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The Syntactic Functions of Prepositional Phrases in English Language

A B S T R A C T

The aim of this paper is to present a better understanding of how the prepositional phrases in the English language function syntactically, since there are different functions of prepositional phrases in sentences. The study is a qualitative approach that analyzes examples that are taken randomly from different sources as data; this is called probability sampling. The study will seek a suitable, academic, plausible, and credible answer to the question of "what are the syntactic functions of prepositional phrases in English language". As a result, the conclusion is reached, which shows that the syntactic functions are post-modifier, adverbial, nominal, and complement.

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الوظائف النحوية لجمل الجر في اللغة الإنجليزية

لافان ديدار عمر / قسم اللغة الإنجليزية ، كلية اللغات ، جامعة صلاح الدين
 أ.م.د. وريا عزالدين / قسم اللغة الإنجليزية ، كلية اللغات ، جامعة صلاح الدين
الخلاصة:

الهدف من هذه الورقة هو تقديم فهم أفضل لكيفية عمل عبارات الجر في اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل نحوي ،
 نظرًا لوجود وظائف مختلفة لعبارات الجر في الجمل. الدراسة هي نهج نوعي يحلل الأمثلة المأخوذة بشكل
 عشوائي من مصادر مختلفة كبيانات ؛ وهذا ما يسمى بأخذ العينات الاحتمالية. ستسعى الدراسة إلى إجابة

مناسبة وأكاديمية ومعقولة وذات مصداقية لسؤال "ما هي الوظائف النحوية لعبارات الجر في اللغة الإنجليزية". نتيجة لذلك ، تم الوصول إلى الاستنتاج ، الذي يوضح أن الوظائف النحوية هي معدّل لاحق ، ظرف ، اسمي ، ومكمل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: جمل الجر ، الدوال النحوية ، اللغة الإنجليزية

1. Introduction

In the study of English Syntax. It is important to understand how prepositional phrases function in a sentence. To understand prepositional phrase in English, which is a significant and interesting topic, the function of prepositional phrase needs to be indicated. Prepositional phrases are groups of words that, together, form the phrase (Soesman and Walters, 2021). The general structure of prepositional phrases consists of a preposition that is followed mostly by noun phrases. However, the preposition is regarded as the head, which has a significant role in prepositional phrases since without a preposition, prepositional phrases cannot be formed. However, a preposition is a part of speech that is only one word that has a form and shows the connection between words in a sentence. It familiarizes the object of the prepositional phrase. The usage of the prepositional phrase is significant since using the wrong preposition disturbs the meaning of the sentence. Therefore, it is also necessary to understand what role the prepositional phrases have in a sentence (Hernandez, 2022).

Since reading about and learning more about prepositional phrases can help enhance our writing skills as long as they are utilized correctly, this topic can be considered interesting to read about and learn more about. They also show the time and the direction of an object in addition to its location information (Lan et al., 2022). Although they are relatively small words, prepositions are quite significant due to the fact that they link different components of a phrase together and assist in the distribution of our focus in a manner that is both more precise and efficient.

Even the way a language is used might be different from another, as might the quantity of prepositions that are unique to each language. There are some prepositions that are exclusive to one language and cannot be found in any other language, and the opposite is also true (Benelhadj, 2019). When readers understand prepositional phrases and spend time studying them, it will be easier for them to use them correctly and to categorize them when they are learning grammar. Due to the fact that prepositions answer wh-questions such as "where," "when," and others, using them incorrectly in a sentence can lead to miscommunication and lower the overall quality of the message being communicated between the speaker and the listener in everyday life. For this reason, it is best to be familiar with the function of prepositions. To construct sentences with meaning, it is helpful to have a solid understanding of the prepositions (Delecraz et al., 2021).

1.1 Postmodifier

Postmodifiers are specified as words that are preceded by nouns and obtain information about the noun (Wu et al., 2020). So, a prepositional phrase is one of the phrases that can function as a postmodifier (Suhrob and Vasila, 2022). In order to share additional information about a sentence, postmodifiers are used more regularly than premodifiers because they are able to be extended and give more explanatory information (Seržant and Rafiyenko, 2020). Prepositional phrases frequently function as noun phrase modifiers, which are words, phrases, or clauses that modify a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase in the English language. For instance (Atak and Saricaoglu, 2021):

1. A passenger **near the front** asked the conductor to stop the train.
2. The ball **under the table** belongs to the dog across the street.
3. My English teacher encourages my passion **for reading**.
4. The author **of the famous book** died a terrible death at a young age.

