Objectless Locative Prepositions in British English

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1 Introduction

1.1 Basic facts

- whereas most dialects of English (Eng) require the pronoun in (1)a and (2)a, British English (BrEng) allows synonymous objectless locative prepositions (OLPs) (1)b and (2)b, first analyzed\(^1\) by Griffiths & Sailor (2015a,b, 2017; Sailor & Griffiths 2017) (G&S) under the moniker Prepositional Object Gaps (POGs).
- The pronoun (a) or gap (b) obligatorily corefers with an overt DP.

(1) a. The film, has monsters in it. Eng [1a]\(^2\)
   b. The film, has monsters in __. BrEng [1b]

(2) a. a film, with monsters in it. Eng
   b. a film, with monsters in __. BrEng

Terminology: “The Objectless Locative Preposition (OLP) construction” refers just to cases like (1)b & (2)b, possible only for British speakers, as distinct from other environments where all Englishes allow a preposition with no overt complement (cf. §3 below). In both (1)a,b & (2)a,b the preposition (P) (e.g. in) expresses a relation between the Figure (monsters) and the Ground (the film).

In clausal OLPs (1b), the Ground surfaces as the subject of the clause:

In nominal OLPs (2b), the Ground surfaces as the head of the DP:

Notation: (3), (4) collapse the synonymous (1)a,b, (2)a,b into a single line, writing “< >” around pronouns that are optional only in BrEng, and asserting obligatory coreference between the subject/head and the pronoun. Otherwise “( )” indicates optionality in all Eng.

(3) The film has monsters in <it>.
(4) the film with monsters in <it>

Importance: if an Eng example doesn’t sound good with it, we don’t really expect the corresponding BrEng example with a gap to sound good; restrictions on the former are presumably independent of well-formedness conditions on OLPs.

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1 This phenomenon has been observed in the descriptive literature (Swan 1995: 174, 433) and (foot)noticed by syntacticians: Belvin & den Dikken (1997:168, fn. 17), McIntyre (2005:5; 2006, fn. 12).

2 Example numbers in [square brackets] refer to G&S’s 2015 paper; in {curly brackets} to S&G’s 2017 handout.

1.2 Theoretical issues raised by OLPs

1) What is the nature of the gap in (1, 2)b, denoted pre-theoretically with an underscore?

2) What is it about BrEng that allows such gaps where other Eng do not? (We’ve tried Canadian, Australian, commonwealth suspects; tell us if you know of other OLP dialects!)

The challenge: The “silencing” of the pronoun is not free: many syntactic manipulations that are possible on (1, 2)a turn (1, 2)b bad, so they need to be somehow different beyond (non) pronunciation of the pronoun.

1.3 Goals & Roadmap

- Clarify the descriptive landscape of OLPs (§2) and superficially similar Eng phenomena (§3)
- Discuss G&S’s analysis (§4)
- Consider alternative analyses in a cross-linguistic context (§5)
- Conclude (§6)

2 The Empirical Landscape of OLPs

2.1 Predicates that license OLPs: have, with, …

As observed by Swan (1995: 174, 433), OLPs depend on the presence of have (1) or with (2).

Thus in (5) the existential is bad (a), despite the apparent synonymy of (b) and (c).

(5) a. Don’t watch that film—there’s a monster in *(it)!  \[3a\]
   b. There’s a monster in that film.  
   c. That film has a monster in *<it>.

We add that verbs roughly synonymous with have (in particular cases) fail to license OLPs, e.g.

(6) a. This box has papers in *<it>.
   b. This box containing papers in *(it).

There is one exception: “This wallet contains up to 20 credit cards in <it>.

(7) a. This wallet can have up to 20 credit cards in <it>.
   b. This wallet holds up to 20 credit cards in *(it).

