i> + subjunctive	1723 <i>Present St. Russia</i> II. 122 <i>The Design..was, to <u>prevent that no body might be sent to meet me.</u></i>
<i>but that</i> + subjunctive	1656 EARL OF MONMOUTH tr. T. Boccalini <i>Ragguagli di Parnasso</i> I. xiv. 25 <i>It was impossible to <u>prevent, but that a pair of shooes...should in process of time become torne.</u></i>

Table 2: Senses and complements of *prevent* in the *OED* (*OED*, 2021)

The earliest examples of NP *from -ing* (ex. 21) and NP *-ing* (ex. 22) in the *OED* date from the 17th century:

- (21) 1620 tr. G. Boccaccio *Decameron* I. v. viii. f. 203 *To preuent the like heauy doome from falling on her; she studied..how to change her hatred into kinde loue.*
- (22) 1670 J. EACHARD *Grounds Contempt of Clergy* 16 *They took..heretofore a very good method to prevent Sizars over-heating their Brains: Bed-making [etc.] (*OED*)*

Like today, the object of NP allowed both +human and -human reference in the 19th century with no change in meaning of the pattern:

- (23) 1875 B. JOWETT tr. Plato *Dialogues* (ed. 2) V. 352 *There is nothing to prevent us from considering..the subject of law.*
- (24) 1839 T. KEIGHTLEY *Hist. Eng.* II. 33 *Henry took due precautions to prevent the bull from getting into his dominions. (*OED*)*

The construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing* also appears in the *OED* for the first time in the 17th century texts:

- (25) 1657 tr. A. Thevet *Prosopographia* 45 in T. North tr. Plutarch *Lives* (new ed.) *He built a house without his Camp for all strangers that arrived,..whereby he prevented their sneaking into his Camp.* (*OED*)

“The variant with *from* was probably patterned on an older use of *hinder from*, a common construction since Middle English times” (Visser, 1970±8: III: 2371, as cited in Mair, 2002). Its *from*-less counterpart “arose in the context of the systematic structural ambiguity between genitive/possessive and object/common case readings of certain pronouns and plurals at the time” (Fanego, 1998: 92, 101, as cited in Mair, 2002). Mair says (2002: 114) that the NP *-ing* and NP *from -ing* patterns “seem to have spread more or less simultaneously in the course of the 18th century”.

Mair (2002: 115) also points out that there are examples with the *from*-less construction in older American texts. He notes that while “the early examples of the *from*-less gerunds collected by Visser, Jespersen, and the *OED* are all British, it is not difficult to find eighteenth-century American instances, which shows that the same type of variation found in modern British English must at one stage also have been characteristic of American usage.” The following examples (ex. 26-28) come from an electronic edition of Benjamin Franklin's *Diaries*:

- (26) . . . every Law we have hitherto made to prevent this Deluge of Wickedness overwhelming us. (Franklin, 1736±57, 359: 1, as cited in Mair, 2002)
- (27) *So that, while the Enemy is in the Heart of the Country, Cavils prevent any Thing being done for its Relief* (Franklin 1757±75, 507: 1, as cited in Mair, 2002)
- (28) *There is no test to prevent Churchmen holding offices.* (ibid., 676: 4)

Ong (2011) studies the variation between the *from* and the *from*-less construction as a complement of *prevent* and *stop* in American English of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. She is not surprised to find out that *prevent NP from -ing* strongly prevails over *prevent NP -ing* in all three periods. As for *prevent NP from -ing*, Ong (2011: 81) discovers that its frequencies are at a constant average of 21 per million words though they fluctuate from the start of the 19th century to early 21st century and that “the overall diachronic trend for *prevent NP from -ing* is decreasing towards the 20th century but is increasing back slowly in the beginning of the 21st

century” (ibid., 83). In the case of *prevent* NP *-ing*, the frequencies are significantly lower than the frequencies of the *from*-variant (three per million words in contrast to twenty per million words) (ibid., 87). She concludes that “the overall diachronic trend for *prevent* NP *-ing* is decreasing tremendously especially at the start of the 20th century and continues to decrease towards the 21st century” (ibid., 89). Figures 1-2 show developmental trend of the NP *from -ing* and NP *-ing* patterns in American English of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. The vertical line indicates normalized frequency (a number of examples per million words).

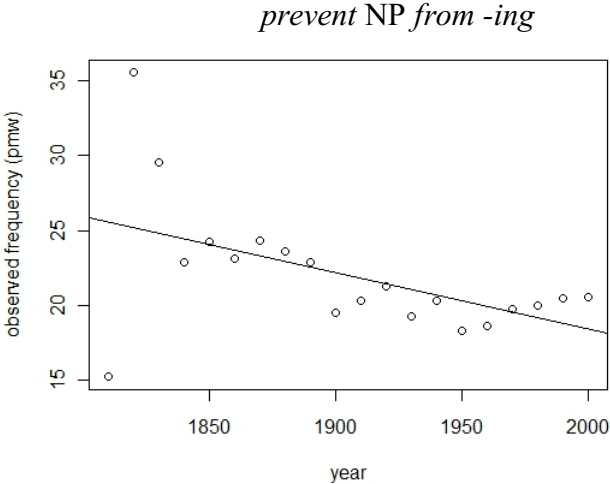


Figure 1: Diachronic frequency development (pmw) of *prevent* NP *from -ing* in AmE (1810-2009) (Ong, 2011: 81)

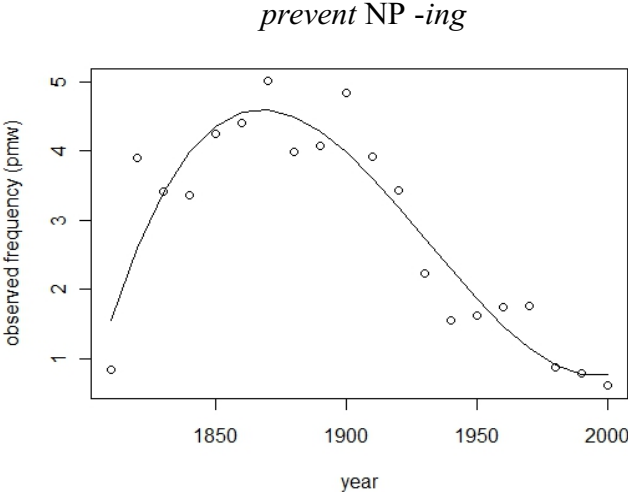


Figure 2: Diachronic frequency development (pmw) of *prevent* NP *-ing* in AmE (1810-2009) (Ong, 2011: 87)

Sellgren (2007) focuses on complementation patterns of the verb *prevent* in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. She extracts data from three corpora, *The Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (CLMET)*, *The Early American Fiction (EAF)* corpus, and *The British National Corpus (BNC)*. The results from the *CLMET* are indicated in Table 3, which shows the distribution of

the clausal complements of *prevent* in British English in the period 1780-1850 and 1850-1920 (ibid.: 50-64). In both periods the most common clausal complement of *prevent* is the *from*-construction. Its frequency rises in the course of the two periods (from 63.2 % to 68 %). The second most common clausal complement of *prevent* in the period 1850-1920 is the *from*-less construction, which differs from the period 1780-1850 where the second most common pattern is *poss-ing*. This points to increasing popularity of the *from*-less construction in British English during the 19th and 20th century.

	1780-1850		1850-1920	
	ABS	%	ABS	%
NP <i>from -ing</i>	227	63.2	160	68
NP <i>-ing</i>	23	6.4	39	17
<i>-ing</i>	2	0.6	-	-
<i>poss-ing</i>	107	29.8	36	15
Total	359	100	235	100

Table 3: Distribution of clausal complements of *prevent* in BrE texts (1780-1850) and (1850-1920) (Sellgren, 2007: 56-64)

The *EAF* corpus represents American English in fictional texts of the period 1809-1874. Sellgren is not surprised to find out that in this corpus the pattern NP *-ing* is rare. However, she claims that “29 examples in total in a corpus of almost 12 million words is definitely more than in present-day American English, in which this pattern is non-existent. Presumably it is not until late 19th and early 20th century that this pattern started to disappear from American English” (ibid.: 112). This assumption is supported Benjamin Franklin’s *Diaries*, in which the *from*-less construction is found. (Mair, 2002, Section 2.1.2)

In brief, clausal complementation of the verb *prevent* has been investigated from regional and diachronic perspectives. While in British English the alternation between the two variants is common, in American English the complementation of *prevent* is almost exclusively restricted to prepositional construction (Dixon, 1995: 217). Popularity of the *from*-less construction increases in British English over the second half of the 20th century Mair (2002: 112). On the other hand, the frequency of the *from*-less construction in American English has been dramatically decreasing since the beginning of the 20th century (Ong, 2011).

2.2 Clausal complements of *stop*

There are four clausal complements of *stop*: the construction with gerund (ex. 29), with *to*-infinitive (ex. 30), with the preposition/complementizer *from* (ex. 31) and with a fused participle (ex. 32):

- (29) *That phone never stops ringing!*
- (30) *We stopped to admire the scenery*
- (31) *This stopped me from leaving early*
- (32) *This stopped me leaving early*

Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 657) put the verb *stop* into the same class as *prevent*, the verbs of prevention and abstention. Like *prevent*, *stop* may be used with a gerund-participial clausal complement without *from* (ex. 32).

They find *stop* a questionable member of this class because it cannot be followed by the construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing* (2002: 1238):

- (33) **It stopped our leaving early.*

Moreover, they claim that the construction with a fused participle has a wider range of meanings than the *from*-one:

- (34) *We must stop him coming back tomorrow* (“not allow, prevent”)
- (35) *They stopped us playing before he had finished the first set* (“made us stop”) (ibid.)

The following sentence yields the “prevent” meaning:

- (36) *We must stop him from coming back tomorrow.* (ibid.)

The complementizer *from* thus cannot be used in the example (35) in which the verb *stop* functions as an aspectual verb. Quirk et al. (1985: 1194) classify *stop* as an aspectual verb which is complemented by a gerund.

2.2.1 Clausal complements of *stop* in British and American English

Less attention has been paid in grammar books to the structure *stop* NP *-ing* than to the structure *prevent* NP *-ing*. Algeo (1988: 24) says that in American English the *from*-less

construction after *stop* is absent, but that the corresponding structure with the verb *prevent* is accepted “by many, though not all, American consultants.”

Dixon (1995: 217) claims that *from* can be omitted after *stop* in British and Australian English, but not in American English.

Mair (2006: 132) analyses *stop* in the same terms as *prevent* (Section 2.1.1):

Corpora sampling years	British English	American English
1961	6:4	5:0
1991/92	3:12	7:0

Table 4: Raw frequency of *stop* NP *from -ing* (on the left) and *stop* NP *-ing* (on the right) in the *LOB*, *FLOB*, *Brown* and *Frown* (Mair, 2006: 132)

In British English, the frequency of *stop* NP *from -ing* decreases (from six to three instances), while the frequency of *stop* NP *-ing* increases three times (from four to twelve examples). In American English, there are no examples of the NP *-ing* pattern in both time periods. The frequency of the *from*-construction shows a small increase (from five to seven instances). Thus, the situation with *stop* resembles that with *prevent*. Furthermore, *stop* seems to occur with these two clausal complements less frequently than *prevent* (Table 1, Section 2.1.1).

Summarizing his results for *prevent* and *stop* (Table 1 and Table 4) and considering diachronic studies, Mair (2002: 115) emphasizes the rapid spread of the *from*-less construction in British English, which is without a parallel in American English. He concludes that if this trend is carried to a completion, it “will mean that from a common stock in which both structural options were present, British English standardized one, and American English the other. Alternatively, the dynamic apparent in twentieth-century British English may subside, and the British variety may continue to have two options where there is only one in American English.” The present thesis investigates the distribution of the two options in present-day British English and aims to see whether either of them is more grounded in one of the registers under scrutiny.

Geoffrey Leech et al. (2009: 194-5) find out that in the *DCPSE* corpus the construction *stop* NP *-ing* outnumbers the construction *stop* NP *from -ing* already in the older texts (1959–1977) and the trend continues in the more recent data (1991-1993). They find an example which “violates a traditional constraint on the passivization of *from*-less *stop*” (ibid.:195):

(37) *But if your tongue is denervated if the nerve to your tongue is cut then the taste buds are stopped being renewed all the time.* (DCPSE DI-B79)

2.2.2 Historical perspective on clausal complementation of *stop*

Sellgren (2007: 22) claims that “there are many meanings for *stop* found in *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* as it is a multi-purpose word”. We can identify three different main senses for clausal complementation of *stop* listed in the *OED*:

1. to cause (a person) to desist from or pause in a course of action or conduct	
NP PP (<i>in</i>)	1561 T.HOBY tr. B. Castiglione <i>Courtyer</i> I. sig. G.iii ^v <i>It is a stray out of the way in which he would haue profited, had <u>he not bene stopped in it.</u></i>
NP PP (<i>of</i>)	1592 T. Kyd Spanish Trag. iii. sig. H4v <i>My L. it lyes not in Lorenzos power, To <u>stop the vulgar liberall of their tongues.</u></i>
NP <i>of -ing</i>	1611 Bible (King James) 2 Cor. xi. 10 <i>No man shall <u>stop mee</u> [margin., Gr. this boasting shal not be stopped in me.] <u>of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.</u></i>
NP <i>-ing</i>	1917 N.E.D. at <i>Stop Mod.</i> <i>I wish you would <u>stop him circulating those rumours.</u></i>
NP <i>from -ing</i>	1816 W. Scott Old Mortality xv, in Tales of my Landlord 1st Ser. IV. 319 <i>What can be done to <u>stop him from running headlong on ruin?</u></i>
<i>short</i>	1837 T. CARLYLE <i>French Revol. I. v. iii. 237</i> <i>Your National Assembly, <u>stopped short in its Constitutional labours,</u> may, [etc.].</i>
2. to restrain or prevent (a person) from a contemplated action.	
–	1530 J. Palsgrave <i>Lesclarcissement</i> 737/1 <i><u>I stoppe,</u> I hynder or let one of any purpose that he is about, je empesche.</i>

NP	1874 J. RUSKIN <i>Fors Clavigera</i> IV. xxxix. 69 <i>If any one likes to go, nobody will <u>stop them</u>.</i>
NP <i>-ing</i>	a1917 <i>Mod. Why didn't you <u>stop him sending</u> that letter?</i>
3. to cease from, discontinue (an action, employment, etc.).	
NP	1853 M. Arnold <i>Scholar Gipsy</i> in <i>Poems</i> (new ed.) 208 <i>The blackbird picking food Sees thee, nor <u>stops his meal</u>, nor fears at all.</i>
poss <i>-ing</i>	1525 Ld. Berners tr. J. Froissart <i>Cronycles</i> II. ccxxxvii. 306 b/2 <i>Whan they had this warnynge they <u>stopped their coming to the kyng</u>.</i>
<i>-ing</i>	1795 <i>Gentleman's Mag.</i> 65 ii. 539/1 <i>Barley was so dear that brewers had <u>stopped brewing</u>.</i>
bare infinitive	1878 W. S. JEVONS <i>Polit. Econ.</i> 66 <i>Nobody should be allowed suddenly to <u>stop work</u> in a way endangering other people.</i>

Table 5: Senses and complements of *stop* in the *OED* (*OED*, 2021)

The earliest examples of NP *-ing* and NP *from -ing* in the *OED* are both relatively recent:

(38) *What can be done to stop him from running headlong on ruin?* (1816)

(39) *I wish you would stop him circulating those rumours.* (1917)

The first example (ex. 38) contradicts Huddleston and Pullum's claim that the construction with the complementizer *from* can be used only in the "prevent" meaning (Section 2.2). In the *OED* it is listed under the meaning "to cause (a person) to desist from or pause in a course of action or conduct" (Table 5). Moreover, no example of the *from*-construction is found in the *OED* under the meaning "to restrain or prevent (a person) from a contemplated action."