So, the function of a prepositional phrase is not only one but varied. While a noun precedes a prepositional phrase, the prepositional phrase functions as a modifier of the noun, for instance (Jitpraneechai, 2019):

5. I read a book **on British history last week**.

Here, the prepositional phrase “on British history last week” is the postmodifier of the noun “book”.

6. The little girl **with the blond hair**.

In this sentence, the prepositional phrase “with the blond hair” modifies the noun phrase “the little girl” which shows the color of the little girl’s hair.

The prepositional phrases commonly modify noun phrases. Morales et al. (2020), state that the level of phrase as an adjective function because prepositional phrases modify noun phrases as adjectives do. The prepositional phrase, while functioning as a postmodifier of the noun phrase, is inserted before the noun phrase in order to specify or limit the noun’s meaning and causes a new element of the noun phrase. The prepositional phrases in the case of the postmodifier are able to be rephrased into a "which" question. A prepositional phrase can modify a head noun that stands alone or even if it is preceded by modifiers and determiners (Lan and Sun, 2019). However, a postmodifier prepositional phrase could be changed into a relative clause with no change in the meaning. In the below examples, the prepositional phrases "with a red hat" and "with a blue color" modify the noun phrases "the boy" and ‘a T-shirt," respectively. The following sentences are examples of prepositional phrases changed into a relative clause with an equivalent meaning (Geluso, 2022):

The boy [who is with red hat] is my friend.

So, the meaning of both sentences "The boy with a red hat is my friend" and "The boy [who is wearing a red hat] is my friend" has the same meaning. This indicates that prepositional phrases are an extremely common type of postmodifier. They

function in a manner similar to defining relative clauses (Carter & McCarthy, 2006):

7. McCars with disc brakes on all four wheels have been proven to be safer.
(Cars that have disc brakes on all four wheels...)
8. The five main proposals in the plan were considered at yesterday's meeting. (The five main proposals that are in the plan...)
9. He has lots of friends, but that was a friend of long standing.

Further examples are mentioned below that are cited by Inoue (2019) about prepositional phrases as postmodifiers:

10. They are writing a movie **about his life**.

In the above sentence, the prepositional phrase "about his life" is a modifier of the noun "movie" and helps the readers comprehend which movie is meant.

11. The ending **of the movie** wasn't good.

The prepositional is "of the movie" which modifies and identifies the noun "ending" It also helps us answer the question "Whose ending was not a good one".

12. The guy **in the red shirt** is my neighbor.

"In the red shirt" is the prepositional phrase that modifies the noun "guy," and it also describes the guy by indicating the color of his shirt, which means any guy who is present there is not the speaker's neighbor but the one with a red shirt.

Students **from different countries** are studying at this college.

The prepositional phrase "from different countries" modifies the noun "students. It gives us information about what kind of students are studying there. Without the prepositional phrase, the meaning will change (Bi and Jiang, 2020). The postposition modifiers are mostly indicated by the usage of the preposition "of". For instance (Wan et al., 2021):

a piece of cheese	the rotation of the earth
the top of the hill	a biography of Mozart
a view of the sea	the Museum of Mankind

In the following examples, the prepositional phrase functions as a postmodifier of the noun phrases:

Mr. John is a man **of wealth**.

The prepositional phrase "of wealth" is a modifier of the noun phrase "a man" in the same way an adjective would be. The sentence can be rephrased with an adjective as:

Mr. John is a wealthy man.

Regarding the postmodifier complex, it can show a sequence of forms that is modifying a head noun (Ali, 2021):

[The section of the reader] consider [various aspects of teaching and learning that have come under increased official scrutiny by central state agencies in recent years].

There are two noun phrases within a sentence, which are "the chapters" and "various aspects" (the "aspect" as the head). Both noun phrases have postmodifier complexes that are prepositional phrases; this causes the sentence to be long and complicated. However, there are postmodifier complexes that consist of two prepositional phrases, as seen in the following examples (Bibber, Conrad, Leech,

2002): The main difficulties which are posed concern the rendition [**of culturally specific German or French terms**] [**into English**].

A sociological description might discuss the utilization [**of such devices**] [**for social purposes**]. In some cases, there can be a prepositional phrase surrounded by others, as noted in the following example, in which the prepositional phrase functions as the post-modifier of the noun (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2009):

There were variations in the degree of bitterness of taste.