Likewise in (8), OLPs with the Saxon genitive (a) and a because-clause (b) are bad for lack of a have/with frame.\(^3\)

(8) a. That file’s papers are all in *(it).
   b. This film, frightening because there are so many monsters in *(it).  \[cf. 2b\]

Swan (1995: 174) observes that have got works like have:

(9) My socks have got holes in <them>.
Negation of the licensing predicates is allowed:

(10) a. This film doesn’t have monsters in <it>.
    b. This film has no monsters in <it>.
    c. The film without monsters in <it> was far more enjoyable.

The necessity of a have- or with-frame for OLPs sits nicely with analyses where (at least on some uses) have “contains” with (Tremblay 1996, Schütze 2001, Levinson 2011, i.a.). In
fact, McInerney (2005:5) marshals the parallel behaviour of have (1) with and with (2) with
respect to OLPs as evidence for decomposing have as be + with.

Ritter & Rosen (1997) and Harley (1998) term the use of have in (6, 7, 10)a “Locational”;
similarly, Myler (2016) uses “Locative”; other uses of have do not license OLPs, e.g.,
modal have (got) to, experienter have, causative have:

(11) a. For a film to be successful, monsters have (got) to be in *<it>!
    b. The guestbook had its tank collecting water in *<it>.
    c. The film’s director had there be lots of monsters in *<it>.

We add to the set of licensors verbs that are plausibly built from have: need (14), which has been
argued to contain possessive have (Harves & Kayne 2012); and get (15), which has been
claimed to be the inchoative form of have (Kimball 1973, Emonds 1994:164, i.a.).

(14) a. This film needs more monsters in <it>.
    b. Over the past year, the guestbook got so many rude entries in <it> that it had to be thrown away.

Again, roughly synonymous verbs fail to license OLPs:

(16) a. This film requires/demands more monsters in *<it>.
    b. The guestbook obtained/acquired too many rude entries in *<it>.

2.2 Restrictions on the Ground

As complement of P, it and inanimate them (18) are OK; 1st & 2nd person pronouns are bad (19);
3rd person human pronouns call for further investigation—G&S note the badness of (20a), we note the OKness of (20b).

(18) a. These boxes have papers in <them>.
    b. the boxes with papers in <them>.

(19) a. I/You have [poison/radioactive chemicals] in *(me/you).
    b. That guy looks like he has ten pints of beer in *(him).
    [28b] c. The poisoned spy with radioactive chemicals in *(him) is dying.

2.3 Absence of restrictions on the Figure

In addition to bare plurals (above), all sorts of DPs can appear as the Figure in situ (but cf. §4.4
for attempts to move it):

(21) a. This film has a monster in <it>—namely, Godzilla.
    b. This film has Eddie Redmayne in <it>.
    c. This film has every living member of Monty Python in <it>.

2.4 Constraints on the spatial relations

2.4.1 Prepositions

G&S claim that all spatial prepositions license OLPs. But this does not hold for Standard
Southern British English (SSBSE), where OLPs are restricted to in (above) and on (25).

(25) a. This box has spots on <it>.
    b. the box with spots on <it>

G&S have across and ander as good (26); RS finds them very marginal (?)

(26) a. Rivers have bridges across <them>.
    b. The building has strong foundations under <it>.
    [cf. 14d]

And where G&S have speaker variation (%) for along and up (27), RS rejects them (?)

(27) a. This road has streetlights along <it>.
    b. That monument has stairs up <it>.
    [cf. 15a]
    [cf. 15d]

It would be interesting to see a fuller picture of interdialectal/interspeaker variation
and the course of acquisition of OLPs, to see if there are implicational patterns.

2.4.2 Senses of in and on

The spatial sense of in was already metaphorically extended in (1)—monsters aren’t physically
located in movies. (28) provides further metaphorical extensions of in to moments (a),
musical contexts (b), (29) shows that temporal senses are possible.

(28) a. Every Hitchcock movie has truly frightening moments in <it>.
    b. Hitchcock films tend to have a lot of suspenseful music in <them>.

(29) a. The month of May has two bank holidays in <it>.
    b. Every term has at least one manically stressful day in <it>.

However, on is difficult to extend metaphorically or temporally, as (30) & (31) show.