While the verb *stop* is not used with the gerundial complement *poss-ing* in present day English, one such example is found in the 16th century text:

(40) *Whan they had this warnynge they stopped their commynge to the kyng.* (1525)

However, the construction (ex. 40) differs from the construction investigated in the thesis in that the pronoun “their” refers to the subject of the matrix clause.

The construction with the complementizer *of*, which is absent in present-day English, occurs once in the 17th century text (ex. 41).

(41) *No man shall stop mee [margin., Gr. this boasting shal not be stopped in me.] of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.* (1611)

Ong (2011), analysing complements of *prevent* and *stop* in American English of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, finds out that diachronic trend for *stop* is different from that of *prevent* (Section 2.1.2). There is not a significant difference between the frequency of the NP *from -ing* and NP *-ing* patterns in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century (e.g., in 1910 the normalized frequency of the *from*-construction is 1.37 ipm and of its *from*-less counterpart 1.18 ipm). It is not until the 1950s when the frequency of *stop* NP *from -ing* significantly increases (Figure 3). The increase in frequency of *stop* NP *-ing* is insignificant in all three periods (Figure 4). The vertical line indicates normalized frequency (a number of examples per million words).

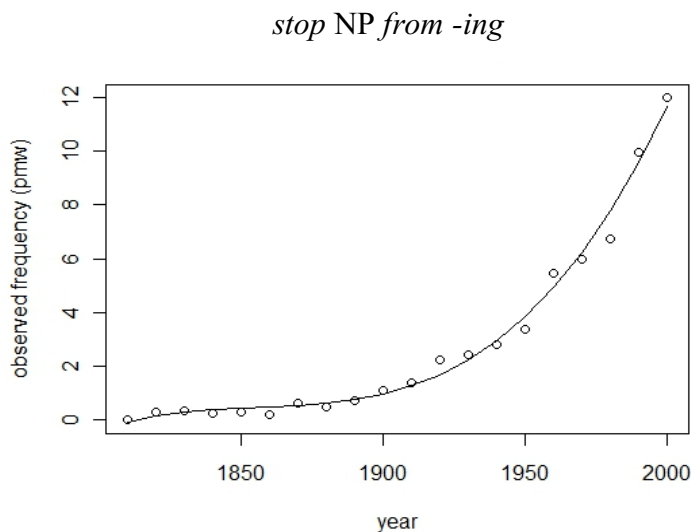


Figure 3: Diachronic frequency development (pmw) of *stop* NP *from -ing* in AmE (1810-2009) (Ong, 2011: 81)

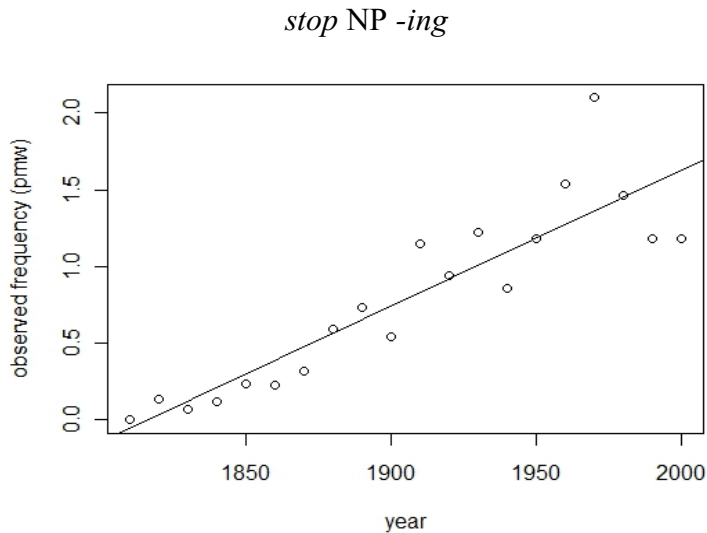


Figure 4: Diachronic frequency development (mpw) of *stop* NP *-ing* in AmE (1810-2009) (Ong, 2011: 87)

Section 2.2 focused on alternation between the construction with the complementizer *from* and the *from*-less construction as a clausal complement of the verb *stop*. Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 657) put *stop* into the same class as *prevent*, the verbs of prevention and abstention, but point out that unlike *prevent*, *stop* cannot be complemented by the construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing*. Mair’s (2006: 132) analysis shows that developmental trend of *stop* in British English of the 20th century is similar to that of *prevent* - the frequency of the *from*-less construction increases significantly over the second half of the 20th century. In American English the *from*-less construction after *stop* has always been rare, while popularity of the *from*-construction has significantly increased from the 1950s onwards (Ong, 2011: 81).

2.3 Structural and semantic factors determining the complement of *prevent/stop*

Attempts have been made to identify factors which influence the language user’s choice between the construction with complementizer *from* and the *from*-less construction. These factors are regional (Section 2.1.1 and 2.2.1), semantic (e.g., Dixon, 1991) and structural (e.g., Sellgren, 2007; Ong, 2011).

2.3.1 Complexity principle

The factor that has been investigated several times concerns Rohdenburg’s Complexity Principle, which states:

- (42) *In the case of more or less explicit grammatical options the more explicit one(s) will tend to be favoured in cognitively more complex environments.*
(Rohdenburg, 1996)

This is so because in complex structures the more explicit variant will be easier to process cognitively than the less explicit one. Applying this principle to the verbs *prevent* and *stop*, the construction with *from* should occur in complex syntactic environments (the NP following *prevent/stop* is long) more often than its *from*-less counterpart. Very complex syntactic environment is illustrated by the following example (ex. 43):

- (43) *But the fight did not prevent the fundamental beliefs in the nation and 'the historic integrity of the island of Ireland', as nationalist parties described it in their New Ireland Forum (1983-1984: i.28), from remaining basic to the perceptions of both parties. (BNC, A07, 317, as cited in Sellgren)*

According to Mair (2002: 113), this claim is not entirely consistent with data. “Historically, there has been a spread of the *from*-complements, but only in American English, where they have outstated their “bare” alternatives; in British English the recent decades have been characterized by a spread of what according to Rohdenburg would be the dysfunctional (less explicit) alternative”. Moreover, “synchronically, the complexity principle may account for some of the variation observed in British English; in American English, where there has ceased to be variation, the principle cannot be applied any longer” (ibid., 114).

Rohdenburg distinguishes three degrees of complexity in noun phrases involving subject pronouns:

- (44) *My mates (they) made a collection for me.*
(45) *My mates at work (they) made a collection for me.*
(46) *The fella that done the damage (he) said to me...*

(Rohdenburg, 2006)

These degrees of complexity are represented by a simple noun phrase (ex. 44), a complex noun phrase (ex. 45) involving prepositional phrase as a postmodification, and a very complex noun phrase (ex. 46) whose postmodification is realized by a relative clause.

Concerning the verb *stop*, Ong (2011: 101) finds out that between 1810 and 2009 the two constructions (with *from* and without it) display a similar average number of words within the noun phrases - between 1.4 to 1.8 words. The average number of words trend for both NP *from -ing* and NP *-ing* is decreasing but the trend for NP *ing* is more salient (Figure 5 and 6). The vertical line shows the average number of words per million words.

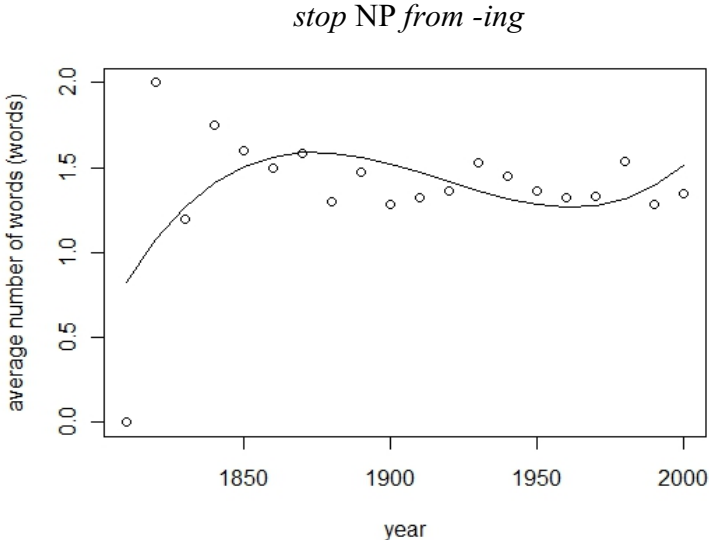


Figure 5: Average number of words within a noun phrase for *stop NP from -ing* in AmE (1810-2009) (Ong, 2011: 98)

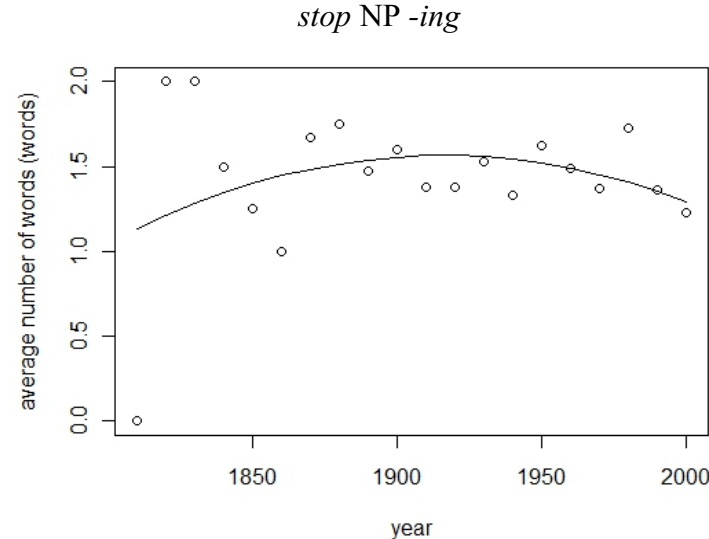


Figure 6: Average number of words within a noun phrase for *stop NP -ing* in AmE (1810-2009) (Ong, 2011: 98)

As for the verb *prevent*, Ong's data indicate that the complementizer *from* tends to be inserted between long noun phrases and *-ing* (ibid., 101). She concludes that "both *prevent* and *stop* complementation clauses favour the preposition or complementizer *from* when they have long noun phrases in order to show explicitness in their constructions" (ibid., 102).

2.3.2 Factor of iconicity

Dixon (1991: 236) attempts to explain the variation from semantic point of view. The *from*-less construction is likely to be used when the subject employs direct means to prevent the action and it has a sense of immediacy and external observability, while the construction with the complementizer *from* is likely to be chosen when the speaker uses his influence to make sure that someone does not do something. Dixon illustrates this idea on the following examples (ex. 47-48):

(47) *I prevented her going*

(48) *I prevented her from going* (ibid.)

In the first example (47), the speaker might block her path. In the example with the complementizer *from* (48), he might use his influence to make sure that she was not allowed to leave the country.

Mair (2002: 114) points out that this is consistent only with part of the attested data. "There are straightforward counterexamples in the corpora, and in many cases the semantic distinction involved is irrelevant or difficult to perceive in a given context."

2.3.3 Verb form of *prevent/stop*

Sellgren (2007: 88) aims to find out whether the preference for one of the variants might be associated with the verb form of *prevent*. Table 6 shows the distribution of verb forms of *prevent* when *prevent* is followed by the *from*-construction and when by the *from*-less one in the whole *BNC*.

	<i>from</i>	%	-	%
<i>prevent</i>	1391	50	1365	50
<i>prevents</i>	230	63	138	37
<i>preventing</i>	325	75	109	25
<i>prevented</i>	470	77	142	23
Total	2316	57	1754	43

Table 6: Verb forms of *prevent* followed by the *from* and *from*-less construction in the *BNC* (Sellgren, 2007: 88)

Her analysis reveals that the NP *from -ing* and NP *-ing* patterns are both by far most common with the base form of *prevent* with which they are equally common (1391 and 1365 examples). As Sellgren observes, “with other inflectional forms, there is a definite preference for NP *from-ing*, ranging in percentages from 63 to 77” (ibid., 89).

Moreover, using diachronic subcorpora of the *BNC*, Sellgren pays attention to developmental trend of verb forms of *prevent* with the two complements. The following tables represent results from two time periods – the texts from 1960-1974 (Table 7) and from 1985-1995 (Table 8).

	<i>From</i>	%	-	%
<i>prevent</i>	22	60	15	40
<i>prevents</i>	2	100	-	0
<i>preventing</i>	6	100	-	0
<i>prevented</i>	17	94	1	6
Total	47	75	16	25

Table 7: Verb forms of *prevent* followed by the *from* and *from*-less construction in the texts from 1960-1974 (Sellgren, 2007: 90)

	<i>From</i>	%	-	%
<i>prevent</i>	1281	50	1285	50
<i>prevents</i>	219	60	138	40
<i>preventing</i>	297	72	114	28
<i>prevented</i>	421	74	150	26
Total	2218	57	1687	43

Table 8: Verb forms of *prevent* followed by the *from* and *from*-less construction in the texts from 1985-1995 (Sellgren, 2007: 91)

In both time periods the NP *from -ing* and NP *-ing* patterns occur most commonly with the base form of *prevent*. There are no examples of *prevents* and *preventing* followed by the *from*-less construction in the texts from 1960-1974. In the later period, the inflectional forms do occur with the NP *-ing* pattern but their frequency with the NP *from -ing* pattern is significantly higher. Sellgren concludes that the verb form of *prevent* is one of the aspects affecting the variation (ibid.: 97)

2.3.4 Type of a verb complementing *prevent/stop*

Ong (2011) investigates semantic domain preferences for *-ing* forms of the *prevent* and *stop* complementation clauses. She attempts to answer the question whether certain *-ing* forms show a preference for the construction with *from* or for the *from*-less variant and whether there are some changes over time. She employs the classification of verbs as proposed by Biber et al. (1999: 360-364), which comprises seven semantic domains:

- activity verbs (e.g., *run, draw*)
- communication verbs (e.g., *speak, advise*)
- mental verbs (e.g., *know, hear, regret*)
- causation verbs (e.g., *enable, allow, force*)
- occurrence verbs (e.g., *happen, become, develop*)
- existence and relationship verbs (e.g., *be, seem, appear*)
- aspectual verbs (e.g., *begin, continue, stop*)

(1999: 360-364)

The following figures (Figure 7 and 8) group the top 15 most frequent *-ing* forms used in the construction *prevent NP from -ing* and *prevent NP -ing* into the semantic domains based on the number of occurrences across three different time periods.