In the degree of bitterness of taste = prepositional phrase

the degree of bitterness of taste = noun phrase

of bitterness of taste = prepositional phrase

bitterness of taste = noun phrase

of taste = prepositional phrase

Post modifiers are usually found after adjectives, however, there can be various types of adjective post modifier, one of the types is prepositional phrase. So, prepositional phrases can also become the postmodifier of an adjective, for example (Hummadi et al., 2020):

- I am glad **to see you.**
- He is guilty **of murderer**
- We were not aware **of his drinking problem**
- I was happy **with my marks last term.**

The underlined prepositional phrases are the postmodifiers of the adjectives "glad, guilty, aware of, happy."

- The paint was green **on the walls.**
- The floor was wet **near the bathtub.**

The prepositional phrases "on the wall" and "near the bathtub" modify the adjective phrases by describing the color of the paint and how it was near the

bathtub, respectively. Further functions of prepositional phrases include modifying verb phrases; both "during the wedding" and "after dinner" modify what happened at that time, such as (Biber et al., 2020).

- The woman cried **during the wedding.**
- The couple danced **after dinner.**

Furthermore, prepositional phrases can function as postmodifiers in adjective and adverb phrases, such as seen in the following examples (Bychkovska, 2021):

- She is quite tall **for a five-year-old,** isn't she? (Postmodifier of adjective phrase).
- He performed quite well **on the whole.** (Postmodifier of adverb phrase) .
- Luckily **for me** there was another train just half an hour later. (Postmodifier of adverb phrase)

1.2. Adverbial:

As Dahunsi and Ewata (2022) state that adverbial is one of the functions of prepositional phrases in English language:

Children are playing **in the basement.**

In the above sentence, the prepositional phrase "in the basement" functions as an adverbial by showing the place of the action. It is possible to have more than one prepositional phrase in a sentence and for each of them to function as an adverbial, for example (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2009):

I read stories **to the children** (A) **at home** (A) **in the evening** (A).

The prepositional phrases are "to the children", "at home" and "in the evening". They all function as adverbs by indicating to whom the story is read, where it was read, and when it was read, respectively. While prepositional phrases function as

adverbials, they are also modifiers. They usually complete an adverb's function, as seen in the following example (Premjith et al., 2019):

This happened two years after the war.

The prepositional phrase "after the war" is an adverb of time, and the preposition "after" establishes its meaning. Further examples of prepositional phrases functioning as adverbials are illustrated by Prityatmojo (p. 70), such as:

PP (By midnight) (our bus) (will have arrived) PP(in the harbour) PP(in Bali).

PP (At campus), (most students) (will start) (a new milestone) PP(for years).

A prepositional phrase differs according to the way it is associated with the structures around it. One of its syntactic roles is being an adverbial on the level of a clause (Chen et al., 2020):

He worked **in a shop probably at that time**.

He retired **after three minor heart attacks at the age of 36**.

The syntactic form of the adverbial that occurs as a prepositional phrase is illustrated below (Bibber, Conrad, Leech, 2002):

1. The man came to stay with them for a few weeks each year.
2. In this chapter three of the most important approaches are examined.

The prepositional phrase in the above-mentioned examples can occur as an adverb too. Adverbials are also optional elements in a clause; the optional adverbials can occur as prepositional phrases, and they can also be found in the initial, medial, or final positions within a clause (Soesman and Walters, 2021). While a prepositional phrase functions as an adverbial, it has four essential functions, all of which are illustrated below with examples (Hernandez, 2022):

1. The prepositional phrase "in the guest room" that functions as an adverbial is also modifying the verb "slept" in the below sentence:

Elis slept **in the guest room.**

2. Another function is “complement of a verb”, as seen in the following example that the prepositional phrase “into the store” functions as the complement of the verb “went” as well:

Carol went **into the store.**

3. The prepositional phrase modifies adjectives too, such as the below sentence, the prepositional phrase “with envy” is a modifier of the adjective “green”:

Ciara had everyone green **with envy.**

4. Prepositional phrase can function as a modifier of a sentence. For instance, the prepositional phrase “in the evening” ,as seen in the below sentence ,functions a modifier of the whole sentence that is “he informed members of Congress”:

In the evening, he informed members **of Congress.**

The prepositional phrases in their adverbial functions, which are mentioned above, can be recognized by the test of an adverbial question, which is when a word in any case of a component, phrase, or clause can answer an adverbial question about one more component word, phrase, or clause (Lan et al., 2022). In this case perhaps the word is considered an adverbial; even if it is deleted and still has a meaningful sentence at that time, the word is an adverbial modifier of the other word, phrase, or clause. The questions of an adverbial are when, where, why, how, how often, how long, etc (Benelhadj, 2019).