(30) a. A department website typically has faculty and graduate student photos on *(it).
    b. Tax forms have various sources of income and deductions on *(them).
    c. a lake with cottages on *(it)

(31) Fridays with faculty meetings on *(them) are the worst.

Contrariwise, for RS (and other SSBSE speakers consulted) many straightforwardly spatial
examples with on are degraded: OLPs with on (32) can express attachment, as in (a), but
not merely touching, as in (b), or a temporary state, as in (c); (b) would be improved if
the glasses were glued to the tray, as with a play prop.
G&S argue convincingly that OLPs cannot b

Unlike OLPs, presence/absence of the coindexed pronoun changes meaning (and the subject is human, which is scarcely possible with OLPs, cf. §2.2):

Examples in (41) (cf. Svenonius 2010) illustrate that Ps can have idiosyncratic meanings, sometimes as a function of the (in)animacy of the subject:

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3.3 Unmentioned Ground

Some Ps (particles?) allow the Ground to be understood conventionally or from non-linguistic context with no overt antecedent; in some cases it is not even obvious what the Ground might be...

3.4 Accompaniment with construction

- unlike OLPs, animate pronouns (any person) can readily be dropped; but unlike ‘wearing’ verbs (§3.2), there is no meaning change associated with their presence vs. absence.\(^5\)

Dialectically restricted (US Midwest?)

a. I’ll bring some wine with (me).
   b. Can I come with (you)?
   c. Do you want to go with (them)?
   d. If I buy a premium ticket, does a backstage pass come with (it)?

4 G&S’s analysis: A-movement of the Ground

G&S propose that OLPs are derived by A-movement of the Ground from the complement of P:

\(^{\text{5}}\) Along can express this meaning (except in (d)) in all dialects (and takes an optional with-PP complement). Thus, with is arguably not spatial here: there is no obvious figure/Ground relation.
G&S propose this parametric distinction: BrEng is different from other Eng in that its spatial prepositions optionally do not assign Case. When a non-Case-assigning P is used, the complement of P must move to the subject/head position for Case.

4.1 Challenges for A-movement
4.1.1 Subextraction as supporting evidence?

G&S provide the following as evidence for the crucial movement: (45) shows what they characterize as a Freezing effect (Wexler and Culicover 1980, Corver 2017):

(45) Which president, did you read [a book about t], with a bunch of torn pages in [it/*t]?

With the overt pronoun, the Ground, [a book about ...], is merged where we see it, and the Wh-phrase, which president, is free to move out.

Without the pronoun, however, the Ground has A-moved from the complement of the preposition, rendering it a derived island, and barring sub-extraction of the Wh-phrase.

However, as G&S (2017, note 8) observe, the degree of contrast in (45) shows interspeaker variation.

Further, the hypothesized configuration of movements in (45) is good in (46), where the bracketed DP A-moves for Case by passive and/or raising-to-object, but is not rendered a derived island (cf. Bošković 1992):

(46) a. Which celebrity, do you believe [a picture of t], to have been stepped on t?
   b. Which president, does John consider [books by t], to have been plagiarised t?

Moreover, the very existence of Freezing as a grammatical constraint has been challenged (see Corver 2017, note 14 for references regarding spec-TP), and recent experimental work (Hofmeister et al. 2015, Konietzko et al. 2018) finds that acceptability judgements for “Freezing” sentences can be explained as an additive processing effect of extraction and movement, without a superadditive contribution from a Freezing Constraint, following the logic of Sprouse (2007) for islandhood.

4.1.2 Variable binding incorrectly predicted

If the Ground has moved from the complement of P position, and the Figure c-commands this position as diagrammed in (44), then the Figure should be able to bind a variable in the Ground.

• (47) shows canonical variable binding under c-command
• (48) and (49) show that A- and A-bar movement respectively can reconstruct to allow variable binding
• but the bound variable reading of his is not available in OLP (50), which it ought to be if the subject had moved (A- or A-bar-wise) from the gap position.