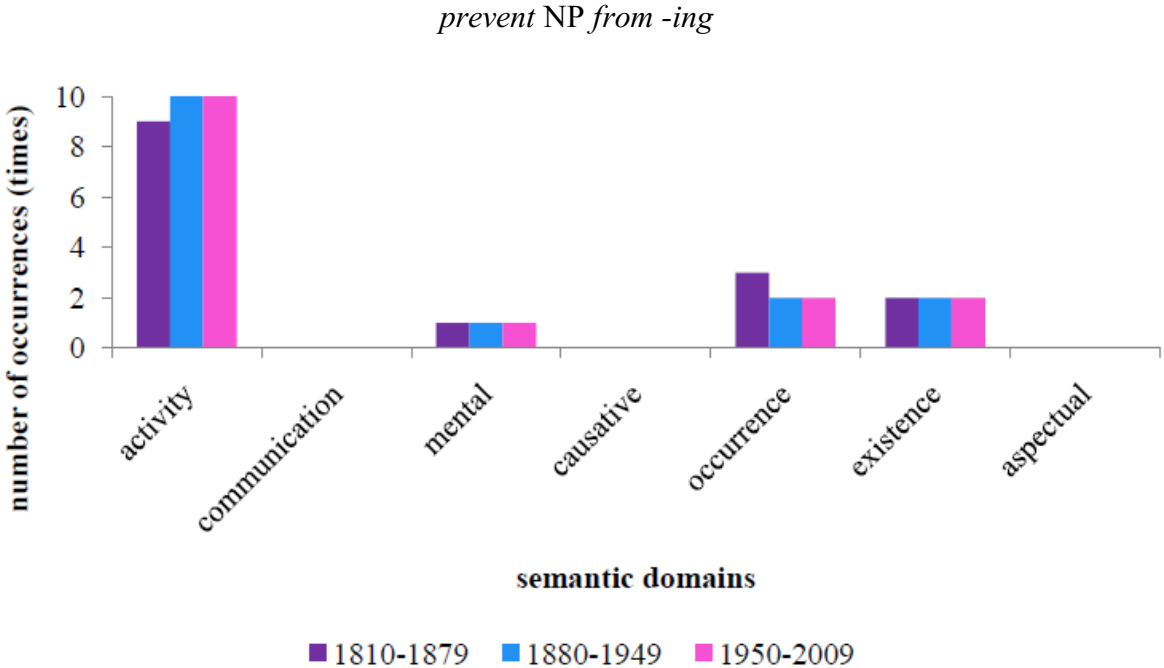


Figure 7: Top 15 most frequent *-ing* forms in *prevent NP from -ing* over three time periods (Ong, 2011: 133)

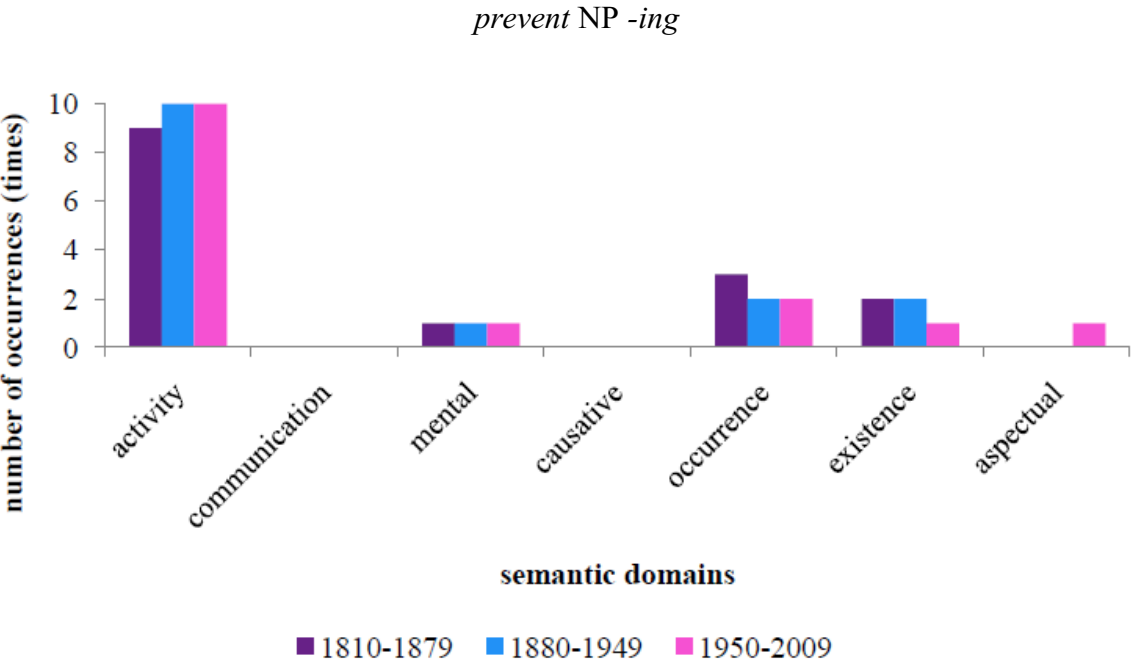


Figure 8: Top 15 most frequent *-ing* forms in *prevent NP -ing* over three time periods (Ong, 2011: 133)

Figures 7-8 show that activity verbs prevail in all three periods in both constructions. The other semantic domains have a low frequency. There are no examples of causative verbs or communication verbs. Also, there is not much change between the three time periods and “a lot of the *-ing* forms overlap for both variants within the three time periods. The verbs, *becoming*, *getting*, *going*, *making*, *doing*, *seeing*, *coming*, *giving* and *having* occur most frequently in both variants based on the raw frequency” (ibid., 130). The analysis thus does not reveal whether some *-ing* forms are strongly attracted or repelled by one of the constructions.

The variation between the construction with the complementizer *from* and the *from*-less construction as a complement of the verbs *prevent* and *stop* has been investigated so far from regional and diachronic perspectives and from the perspective of structural and semantic factors affecting the choice of the complement (Mair, 2002; Ong, 2011; Sellgren, 2007; Dixon, 1991). While British English is characterized by “the rapid spread of the *from*-less variant” (Mair, 2002: 115), in American English the clausal complementation of *prevent/stop* is almost exclusively restricted to the *from*-construction. The research also suggests that preference for one of the variants might correlate with the verb form of *prevent* and the complexity (length) of a noun phrase. The present thesis aims to contribute to the survey of clausal complementation of *prevent* and *stop* assessing the distribution of clausal complements of *prevent* and *stop* in three different written registers. Since regional dialect has been shown to affect the variation, we expect that the variation might be affected also by register. If it is so, we are interested in whether preference for one of the variants could be linked to some characteristics of the registers under examination, e.g., a frequent use of passive in academic writing.

3 Material and Method

3.1 Material

Material for my analysis was extracted from six corpora/subcorpora representing British English material because in American English the *from*-less construction is rare (cf. above). Each register (fiction, academic language, periodicals) is represented by two corpora:

Fiction

- *InterCorp*
- *British National Corpus (BNC)*

Academic language

- *The British Academic Written English Corpus (BAWE)*
- *The Cambridge Academic English Corpus (CAEC)*

Periodicals

- *British National Corpus (BNC)*
- *The SiBol corpus of English broadsheet newspapers (SiBol)*

InterCorp is a parallel synchronic corpus. “*InterCorp* is a part of the Czech National Corpus, a project funded by the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic within the programme Large Research, Development and Innovation Infrastructures (LM2018137; 2020–22)” (Cvrček, V. and O. Richterová (eds.), 2020). We decided to work with the version 13, which contains texts in 40 different languages plus Czech (ibid.). *InterCorp* is freely available via a web interface. Čermák and Rosen (2021: 1) argue that “it has an important role especially for languages with fewer native speakers, supporting both comparative research and studies of the language from the perspective of other languages.” The core part of the corpus consists mostly of novels (ibid.: 7). The British English fiction section that we chose for the analysis contains 18,743,278 tokens.

British National Corpus (BNC) is “a collection of over 4,000 samples of modern British English, both spoken and written, stored in electronic form and selected so as to reflect the widest possible variety of users and uses of the language” (Aston and Burnard, 1997: 3). The corpus contains over 100 million words (ibid.). “Ninety percent of the BNC is made up of written texts, chosen according to three selection features: domain (subject field), time (within

certain dates) and medium (book, periodical, unpublished, etc.). For the selection feature ‘domain’, 75 percent of the samples were drawn from texts classed as ‘informative’, and 25 percent from texts classed as ‘imaginative’ (ibid.). We used ‘imaginative texts’ for investigation of complementation of *prevent* and *stop* in fiction. This sample contains 19,769,014 tokens. To investigate the use of complements of *prevent* and *stop* in periodicals, we worked with the periodicals section of the *BNC* from 1992-1994, which contains 11,214,549 tokens.

“*The British Academic Written English Corpus (BAWE)* is a collection of texts produced by undergraduate and Master’s students in a wide range of disciplines, for assessment as part of taught degree programmes undertaken in the UK. The majority of the contributors to the corpus are mother tongue speakers of English” (Alsop and Nesi, 2009: 71). The corpus enables the identification and description of student writing genres across disciplines (ibid.: 72). It is freely available to researchers. The size of the *BAWE* is 8,336,262 tokens.

The Cambridge English Corpus (CEC) is “a multi-billion-word corpus of English language (containing both text corpus and spoken corpus data)” (“Cambridge English Corpus,” 2019). It includes several specialized corpora, including the *CAEC* (Cambridge Academic English Corpus), which contains texts of “written and spoken academic language at undergraduate and post-graduate level from a range of US and UK institutions, including lectures, seminars, student presentations, journals, essays and textbooks” (ibid.). We worked with a 3-million-word sample that is freely available to researchers outside the University of Cambridge. Of this sample, we used the British English section, which contains 2,215,384 tokens.

The SiBol corpus of English broadsheet newspapers (SiBol) “contains 1.5 million articles coming from 14 newspapers written in the English language and published between 1993 and 2013. There are around 650 million words in the corpus” (Wasterlain, 2020). Allan Partington (2010: 85), one of its authors, says: “The 1993 corpus was compiled by me, together with John Morley, in the mid-1990s so that we could have at our disposal a large corpus of recent texts for both language research and teaching in faculties of political science (it was interesting, for instance, to compare the stances of left- and right-leaning papers on political issues).” To probe complementation of *prevent* and *stop* in periodicals, we employed the Guardian section (2010-2012) of the corpus, which contains 37,989,020 tokens.

Table 9 summarizes sizes of the six corpora/subcorpora:

Corpus/subcorpus	Size (tokens)
British English fiction section of <i>InterCorp</i>	18,743,278
Fiction section of the <i>BNC</i>	19,769,014
<i>BAWE</i>	8,336,262
British English section of the <i>CAEC</i>	2,215,384
Periodicals section of the <i>BNC</i> (1992-1994)	11,214,549
Guardian section (2010-2012) of the <i>SiBol</i>	37,989,020

Table 9: Sizes of the corpora/subcorpora used in the analysis

To assess quantitative differences in the use of complements of *prevent* and *stop* in fiction, in academic language, and in periodicals, we compared the frequency of the NP *from -ing*, NP *ing* and *poss-ing* patterns in each of the six corpora. Thus, all examples of the following constructions were extracted from the six corpora and were counted (for the results, see Section 4.1-4.2):

- (a) *prevent* + NP + *from* + *-ing*
- (b) *prevent* + NP + *-ing*
- (c) *prevent* + genitive NP + *-ing*
- (d) *stop* + NP + *from* + *-ing*
- (e) *stop* + NP + *-ing*

Concerning the examples in which the noun phrase was realized by the pronoun *her*, the examples were classified under the construction (b):

- (49) *It was done to prevent her giving way to a compulsive wish to injure herself by picking at her skin*

The queries for *prevent/stop* + NP + (*from*) + *ing* were formulated to allow the noun phrase to fill in up to seven positions. The zero position was included due to the examples in which *prevent/stop* is used in the passive form (e.g., *He was prevented from going there*). The noun phrase in the query excludes the words *from*, *by*, *while* and *until* and the comma in order to avoid examples like the following:

- (50) *The iodization of salt dates back to the 19th century when it was discovered that goitre could be prevented by adding iodine to salt.*
- (51) *Once the horses negotiate the first fence, they cannot effectively be stopped until re-crossing the Melling Road after Fence 12.*

The query for the *from*-less construction was used to retrieve the examples of the construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing*. Thus, four queries were formulated:

prevent + NP + *from* + *-ing*

```
[lemma="prevent"][word!="from" & word!="by" & word!="while" & word!="until" & word!="," ]{0,7}[word="from"] [tag="V.*"& word="*.ing"] within <s/>
```

prevent + NP + *-ing*

prevent + genitive NP + *-ing*

```
[lemma="prevent"][word!="from" & word!="by" & word!="while" & word!="until" & word!="," ]{0,7} [tag="V.*"& word="*.ing"] within <s/>
```

stop + NP + *from* + *-ing*

```
[lemma="stop"][word!="from" & word!="by" & word!="while" & word!="until" & word!="," ]{0,7}[word="from"] [tag="V.*"& word="*.ing"] within <s/>
```

stop + NP + *-ing*

```
[lemma="stop"][word!="from" & word!="by" & word!="while" & word!="until" & word!="," ]{0,7}[tag="V.*"& word="*.ing"] within <s/>
```

The concordances were checked manually, and those that did not represent the target construction were removed. For example, there were cases in which the *-ing* complementing *prevent/stop* was tagged as a verb even though it functioned as a noun:

- (52) *Milk protein is then washed over the filter to block any unbound filter to prevent non specific antibody binding.*

In a few examples, the verb *stop* was complemented by the construction with a gerund:

- (53) *As the play starts, I soon stop worrying about whether or not he's enjoying it, because I'm distracted by the woman next to me.*

While the quantitative analysis uses all retrieved examples (Section 4.1-4.3), the analysis of structural and semantic factors that may affect the variation between the *from* and *from*-less construction relies on 840 selected examples, 420 for each verb. Structural factors were analysed on the basis of 210 examples of each of the following constructions:

- (a) *prevent* + NP + *from* + *-ing*
- (b) *stop* + NP + *from* + *-ing*
- (c) *prevent* + NP + *-ing*
- (d) *stop* + NP + *-ing*

The 210 examples of each construction were taken from the six corpora/subcorpora, which means that 35 examples were extracted from each corpus/subcorpus for each construction. There were fewer than 35 examples in the *CAEC* for the verb *stop* and for the pattern *prevent NP -ing*. The missing data were taken randomly from the periodicals section of the *BNC*.

To ensure that the material is suitable for investigation of all factors identified in previous studies, we first extracted those examples in which the noun phrase consisted of more than 2 two words (maximum 15 examples from each corpus for each construction). The remaining examples (it was necessary to retrieve 35 examples from each corpus) were chosen according to the order on the list.

Out of the 840 examples, we took the first fifty representing the construction *prevent* + NP + *from* + *-ing* and first fifty representing the construction *prevent* + NP + *-ing* to investigate a factor of iconicity (Section 4.4.6)

All examples used in the quantitative (and, subsequently, also qualitative) analysis are listed in the appendix. The appendix consists of two parts due to a large number of examples. The first part (Appendix 1) contains all examples of *prevent* + NP + *from* + *-ing*, *prevent* + NP + *-ing* and *prevent* + genitive NP + *-ing* identified in the corpora (Section 4.1). Appendix 1 contains 3644 examples. The second part (Appendix 2) includes all examples of *stop* + NP + *from* + *-ing* and *stop* + NP + *-ing* identified in the corpora (Section 4.2). Appendix 2 contains 2967 examples. In each part of the appendix, the examples for each construction are divided into groups based on corpus/subcorpus they were extracted from. The order of examples corresponds to their order in the corpus.

3.2 Method

The following procedure was applied to both verbs *prevent* and *stop*, respectively. First, absolute and relative frequencies of each construction in each of the six corpora/subcorpora were ascertained. As for the *from* and *from-less* construction, the results for each construction from two corpora representing one register were compared and averaged (Section 4.1.1-4.2.3). Thus, there were three average relative frequencies (representing three different registers) for each construction. In the quantitative comparison among the three registers, we worked mainly with the odds ratio, one of the effect size measures. (see below, Section 4.1.1-4.2.3).

