

# Swiping in Child English

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## abstract

English allows a peculiar type of elliptical *wh*-questions that can be found only under sluicing, in which the *wh*-object of the preposition appears not after the preposition but before it, as in “John fixed it, but I don’t remember *what with*.” Merchant (2002) calls this construction *Swiping*. This study evaluates two competing syntactic analyses of Swiping, by using data from a novel source: the acquisition of English. The findings from child English lend support to the view that swiping crucially involves preposition-stranding in its derivation, and cast doubt on the proposal that pied-piping of a preposition plays a crucial role in the derivation of Swiping sentences.