(47) Every director, is in a film about his, youth.
(48) [His, first film], seems to every director, t, to be immature.
(49) [Which film of his,], does every director, find t, immature?
(50) [Films about his, youth,], have every director, in ___ ,

4.1.3 Anaphor binding incorrectly predicted

Whereas Condition A should be satisfiable prior to (A or A-bar) movement, it is not satisfied in the proposed pre-movement position of OLPs in (51)b & (52)b, which should be able to mean what their (a) counterparts mean (something trivial, in the case of (51))
4. The structure for nominal OLPs

While the movement process for clausal OLPs is familiar, the creation of the nominal OLP structure resulting from movement is not. On traditional assumptions, if the DP a film raises, then the wh/PP which used to contain it would have to become an adjunct to the N(P) film inside the DP that raised (unlike in (43)).

A potential problem: (54), where the with-phrase appears to the right of a VP adverb, would involve extraposition of $p^*$, by the structure in (43).

1. I like how they served [the coffee ___] yesterday [with sugar in <it>].

4.2 Facts consistent with but not compelling A-Movement

As G&S note, with A-movement the following are expected: the A-moved subject of have can raise further (55), and can create new binding opportunities for itself (56).

This box, seems (to appear (to be likely)) to $t$ have a skunk in __.1

These films, have each other,’s directors in __.]…

HÖVER: Both of these observations are equally consistent with base-generating the subject in situ, as in the grammatical counterparts with an overt pronoun.

4.3 A-bar movement of the Figure is not possible

4.3.1 New observations

In clausal OLP constructions, the Figure cannot undergo A-bar movement, whether by question formation (57) (including D-linking), topicalization (58), it- or pseudo-clf-linking (59), restrictive or non-restrictive relativization (60), or Heavy NP-Shift (61); all of these are possible when the pronoun is pronounced:

What, does this film, have $t$ in {it, / *__}?

[How many monsters], does this film, have $t$ in {it, / *__}?

[Which of these two actors], does this film, have $t$ in {it, / *__}?

Monsters, this film, certainly has $t$ in {it, / *__}.

What, this film, having $t$ in {it, / *__}, is a huge monster.

60. a. John likes the papers [OP that the box, has $t$ in {it, / *__}]?

b. Those papers, which, the box, has $t$ in {it, / *__}, are very important.

61. This box, has $t$ in {it, / *__} [some records that need to be kept for at least 5 years].

Note: It is not true that the whole OLP structure or even the Figure is entirely “frozen”: the subject can extract in (62), and in contrast to (61) the Figure can be subextracted (extraposed) from in (63):

Which film, has monsters in {it/ /__}?  
These papers, which [in {it/ /__}](that need to be kept for at least five years).

4.3.2 Could this restriction follow from movement of the Ground?

Perhaps, but only if the Ground first underwent A-bar movement to a position below where it surfaces: That could create two crossing A-bar chains:

[Which monsters], … [[this film], [t in t]]?

Crossing, in contrast to nested, A-bar chains appear to yield ungrammaticality in a range of structures, e.g. the infinitival Wh-clauses in (65) (Pesetsky 1982, esp. 267ff.)

a. *[Which sonata], is [this violin], easy [OP, PRO to play t on t]?  

b. [Which violin], is [this sonata], easy [OP, PRO to play t, on t]?

From (64), the surface order could be derived by further movement of this film (if Improper Movement is irrelevant)…

66. [Which monsters], does [this film], have [t, t in t]]?  

… or it could be that what undergoes the short A-bar movement is a null operator bound by this film:

67. [Which monsters], does [this film], have [OP, t in t]]?

But there is any independent evidence for such a little step of A-bar movement?

What will not work, by contrast, is to A-bar move [this film] directly from complement of P to subject position—G&S argue against such A-bar movement, i.a. because parasitic gaps (pg) are not licensed in adjuncts to have’s VP. Whereas A-bar movement licenses the parasitic gap in (68)a, an OLP in the same configuration does not in (68)b.5

4 Contra Chomsky (1977), the goodness of this example is not due to the on-PP being in some surprisingly high position: put X on T behaves exactly the same.