In the qualitative analysis (Section 4.4), the sample of 840 examples was used to investigate structural and semantic factors affecting the choice between the *from* and the *from-less* construction. The potential correlations of following factors identified in previous literature were examined:

1. Complexity of the noun phrase (a number of words the intervening noun phrase consists of) (Section 4.4.1)
2. Passive form of *prevent/stop* (Section 4.4.2)
3. Inflected forms of *prevent/stop* (*prevents/prevented/preventing*) (Section 4.4.3)
4. Type of a verb complementing *prevent/stop* (semantic domains proposed by Biber et al. (1999)) (Section 4.4.4)
5. Transitivity of a verb complementing *prevent/stop* (Section 4.4.5)
6. Iconicity (Dixon, 1991) (Section 4.4.6)

4 Analysis

Section 4.1-4.3 surveys the quantitative results for either of the verbs under study.

4.1 Clausal complements of *prevent* in the three registers

4.1.1 Clausal complements of *prevent* in the BrE fiction section of the *InterCorp* and the fiction section of the *BNC*

Table 10 shows frequency of the three constructions in the BrE fiction section of the *InterCorp* and the fiction section of the *BNC*. Results are presented in both absolute frequency (ABS) and relative frequency (REL, i.e., items per million tokens, ipm). Relative frequencies appear in bold type (Section 4.1-4.2).

	<i>InterCorp</i>		<i>BNC</i>	
	ABS	REL	ABS	REL
NP <i>-ing</i>	108 ^{20%}	5.76	134 ^{34%}	6.79
NP <i>from -ing</i>	367 ^{70%}	19.58	247 ^{64%}	12.49
Poss- <i>ing</i>	51 ^{10%}	2.72	8 ^{2%}	0.40
Total	526	28.06	389	19.68

Table 10: Frequency of the respective clausal complements of *prevent* in the BrE fiction section of the *InterCorp* and the fiction section of the *BNC*

The *from*-construction is the most represented one of the three constructions in both corpora, constituting 70% of cases in the *InterCorp* and 64% in the *BNC*. The *from*-less variant is used in 20% of instances in the *InterCorp* and 34% of examples in the *BNC*. The variant with the *poss-ing* complement is found in the *InterCorp* and in the *BNC* in 10% and 2% of cases, respectively.

Concerning the construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing*, the results point to its popularity in prose written before the second half of the 20th century. In the *InterCorp*, sixteen out of fifty-one examples come from Jane Austen's texts and nine examples from Charles Dickens' texts. Unlike the *InterCorp*, almost all examples extracted from the *BNC* come from texts written between 1985-1993. Thus, the difference between the frequency of this construction in the two corpora (2.72 vs. 0.4) reflects its declining popularity throughout the 20th century.

Table 10 suggests that fiction writers prefer the *from*-complement over the *from*-less variant. The frequencies of each of these two complements in the two corpora are rather similar. The log likelihood test shows that the difference between the frequency of *prevent* + NP + *-ing* in the two corpora is insignificant ($p > 0.05$). Yet, the frequency of the *from*-construction is significantly higher in the *InterCorp* than in the *BNC*. The log likelihood value is 30.43 with the significance level $p < 0.0001$. It can be hypothesized that this is due to the fact that the *InterCorp* contains also classic texts written before the 20th century. Sellgren (2007: 58) finds out that in the corpus *CLMET* the relative frequency of the *from*-construction is higher in the period 1780-1850 (52 pmw) than in the period 1850-1920 (37.9 pmw). Although the difference between the frequencies of the *from*/*from*-less constructions in two corpora representing the same register are in some cases significant (cf. Sections 4.1.1., 4.1.3, 4.2.1 and 4.2.3), for the sake of simplicity we decided to work with mean relative frequency in the quantitative comparison among the three registers. The average relative frequency of the *from*-complement in the two corpora representing fiction is 16.04 ipm. The average relative frequency of the *from*-less variant is 6.28 ipm.

Alongside the log likelihood test, we used one of the effect size measures, the odds ratio. With corpus data, the odds ratio can be interpreted as the ratio of the relative frequencies (Alamán and Zotti, 2020). In our analysis, the odds ratio is the ratio of the average relative frequency of the *from*-construction and the average relative frequency of the *from*-less construction in two corpora representing one register. Thus, the odds ratio in the corpora representing fiction is 2.5 (16.04: 6.28). This means that in the two corpora the *from*-construction is 2.5 times as frequent as the *from*-less one.

These results are different from those obtained by Mair who finds out that in the *FLOB* the two constructions are represented equally (2012: 112, Section 2.1.1). Most texts in the *FLOB* are informative texts such as press, general prose and learned writing (81%) and the rest belong to fiction (19%). In the *DCPSE* corpus representing spoken British English of the 1990s, it is the *from*-less construction that is more frequent (2009: 194). Thus, the *from*-less variant might be more popular in informative texts and spoken language than in fiction or, to put it differently, the rapid spread of the *from*-less variant in British English accompanied by the drop of the *from*-construction, which is proclaimed by Mair (2002: 115), may affect informative texts and spoken language more than fiction.

4.1.2 Clausal complements of *prevent* in the *BAWE* and the BrE section of *CAEC*

The frequency of the three constructions in the *BAWE* and the BrE section of the *CAEC* is presented in Table 11.

	<i>BAWE</i>		<i>CAEC</i>	
	ABS	REL	ABS	REL
NP <i>-ing</i>	106 ^{27%}	12.72	34 ^{34%}	15.35
NP <i>from -ing</i>	285 ^{73%}	34.19	66 ^{66%}	29.79
Poss- <i>ing</i>	0	0	0	0
Total	391	46.90	100	45.14

Table 11: Frequency of the respective clausal complements of *prevent* in the *BAWE* and the BrE section of the *CAEC*

Like in fiction, the *from*-construction is more popular than the *from*-less variant in both corpora. In the *BAWE* it is found in 73 % of examples, while in the *CAEC* it appears in 66 % of examples. The construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing* does not occur in any example in any of the two corpora. This supports our assumption that the construction is absent in present-day academic language.

Concerning the variation between the *from* and the *from*-less constructions, the frequencies of each construction in the two corpora are similar, with the log likelihood test showing that the difference between the frequency of *prevent* + NP + *from* + *-ing* in the *BAWE* and in the *CAEC* is insignificant ($p > 0.05$). The same is true for *prevent* + NP + *-ing*. The average relative frequency of the *from*-construction is 31.99 ipm and of the *from*-less one 14.04 ipm. Table 12 compares the odds ratio of these two constructions in the corpora representing academic language and the corpora representing fiction. Moreover, it presents the average relative frequency of the two constructions (the *from* + the *from*-less one) in the corpora.

	<i>InterCorp</i> + <i>BNC</i> - fiction	<i>BAWE</i> + <i>CAEC</i>
Odds ratio	2.5	2.3
Average relative frequency	22.31	46.02

Table 12: Odds ratio and average relative frequency of *prevent* NP (*from*) *-ing* in the corpora representing fiction and the corpora representing academic language

Table 12 indicates that the variation ratio in academic language and in fiction is similar. In the corpora representing fiction, the *from*-construction is 2.5 times as frequent as the *from*-less one and in the corpora representing academic language 2.3 times as frequent. Compared to the results of Mair (2002: 112) and Leech et al. (2009: 194), both fiction and academic language seem to belong to registers which has not been yet significantly affected by the rapid spread of the *from*-less variant pointed out by Mair (2012: 115).

Moreover, Table 12 shows that the pattern *prevent* NP (*from*) -*ing* occurs more frequently in academic texts than in fiction. While the average relative frequency of the two constructions in the corpora representing fiction is 22.31 ipm¹, their average relative frequency in the corpora representing academic language is 46.02 ipm.

4.1.3 Clausal complements of *prevent* in the periodicals section of the *BNC* and the *SiBol*

The frequency of the three constructions is shown in Table 13.

	<i>BNC</i>		<i>SiBol</i>	
	ABS	REL	ABS	REL
NP - <i>ing</i>	251 ^{43%}	22.38	736 ^{44.4%}	19.37
NP <i>from</i> - <i>ing</i>	329 ^{56%}	29.33	917 ^{55.4%}	24.14
Poss- <i>ing</i>	3 ^{1%}	0.27	4 ^{0.2%}	0.11
Total	583	51.98	1657	43.62

Table 13: Frequency of the respective clausal complements of *prevent* in the periodicals section of the *BNC* and the Guardian section (2010-2012) of the *SiBol*

In both corpora the construction with *from* is represented slightly more than the variant without it. In the *BNC* it is found in 56% of examples, while the *from*-less construction is present in 43% of cases. In the *SiBol* the *from*-construction and the *from*-less one are used in 55.4% of the time and 44.4% of the time, respectively. As to the construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing*, the results show that it is quite rare in present-day periodicals. It seems that the construction tends to disappear in all three registers under investigation.

¹ The frequency of construction *prevent* + genitive NP + -*ing* is not included

Like in fiction and academic language, frequencies of each complement in the two corpora are comparable. The log likelihood test shows the difference between the frequency of *prevent* + NP + *-ing* in the *BNC* and in the *SiBol* as insignificant ($p > 0.05$) and the difference between the frequency of *prevent* + NP + *from* + *-ing* in the two corpora as significant with a relatively high p-value ($p < 0.01$). The average relative frequency of the *from*-construction is 26.7 ipm and of the *from*-less one 20.9 ipm. Table 14 compares the odds ratio and the average relative frequency of the two constructions in the corpora representing fiction, academic language and periodicals.

	<i>InterCorp</i> + <i>BNC</i> – fiction	<i>BAWE</i> + <i>CAEC</i>	<i>BNC</i> – periodicals + <i>SiBol</i>
Odds ratio	2.5	2.3	1.3
Average relative frequency	22.31	46.02	47.61

Table 14: Odds ratio and average relative frequency of *prevent* NP (*from*) *-ing* in the corpora representing fiction, academic language and periodicals

In the periodicals section of the *BNC* and in the *SiBol*, the *from*-construction is 1.3 times as frequent as the *from*-less construction. This odds ratio is noticeably lower than the ratio for the two remaining registers, in which the *from*-construction is more than twice as frequent as the *form*-less one. The results suggest that the *from*-less construction is more popular in periodicals than in fiction and academic language and that the proclaimed spread of the *from*-less variant has affected periodicals more than the two other registers.

Such results should not be surprising. Mair (2002: 121-6) notes the spread of popularity of the bare infinitive after *help* in the second half of the 20th century in both British and American English. When the variation between the *to*-infinitive and the bare infinitive after *help* is investigated, most researchers focus on the growing popularity of the bare infinitive. In the findings of Biber et al. (1999: 736) the bare infinitive occurs in newspapers 75 -80% of the time, while in academic prose it occurs 55% of the time.

The pattern *prevent* + NP + (*from*) + *-ing* displays a similar overall frequency of incidence in periodicals and academic language. The average relative frequency of the two constructions in the corpora representing academic language is 46.02 ipm and their average relative frequency in the corpora representing periodicals is 47.61 ipm. Moreover, the pattern occurs more frequently in these two registers than in fiction (22.31 ipm) (Table 14).

4.2 Clausal complements of *stop* in the three registers

4.2.1 Clausal complements of *stop* in the BrE fiction section of the *InterCorp* and the fiction section of the *BNC*

Table 15 gives the frequency of the two complements in the BrE fiction section of the *InterCorp* and the fiction section of the *BNC*.

	<i>InterCorp</i>		<i>BNC</i>	
	ABS	REL	ABS	REL
NP <i>-ing</i>	286 ^{67%}	15.26	421 ^{65%}	21.30
NP <i>from -ing</i>	143 ^{33%}	7.63	229 ^{35%}	11.58
Total	429	22.89	650	32.88

Table 15: Frequency of the respective clausal complements of *stop* in the BrE fiction section of the *InterCorp* and the fiction section of the *BNC*

In both corpora the *from*-less complement occurs more frequently than the *from*-one. In the *InterCorp* it is used in 67 % of examples, while in the *BNC* in 65% of examples. The difference between the frequency of each complement in the two corpora is significant. The log likelihood value is 15.57 ($p < 0.0001$) for the *from*-construction and 19.1 ($p < 0.0001$) for the *from*-less one. Since the differences are not great, we kept working with average relative frequency to allow for easier comparison among the register under examination. The average relative frequency of the *from*-less construction is 18.28 ipm and of the *from*-one 9.6 ipm. The odds ratio in the two corpora representing fiction is 1.9. This means that the *from*-less construction is 1.9 times as frequent as the *from*-one in the given register. The ratio of average relative frequency of the *from* and the *from*-less construction is for the verb *prevent* and *stop* of opposite value – while in the case of the verb *prevent* the dominant variant is the *from*-construction, in the case of *stop* it is the *from*-less one.

These results are not surprising as the strong preference for the *from*-less variant was noted in previous studies. In the *DCPSE* corpus the construction *stop* NP *-ing* outnumbers the construction *stop* NP *from -ing* in both the older texts (1959–1977) and the more recent data (1991-1993) (2009: 1994). Mair notes this preference in the *FLOB* (2012: 132). However, while in the *InterCorp* and the fiction section of the *BNC* the *from*-less construction is less than twice as frequent as the *from*-one, in the *FLOB* it is fourth times as frequent. Therefore, the situation

with *stop* might be similar to that with *prevent*. There is a preference for the *from*-less construction in fiction but its popularity in fiction might be lower than in some informative texts.

Our examples also reveal that it is not uncommon for one writer to alternate between the two variants. There are several examples in the *InterCorp* in which the author uses both variants in one text, e.g., J. K. Rowling uses both constructions quite frequently (ex. 54-55). Thus, unlike in American English, the clausal complementation of *stop* in British English is not restricted to one of the two variants.

(54) ... she skidded on the wet floor and grabbed Hermione around the neck to stop herself from falling. (SF128)

(55) It was all Harry could do to stop himself imitating Hermione and hitting Malfoy in the face on these occasions. (S78)

4.2.2 Clausal complements of *stop* in the *BAWE* and the BrE section of the *CAEC*

The frequency of the two constructions in the *BAWE* and the BrE section of *CAEC* is given in Table 16.

	<i>BAWE</i>		<i>CAEC</i>	
	ABS	REL	ABS	REL
NP <i>-ing</i>	46 ^{55%}	5.52	9 ^{64%}	4.06
NP <i>from -ing</i>	37 ^{45%}	4.44	5 ^{36%}	2.26
Total	83	9.96	14	6.32

Table 16: Frequency of the respective clausal complements of *stop* in the *BAWE* and in the BrE section of the *CAEC*

In the *BAWE* there is a mild preference for the *from*-less construction over the *from*-one. It is found in 55 % of examples. In the *CAEC* the construction occurs in 64% of examples. According to the loglikelihood test, the difference between the frequency of the *from*-complement in the two corpora is not significant. The same is true of the *from*-less construction. The average relative frequency of the *from*-less construction is 4.79 ipm and of the *from*-one 3.35 ipm. Table 17 compares the odds ratio of the *from* and the *from*-less construction in the

corpora representing fiction and the corpora representing academic language. It also shows the average relative frequency of the two constructions in the corpora.

