



palgrave▶pivot

LINKING FORM AND MEANING

Studies on Selected Control
Patterns in Recent English

Juhani Rudanko



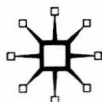
palgrave▶pivot

▶ **Linking Form and
Meaning: Studies
on Selected Control
Patterns in Recent
English**



University of Tampere, Finland

palgrave
macmillan



© Martti Juhani Rudanko 2015

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No portion of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The author has asserted his right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published in 2015 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave* and Macmillan* are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN: 978–1–137–50950–5 EPUB

ISBN: 978–1–137–50949–9 PDF

ISBN: 978–1–137–50948–2 Hardback

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

www.palgrave.com/pivot

DOI: 10.1057/9781137509499



Linking Form and Meaning

Also by Juhani Rudanko

COMPLEMENTATION AND CASE GRAMMAR

PRAGMATIC APPROACHES TO SHAKESPEARE

PREPOSITIONS AND COMPLEMENT CLAUSES

DIACHRONIC STUDIES OF ENGLISH COMPLEMENTATION PATTERNS

CORPORA AND COMPLEMENTATION

COMPLEMENTS AND CONSTRUCTIONS

THE FORGING OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH

CHANGES IN COMPLEMENTATION IN BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH

DISCOURSES OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Acknowledgments

It is my pleasure to thank Palgrave Macmillan for including this book as part of Palgrave Pivot.

This book includes one chapter, slightly adapted, that was originally published in article form: Chapter 3 originally appeared in Kristin Davidse, Caroline Gentens, Lobke Ghesquiére, and Lieven Vandelanotte, eds. 2014, *Corpus Interrogation and Grammatical Patterns*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 223–238. I want to acknowledge my indebtedness to John Benjamins for permitting me to include the chapter in a volume consisting solely of my own work.

I want to express my thanks to the two anonymous readers selected by the publisher for their observations. I also want to thank Ian Gurney, of the University of Tampere, for the many discussions on aspects of English complementation that I was able to have with him before his retirement in 2013. Several of the chapters that are in this volume were originally drafted before his retirement, and I greatly benefited from his advice when writing them. More recently I have been able to discuss questions of complementation with Paul Rickman and Mark Kaunisto, of the University of Tampere, and I have benefited from those discussions. I have also been able to present a number of papers on complementation at conferences, with input from other conference participants shaping my thinking on questions of complementation. I also want to pay tribute to the students in my seminars on English complementation at the University of Tampere during the last ten years or so, whose searching questions have often

stimulated me to look for new angles in the study of complementation. I would also like to thank the English program for making available funding for part-time assistants in 2013 and 2014 to help me with the task of completing this book. I am deeply grateful to Terhi Uusi-Mäkelä and Maija Kyytsönen for their assistance. They saved me from many an error. Of course, I am solely responsible for any remaining errors and inadequacies.

Contents

List of Tables	vi
Acknowledgments	viii
1 Introduction	1
2 Tracking a Change over Five Decades: <i>to</i> Infinitive and <i>to -ing</i> Complements of <i>Accustomed</i> in American Fiction from the 1910s to the 1950s	11
3 A New Angle on Infinitival and <i>of -ing</i> Complements of <i>Afraid</i> , with Evidence from the <i>TIME</i> Corpus	27
4 Additional Data on Nonfinite Complements of <i>Afraid</i>	41
5 On the Semantics of Object Control in English, with Evidence from the Corpus of Contemporary American English	49
6 The Transitive <i>into -ing</i> Pattern as a Caused Motion Construction: The Case of <i>Force</i>	63
7 Exploring the Creative Potential of the Transitive <i>into -ing</i> Pattern	79
8 On a Class of Exceptions to Bach's Generalization	89
9 Concluding Observations	98
References	104
Index	109

List of Tables

2.1	<i>To</i> infinitive and <i>to -ing</i> complements of <i>accustomed</i> in the 1930s, 1940s, and the 1950s, with normalized frequencies given in parentheses	14
2.2	Frequencies of <i>to</i> infinitival and <i>to -ing</i> complements of <i>accustomed</i> from the 1910s to the 1950s	17
2.3	Total of [+/-Choice] interpretations of lower predicates with <i>to</i> infinitive and <i>to -ing</i> complements	23
2.4	[+/-Choice] complements of <i>accustomed</i> from 1910 to 1949	23
3.1	Tokens of <i>afraid</i> with <i>to</i> infinitive and <i>of -ing</i> complements in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, with normalized frequencies in parentheses after the raw frequencies, and the size of the subcorpus for each decade indicated in millions of words	33
3.2	[+Choice] and [-Choice] interpretations of <i>to</i> infinitival and <i>of -ing</i> complements of <i>afraid</i> in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s	35
4.1	The incidence of <i>to</i> infinitives and <i>of -ing</i> complements in <i>be</i> passive complements of <i>afraid</i> in five periods of COCA	44
5.1	The incidence of causative and attributive interpretations of <i>charge</i> in the two text types of NEWS and ACAD of COCA	58