5 G&S make the parasitic gap argument based on examples like (i):

(i) *John filed the papers, with doodles on ___ [without having read pg].

However, (i) does not seem relevant, since an accepted case of A-bar movement, e.g. relative clause formation, across a similar span does not license a parasitic gap.

(ii) *John [[filed [the papers, that the law specified ___]] [without having read pg]].

6 G&S note in addition that movement of the Ground to subject position would incorrectly predict (55) and (56) to be bad, as Improper Movement and Weak Crossover violations, respectively.

There is no hope of conducting these tests on nominal OLPs, we just get an adjunct island effect:

(i) *[What (kinds of monsters))? do you like films, with $t$ in (them),?]

(ii) *What (kinds of monsters)? do you like films, with $t$ in (them),?

(iii) *What (kinds of monsters)? do you like films, with $t$ in (them),?

(iv) *What (kinds of monsters)? do you like films, with $t$ in (them),?
In such circumstances, we suggest looking to other languages for inspiration, and indeed, when it comes to gaps in complement-of-P positions, we do not have to look far afield to find examples where:

1. Movement, base-generated empty categories, and radically missing structure have all been entertained, and
2. The gaps “alternate” (at least at squinting distance) with overt “pronominals” (ditto squinting), and
3. The versions with gaps diverge in subtle and mysterious ways from the versions with overt pronomininals.

Likewise, if the Ground simply undergoes A-movement as diagrammed in (44) above, the restrictions observed in §4.4.1 would not be expected, since crossing of an A-chain (indexed j) and an A-bar chain (indexed i) is not excluded (69):

Who(m), does John, strike t₁ as (being) t₁ selfish?

4.4 Awaiting explanation

Among the further empirical properties of OLPs observed by G&S, some do not seem to follow immediately from the A-movement account:

1. The restriction of licensing to with, have, and a couple of additional verbs presumably built thereupon;
2. The (near?) ban on human/animate Grounds.

Likewise, the restrictions we observed in §2.4 on the uses of in/on (and for some speakers the restriction to those two prepositions) also do not seem obviously derivable from the A-movement structure…

5 In search of alternatives

To the extent that both A- and A-bar movement directly relating the Ground to the OLP gap seem to derive incorrect predictions and fail to derive attested restrictions…

5.1 What other analyses are available for the OLP gap in principle?

(I) The gap in OLPs might be an in situ silent element, call it pro, such has been posited in complement positions for recipe/instructional English (see Stowell & Massam 2017 for review); this pro would have to be obligatorily (and perhaps locally) bound, but perhaps that requirement can be enforced by whatever mechanism enforces the corresponding overt pronoun to be so bound (termed the Linking Requirement by Belvin & den Dikken (1997)).

(II) The gap might reflect absence of any syntactically projected position whatsoever (as might be argued for some of the cases in §3); we would then need the Linking Requirement to be enforceable purely semantically.

The challenge for pursuing (I) or (II) is that it seems hard to derive from them any predictions about constraints on OLPs from independent facts about English.

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5.2 German(ic) R-pronouns

Note: We have not attempted to do bibliographic justice to the extensive literature on this phenomenon on this handout (van Riemsdijk 1978, Koopman 2010, Abels 2012, …)

Unlike OLPs, these are not restricted to with/have-frames.

5.2.1 German (including dialects thereof)

Background

- weak neuter pronoun es (‘it’) cannot be the complement of spatial (or most other) Ps; instead, you get (some variant) of dat(e); obligatorily procliticized to (an allomorph of) the preposition (Müller 2000), e.g.

\[
\text{Fritz has yesterday [da(r)-on]*on it] thought}
\]

‘Fritz thought about it [lit. thereon] yesterday.’