	<i>InterCorp + BNC - fiction</i>	<i>BAWE + CAEC</i>
Odds ratio	1.9	1.4
Average relative frequency	27.89	8.14

Table 17: Odds ratio and average relative frequency of *stop* NP (*from*) -*ing* in the corpora representing fiction and the corpora representing academic language

The results show that preference for the *from*-less construction is a bit stronger in the corpora representing fiction than in the corpora representing academic language. While in the *InterCorp* and the *BNC* the *from*-less construction is 1.9 times more frequent than the *from*-one, in the *BAWE* and the *CAEC* it is 1.4 times more frequent. From a different point of view, in the *BAWE* the *from*-less construction is used in 55% of cases, while in the *InterCorp* in 67% of examples. Thus, we suggest that fiction has a bit stronger preference for the *from*-less construction than academic language and that it might be affected by the current spread of the *from*-less construction (Mair, 2002: 115) a little bit more than academic language.

Table 17 also suggests that the pattern *stop* NP (*from*) -*ing* is used more frequently in fiction than in academic texts. While the average relative frequency of the two constructions in the corpora representing fiction is 27.89 ipm, their average relative frequency in the corpora representing academic language is 8.14 ipm.

What the two corpora of academic language have in common with the *FLOB* results is that the pattern *prevent* NP (*from*) -*ing* occurs in them much more frequently than the pattern *stop* NP (*from*) -*ing* (Mair, 2012, Section 2.1.1-2.2.1). In the *BAWE* and the *CAEC*, the average relative frequency of *prevent* NP (*from*) -*ing* is 46.02 ipm and of *stop* NP (*from*)-*ing* is 8.14 ipm.

4.2.3 Clausal complements of *stop* in the periodicals section of the *BNC* and the *SiBol*

Table 18 displays the frequency of the two constructions in the periodicals section of the *BNC* and in the Guardian section (2010-2012) of the *SiBol*.

	<i>BNC</i>		<i>SiBol</i>	
	ABS	REL	ABS	REL
NP <i>-ing</i>	235 ^{76%}	20.95	1098 ^{74%}	28.90
NP <i>from -ing</i>	75 ^{24%}	6.68	383 ^{26%}	10.08
Total	310	27.64	1481	38.98

Table 18: Frequency of the respective clausal complements of *stop* in the periodicals section of the *BNC* and the Guardian section (2010-2012) of the *SiBol*

The *from*-less construction strongly prevails over the *from*-one in both the *BNC* and the *SiBol*. In the *BNC*, it is found in 76% of examples and in the *SiBol* in 74% of examples. The average relative frequency of the *from*-less construction is 24.9 and of the *from*-one 8.38. Therefore, the odds ratio in the two corpora representing periodicals is 2.97. Table 19 compares the odds ratio and the average relative frequency of *stop* NP (*from*) *-ing* in the corpora representing fiction, academic language and periodicals.

	<i>InterCorp</i> + <i>BNC</i> – fiction	<i>BAWE</i> + <i>CAEC</i>	<i>BNC</i> – periodicals + <i>SiBol</i>
Odds ratio	1.9	1.4	2.97
Average relative frequency	27.89	8.14	33.31

Table 19: Odds ratio and average relative frequency of *stop* NP (*from*) *-ing* in the corpora representing fiction, academic language and periodicals

While in the corpora representing fiction and academic language the *from*-less construction is less than twice as frequent as the *from*-one, in the corpora representing periodicals it is 2.97 as frequent. While the *from*-less construction occurs in the 67% of examples in the *InterCorp*, it is used in 76% of cases in the periodicals section of the *BNC*. Thus, the situation with *stop* might be similar to that with *prevent* – of the three registers, the *from*-less variant seems to be most popular in periodicals.

Moreover, *stop* NP (*from*) *-ing* occurs more frequently in periodicals and fiction than in academic texts. In the *BAWE* and the *CAEC*, the average relative frequency of these two constructions is 8.14 ipm. Their relative frequency in the periodicals section of the *BNC* and the *SiBol* is 33.31. The value for the *InterCorp* and the fiction section of the *BNC* is 27.89.

4.3 Summary of clausal complements of *prevent/stop* in the three registers

The following figures (Figure 9-11) summarize the results obtained from the six corpora/subcorpora representing the three registers. The results are presented in frequency per million. Figure 9 shows a declining popularity of the construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing* throughout the 20th century.

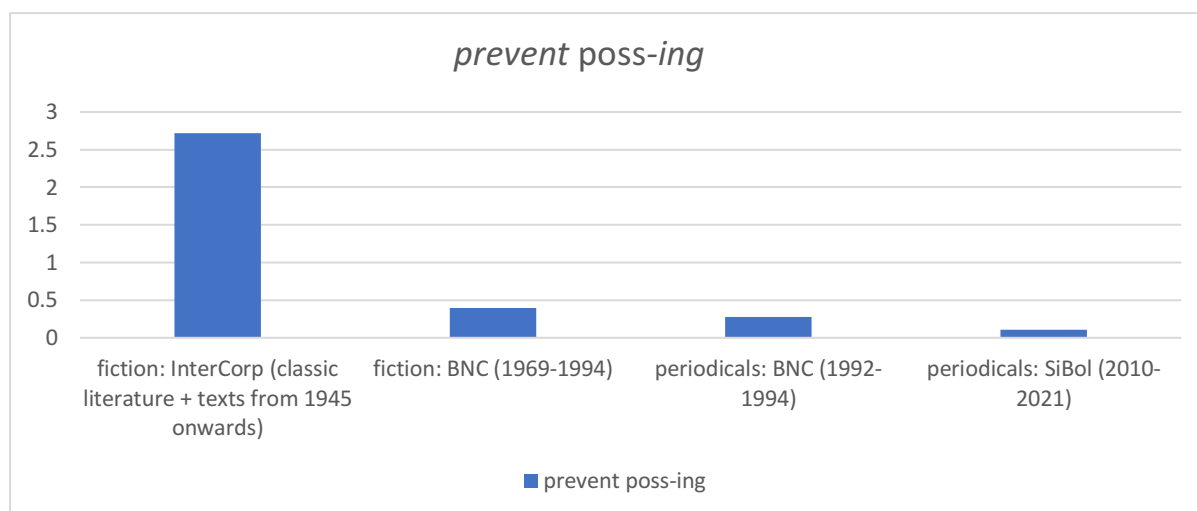


Figure 9: Frequency of *prevent poss-ing* in the corpora representing fiction and periodicals

The following examples illustrate the use of the gerundial complement *poss-ing* in present-day English:

- (56) *Leo was standing at the drink's cabinet in the corner, his back to her, yet it didn't prevent his knowing instantly who it was* (Richmond, 1991, retrieved from BNC)
- (57) *Fizkin's people have got three-and-thirty voters in the lock-up coach-house at the White Hart...The effect, you see, is to prevent our getting at them* (Mullan, 2010, retrieved from SiBol)

Concerning the variation between *prevent NP from -ing* and *prevent NP -ing*, the results indicating that the *from*-less construction might be more popular in periodicals than academic language and in fiction are presented in Figure 10. The figure demonstrates the average relative frequency of each construction for each register.

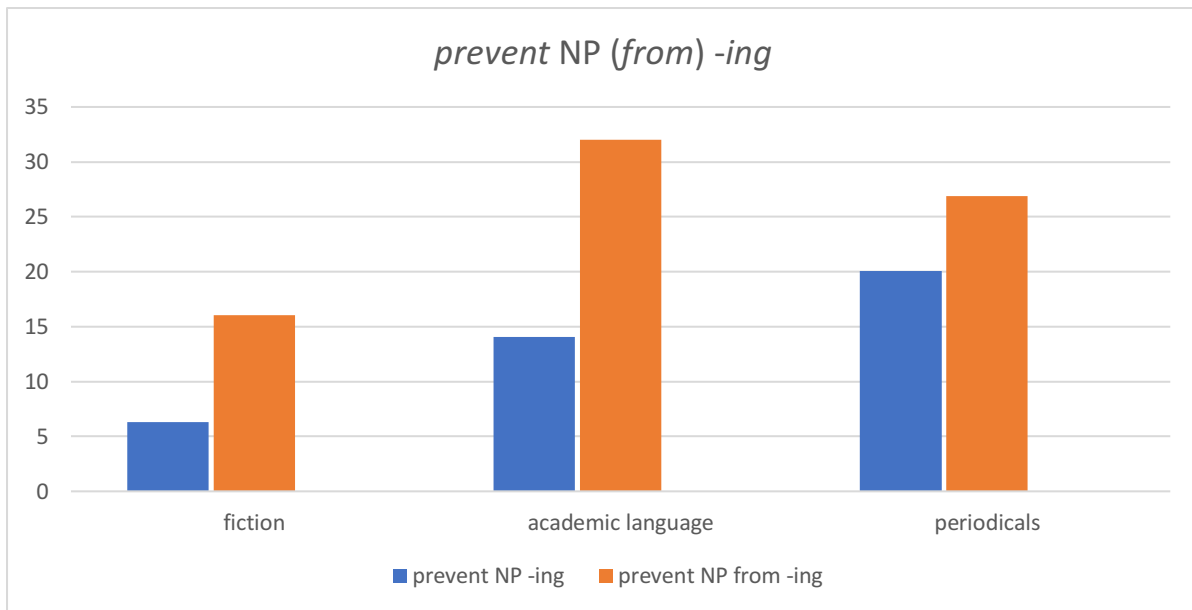


Figure 10: Frequency of *prevent NP from -ing* in the corpora representing fiction, academic language and periodicals

While the verb *prevent* prefers the *from*-construction over the *from*-less one in all three registers, the verb *stop* is in these registers more frequently found with the *from*-less construction than with the *from*-one. Figure 11 presents the results indicating that the *from*-less construction after *stop* might be less popular in academic writing than in fiction and less popular in these two registers than in periodicals.

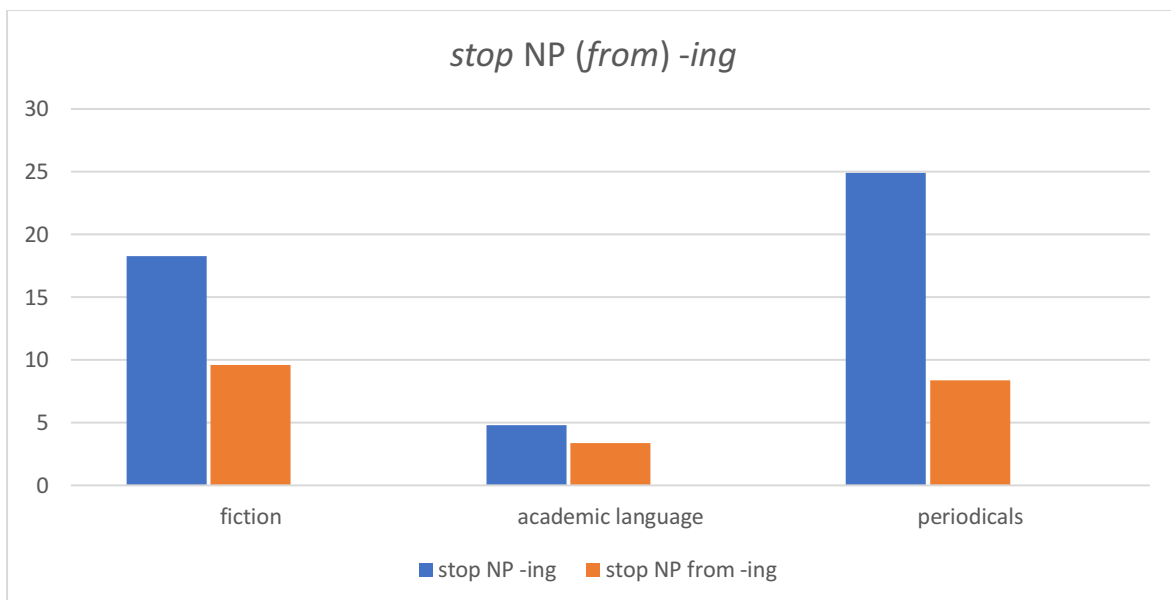


Figure 11: Frequency of *stop NP (from) -ing* in the corpora representing fiction, academic language and periodicals

4.4 Structural and semantic factors determining the complement of *prevent/stop*

In literature (e.g., Ong, 2011), most of the factors we focus on have already been investigated in relation to the complementation of *prevent* and *stop*. Our aim is to verify the findings from previous studies. These factors are complexity of the noun phrase (4.4.1), the presence of the passive form of *prevent/stop* (4.4.2), un/inflected form of *prevent* (4.4.3), and the semantic type of a verb complementing *prevent/stop* (4.4.4). The potential influence of the transitivity of the complement (4.4.5) had been investigated in relation to the variation between the bare and the *to*-infinitives after *help* (Levshina, 2018; Průšová, 2019), with Levshina's data showing that in Hong Kong English the presence of a transitive complement significantly increases the probability of the *to*-infinitive after *help*. We also aim to examine the statement by Dixon (1991) that the choice of the complement is semantically motivated (4.4.6). Moreover, the results of the qualitative analysis are used to investigate possible causes of the high frequency of the *from*-construction after *prevent* in fiction and academic language.

4.4.1 Complexity of the noun phrase

We decided to verify the assumption that a complex (i.e., long) noun phrase standing between *prevent/stop* and the complement correlates with the *from*-construction (Rohdenburg, 1996). If so, we are interested in whether the high frequency of the *from*-construction in academic writing could be partly caused by the frequent use of complex noun phrases in this register. Academic writing has been characterised by “sentences with a relatively simple clause structures but long, complex noun phrases” (Cortes et al., 2015).

In the qualitative analysis the total of 420 examples of the verb *prevent* and 420 examples of the verb *stop* are used. When investigating the factor of complexity of the noun phrase, only 406 examples could be used as in fourteen examples there is no word intervening between *prevent* and its complement because *prevent* is used in a passive voice, and thus the noun phrase moves to a subject position (ex. 58):

(58) *But the messenger was prevented from reaching me and the message was lost*
(PF11)

Out of these fourteen examples, twelve were found for the *from*-construction and two for the *from*-less one. All these examples were excluded from the analysis of the factor of complexity of the noun phrase.

When a one-word object stands between *prevent* and the complement, the *from*-variant is used in 47% of examples. When *prevent* is followed by a multiple-word NP, the two constructions are equally represented:

	ABS	Frequency
<i>prevent</i> + one-word NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i>	75	47%
<i>prevent</i> + one-word NP + <i>-ing</i>	85	53%
Total	160	100%

Table 20: Distribution of *prevent* NP (*from*) *-ing* when the NP consists of one word

	ABS	Frequency
<i>prevent</i> + multiple-word NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i>	123	50%
<i>prevent</i> + multiple-word NP + <i>-ing</i>	123	50%
Total	246	100%

Table 21: Distribution of *prevent* NP (*from*) *-ing* when the NP consists of more than one word

There is no noticeable difference between the distribution of the two complements when NPs consist of one word and when of more than one word. From a different point of view, when *prevent* is used with the *from*-complement, the multiple-word NP is present in 62% of cases. When it is followed by the *from*-less construction, the multiple-word NP is used in 59 % of examples. The log-likelihood test was applied to investigate the significance of difference between the representation of the *from*-construction when it is followed by a one-word NP and when by a multi-word NP. The difference was found to be insignificant (Table 22).

	LL	Significance level
<i>prevent</i> + NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i>	0.20	p > 0.05

Table 22: Significance of difference between the frequency of *prevent* NP *from -ing* when it is followed by a one word NP and when by a multi-word NP

Such results do not correspond to the results by Ong which indicate that in American English of the 20th and 21st centuries both *prevent* and *stop* complementation clauses favour the *from*-construction when a noun phrase is long (2011: 102). On the other hand, results similar to ours had been obtained by Průšová (2019), who focuses on complementation of *help* in present-day spoken British English and who had expected that the tendency to prefer the *to*-infinitive

over the bare infinitive as a complement of *help* would increase with complexity of a noun phrase. Such tendency was not confirmed.