An adverbial prepositional phrase can also function as the complement of a verb. A complement is required, which is a constituent that completes another constituent to make the sentence grammatical (Wu et al., 2020). For instance, a preposition needs a noun phrase or any other complement to form the prepositional phrase. However, the majority of verbs need some sort of constituent as their complements. In the case of an adverbial prepositional phrase functioning as the complement of a verb, as a [PP: ADVERBIAL:MOD OF V], it occurs directly after the verb. The following are the five types of adverbial verb complement, each of which can be a prepositional phrase (Delecraz et al., 2021):

PP:ADVERBIAL: Subject complement(SC): Imelda is at the shoe store .

PP:ADVERBIAL: Locative complement (LC): Carol went into the house.

PP:ADVERBIAL: Temporal complement (TC): Elise walked until noon .

PP:ADVERBIAL: Manner complement (MC): Franz played with confidence.

PP:ADVERBIAL:Object complement (OC): She put the book on the table.

However, the prepositional phrases in the sentences are not modifiers since, by removing them, the sentences become ill-formed (Suhrob and Vasila, 2022):
*Imelda is . * Carol went . * Elise walked . * Franz played . * She put the book. The prepositional phrases also answer the adverb question, including the verbs, which are (Seržant and Rafiyenko, 2020).

Where is Imelda? At the shoe store .

Where did Carol go ? Into the house .

When did Elise walk ? Until noon .

How did Franz play ? With confidence .

Where did she put the book? On the table .

Furthermore, adverbial prepositional phrases function as an adjective's modifier. The "PP:ADVERBIAL:MOD OF ADJ" occurs after the adjective of the sentence, in which the adjective is the head of an adjective phrase (Jitpraneechai, 2019). That adjective, which is the head, functions as the complement of a verb too (Atak and Saricaoglu, 2021):

Alex became green with envy .

Elise was tired of walking .

As seen, the adverbial prepositional phrases in the above sentences, that are "with envy" and "of walking" functions as a modifier of the adjective phrases "green" and "tired" respectively. The meaning of the sentences will become lacking if there are no adjective phrases there (Morales et al., 2020). While an adjective is a modifier of a noun, the adverbial prepositional phrase cannot become a modifier of the adjective, as noted in the following example (Lan and Sun, 2019):

*Have you met the green with envy boy ?

In the mentioned examples of "Alex" and "Elise" , it is obvious that the prepositional phrases are adverbial modifiers of the adjectives "green" and "tired," respectively, since they give the answers to the adverb question about the adjectives:

How/in what manner green? **With envy**.

How/in what manner tired? **Of walking** .

The prepositional phrases of these two sentences are modifiers since by removing them , the sentences still remains grammatical:

Alex became green .

Elise was tired .

Adverbial prepositional phrases function as modifiers of sentences or clauses. As mentioned before, an adverbial prepositional phrase occurs at the initial, final, or occasionally in between the subject and predicate, while the adverbial prepositional phrase functions as a modifier of the sentence or clause (Geluso, 2022):

In the evening, he informed members of Congress.

He informed members of Congress **in the evening**.

The prepositional phrase is an adverbial since it answers the adverb questions of the complete sentence, that is:

When did he inform members of Congress? **In the evening** .

The prepositional phrase is also a modifier because while the it is removed from the sentence, the sentence is still grammatical and accurate (AlShurfa et al., 2022):

He informed members of Congress .

One can say it is a sentence modifier because it can be moved to two or three possible slots and the sentence remains well-formed and has the same meaning as the original. The prepositional phrase is a modifier since it can be moved into two or three different places without making the sentence ungrammatical or meaningless (Inoue, 2019).

1.3 Nominal Function:

Most of the prepositional phrases that indicate location or time perform the nominal functions. The nominal functions, which are subject, subject complement, direct object, indirect object, and object complement, are explained in the following sub-sections (Bi and Jiang, 2020).

1.3.1 As Subject:

Prepositional phrases sometimes, though rarely, function as subjects that complete the action of or act upon the verb. Even though nouns involving noun phrases and

pronouns most often do this function, The following are prepositional phrases that are used as subjects (Wan et al., 2021):

Behind the machine shed needs mowed.

Under the freezer is absolutely disgusting!

Between seven and nine is when employees must arrive.

