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Introduction

This book investigates the syntactic and semantic properties of an important set of complement clauses that are in construction with the prepositions *in, to, at, on, with,* and *of* in present-day English. [The term "present-day English" will be used in this book as in Rudanko (1989) to denote "contemporary English, twentieth-century English, of speakers who are alive today" (Rudanko 1989, 13).] More specifically, the types of complement clauses considered may be illustrated with the following sentences:

(1) a. John delights in frustrating his opponents.
b. John resorted to denigrating his opponents.
c. The rebuff reduced John to groveling before his idol.
d. John balked at extending the deadline.
e. John concentrated on winning the round.
f. John coped well with putting the baby to bed.
g. They charged John with stealing a car.
h. John dreamed of changing the world.
i. They accused John of stealing a car.

Sentences 1a–i share a number of salient properties. In each of them there are two verbs. The first, occurring immediately after the first noun phrase in 1a–i, is the matrix predicate. The other verb in each case occurs immediately after the relevant preposition in the sequence of

expressed constituents. Each verb has its own subject. Here we might recall the projection principle and the theta criterion, which are two principles influential in guiding current syntactic work. Informal phrasings of the principles are sufficient for the present purpose. The projection principle says that "every syntactic representation (i.e., LF-representation and S- and D-structure) should be a projection of the thematic structure and the properties of subcategorization of lexical entries" [Chomsky (1981, 36)]. The theta criterion relates to arguments of verbs and says that each argument of a verb can have only one theta role and that "each θ-role is assigned to one and only one argument" [Chomsky (1981, 36)]. Given these two principles, it follows that in each of 1a–i there is an understood argument. The first NP in each sentence is the subject argument of the verb that immediately follows it, but given the theta criterion, this NP cannot simultaneously be the subject argument of the other verb of the sentence. At the same time, given the projection principle, the lower verb must have a subject argument. The subject argument of this other verb is not overtly expressed. In line with fairly recent work, the understood subject of the lower verb in each of 1a–i may be represented by the symbol PRO. This is a symbol for a pronominal element which has the features of number, person, and gender but has no phonetic realization. Earlier pretransformational and traditional work on English grammar did not use the symbol PRO but generally shared the basic intuition that there is an understood subject in each of 1a–i.

Given the presence of an understood subject in 1a–i, it follows that there are two sentences or clauses in each of them. In relatively recent work, sentences have been analyzed on the basis of progressively more hierarchical structures, including the S' node, originally proposed by Bresnan (1970), and the IP and CP projections proposed by Chomsky (1986a). Still further projections were proposed by Abney (1987) and Pollock (1989). For present purposes, such elaborate structures can be set aside, and the traditional "flat" structure may suffice. It is then possible to represent the sentences of 1a–i as in structures 1'a–i:

(1') a. $[[\text{John}]_{NP1}\ [\text{delights}]_{Verb1}\ [\text{in}]_{Prep}\ [[\text{PRO}]_{NP2}\ [[\text{frustrating}]_{Verb2}$ his opponents$]_{VP}]_{S2}]_{S1}$

b. $[[\text{John}]_{NP1}\ [\text{resorted}]_{Verb1}\ [\text{to}]_{Prep}\ [[\text{PRO}]_{NP2}\ [[\text{denigrating}]_{Verb2}$ his opponents$]_{VP}]_{S2}]_{S1}$

c. $[[\text{The rebuff}]_{NP1}\ [\text{reduced}]_{Verb1}\ [\text{John}]_{NP0}\ [\text{to}]_{Prep}\ [[\text{PRO}]_{NP2}$ $[[\text{groveling}]_{Verb2}$ before his idol$]_{VP}]_{S2}]_{S1}$

d. [[John]$_{NP1}$ [balked]$_{Verb1}$ [at]$_{Prep}$ [[PRO]$_{NP2}$ [[extending]$_{Verb2}$ the deadline]$_{VP}$]$_{S2}$]$_{S1}$

e. [[John]$_{NP1}$ [concentrated]$_{Verb1}$ [on]$_{Prep}$ [[PRO]$_{NP2}$ [[winning]$_{Verb2}$ the round]$_{VP}$]$_{S2}$]$_{S1}$

f. [[John]$_{NP1}$ [coped]$_{Verb1}$ well [with]$_{Prep}$ [[PRO]$_{NP2}$ [[putting]$_{Verb2}$ the baby to bed]$_{VP}$]$_{S2}$]$_{S1}$

g. [[They]$_{NP1}$ [charged]$_{Verb1}$ [John]$_{NP0}$ [with]$_{Prep}$ [[PRO]$_{NP2}$ [[stealing]$_{Verb2}$ a car]$_{VP}$]$_{S2}$]$_{S1}$

h. [[John]$_{NP1}$ [dreamed]$_{Verb1}$ [of]$_{Prep}$ [[PRO]$_{NP2}$ [[changing]$_{Verb2}$ the world]$_{VP}$]$_{S2}$]$_{S1}$

i. [[They]$_{NP1}$ [accused]$_{Verb1}$ [John]$_{NP0}$ [of]$_{Prep}$ [[PRO]$_{NP2}$ [stealing a car]$_{VP}$]$_{S2}$]$_{S1}$