Based on secondary literature (Ong, 2011; Rohdenburg, 1996), we expected that there could be a correlation between complex noun phrases and the prepositional complementation. Since no such correlation was confirmed, we could not investigate whether the high frequency of the *from*-construction in academic writing might be due to a frequent use of complex noun phrases in this register.

Table 23 shows the distribution of the respective multiple-word NPs (two-word, three-word etc.) for *prevent NP -ing* and *prevent NP from -ing*:

	<i>prevent NP -ing</i>		<i>prevent NP from -ing</i>	
	ABS	Frequency	ABS	Frequency
two-word NP	52	42%	38	31%
three-word NP	40	32%	51	41%
four-word NP	13	11%	17	14%
five-word NP	11	9%	13	10%
six-word NP	6	5%	2	2%
seven-word NP	1	1%	2	2%
Total	123	100%	123	100%

Table 23: Distribution of multiple-word NPs for *prevent NP -ing* and *prevent NP from -ing*

There is not a great difference between the results for the two complements. The average length of the NP is almost the same for the two cases (3.04 for the *from*-less construction and 3.15 for the *from*-one). The results do not fully correspond to Ong’s claim that “the more explicit the constructions are with references to longer noun phrases, the higher the tendency for *from* is used” (2011: 104) as there are more examples with six-word NPs for the *from*-less construction than for the *from*-one in our sample (see Table 23, the bold line). In the following examples (59) and (60), the six-word NP stands between *prevent* and the *from*-less construction:

- (59) *The high temperatures of the denaturing temperature may be causing some of the DNA already produced to break down, while the reduced concentration of reactants prevents a significant amount of new DNA being produced (P364)*

(60) *Well , you surely know enough about this devil to prevent any decent girl in her senses wanting to be in the same parish with him (P5)*

Concerning the verb *stop*, we worked with 415 examples. There are five examples in our material in which no word stands between *stop* and the complement because *stop* is used in a passive voice. In all of them, *stop* is followed by the *from*-construction (ex. 61):

(61) *Courtney must be stopped from carrying out more despicable crimes (SF479)*

As with *prevent*, these examples were removed from the analysis of this factor.

The *from*-variant is used in 48% of examples in which one-word NP is inserted between *stop* and the complement (Table 24). When a multiple-word NP follows *stop*, this variant occurs in half of the examples (Table 25).

	ABS	Frequency
<i>stop</i> + one-word NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i>	96	48%
<i>stop</i> + one-word NP + <i>-ing</i>	103	52%
Total	199	100%

Table 24: Distribution of *stop* NP (*from*) *-ing* when a one-word NP stands between *stop* and the complement

	ABS	Frequency
<i>stop</i> + multiple-word NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i>	109	50%
<i>stop</i> + multiple-word NP + <i>-ing</i>	107	50%
Total	216	100%

Table 25: Distribution of *stop* NP (*from*) *-ing* when a multiple-word NP stands between *stop* and the complement

As with *prevent*, the distribution of the two complements when NP consists of one word and when more than one word is extremely similar. The log-likelihood test shows that the difference between the frequency of the *from*-construction when it is followed by a one-word NP and when by a multi-word NP is not significant (Table 26).

	LL	Significance level
<i>stop</i> + NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i>	0.2	$p > 0.05$

Table 26: Significance of difference between the frequency of *prevent* NP *from -ing* when it is followed by a one-word NP and when by a multi-word NP

The results for *stop* are like those for *prevent*. Complexity of a noun phrase does not seem to influence the language user's choice between *prevent/stop* NP *-ing* and *prevent/stop* NP *from -ing*.

Distribution of the respective multiple-word NPs for *stop* NP *-ing* and *stop* NP *from -ing* is shown in Table 27:

	<i>stop</i> NP <i>-ing</i>		<i>stop</i> NP <i>from -ing</i>	
	ABS	Frequency	ABS	Frequency
two-word NP	45	42%	61	56%
three-word NP	36	34%	22	20%
four-word NP	14	13%	13	12%
five-word NP	7	6%	10	9%
six-word NP	5	5%	2	2%
seven-word NP	0	0%	1	1%
Total	107	100%	109	100%

Table 27: Distribution of multiple-word NPs for *stop* NP *-ing* and *stop* NP *from -ing*

Like with *prevent*, the results for the two complements are rather similar and they do not support the claim that the longer the noun phrase, the higher the chance that the language user will choose the *from*-construction (Ong, 2011: 104). More examples with four-word and six-word NPs were found for the *from*-less construction than for the *from*-one (Table 27, bold lines). Two of them are presented in the ex. 62-63:

(62) *She half fell, half collapsed against it, unable to stop the tears of fear and anguish pouring down her face (S367)*

(63) *...but there is nothing they can give you to stop this grim cluster of brain cells scaring you shitless (or, perhaps, the opposite) until the very end. (S7)*

4.4.2 Passive form of *prevent/stop*

Second, we examine the claim that for the verbs showing alternation between the complement with preposition and the one without it (*forgive, prevent, prohibit...*), “passivisation is restricted to the prepositional construction, except very marginally with *prevent* and *stop* (?*She was prevented/stopped writing to us*)” (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 1238). If this is the case, we want to find out whether the high frequency of the *from*-construction in academic language might be partly caused by a frequent use of the passive voice in this register. Biber et al. (2006: 65) claim that “the written university registers show a greater reliance on passive voice. All spoken registers use active voice in 95% of time, while university registers use passive voice in cca. 20% of the time and active voice in the cca. 80% of the time.”

The verb *prevent* is used in a passive form in fourteen examples (3%) out of 420. In twelve cases it is followed by the *from*-construction and in two examples by the *from*-less one (Table 28)

	ABS	Frequency
NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i>	12	86%
NP + <i>-ing</i>	2	14%
Total	14	100%

Table 28: Passive form of *prevent* in *prevent* NP (*from*) *-ing*

The two examples in which *prevent* is followed by the *from*-less construction come from Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (ex. 64-65):

(64) *Mrs Bennet was prevented replying by the entrance of the footman with a note for Miss Bennet* (P14)

(65) *However, I recollected afterwards that if he had been prevented going, the wedding need not be put off, for Mr Darcy might have done as well* (P15)

Such results indicate that passivization is restricted to the prepositional construction in present-day English but that it might not have been so in the past. This idea is supported by the example from the *OED*:

(66) 1768 L. STERNE *Sentimental Journey* I. 134 *She had been prevented telling me her story.*

The verb *stop* is used in a passive form in five examples. In all of them, it is complemented by the *from*-construction. The results for both *prevent* and *stop* correspond to the study by Rohdenburg (2006), in which he analysed active and passive constructions in British English relying on the material from *The Daily Mail* and *The Mail on Sunday* (published 1993). He found 16 examples of the passive construction where *stop* is followed by the *from*-complement and no example of the passive construction where *stop* is complemented by the *from*-less variant (2006: 64). Thus, our results, which we were not surprised by, suggest that the passive voice of the superordinate verb strongly affects the language user's choice between the variant with the complementizer *from* and the one without it.

Moreover, it seems that the high frequency of the *from*-construction in academic language might be partly given by the frequent use of the passive in this register. Six out of eleven examples in which *prevent* is used in a passive voice come from the *BAWE* and *CAEC* corpora representing academic language. Two examples come from corpora representing fiction and three from corpora representing periodicals.²

4.4.3 Un/inflected form of *prevent/stop*

Another factor that is subjected to the analysis is the un/inflected form of the verb *prevent/stop*. We aim to verify the idea that there is a strong preference for the *from*-construction when *prevent* is used in an inflected form (Sellgren, 2007). If so, we are interested in whether the high frequency of the *from*-construction in fiction might be partly caused by a frequent use of the past simple in this register. The findings of Biber et al.'s (1999: 457) show that past simple is used more frequently in fiction than in news and more frequently in these two registers than in academic prose.

The verb *prevent* is uninflected in 271 examples (65%) out of 420. In the remaining 149 it is inflected. When it is uninflected, it is followed by the *from*-variant in 40% of cases (Table 29), while when an inflected form is used, the *from*-variant is present in 68% of examples (Table 30):

² This type of analysis (Chap. 4.4.2 – 4.4.3) is not applied to *stop* because for *stop*, the number of examples from the BNC is significantly greater than the number of examples from the CAEC, which biases the results

	ABS	Frequency
<i>prevent</i> + NP + <i>-ing</i>	163	60%
<i>prevent</i> + NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i>	108	40%
Total	271	100%

Table 29: Distribution of uninflected *prevent* NP (*from*) *-ing*

	ABS	Frequency
<i>prevented/s/ing</i> + NP + <i>-ing</i>	47	32%
<i>prevented/s/ing</i> + NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i>	102	68%
Total	149	100%

Table 30: Distribution of *prevents/ed/ing* NP (*from*) *-ing*

There is a noticeable difference between the representation of the *from*-construction when *prevent* is used in a base form and when in an inflected form. The likelihood test showed this difference to be significant. The log likelihood value is 15.09 with the significance level $p < 0.0001$.

	LL	Significance level
<i>prevent</i> + NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i>	15.09	$p < 0.0001$

Table 31: Significance of difference between the frequency of *prevent* NP *from -ing* when *prevent* is used in a base form and when in an inflected form

From another point of view, when *prevent* is complemented by the *from*-construction, it occurs in an inflected form in 49% of examples, while when it is complemented by the *from*-less construction, the inflected form is used in 29% of cases. Overall, the results suggest that the inflected form of *prevent* increases the chance of using the *from*-construction. Moreover, if the *from*-less construction is being grammaticalized in British English (Mair, 2002), the process has probably begun with the base form of *prevent* and has not yet noticeably affected the inflected forms.

Similar results were obtained by Sellgren who finds out that in the *BNC* “the two complements are actually equally common with the base form of *prevent*; with other inflectional forms, there is a definite preference for NP *from-ing*” (2007: 89). She claims that

it is another aspect of Rohdenburg’s Complexity Principle. The simplest verb form is commonly used with the NP *-ing* pattern, while the more complex forms tend to be used with the prepositional construction (2007: 96). In his study, Lind (1983) finds out that there is a significant difference between the frequency of the bare and the *to*-infinitive after the uninflected and the inflected form of *help*. He says, “the omission of *to* occurs in my corpus much more frequently after the uninflected form *help* than after any of the inflected forms” (1983: 268).

The results of our analysis do not indicate that the high frequency of the *from*-construction in fiction is due to a frequent use of the past simple in this register. When the *from*-construction complements *prevent*, the verb form *prevented* is less frequent in the corpora representing fiction (15 examples out of 49) than in the corpora representing periodicals (19 examples), a register in which the *from*-construction is, according to our data, less popular than in fiction. The frequency of *prevented* in the corpora representing academic language is same as in the corpora representing fiction (15 examples).

As for the verb *stop*, 309 examples (74%) out of 420 are uninflected and 111 (26%) are inflected. The distribution of the *from* and the *from*-less construction in the two cases is given in Table 32 and 33:

	ABS	Frequency
<i>stop</i> + NP + <i>-ing</i>	174	56%
<i>stop</i> + NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i>	135	44%
Total	309	100%

Table 32: Distribution of uninflected *stop* NP (*from*) *-ing*

	ABS	Frequency
<i>stopped/s/ing</i> + NP + <i>-ing</i>	36	32%
<i>stopped/s/ing</i> + NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i>	75	68%
Total	111	100%

Table 33: Distribution of *stops/ed/ing* NP (*from*) *-ing*

The difference between the distribution of the two complements when *prevent* is used in a base form and when in an inflected form is striking. The likelihood test shows that the difference between the frequency of the *from*-construction in the two cases is significant (Table 34).

	LL	Significance level
<i>stop</i> + NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i>	8.74	p < 0.01

Table 34: Significance of difference between frequency of *stop* NP *from -ing* when *stop* is used in a base form and when in an inflected form

Overall, it seems that the verb form of *prevent/stop* has a significant influence on the language user's choice between the *from* and the *from*-less construction.

4.4.4 Type of a verb complementing *prevent/stop*

Another factor we focus on concerns a verb complementing *prevent/stop*. Our aim is to find out whether certain semantic verb classes show a preference for one of the two constructions. The verbs were classified into semantic domains proposed by Biber et al. (1999: 360-364) (Section 2.3.4).

Table 35 indicates the proportion of the respective verb classes for *prevent* NP *-ing* and *prevent* NP *from -ing* in the 420 examples:

	<i>prevent</i> NP <i>-ing</i>		<i>prevent</i> NP <i>from -ing</i>	
	ABS	Frequency	ABS	Frequency
Activity verbs	150	71%	155	74%
Communication verbs	6	3%	5	2.5%
Mental verbs	16	7.5%	19	9%
Aspectual verbs	1	0.5%	3	1%
Verbs of simple occurrence	29	14%	23	11%
Verbs of existence or relationship	6	3%	5	2.5%
Causative verbs	2	1%	0	0%
Total	210	100%	210	100%

Table 35: Distribution of verb classes for *prevent* NP *-ing* and *prevent* NP *from -ing*

Distribution of the semantic domains when *prevent* is followed by the *from*-construction and when by the *from*-less one is very similar. In both cases, the most frequent verbs are activity verbs. This is not surprising as the study from the *Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus* (LSWE) by Biber et al. shows that 50% of all the common verbs (verbs that occur at least 50 times per million words) are activity verbs (1999: 365-366). The following examples (67-68) show activity verbs complementing *prevent* with and without the complementizer *from*, respectively.

- (67) *For example, the effects of the "infamous literacy tests" which prevented many black voters in many Southern states from voting in the 1960s* (PF644)
- (68) *Unfortunately, her determination didn't prevent a slight shiver of apprehension traversing her nervous system* (P154)

The second most frequent verbs are in both cases verbs of simple occurrence. There are 29 examples for the NP *-ing* pattern and 23 examples for the NP *from -ing* pattern. It is also the second most frequent semantic domain in Ong's work. She says: "Although Biber et al. claim that occurrence verbs are rare; they however are not in my study as *prevent* and *stop* are verbs which are linked closely to happening events. Hence, this might be the reason to why occurrence verbs domain has a high number of *-ing* forms in it" (2011: 139). The verb of occurrence used more than once in our sample is for example the verb *become* or *occur* (ex. 69-70)

- (69) *I see them as landmarks or safety nets - something to lean on to prevent one from becoming completely lost in the music* (PF623)
- (70) *Then one can try to prevent the same thing occurring again* (P20)

Causative and aspectual verbs are least common verbs in our analysis. This is not surprising as the corpus findings of Biber et al. show that causative and aspectual verbs are relatively rare (1999: 366).

Overall, no verb class shows any preference for one or the other variant. The log likelihood test shows the difference between the frequency of occurrence verbs when *prevent* is complemented by the *from*-construction and when by the *from*-less one as insignificant. The log likelihood value is 0.79 with the significance level $p > 0.05$. Such results correspond to those obtained by Ong whose analysis "does not show which *-ing* forms are strongly attracted or repelled by the constructions" (2011: 134). Different results for investigation of semantic verb classes were obtained by Průšová who finds out that "while dynamic verbs are associated

with the complementation of *help* by the bare infinitive, stative verbs occur in the complementation by the *to*-infinitive” (2019: 50).