- with other 3rd person pronouns, dat(e)- forms alternate with canonical P-pronoun orders if the referent is inanimate, but are excluded if the referent is human, or animal viewed humanistically (recall the possible exclusion of human/animate OLP Grounds §2.2):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. Maria mußte noch oft & & daran & & denken.} \\
&M & \textit{had.to still} & \textit{often} & \textit{on} & \textit{at it} & \textit{think} \\
&M & \text{‘Maria still had to often think about it’} & & \text{‘her’}. \\
\text{b. Maria mußte noch oft & & an sie & & denken.} \\
&M & \text{had.to still} & \textit{often} & \text{on} & \text{to} & \text{her} & \text{think} \\
&M & \text{‘Maria still had to often think about it’} & & \text{her’}. \\
\end{align*}
\]

- much ink has been spilled on the morphosemantics of dat(e), whether it originates to the left vs. right of P, whether it head-adjoints/incorporates to P and/or is in Spec-PPl, etc. Repeat literature disclaimer.

Potentially relevant facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intriguingly, there are dialectal/colloquial patches where the otherwise obligatory dat(e) morpheme disappears, is it conceivable that BrEng is leveraging the same machinery (whatever it might be)?</th>
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<td>- Fleischer (2000) notes optionality of dat(e)- in the following examples drawn from the same page of the same dialectal German source (Feyer 1939:27):</td>
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\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ja, aber Hinnerk man trocknet sich doch die Hände nicht \textit{dar-in ab}} \\
\text{yes but H & & one dries & self & yet & the hands not & in ab} \\
\text{‘Well, Hinnerk, but one does not dry one’s hands [off] with it’} \\
\end{align*}
\]

10 McIntyre (cf. footnote 1) has independently noted the potential connection between OLPs and R-pronouns.
(73) Dat hangt an de Wand un lett witt, un man dröögt sik de Han’n in af. (North Saxon)
that hangs on-the wall and lets white and one dries self the hands [off] with it.

- there are also German dialects where resumptive R-pronouns surface according to the phonological environment: they are obligatorily overt with vowel-initial Ps (74) but silent with consonant-initial Ps (74)b:

(74) a. Da kann ich keine Rücksicht drauf*auf nehmen. (Oppenrieder 1991)
there can I no account [DAR-on*on] to take
‘I can’t make any allowance for that.’

b. Da will ich nichts von*davon hören.
there want I nothing [from*Das-from] to hear
‘I don’t want to hear anything about that.’

- and there are dialects where a particular preposition strongly resists dat(r)- in favor of Ø, e.g.
mit in Colmar (Alsation: Muller 1983, p. 260)

5.2.2 Frisian

Background

J. Hoekstra (1995) argues for Frisian that there is no genuine P-stranding extraction; rather, you base-generate the DP in its surface position and it triggers a resumptive R-pronoun, which must precede the P whose complement it stands for, i.e., you get the postposition counterpart

- to see this, first consider in situ full DP: here the “preposition” is in two parts (nei...ta), i.e. a circumposition, but replacing the DP with an R-pronoun requires the postposition (hinne)

(75) a. Hja ha nei de ústalling ta west.
they have to the exhibition to been

b. Hja ha [der hinne*der nei ta] west.
they have [there to *there to] to been

- now if we Wh-move (76) or scramble (77) the complement of P, we must get the postpositional form (P-stranding is completely impossible for prepositions that lack a postpositional counterpart):

(76) [Hokker ústalling] ha se [hinne/nei ta] west?
which exhibition have they to to been
‘Which exhibition have they been to?’

(77) dat men [sokke lannen] better net hinne gean kin mei fakânsje
that one such countries better not to go can on holiday
‘that such countries, one can better not go to on holiday’

Potentially relevant facts

What is surprising compared to German and Dutch is that (76) and (77) have no overt R-pronoun; in fact, Wh-movement of a full DP stranding a P does NOT allow the R-pronoun (78)a unless the Wh-phrase has moved out of the originating clause (78)b:

(78) a. Hokker famke hie er (*der) mei praat?
which girl had he (*there) with talked
‘Which girl had he talked with?’

b. Hokker famke miendest [er dat er sei [*er dat er der mei praat hie]]?
which girl thought you that he said that he there with talked had
‘Which girl did you think that he said that he had talked with?’