In order to make sure that the prepositional phrase functions as subject, it is better to change the sentence into an interrogative, as seen in the following examples (Ali, 2021):

Nine will be the best time to call me. When will be the best time to call you?

Under the bed is a good place to keep the exerciser. (Where should I keep the exerciser?)

The answers show also that prepositional phrases are adverbial as well.

1.3.2 As Subject Complement:

Subject complement is a function of the prepositional phrase, which comes after copulative verbs (linking verbs) such as "be, seem, look, etc. There are words that sometimes function as nouns, but in fact they are not nouns; these types of words are named "nominals". However, nouns or noun phrases most often complete the function, and prepositional phrases rarely function as subject complements. For example (Pierre and Johnson, 2021):

The most magical time of night is after midnight.

Studying English grammar is out of this world.

My least favorite part of the workday is during the afternoon.

A good place to study is in the library.

The prepositional phrase in the below sentence functions as the subject complement. To make sure whether the prepositional phrase's function is a subject complement, it is better to change the sentence to an interrogative form, as in Piunno and Ganfi (2020):

The most convenient time for me is in the morning. (What is the most convenient time for you?)

The prepositional phrase, which is the answer to the question, describes the suitable time and is also adjectival.

1.3.3 As Direct Object :

A direct object is defined as a part of a sentence that is the complement of a verb's action (Hummadi et al., 2020) Semantically, the three names of a direct object are resultant, cognate, and affected, as well as locative, instrumental, and eventive. The direct object follows and obtains the transitive verb action. Prepositional phrases every so often function as direct objects. The examples of using prepositional phrases as direct objects are mentioned in the following (Biber et al., 2020):

You must organize under the bed.

Her sister is painting along the ceiling.

My grandfather scrubbed behind the freezer.

I will decorate on top of the roof.

One of the characteristics of a noun phrase is "direct objects," which correspond to the subjects of the passive voice (Miller, 2002):

The cup was broken by Louise.

The car was driven by Alison.

The bread was chewed by Martha.

The examples indicate that they are direct objects and occur as prepositional phrases as well. In English, usually when there is no preposition in a sentence, the

direct object comes after the indirect object. For example (Dahunsi and Ewata, 2022):

I have sent you an email. (The direct object is "e-mail" which follows the indirect object and "you") However, the indirect object follows the following prepositions while it semantically answers the question of "to whom, for whom, and of whom?"

I have sent the email (for you, to you, about you).

1.3.4 As Object Complement:

In English grammar, an object complement occurs as a word or phrase that follows the direct object of the sentence and also renames, defines, or locates it. It is also named "objective complement" or "objective predicate" (Lan et al., 2019). An object complement describes the object exactly the same as a subject complement describes the subject. By omitting an object complement in a sentence, one causes a change in the meaning or makes the sentence ungrammatical (Premjith et al., 2019):

He locked his keys in his office. Versus He locked his keys .

Object complements modify the direct object. Even though nouns, pronouns, and noun phrases most often complete the function, The function of the prepositional phrase in the following sentences is object complement, and it also defines the direct object (Chen et al., 2020):

I prefer *my* time of the day before sunset.

The answer of "What is *your* time of the day?" is "before sunset" is adjectival.

In other words, when a prepositional phrase follows an object directly, then it functions as an object complement, for example (Díez-Bedmar and Pérez-Paredes, 2020).

Sara has got bruises on her knees.

1.3.5 As Indirect Object:

An indirect object shows to, for whom, or what the action of a ditransitive verb is completed. Though nouns, pronouns, and noun phrases very regularly present the function, However, prepositional phrases rarely function as indirect objects. Examples of using prepositional phrases as indirect objects involve the following (Soesman and Walters, 2021):

1. The maid gave **inside the refrigerator** a thorough scrubbing.
2. My mom has given **behind the freezer** a good scrubbing.
3. The decorator is giving **inside the closet** some serious consideration.
4. My brother should give **under his bed** some thought.

Furthermore, the "of" prepositional phrase can express a limited number of indirect objects, for instance:

"Vivian asked **the Dean** a question" versus "Vivian asked a question of **the Dean**" (Hernandez, 2022). Although a few indirect objects are problematic when they are paraphrased as prepositional phrases, for instance, "I promised Luis a job" is acceptable for speakers, but "promised a job to Luis" sounds odd to some people. Also, "We refused the kids service" and "We charged them a fee" are good, but "We refused service to the kids" and "We charged a fee to them" are odd, otherwise downright ungrammatical (Lan et al., 2022).