As a point of terminology facilitating discussion, the symbol NP_1 is used in this book to designate the subject of a matrix clause, the symbol NP_2 the subject of a lower clause, and the symbol NP_0 the object of a matrix clause. Where there is no danger of confusion, these same symbols are sometimes also used, by way of a convenient shorthand, to designate the entities that are referred to by the NPs in question. As another point of terminology, the terms "*in -ing* pattern," "*to -ing* pattern," etc., will be used of the constructions in 1a–i and 1'a–i, even though, strictly speaking, in none of these is the preposition a constituent of the subordinate clause.

Examples 1'a–b, 1'd–f, and 1'h may be termed subject control structures, for in them PRO is generally, as in the sentences given, controlled by the subject of the matrix clause. On the other hand, 1'c, 1'g, and 1'i are object control structures, for in them PRO is frequently controlled by the object of the matrix clause.

The presence of PRO is an important feature shared by the patterns of 1a–i. Another important feature shared by the constructions concerns the syntactic status of the lower clause, designated S_2 in 1a–i. In each case without exception, the lower clause is a complement clause. This means that there is a close syntactic connection between the matrix verb, designated $Verb_1$ in 1a–i, and the lower clause. In particular, the focus of the present investigation on complement clauses entails a number of exclusions. For instance, it means that adverbial clauses will not be considered except in passing. An example, to be discussed more fully in chapter 2, may serve to illustrate the point. Consider sentence 2:

(2) John stammered in pronouncing the word.

Sentence 2 is similar to 1a in a number of ways. For instance, in 2, as in 1a, there is a PRO, and in both the PRO is coreferential with the subject of the matrix clause. However, in 2 the connection between the higher verb *stammered* and the lower clause introduced by *in* is less close than in 1a. One reflex of this is that preposing is more readily possible in 2 than in 1a. Thus compare 3a–b, with an adverb of manner added in each case to alleviate the artificial flavor of the sentences.

(3) a. ?? In frustrating his opponent John delights greatly.
b. In pronouncing the word John stammered perceptibly.

The distinction between complement and adverbial clauses is important, but it is not always easy to make. More discussion of the question and, more broadly, of the delimitation of the patterns of 1a–i, will be provided in the individual chapters of this book. It will be seen that problems of delimitation do not always surface in the same way, but that adverbial clauses are a recurring theme.

The order in which the patterns of complementation are covered in this book is not based on some logical necessity. Nor is it alphabetical, based on the preposition. It is simply that in which the chapters were originally written. No doubt it would be possible to change the order, but this would affect little of substance, and consequently the order of conception has been preserved in this book.

Not all complement clause patterns involving control and introduced by prepositions in present-day English are covered in this book. For instance, sentential patterns introduced by *into, from,* and *for* are not included. The first two of these receive some attention in Rudanko (1989). As for *for* patterns, and other patterns not covered, their exclusion is not motivated by any desire to imply that they are unimportant in present-day English. Rather, it is dictated by practical considerations, including the limitations of space and time and the desirability of bringing the investigation of at least some central patterns to some kind of conclusion. It may also be hoped that the methods of analysis applied and illustrated here may be used in the investigation of patterns not covered.

Regarding data and sources of data in the present study, extensive use is made of two major corpora of present-day English, the Brown and the LOB corpora. In the collection of data in each chapter these two corpora are considered first. In an important sense, then, the present

study is corpus-based. At the same time, the reliance on the Brown and LOB corpora does not mean that data collected by earlier grammarians should necessarily be discarded. In this connection, as will be seen, pride of place belongs to Poutsma (1905, 1929).[1] As far as sources of data other than corpora and grammars are concerned, Bridgeman et al. (1965) do not have a focus on documented usage, but it is beyond question that their lists of verbs selecting sentential complements in numerous types of constructions constitute another useful resource for the present investigation. From a broader perspective, data based on intuitions of native speakers should be taken into account. Indeed, recorded usage cannot be taken as an absolute guideline. Instead, it must be weighed against intuitions of native speakers. In the great majority of cases there is little conflict between these two sources of data, and for any given verb in any given construction there is a tendency for plentiful recorded usage to go together with native speakers finding the verb acceptable in the construction in question. In some other cases, relatively few in number, recorded usage offers examples that are clearly unacceptable to speakers today. An early example occurs in chapter 2. It is observed that in the LOB corpus, the verb *concentrate* is found construed with *in -ing*, as in *I concentrated in forgetting my trouble* (abbreviated from the example in chapter 2). However, there is a very pronounced tendency for speakers today instead to favor *concentrate on -ing*, as in *I concentrated on forgetting my troubles*, and on the basis of this introspective evidence, which is of course backed up by recorded usage of *concentrate on -ing*, the verb is not cited as taking *in -ing*, in spite of the one recorded example, but is restricted to taking *on -ing*. In a number of other cases, judgments are less clear-cut, and informants may have intuitions that are hazy or even conflicting. Mention will be made of decisions on including or excluding marginal constructions. It is observed repeatedly that marginal acceptability tends to go together with dearth of recorded usage in the corpora. The more general point is that introspective and corpus evidence must be weighed against each other, with the aim of doing justice—as best as one can—to what is current and acceptable in present-day English. This book will serve to demonstrate that both corpus data and data derived from introspection are valuable and necessary in the study of the complementation structures under review.