5.2	The incidence of causative and attributive interpretations of <i>charge</i> in three decades of COHA	59
7.1	The frequency of the transitive <i>into -ing</i> pattern in the different decades of the <i>TIME</i> Corpus	82
8.1	Incidence of the NP <i>against</i> NP, <i>against</i> NP, NP <i>against -ing</i> , and <i>against -ing</i> patterns with <i>counsel</i> in the different decades of COHA	93
8.2	Incidence of the NP <i>against</i> NP, <i>against</i> NP, NP <i>against -ing</i> and <i>against -ing</i> patterns with <i>counsel</i> in the two decades of COCA	94

1

Introduction

Abstract: *Control constructions are central in the book, and Chapter 1 introduces the concept of control, beginning with subject control. A central assumption concerns the postulation of understood subjects, in line with other work on infinitival and gerundial complements. The assumption is motivated in the chapter. The sentential complements introduced include the to infinitival and to -ing patterns, and it is noted that the word to is homonymous in current English. The chapter also provides a brief description of the central research questions investigated in the body of the book. Chapters 2 through 4 deal with subject control, and Chapters 5 through 8 with object control. The chapter concludes with a comment on the method of focusing on individual verbs and adjectives in work on complementation in English.*

Keywords: infinitival to; object control; subject control

Rudanko, Juhani. *Linking Form and Meaning: Studies on Selected Control Patterns in Recent English*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
DOI: 10.1057/9781137509499.0004.

The purpose of this book is to investigate a number of new ideas in the area of the system of English predicate complementation, with an emphasis on variation and change in that system in recent English. The data for the investigation come mainly from large electronic corpora.

To introduce some of the main assumptions that are made in this investigation, it is helpful to start by considering sentences (1a–b) from the British National Corpus, the BNC:

- (1) a. We sought to measure attitudes in several ways. (A62)
 b. ... he occasionally resorted to taking one of my sleeping-tablets.
 (CES)

Sentences (1a–b) exemplify subject control. In (1a) the matrix, or higher, verb is *seek*, and its complement is a *to* infinitive, and in (1b) the matrix verb is *resort* and its complement is what is here termed a *to -ing* construction, which consists of the word *to* and a following *-ing* clause. The *-ing* clause in question may be termed a gerund. An assumption made here is that in both (1a) and (1b) the complements of the matrix verbs are sentential, with their own subjects. This assumption is not accepted by all linguists today, but there are a number of reasons for thinking that *to* infinitive and *-ing* complements are indeed sentential. One line of reasoning was expressed by Otto Jespersen, a traditional grammarian, many years ago as follows:

Very often a gerund stands alone without any subject, but as in other nexuses (nexus-substantives, infinitives, etc.) the connexion of a subject with the verbal idea is always implied. (Jespersen [1940] 1961, 140)

The use of a verb in a sentence thus implies the presence of someone or something that the verbal idea is predicated of. Given the presence of two verbs in (1a–b) it is therefore reasonable to think of it as implying the presence of two such entities. The first of them, the subject of the higher verb, is overtly represented, and the second, the subject of the lower verb, is covertly represented. Given that the higher subjects of (1a–b) are assigned theta roles by their matrix verbs, the sentences in (1a–b) are control structures. It is customary in much current work to represent the covert – or understood or implicit – subjects of (1a–b) with the symbol PRO.

The argument for the postulation of an understood subject outlined in the paragraph above is strengthened when it is borne in mind that an understood subject can provide an antecedent to bind a reflexive in

the lower sentence. For instance, consider (2a–b), from the Corpus of Contemporary American English, COCA:

- (2) a. Vice President Joe Biden has sought to separate himself from his boss,... (2010, MAG)
 b. ... he had to stealthily resort to identifying himself as “Dave, a caller from Washington, D.C”. (1992, MAG)

Assuming, then, that both (1a) and (1b) contain understood subjects, they may be represented as in (1a') and (1b'), in their essential respects.

- (1) a' [[We]_{NP} [sought]_{Verb1} [[PRO]_{NP} [to]_{Infl} [[measure]_{Verb2} attitudes]_{VP}]_{S2}]_{S1}
 b' [[he]_{NP} occasionally [resorted]_{Verb1} [to]_{Prep} [[PRO]_{NP} taking one of my sleeping-tablets]_{S2}]_{NP}]_{S1}

The representations provided contain a minimum of analysis, but they are suitable for the study of argument structure. There are two other features of the representations that are worth mentioning here. First, it is observed that the representation in (1b') makes use of the traditional idea of a nominal clause. This is simply a sentence dominated by an NP.