Table 36 shows the proportion of the respective verb classes for *stop* NP *-ing* and *stop* NP *from -ing*:

	<i>stop</i> NP <i>-ing</i>		<i>stop</i> NP <i>from -ing</i>	
	ABS	Frequency	ABS	Frequency
Activity verbs	165	79%	164	78%
Communication verbs	9	4%	8	4%
Mental verbs	12	6%	15	7%
Aspectual verbs	4	2%	4	2%
Verbs of simple occurrence	11	5%	16	8%
Verbs of existence or relationship	9	4%	3	1%
Total	210	100%	210	100%

Table 36: Distribution of verb classes for *stop* NP *-ing* and *stop* NP *from -ing*

The findings coincide with those of Ong’s who claims that “the *-ing* forms for the stop complementation clauses have similar semantic preference with the *prevent* complementation clauses” (2011: 158). The most frequent verbs are, again, activity verbs. The second most frequent verbs are for both complements mental verbs. The following examples (71-72) show mental verbs complementing *stop* with and without the complementizer *from*, respectively:

- (71) *The person who helped tried to stop the person from wanting to die two more in just the past year* (SF519)
- (72) *Rawls himself mentions the social basis of self-worth and believes a UBI would stop those receiving the income feeling "ashamed of themselves" or undermine their self-respect.* (S718)

The only difference that is worth noticing is found in verbs of existence or relationship which are more than three times more frequent when *stop* is complemented by the *from*-less construction than when it is followed by the *from*-construction. The verbs of existence or relationship include copular verbs and other verbs such as *include*, *involve* or *contain*.

However, the log likelihood test shows that the difference between the frequency of verbs of existence or relationship when they occur with the *from*-construction and when with the *from*-less one is insignificant. The log likelihood value is 3.22 with the significance level $p > 0.05$. Moreover, since the absolute frequencies are low (9 and 3 examples), it is not possible to make any definite conclusion. Overall, preference for the *from*-construction does not seem to be associated with semantic class of the verb complementing *prevent/stop*.

4.4.5 Transitivity of a verb complementing *prevent/stop*

The last but one factor that we deal with is the transitivity of a verb complementing *prevent/stop*. We aim to find out whether the presence of an object after the *-ing* verb may increase the chance of the *from*-construction. This idea is inspired by the study of Levshina (2018), who finds out that in Hong Kong English the presence of a transitive complement significantly increases the chance of the *to*-infinitive after *help* (2018: 15).

A verb was classified either as an intransitive verb (including copular verbs) or as a transitive verb. 237 (56%) out of 420 examples contain a transitive verb and 183 examples (44%) an intransitive verb. Table 37 and 38 shows the distribution of the *from*-construction and the *from*-less one in the two cases:

	ABS	Frequency
<i>prevent</i> + NP + <i>-ing</i> (transitive v.)	115	49%
<i>prevent</i> + NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i> (transitive v.)	122	51%
Total	237	100%

Table 37: Distribution of *prevent* NP (*from*) *ing* when transitive verb complements *prevent*

	ABS	Frequency
<i>prevent</i> + NP + <i>-ing</i> (intransitive v.)	95	52%
<i>prevent</i> + NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i> (intransitive v.)	88	48%
Total	183	100%

Table 38: Distribution of *prevent* NP (*from*) *ing* when intransitive verb complements *prevent*

Such results do not point to any strong correlation between the *from*-construction and transitivity of the *-ing* verb. According to the likelihood test, the difference between the frequency of the *from*-construction when the verb complementing *prevent* is an intransitive verb and when a transitive verb is insignificant. The log likelihood value is 0.47 with the significance level $p > 0.05$.

	LL	Significance level
<i>prevent</i> + NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i>	0.47	$p > 0.05$

Table 39: Significance of difference between frequency of *prevent* NP *from -ing* when transitive and when intransitive verb complements *prevent*

Since there is little difference between the frequency of the *from*-construction in the two cases, we cannot speak about transitive verbs showing preference for the *from*-construction.

Concerning the verb *stop*, 210 examples (50%) contain a transitive verb complementing *prevent* and 210 (50%) an intransitive verb. The following Tables 40 and 41 show the distribution of *stop* NP *-ing* and *stop* NP *from* in the two cases.

	ABS	Frequency
<i>stop</i> + NP + <i>-ing</i> (transitive v.)	101	48%
<i>stop</i> + NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i> (transitive v.)	109	52%
Total	210	100%

Table 40: Distribution of *stop* (NP) (*from*) *ing* when transitive verb complements *stop*

	ABS	Frequency
<i>stop</i> + NP + <i>-ing</i> (intransitive v.)	109	52%
<i>stop</i> + NP + <i>from</i> + <i>-ing</i> (intransitive v.)	101	48%
Total	210	100%

Table 41: Distribution of *stop* (NP) (*from*) *ing* when intransitive verb complements *stop*

The results are very like those for *prevent*. There is only a 3% difference between the frequency of the *from*-construction when it occurs with a transitive and when with an intransitive verb. Thus, transitivity does not seem to be a factor for the choice between the two complements of *prevent* and *stop*.

4.4.6 Iconicity

Finally, we pay attention to Dixon's (1991: 236) idea that the choice between the *from*-construction and the *from*-less one is semantically motivated (Section 2.3.2). The variant with *from* is said to be associated with indirect means employed by the one who is trying to prevent the action from taking place, while the *from*-less variant is associated with direct means. What Dixon understands under indirect means is for example a speaker using his influence to make sure that someone does not do something.

We worked with a total of 50 examples representing the construction *prevent NP from -ing* and 50 examples representing the construction *prevent NP -ing*. The results for both constructions are presented in Table 42, which shows the frequency of the examples in which direct means were employed and of the examples in which indirect means were employed to prevent the action from happening. By direct means we understand the situation when the initiator of the action does something that directly causes that the action does not take place. By indirect means we understand the situation when the initiator of the action cannot/does not want to act directly, so he does something that can have an impact on whether the action takes place or not. In forty-two examples, it was impossible to identify whether direct or indirect means are involved.

	<i>prevent NP from -ing</i>		<i>prevent NP -ing</i>	
	ABS	Frequency	ABS	Frequency
direct means	24	48%	23	46%
indirect means	5	10%	6	12%
not possible to identify	21	42%	21	42%
Total	50	100%	50	100%

Table 42: Factor of iconicity for *prevent NP (from) -ing*

The results are in contrast to Dixon's suggestion. There are more examples with the *from*-construction than those with the *from*-less one in which direct means are employed to prevent the action from taking place (24 vs. 23 examples). In some examples, it was quite clear that direct means were used (ex. 73-74).

- (73) *She had a deeply serious expression on her face as she immersed herself in the newspaper and with elegant fingers tried to prevent the pages from flapping in the breeze (PF3)*
- (74) *He seized Harry's shoulder to prevent them being separated by a gaggle of shoppers plainly intent on nothing but making it into a nearby shop full of electrical gadgets (P16)*

Other examples were less clear. These are for example cases in which the initiator of the action is inanimate and direct means are not employed intentionally (ex. 75-77).

- (75) *Outside it, the cloud of dust aroused by the crash and the hulks of the other buildings with which this one was surrounded effectively prevented Zaphod from seeing anything of the world outside (PF16)*
- (76) *The mist prevented him seeing very far (P6)*
- (77) *They were a double pair of Joo Janta 200 Super-Chromatic Peril Sensitive Sunglasses which had been specially designed to help people develop a relaxed attitude to danger . At the first hint of trouble, they turn totally black and thus prevent you from seeing anything that might alarm you (PF9)*

As for indirect means, they are employed more frequently in the examples with the *from-less* construction than in those with the *from-one* (5 vs. 6 examples). Some of the examples with indirect means involved are:

- (78) *All this pother of coming to England and seeing lawyers wasn't to marry her, but to prevent her from marrying anybody else (PF21)*
- (79) *Well, you surely know enough about this devil to prevent any decent girl in her senses wanting to be in the same parish with him (P5)*
- (80) *It was resolved now that such an example should be made of them as would prevent any other victim from rebelling. At the meeting it was arranged that he and his house should be blown up with dynamite (PF27)*

For both constructions, there was a significant number of examples in which it was not possible to identify whether direct or indirect means were employed. It was for example because the act of preventing is only hypothetical (ex. 81-82).

- (81) *"We fared rather pathetically at the party, I 'm afraid," he said, "and our only hope now is to try to prevent the robots from using the Key in the Lock. How in heaven we do that I don't know," he muttered."* (PF30)
- (82) *The porter left the reception desk and went into his office to telephone. Jonathan thought, what's to prevent me just going up the stairs and knocking at the door ?* (P10)

In other cases (ex. 83-85), the act of prevention does not take place:

- (83) *Her frantic attempts to push away those wide shoulders proved to be of no avail, and there was nothing she could do to prevent his mouth gently brushing her lips* (P110)
- (84) *They climb Ingleborough together, and he cannot prevent himself feeling how good it is for a man to have a healthy young woman at his side* (P34)
- (85) *'I may not be able to prevent Thomas becoming his stepson, but I won't agree to him being adopted, nor will he use his name.'* (P114)

These results indicate that we cannot rely on a factor of iconicity when investigating the way language users use the *from* and *from*-less complement after *prevent*. First, the distribution of the two complements when direct and when indirect means are employed disproves Dixon's claim that the variant with *from* is connected to indirect means, while the *from*-less variant is associated with direct means (1991). Second, there are many examples in which it is impossible to identify which means are employed. Similar results were obtained by Mair who claims, "there are straightforward counterexamples in the corpora, and in many cases the semantic distinction involved is irrelevant or difficult to perceive in a given context" (2012: 114).

5 Conclusion

The thesis aimed to examine the variation between the construction with the complementizer *from* and the *from*-less construction as a clausal complement of the verbs *prevent* and *stop*, and thereby to contribute to the research of changes in complementation of English verbs, which has lately attracted attention of many researchers.

Since the degree of alternation between the two constructions has been shown to be a case of regional variation, the thesis focused on whether there are differences between the representation of each construction in three written registers in British English (fiction, academic language, and periodicals), including the construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing*. Furthermore, the thesis aimed to verify potential correlations with structural and semantic factors determining the complement, as they had been posited in secondary literature. Material for analysis was extracted from six corpora/subcorpora representing academic language, fiction, and periodicals, with each two corpora/subcorpora representing one register.

In all three registers the *from*-construction is more popular than the *from*-less one as a complement of *prevent*. The popularity of the *from*-construction seems to be similar in fiction and in academic language. In the corpora representing fiction (*BNC* and *InterCorp*), the *from*-construction is 2.5 times as frequent as the *from*-less one and in the corpora representing academic language (*BAWE* and *CAEC*) it is 2.3 times as frequent. The *from*-construction seems to be more popular in these two registers than in periodicals. In the periodicals section of the *BNC* and the *SiBol* the *from*-construction is only 1.3 times as frequent as the *from*-less one. Thus, the proclaimed spread of the *from*-less construction (Mair, 2002) might have affected periodicals more than fiction and academic writing. As for the construction with the gerundial complement *poss-ing*, the results indicate that in present-day English it is rare in all three registers. The only corpus in which the relative frequency of this complement is higher than 1 ipm is *InterCorp* (2.72 ipm), which contains both contemporary and classical texts written before the second half of the 20th century.

The complementation of *stop* displays inverse proportions, as the *from*-less construction is more frequent than the one with *from* in all three registers. The analysis shows that it might be slightly more popular in fiction than in academic language. While in the *InterCorp* and the *BNC* the *from*-less construction is 1.9 times as frequent as the one with *from*, in the *BAWE* and the *CAEC* it is 1.4 times as frequent. Of the three registers, the *from*-less construction is most popular in periodicals as a complement of both *prevent* and *stop*, but only with the verb *stop* it

is preferred over the *from*-construction. In the corpora representing periodicals the *from*-less variant after *stop* is 2.97 times more frequent than the one with *from*.

Overall, the spread of the *from*-less construction seems to have affected periodicals more than fiction and academic writing as a complement of both *prevent* and *stop*, and the alternants thus seem to represent register variation.

Table 43 summarizes some of the results of the analysis of structural and semantic factors. It shows the distribution of the *from* and *from*-less construction after *prevent* when the feature is present (+) and when it is absent (-). The difference between the frequency of each construction when the feature is present and when it is absent is given in the rightmost column (e.g., when an NP consists of more than one word, the *from*-construction is used in 50% of examples and when it consists of one word it is used in 47%. The difference is 3%. The same difference applies to its *from*-less counterpart (50% and 53%)) (Table 43). The respective factors are discussed below together with those that are not included in the table. The bold lines indicate that there is a significant difference between the frequency of each construction when the feature is present and when it is not.

	+		-		
	NP <i>from</i> - <i>ing</i>	NP <i>-ing</i>	NP <i>-from</i> <i>-ing</i>	NP <i>-ing</i>	Diff.
1. Complexity of NP (it consists of more than one word)	50%	50%	47%	53%	3%
2. Passive form of <i>prevent</i>	86%	14%	49%	51%	37%
3. The inflected form of <i>prevent</i>	68%	32%	40%	60%	28%
4. Transitivity of the complement	51%	49%	48%	52%	3%

Table 43: Results for factors determining the complement of *prevent*

Table 44 displays the results for the verb *stop*.

	+		-		
	NP <i>from</i> - <i>ing</i>	NP <i>-ing</i>	NP <i>-from</i> <i>-ing</i>	NP <i>- ing</i>	Diff.
1. Complexity of NP (it consists of more than one word)	50%	50%	48%	52%	2%
2. Passive form of <i>stop</i>	100%	0%	49%	51%	51%
3. The inflected form of <i>stop</i>	68%	32%	44%	56%	24%
4. Transitivity of the complement	52%	48%	48%	52%	4%

Table 44: Results for factors determining the complement of *stop*

1. Complexity of the noun phrase – Our data do not support the assumption that a complex noun phrase standing between *prevent/stop* and the clausal complement increases the probability of using the *from*-construction (Rohdenburg, 1996). The results for *prevent* and *stop* are very similar. There is no notable difference between the distribution of the two complements when NPs consist of one word and when of more than one word (see Table 43-44). Moreover, the log-likelihood test shows that the difference between the frequency of the *from*-construction when it is followed by a one-word noun phrase and when by a multi-word noun phrase is insignificant. As no correlation between the length of the noun phrase and the *from*-construction was confirmed, we could not examine whether the popularity of the *from*-construction in academic writing might be due to a frequent use of complex noun phrases in this register.
2. Passive form of *prevent/stop* – The analysis supports the assumption that passivization is almost exclusively restricted to the prepositional construction (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 1238). The verb *prevent* is complemented by the *from*-less construction only in two examples out of fourteen (14%, Table 43) in which the passive voice is used. Moreover, the two examples come from Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, which indicates that the passive might not have been restricted to prepositional construction in the past. As for the passive form of the verb *stop*, there is no example with the *from*-less construction as a complement. The data also indicate that the high frequency of the *from*-construction in academic language might be partly given by a frequent use of the passive in this register.

3. Un/inflected form of *prevent/stop* – Preference for the *from*-construction might be associated with the inflected forms of *prevent/stop*. In our data, the distribution of the two variants when *prevent/stop* is inflected and when uninflected is quite different. In the case of the uninflected *prevent*, the *from*-construction occurs in 40% of examples, while in the case of the form *prevents/edding* it is 68% of cases (Table 43). The situation with the verb *stop* is similar (Table 44). The log likelihood test shows that the difference between the frequency of the *from*-construction when *prevent/stop* is used in a base form and when in an inflected form is significant. The assumption that the results of the analysis do not support is that the high frequency of the *from*-construction in fiction might be partly due to a frequent use of the past simple in this register.