- the only way to make sense of the pre-/post-position alternations is to assume all apparent P-stranding involves an R-pronoun;1 but we must then conclude that R-pronouns can sometimes be silent, e.g. in (76), (77), and (78)a, even in languages that have overt R-pronouns; parallel claims have been made for resumptives in other languages

5.3 French “orphan prepositions” (Zribi-Hertz 1984, Jones 1996, Authier 2016, i.a.)

Unlike OLPs, these are not restricted to with/have-frames.

Background

- at first blush, two candidates for counterparts to (pieces of?) R-pronouns: de and là (see Noonan (2009) for a detailed attempt to unify French and German)

I it-have put on/under/in the-cabinet
‘I have put it on/under/in the cabinet.’

b. Je l’ai mis [dessus/ dessous / dedans].
I it-have put de-on/de-under/de-in
‘I have put it on/under/in it.’

c. Je l’ai mis [là-dessus / là-dessous / là-dedans].
I it-have put thérèe-de-on/thérèe-de-under/thérèe-de-in
‘I have put it on/under/in there.’

- such “pronomes” are excluded if the referent is human:

(80) a. Il y a une mouche sur Pierre.
it there has a fly on P
‘There is a fly on Pierre.’

b. Il y a une mouche [sur lui* / là-dessus].
it there has a fly on him* (there-de-on)
‘There is a fly on him.’

1 J. Hoekstra suggests that German and Dutch are different in that their R-pronouns are pronounced traces of actually moved DPs, not base-generated resumptives; Frisian concomitantly allows apparent island violations that German and Dutch do not.

11
- while là can also procliticize to prepositions that show no de-alternation as a function of (in)transitivity (81a), it can combine only with the de- forms of those that do alternate (81b):

(81) a. Le livre est là-derrrière /là-devant.
   the book is there-behind/there-in-front

b. Le livre est là-dessus /là-sur.
   there-DE-on/there-on

- Rooryck (1996) argues that de is a functional head (K?) to which on/under/in raise, which has a Ω allomorph when there is a full DP complement of P (79a) but surfaces when that complement is pro (79b) or the “locative DP” là (79c); (81) (cf. there = that place; Sportiche 1998), i.e., in the presence of a pro-form—on Rooryck’s analysis, both de and là have silent counterparts.

Potentially relevant fact

Not all spatial relations expressable as dans + DP are compatible with dedans paraphrases (cf. OLP restrictions in §2.4.2): (82) vs. (83), which seems to hinge on containment and the difference between material and spatial Grounds (Vandeloise 2017)

(82) Cette eau, il y a du chlore dans.
   this water it there has of.the chlorine

(83) *Le ciel, des oiseaux volaient dedans.
   (cf. Des oiseaux volaient dans le ciel.)
   the sky: D birds were.flying in-de dans: D birds were.flying in the sky
   (‘The sky, the birds were flying in it.’)

6 Concluding remarks

By identifying various restrictions on the distribution and interpretation of OLPs, we hope to have sharpened the empirical landscape that proposed analyses should eventually account for:
• dialectal variation within BrEng: which prepositions and senses thereof license OLPs
• arguments against an A-movement analysis
• the new observation that the Figure cannot undergo A-bar movement

The cross-linguistic observations in §5 suggest a program of inquiry for understanding OLPs (as does the history of English: older varieties had R-pronouns too); a specific analytical proposal must await further research.

Two non-obvious questions from this perspective:
(1) As noted in §5, there seems to be nothing resembling the have/with licensing requirement in Germanic or French (or Old English)—where does that come from?

(2) How to characterize the parametric differences...
   (i) between BrEng and Eng lacking OLPs;
   (ii) among BrEng varieties with regard to the range of participating prepositions?

We take the range of data in §5 as suggestive that there are (micro?)parametric choices in this domain, but the relevant literature contains few attempts to formalize them.

References

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