Second, the structural representations given in (1a'–b') also embody the hypothesis that there are two different types of *to* in English. The *to* preceding the *-ing* form of a verb in (1b') is represented as a preposition, but the infinitival *to* in (1a') is under the Infl node, corresponding to the Aux node in more traditional terminology. There are some scholars today who consider both types of *to* as prepositions, but it is observed that they are not in free variation, at least not in the case of the verbs *seek* and *resort*, since both (3a) and (3b), modified from the authentic examples in (2a–b), are ill-formed:

- (3) a. *Vice President Joe Biden has sought to separating himself from his boss.
 b. *He had to resort to identify himself as Dave.

The matrix verb *seek* thus only selects infinitival *to* and the matrix verb *resort* only selects prepositional *to*, and it is necessary to distinguish the two types in the grammar of English.

From a historical perspective, it is clear that in Old English the word *to* found with infinitives was a preposition. However, the infinitive has drifted from a “nominal to a verbal character,” as Denison (1998, 266) puts it. This drift is “now virtually complete,” and the drift has also involved the “concomitant dissociation of the infinitive marker *to* from

the homonymous preposition” (Denison 1998, 266). The approach adopted here shares Denison’s basic view of the analysis of *to* infinitives, and treats the word *to* as homonymous in current English. At the same time, the term “infinitive marker” has in some treatments involved the implication that the constituent in question is “merely” a marker, devoid of meaning. This implication is not shared by the present author. More than 25 years ago he pointed to the historical associations of infinitival *to* (Rudanko 1989, 35), and the fact that it is placed under the Infl – or Aux – node does not mean that it is devoid of meaning. On the contrary, like other items under the Infl node, it may carry a meaning.

As for the *to* that precedes *-ing* clauses, or gerunds, as in (1b), it is probably fair to say that there is a consensus in the literature regarding its prepositional status. When infinitival *to* is distinguished from prepositional *to*, the behavior of the latter is regular: similarly to other prepositions, prepositional *to* co-occurs with *-ing* forms, or gerunds, rather than with infinitives. (Apart from prepositional gerunds, there are of course also simple or nonprepositional gerunds in English, as in the complement of *avoid* in *I avoided looking at her*, COCA, 2011, FIC).

Once it is recognized that there are two types of *to* in recent English, it is fascinating to investigate the variation affecting the use of the two patterns in recent English. There is little doubt in the light of a considerable body of recent work that it is the *-ing* variant that has been spreading at the expense of the *to* infinitive. Indeed the spread of the gerund, whether prepositional or nonprepositional, at the expense of *to* infinitives is one of the more important features of what in recent work has been called the Great Complement Shift (Rohdenburg 2006a, Vosberg 2006, Vosberg 2009, Rudanko 2010b, Rudanko 2011, Davies 2012, Rudanko 2012).

In work investigating variation and change affecting *to* infinitives and *-ing* complements it is essential to document the frequencies of the two variants and to note any trends in their incidence, but a concomitant and more interesting research task is to explore the factors that can have an impact on the variation and change observed. One of the aims of the present volume is to contribute to this ongoing area of research. Chapter 2 sets the stage for exploring an idea that the present author has mooted in recent work. The idea involves a semantic distinction that was proposed as an explanatory principle separating the two constructions at a time of considerable variation. This hypothesis is grounded in what has been called Bolinger’s Generalization. This says that a “difference in

syntactic form always spells a difference in meaning” (Bolinger 1968, 127). The principle is heuristic. It does not specify what the difference is in any one case where variation involving two or more patterns is found. Instead, it sets up a research agenda for zeroing in on the semantics of different types of complementation patterns. Applying the heuristic principle to the variation between *to* infinitive and *to* -ing complements of the adjective *accustomed*, Rudanko (2010a) proposed that a contrast between predicates that are [+Choice] and those that are [-Choice] can shed light on variation between the two types of complement at a time when both are found in sizable numbers. At the back of the distinction is the hypothesis that the study of semantic roles, especially the Agent role, is salient in the analysis of syntactic variation and change.

The distinction between [+Choice] and [-Choice] predicates as an explanatory principle bearing on complement selection was based in Rudanko (2010a) on data from three decades of the *TIME* Corpus, the 1930s, the 1940s, and the 1950s. (The 1930s is the first full decade of the *TIME* Corpus.) It was argued in that study that during this period of three decades the complementation structure of the adjective *accustomed* underwent a major restructuring and that the distinction between [+Choice] and [-Choice] predicates can be used as an explanatory principle to shed light on variation between two major patterns of sentential complementation during a time of considerable variation between the patterns.