4. Type of a verb complementing *prevent/stop* – Neither construction shows preference for certain semantic type(s) of a verb complementing *prevent/stop*. As for *prevent*, the distribution of semantic domains is very similar for the two complements. As to the verb *stop*, the only difference in distribution of semantic classes for the two complements that is worth noticing concerns verbs of existence or relationship. However, the log likelihood test shows that the difference between the frequency of verbs of existence or relationship when they occur with the *from*-construction and when with the *from*-less one is insignificant. Moreover, the absolute frequencies are low (nine examples for the *from*-less construction and three for the *from*-one) for drawing definite conclusions.

5. Transitivity of a verb complementing *prevent/stop* – The data do not support the assumption that the presence of a transitive complement may increase the probability of the *from*-construction. In our sample there is little difference between the distribution of the two variants when *prevent/stop* is complemented by a transitive and when by an intransitive verb (Tables 43-44). The log likelihood test shows that the difference between the frequency of the *from*-construction when the verb complementing *prevent/stop* is a transitive verb and when it is an intransitive verb is insignificant.

6. Iconicity – Finally, we examined Dixon's idea (1991: 236) that the *from*-construction is linked to indirect means employed by the initiator of the action of preventing, while the *from*-less complement is linked to direct means. The results of our analysis are in contrast to Dixon's claim. There are more examples of the *from*-variant than the *from*-less one in which direct means are employed to prevent the action from taking place. On the contrary, the *from*-less construction is more popular than the *from*-one when indirect means are

used. Moreover, the identification of the distinction between *in*/direct means is impossible in 42 out of 100 examples. Therefore, it seems that the semantic point of view is not sufficient to explain the variation.

Our hypothesis that popularity of the *from* and *from*-less construction as a complement of the verb *prevent/stop* partly depends on register was confirmed in that the frequency of the *from*-less construction as a complement of *prevent* and *stop* is, in our data, noticeably higher in periodicals than in fiction and academic writing. Moreover, it seems that there is a correlation between the *from*-construction and the inflected forms of *prevent/stop* and between the *from*-construction and the passive form of *prevent/stop*. As for other structural and semantic factors under investigation, none of them seems to markedly influence the choice between the two types of complements. Thus, in future research, it would be useful to examine the influence of some other factors, such as negation of the verb *prevent/stop*, and to observe whether the forms of complementizers of other verbs are also register-sensitive.

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Resumé

Diplomová práce si klade za cíl prozkoumat ne/předložkovou komplementaci slovesa *prevent* a *stop* z hlediska zastoupení ve třech registrech a z hlediska potenciálních strukturních a sémantických faktorů ovlivňujících volbu komplementu. Práce by tak ráda přispěla do oblasti výzkumu nefinitní komplementace lexikálních sloves. Předmětem zkoumání je v posledních letech, kromě komplementace slovesa *prevent* and *stop*, také například komplementace sloves *help* (Mair, 2002; Průšová, 2019), *begin* (Mair, 2002) nebo *start* (Leech et al., 2012).

Kapitola 2.1 teoretické části práce popisuje polovětné komplementy slovesa *prevent*. Čerpá přitom z anglických mluvnic od autorů Huddleston and Pullum (2002) a Quirk et al. (1985) a z několika studií (Aarts, 1990; Mair, 2002). Mair (2002) rozlišuje tři větné komplementy slovesa *prevent* – konstrukci s předložkou *from* (*prevent* + NP + *from* + *-ing*), konstrukci bez předložky (*prevent* + NP + *-ing*) a konstrukci s konatelem vyjádřeným posesívem (*prevent* + genitive NP + *-ing*). Konstrukce s předložkou a konstrukce bez předložky funguje také jako komplement slovesa *stop*. Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1238) upozorňují na to, že v případě, že je sloveso *prevent/stop* užito v pasívu, je téměř vždy zvolena varianta s předložkou.

V oddílu 2.1.1 jsou představeny studie, které se zabývají variací mezi konstrukcí s předložkou a konstrukcí bez ní z hlediska regionální variety angličtiny. Zatímco v britské angličtině roste od 2. poloviny 20. století popularita konstrukce bez předložky, v americké angličtině je tato konstrukce považována za vzácnou, či dokonce gramaticky nesprávnou (Mair, 2002; Dixon, 1995). Následující oddíl se zabývá komplementací slovesa *prevent* z hlediska diachronního. První příklady obou konstrukcí pocházejí v *Oxford English Dictionary* ze 17. století. Sellgren (2007) upozorňuje na rostoucí popularitu konstrukce bez předložky v britské angličtině v průběhu 19.-20. století.

Kapitola 2.2. se věnuje komplementaci slovesa *stop*. Opírá se přitom o stejné zdroje jako kapitola 2.1. (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002; Quirk et al., 1985; Mair, 2002). Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1238) zmiňují, že na rozdíl od slovesa *prevent*, se sloveso *stop* neužívá s konstrukcí s konatelem vyjádřeným posesívem. Oddíl 2.2.1 se zabývá komplementací slovesa *stop* z hlediska regionální variety angličtiny. Stejně jako v případě slovesa *prevent* se konstrukce bez předložky běžně neužívá v americké angličtině. V britské angličtině naopak dochází během 2. poloviny 20. století k nárustu její popularity (Mair, 2002). Ong (2011), která studuje komplementaci slovesa *stop* z hlediska diachronního, zjišťuje, že v americké angličtině dochází během 19.-20.století pouze k nepatrnému růstu relativní četnosti konstrukce bez

předložky. Relativní četnost konstrukce s předložkou naopak významně roste od 50. let 20. století.

Kapitola 2.3. popisuje studie zaměřené na vliv strukturních a sémantických faktorů na volbu mezi konstrukcí s předložkou a konstrukcí bez ní. Nejprve pojednává o principu komplexity (Rohdenburg, 1996), podle kterého je v kognitivně náročném prostředí preferována explicitnější varianta (v našem případě konstrukce s předložkou). Oddíl 2.3.2 popisuje variaci ze sémantického hlediska. Podle Dixona (1991) je konstrukce s předložkou užita, pokud iniciátor děje zabránění použije k zabránění události nepřímé prostředky. Varianta bez předložky se týká prostředků přímých. Oddíl 2.3.3 naznačuje, že flektivní tvary slovesa *prevent/stop* jsou silně vázané na konstrukci s předložkou (Sellgren, 2007: 88). Analýza Ong (2011) nepodporuje předpoklad, že preference pro jednu variantu komplementu souvisí se sémantickou třídou, do které patří sloveso komplementující *prevent/stop*.

Kapitola 3.1 metodologické části práce představuje jednotlivé korpusy, ze kterých byla extrahována data. Beletrii reprezentují korpusy *InterCorp* a *BNC*, akademický jazyk korpusy *BAWE* and *CAEC* a noviny a časopisy korpusy *BNC* a *SiBol*. Kapitola dále popisuje postup, jakým byly z těchto korpusů získány všechny příklady následujících pěti konstrukcí:

- (a) *prevent* + NP + *from* + *-ing*
- (b) *prevent* + NP + *-ing*
- (c) *prevent* + genitive NP + *-ing*
- (d) *stop* + NP + *from* + *-ing*
- (e) *stop* + NP + *-ing*

Analýza se skládá ze dvou částí. Kvantitativní část (4.1-4.3) se soustředí na porovnání četnosti konstrukce *prevent/stop* + NP + *from* + *-ing*, *prevent/stop* + NP + *-ing* a *prevent* + genitive NP + *-ing* ve třech vybraných registrech – beletrii, akademickém jazyce a novinách a časopisech. Výsledky ukazují, že u slovesa *prevent* je v beletrii i v akademickém jazyce výrazně preferována konstrukce s předložkou nad konstrukcí bez předložky. Výsledky pro tyto dva registry jsou obdobné. V beletristické části *BNC* je konstrukce s předložkou užita v 64 % případů a v korpusu *BAWE* v 66 % příkladů. Z dat můžeme také vyčíst, že konstrukce s předložkou je v korpusech reprezentujících beletrii 2.5krát četnější než konstrukce bez předložky. V korpusech reprezentujících akademický jazyk je konstrukce s předložkou četnější 2.3krát. Analýza dále naznačuje, že konstrukce bez předložky je v novinách a časopisech populárnější než v předchozích dvou registrech. V korpusech reprezentujících noviny a časopisy je konstrukce s předložkou pouze 1.3krát častější než konstrukce bez předložky.

Konstrukce s konatelem vyjádřeným posesivem se vyskytuje ve starších beletristických textech, zatímco v textech novějších (od 2. poloviny 20. století) je vzácná.

Kapitola 4.2 se věnuje konstrukci *stop + NP + from + -ing a stop + NP + -ing*. Ve všech třech registrech je konstrukce bez předložky četnější než konstrukce s předložkou. Data naznačují, že v beletrii je konstrukce bez předložky oblíbenější než v akademickém jazyce. Zatímco v korpusech reprezentujících beletrii je konstrukce bez předložky 1.9krát četnější než konstrukce s předložkou, v korpusech reprezentujících akademický jazyk je četnější 1.4krát. Následující oddíl (4.2.3) ukazuje, že ze třech vybraných registrů je konstrukce bez předložky nejfrekventovanější v novinách a časopisech. Situace je tedy obdobná jako u slovesa *prevent*. V korpusech reprezentující noviny a časopisy je konstrukce bez předložky po slovese *stop* 2.97krát častější než konstrukce s předložkou. Kvantitativní analýza tedy ukázala, že volba jedné z variant souvisí pravděpodobně nejen s regionální varietou angličtiny, ale také s registrem.

V kvalitativní části práce (4.4) bylo užito 840 příkladů k analýze vlivu strukturních a sémantických faktorů na volbu mezi konstrukcí s předložkou a konstrukcí bez předložky jakožto komplementu slovesa *prevent a stop*. Faktory byly vybrány podle sekundární literatury (e.g., Mair, 2002; Sellgren, 2007). Analýza nepotvrdila předpoklad, že komplexní nominální fráze (delší než jedno slovo) po slovese *prevent/stop* zvyšuje pravděpodobnost užití konstrukce s předložkou *from*. U slovesa *prevent* se v případě jednoslovné fráze objevila konstrukce s předložkou ve 47 % případů. V případě víceslovné fráze šlo o 50 % příkladů. Výsledky pro sloveso *stop* je obdobné. U jednoslovné nominální fráze je konstrukce s předložkou užita ve 48 % případů a u fráze víceslovné v polovině příkladů (oddíl 4.4.1).

Naše data dále potvrzují předpoklad, že v případě, že je sloveso *prevent/stop* použito v trpném rodě, je v naprosté většině případů komplementováno konstrukcí s předložkou (oddíl 4.4.2). Sloveso *prevent* se objevilo v trpném rodě v celkem čtrnácti příkladech. Ve dvanácti z nich je užita konstrukce s předložkou (86 %). Dva příklady s konstrukcí bez předložky pochází z díla *Pýcha a předsudek* od Jane Austenové. Je tedy možné, že v minulosti se konstrukce bez předložky kombinovala s trpným rodem poměrně běžně nebo alespoň častěji než dnes. Ve všech pěti příkladech, ve kterých je sloveso *stop* užito v trpném rodě, je zvolena konstrukce s předložkou.

Výsledky analýzy také podporují předpoklad, že sloveso *prevent/stop* se ve flektivním tvaru (tj. s koncovkou *-s, -ed* nebo *-ing*) pojí s konstrukcí s předložkou (Sellgren, 2007) (oddíl 4.4.3). Varianta s předložkou je přítomna ve 40 % příkladů, ve kterých je sloveso *prevent* užitě v základním tvaru. Pokud je sloveso *prevent* ve flektivním tvaru, tvoří konstrukce s předložkou

68 % příkladů. Podle testu významovosti je rozdíl mezi frekvencí konstrukce s předložkou při užití základního tvaru *prevent* a při užití tvaru *prevents/prevented/preventing* signifikantní. Situace se slovesem *stop* je velmi obdobná. Zdá se tedy, že volba komplementu slovesa *prevent/stop* částečně závisí na slovesném tvaru tohoto slovesa.

Analýza neprokázala vliv sémantiky slovesa v *-ing* formě na volbu mezi dvěma konstrukcemi (oddíl 4.4.4). Slovesa byla rozdělena do tříd podle klasifikace od Bibera a kol. (1999: 360-364). Distribuce jednotlivých sémantických tříd v případě užití konstrukce s předložkou a v případě užití konstrukce bez předložky je velmi podobná. Jediný viditelný rozdíl se týká tzv. “verbs of existence or relationship” (sponová slovesa např. *be* nebo *become*) komplementující sloveso *stop*. Z dvanácti případů je konstrukce bez předložky užitá v devíti případech. Test významovosti ovšem ukazuje, že rozdíl mezi frekvencí těchto sloves v případě, kdy je komplementem konstrukce s předložkou a v případě, kdy konstrukce bez předložky, není signifikantní.

Výsledky analýzy nepodporují ani předpoklad, že tranzitivní charakter slovesa, které komplementuje sloveso *prevent/stop*, zvyšuje pravděpodobnost užití konstrukce s předložkou (oddíl 4.4.5). Konstrukce s předložkou je přítomna v 51 % příkladů, ve kterých je komplementem slovesa *prevent* sloveso tranzitivní. V případě slovesa intranzitivního jde o 48 % příkladů. Podle testu významovosti není rozdíl mezi frekvencí konstrukce s předložkou při užití tranzitivního a při užití intranzitivního slovesa signifikantní. Výsledky pro sloveso *stop* jsou téměř identické (konstrukce s předložkou je přítomna 51 % příkladů, které obsahují tranzitivní sloveso, a 49 % příkladů obsahující sloveso intranzitivní). Vliv tranzitivity na volbu formy komplementu slovesa *help* byl naopak prokázán ve studii Levishny (2018: 15).

Poslední zkoumaný faktor se týká konceptu ikonicity. Výsledky analýzy jsou v rozporu s tvrzením Dixona (1991: 236), že konstrukce s předložkou je spojena s nepřímými prostředky použitými k zabránění události, zatímco konstrukce bez předložky se pojí s prostředky přímými. Navíc, u celkem čtyřiceti dvou příkladů ze sta nešlo určit, zda jde o užití prostředků přímých nebo nepřímých. Zdá se tedy, že pro vysvětlení toho, jak se mluvčí rozhoduje pro jednu ze dvou konstrukcí, je Dixonův přístup nedostatečný.

Závěr práce shrnuje získané výsledky. Byla zjištěna možná korelace mezi formou komplementu slovesa *prevent/stop* a třemi proměnnými – registrem, slovesnou formou slovesa *prevent/stop* a slovesným rodem.

Seznam literatury poskytuje přehled všech gramatik, knih, článků, a dalších zdrojů, ze kterých jsme čerpali.

Všechny příklady jsou uvedeny v příloze práce. Vzhledem k velkému množství příkladů je příloha rozdělena do dvou částí. První část obsahuje všechny příklady konstrukce *prevent* + NP + *from* + *-ing*, *prevent* + NP + *-ing* and *prevent* + genitive NP + *-ing*. Druhá část obsahuje všechny příklady konstrukce *stop* + NP + *from* + *-ing* a *stop* + NP + *-ing*. Příklady pro každou z konstrukcí jsou rozděleny do skupin podle toho, z jakého korpusu byly extrahovány. Pokud byl příklad citován v analytické části práce, je číslo tohoto příkladu uvedeno v příloze, např. PF3(20).