1.4 Complements:

The emphasis in this section is on how a prepositional phrase functions as a complement. Verbs or verb phrases are the primary complement-requiring elements in language, but other parts of speech may require complements too (Delecraz et al., 2021). Verbs are able to have various relationships with prepositions because they have three types: phrasal, prepositional, and phrasal

prepositional verbs. Regarding phrasal verbs, the prepositions are more noticeable as a particle linked to the verb rather than being connected to the complement. These particles cannot form prepositional phrases; they are not like prepositional verbs, where the prepositional phrase functions as an independent element (Benelhadj, 2019):

The children are **at the zoo.**

They agreed **on the meeting.**

We considered him **as a genius.**

The complements of adjectives are similar in part to those of verbs. The classification of adjectives is according to whether the adjectives are predicative, attributive, or postpositive (Wu et al., 2020). Concerning the predicative adjectives, their function is either the complement of the subject or the complement of the object. Most of them need complements (aware of, able to, fond of, etc.), and some of them cannot stand without them (Suhrob and Vasila, 2022).

I am **very surprised** **about the nomination.** (Prepositional phrase)

The little boy was **eager** **for Christmas to arrive.** (Prepositional phrase)

Furthermore, an adjective phrase complement is formed of a word, phrase, or clause that completes the adjective or adjective phrase meaning. Prepositional phrases often function as adjective phrase complements. For instance (Seržant and Rafiyenko, 2020):

He is **angry** **about his pay decrease.**

My dog is **terrified** **of thunderstorms.**

Her husband is **keen** **on buying a new car.**

You should be **ashamed** **of your irresponsible actions.**

An adjective complement stands next to an adjective and gives further information about it. The information that is provided by the adjective complement helps readers comprehend the situation well (Atak and Saricaoglu, 2021):

I am **mad** about the score.

The prepositional phrase "about your score" ,which functions as the adjective complement, comes next to the adjective "mad" and obtains information about it. If the sentences ended with the adjective, then we would have enough information about the situation and the reason for being mad. (Jitpraneechai, 2019). To make the use of prepositional phrases as adjective complements more clear, further examples are mentioned below (Morales et al., 2020):

I am **concerned** about your health.

We are **happy** about what happened last night.

Regarding nouns or noun phrases, they can take more than one prepositional phrase complement as their complement, such as (Lan and Sun, 2019):

Let there be **government** | of the people | by the people | for the people | .

The statement | by the driver | to the police | about the incident | was crucial.

A verb phrase complement is a word or phrase that completes the verb's meaning or the meaning of the verb phrase. The grammatical form that can present the function of a verb phrase complement is a prepositional phrase. So, a prepositional phrase that is in a prepositional verb acts as a verb phrase complement, for instance (Geluso, 2022):

Dinner **consists of** soup and biscuits.

You should hope for the best but plan for the worst.

He can rely on me.

An exceptional verb phrase form that has a verb phrase complement in the form of a prepositional phrase is the structure "determiner+verb+verb phrase complement", for instance (AlShurfa et al., 2022):

The **reading** of the proclamation.

The **cutting** of the cake.

The **ringing of the bell.**

Though some syntactic theorists consider the forms "reading, cutting, ringing, etc." as gerunds, other reliable approaches believe that those form verbs are in the present participle form. So, here, the determiners function as a determinative and the prepositional phrases as verb phrase complements (Inoue, 2019). The intensive verb in English is "verb to be," which is syntactically named "copula," and a prepositional phrase can function as the complement of them (Bi and Jiang, 2020):

Your brother is **in the studio**. (In the studio is a PP.)

Conclusion

To conclude, the first function of a prepositional phrase that is mentioned is "postmodifier". As noticed, the prepositional phrases can function as the postmodifier of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. However, prepositional phrases are the most common type of postmodifier of noun phrases. The second function of a prepositional phrase that is mentioned is adverbial. A prepositional phrase functions as an adverbial, while the preposition phrase answers the questions of when, where, why, etc. and modifies the verb of the sentence. The main point that indicates a prepositional phrase is being used as an adverbial is that the prepositional phrase comes after the verb. The mentioned examples clarify the prepositional phrases while functioning as an adverbial. Regarding the nominal functions of prepositional phrases, there are various ones, such as subject, subject complement, direct object, indirect object, and object complement. The last function of a prepositional phrase is "complement," in which they function as the complement of a noun, an adjective, or a verb. Verbs are the most common type that needs a complement since sometimes they lack the meaning of the sentence.

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