Chapter 2 of the present book takes up the same adjective *accustomed*, but in a different text type. While the *TIME* Corpus represents the text type of Magazines, the data investigated in the chapter concern the text type of Fiction. The data come from the Corpus of Historical American English, COHA, and the composition of the corpus makes it possible to examine not only the three decades covered in the study of the *TIME* Corpus, but to extend the investigation to the preceding two decades. One purpose is to examine whether the change in the complementation of the adjective *accustomed* observed in the text type of Magazines also took place in the text type of Fiction, and if so, whether it happened at the same rate. Another purpose is to find out whether the explanatory principle based on the [+Choice] and [-Choice] distinction can be applied to data from the text type of Fiction and whether it can shed light on variation between sentential complements of the adjective in that text type.

Chapter 3 extends the investigation of the semantic distinction between [+Choice] and [-Choice] predicates in another direction. The

chapter investigates the complementation of the adjective *afraid*. This adjective selects *to* infinitive complements and gerunds introduced by the preposition *of*. The latter construction may be termed the *of -ing* pattern. Consider these examples from COCA:

- (4) a. ...they're afraid to do their jobs... (2008, SPOK)
 b. ...I was afraid of doing a comedy. (2005, SPOK)

The purpose of the chapter is to provide information on the use of the two types of complements. Frequency information is supplied, but the main concern is to investigate, with the help of corpus evidence, whether the semantic distinction that was originally developed on the basis of the variation between *to* infinitive and *to -ing* complements of the adjective *accustomed* might be extended to variation between *to* infinitive and *of -ing* complements of the adjective *afraid*. The data on the two sentential complements of *afraid* is taken from the first three decades of the *TIME* Corpus.

Chapter 4 offers a continuation of work on *afraid*. In this chapter the range of data is extended to even larger sets of data from COCA, and the distinction between [+Choice] and [-Choice] predicates is subjected to a further searching test, taking advantage of variation in the complementation of the adjective *afraid*.

Going beyond the subject control constructions discussed in Chapters 2 through 4 in this book, this study also investigates object control, the other major type of control in English. Consider sentence (5), from COCA:

- (5) The boy persuaded her to buy the flight over the Painted Hills... (2012, FIC)

There are two verbs in sentence (5), and, given that sentences of the type of (1) are analyzed as containing an understood subject and a lower clause, the sentence in (5) may also be analyzed in the same way, with an understood lower subject and a sentential complement. However, in this case there is an object NP between the matrix verb and the lower verb and it is this object that controls the reference of the understood subject of the lower clause. The NP object of the higher clause gets a semantic role from *persuade*. The pattern is therefore one of control. More precisely, it is one of object control.

Concerning the semantics of object control, it is helpful to consider the following important statement by Sag and Pollard (1991):

The semantics of all verbs in this class [of verbs involving object control] thus involves a *soa* [state of affairs] whose relation is of the INFLUENCE type. With respect to such *soas*, we may identify three semantic roles, which we will refer to as INFLUENCE (the possibly agentive influencer), INFLUENCED (the typically animate participant influenced by the influence) and SOA-ARG (the action that the influenced participant is influenced to perform (or, in the case of verbs like *prevent* and *forbid*, NOT to perform). [Note omitted] (Sag and Pollard 1991, 66)

Sag and Pollard's analysis is certainly relevant to sentence (5), and it captures an important part of its meaning. It is indeed probably true to say that in the literature on object control today there is a consensus that the Sag–Pollard analysis captures the semantics of object control. However, in Chapter 5 this consensus is challenged. It is argued that an influence-type relation is by no means sufficient to account for the semantics of object control. Instead, it is argued on the basis of more than one syntactic pattern that an additional semantic relation needs to be postulated to provide a fuller analysis of object control.

In Chapter 6 the discussion turns to one particular pattern of object control. Consider sentences (6a–b), from COCA:

- (6) a. ... he coaxed somehow the pilot to leave the cockpit ... (2012, SPOK)
 b. Kate apparently coaxed William into staying in school. (2011, SPOK)

The sentential complement of the matrix verb *coax* in (6a) is a *to* infinitive, and the sentence is of the type of sentence (5) above. In the sentence the higher verb assigns a semantic role to its NP object, *the pilot*. In (6b) the same matrix verb *coax* again selects an NP object, assigning a semantic role to it, but the sentential complement of the same matrix verb is a gerund introduced by the preposition *into*. The latter pattern may be termed the *into -ing* pattern. Or more precisely, it can be termed the transitive *into -ing* pattern, because of the presence of an object in the higher sentence.

The transitive *into -ing* pattern has been investigated in a number of studies, including Francis et al. (1996), Hunston and Francis (2000), Rudanko (2000, 2005, 2011, Forthcoming), Stefanowitsch and Gries (2005), Wulff, Stefanowitsch and Gries (2007), and Davies (2012). Such studies have, for instance, investigated the emergence and early history of the transitive *into -ing* pattern in English. It has also been pointed out that there is a tendency for certain types of higher verbs to occur with