As far as the structure of the individual chapters is concerned, a broadly similar procedure is followed in each. First, an attempt is made to delimit the pattern or patterns to be considered as explicitly as possible. Second, there is the task of compiling lists of verbs. In this book,

this task is as far as possible kept separate from that of characterizing and taxonomizing the verbs. This is to ensure that the process of classification does not interfere with that of deciding whether or not a given verb should be included in the first place. Taxonomies are preceded or followed in the individual chapters by discussion of the reasons for setting them up in the way done here. In all chapters, the taxonomies lead to further discussion of syntactic and semantic properties of the verbs included. Often it is possible to argue, partly on the basis of usage and partly on the basis of semantic analysis, that verbs selecting a pattern may be grouped into a relatively small number of core classes. Other recurring themes in the further analysis of the patterns in the light of the taxonomies include the question of whether the complement sentence in the pattern in question is always nominal and whether control properties interact with the semantic taxonomy proposed, and if so, in what way. The chapters also typically include discussion of the question of alternation, that is, whether verbs selecting the pattern under review select other patterns of sentential complementation, with the meaning of the verb in question remaining approximately constant. It is observed of the nine constructions investigated that verbs governing them permit differing amounts of alternation. Apart from the sheer quantity of alternation, it is also important to consider its quality, especially from a semantic point of view. It is suggested in the individual chapters that alternative construals—even when similar in meaning in some respects—often exhibit semantic differences on closer inspection, and that such differences may have a bearing on the degree of homogeneity that can be attributed to the pattern in question. Overall, the taxonomies, supplemented with discussion of core classes, of control properties, and of alternation, are helpful in pointing to at least some of the typical semantic functions associated with each pattern of complementation considered.[2]

With regard to the theoretical orientation of this book, the investigation draws on both traditional and more recent work on the syntax and semantics of English where such work bears on the analysis of one or more of the nine patterns of complementation in a fruitful way. At the same time, it is carried out in a fashion that is as independent as possible of any particular model of description, and especially of the technicalities of any model, so as not be an artifact of any one framework. It is grounded in facts of English relating to the nine patterns and their position in the complementation system of English that call for coverage in any paradigm, and overall, it is offered as a contribution to the grammatical analysis of English.

A comment might be appended on the relation of the present book to Rudanko (1989). It is certainly possible to find similarities between the two volumes. In both an attempt is made to gather and to consider a reasonable body of data for analysis, and in both the data are primarily from present-day English. Further, both share a concern with the syntactic and semantic analysis of the data and especially with the interrelation and the interface of the syntactic and semantic points of view. However, there are also important differences. For instance, the extensive use made here of corpus data—which I did not have at my disposal when I wrote the 1989 book—enriches the data base of the present investigation. More fundamentally, the subject matter of the two books is different. The nine constructions that are the focus of attention in the present volume are not the ones considered in the 1989 book. The difference in subject matter is accentuated by another consideration. Several of the constructions that were considered in the 1989 book—especially the nonprepositional *to* infinitive and *-ing* form construals, as in *John wanted to come along* and *John avoided committing himself,* respectively, and *that* complement clauses, as in *John asserted that he was innocent*—have been the object of intense investigation over the past thirty years or so. As far as the nine constructions that are the subject of the present investigation are concerned, Poutsma (1905, 1929) and one or two other studies have addressed some aspects of some of these. However, important features of the nine patterns, including the syntactic status of complements of prepositions in the structures, the question of control, and the possibility of core classes, have been more or less completely overlooked in the literature so far. Indeed, the neglect of the nine constructions over the past thirty years or so has been so pervasive that there is a sense in which the present book, by redressing this neglect and by focusing on sentential complementation dependent on prepositions from the vantage point of modern linguistic theory, introduces and defines a new research field. This may serve to provide justification for the project. In any case, as far as the relation of the present book to the 1989 volume is concerned, the two do not duplicate each other. Rather, they complement each other, and each of them is designed to stand on its own as an independent study.