

ON THE ENGLISH INFINITIVE OF PURPOSE IN FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE PERSPECTIVE

The present paper deals with sentences that contain an infinitive of purpose. Its aim is to ascertain the relation between the sentence position of the infinitive of purpose and the degree of communicative dynamism (= CD) carried by it.¹ Special attention has been paid to the initial infinitive of purpose.

The material on which the inquiry is based has been drawn from modern English and American prose. The works examined are representatives of the following three genres:

(i) non-dramatic fiction, (ii) drama, (iii) educational prose.²

In my material I have found 314 sentences containing an infinitive of purpose.³ The most common is the sentence type with an infinitive of purpose occurring finally.

1. Stroke has to stretch his arms nearly out

of their sockets *to reach* his skulls now; ... Jerome 156,12⁴

Sentences with an initial infinitive of purpose are much rarer.

2. *In order to explain* [what this machine would do], we must first describe [what is meant by a formant]. — Carroll 207,10

Out of the 314 collected sentences, in 52 the infinitive of purpose occurs initially, in 8 medially and in 254 finally. It follows that in my material the infinitives of purpose occurring in end-position are about five times more frequent than those occurring in front-position. In this respect there are interesting differences between non-dramatic fiction (i) and drama (ii) on the one hand, and educational prose (iii) on the other. This is borne out by the statistics tabulated at the top of the following page.

If we compare the ratio of initial to final infinitives in (i) and (ii) with that in (iii), we find that in fiction prose (i and ii) the initial infinitive is about 15 times, whereas in educational prose (iii) only 2.5 times, less frequent than the final infinitive.⁷

Let us now examine the sentences containing an infinitive of purpose from the point of view of functional sentence perspective (FSP). We shall first be concentrating on my material from FICTION PROSE.

In an overwhelming majority of the sentences with a final infinitive of purpose, both the part of the sentence on which the infinitive immediately depends and the infinitive part convey new information, unknown from the context. (For short I shall denote the former as the leading part, and for the purposes of this paper understand by it the section of the sentence arrived at by excluding the infinitive of purpose, the elements expanding it, and the entire subject.) Out of the total number of 149 sentences, this holds good for 142.

The Number of Infinitives of Purpose

	Occurring Initially	Medially ⁵	Finally
(i) Beal	1	2	23
Cronin	0	0	23
Jerome	4	0	32
Lawrence	1	0	12
(ii) Forbes	1	0	5
Lessing	0	0	11
Osborne	2	0	15
Wesker	1	0	28
Total	10	2	149⁶
(iii) Carroll	21	1	36
Fowlers	7	2	14
Potter	4	0	8
Quirk	10	3	47
Total	42	6	105

The following four sentences may be adduced in illustration.

3. They have stopped the car⁸ *to argue*, ... — Beal 51,10
4. [Her pretence of invalidism was so blatant] he had to struggle *to conquer* a wild impulse to laugh. — Cronin 12,24
5. The night watchman will be out any moment now, *to get* a drink [before the pub closes]. — Forbes 32,15
6. They did just about everything [they could think of] *to stop* us ... — Osborne 45,29

In all of them, the infinitive part further develops the information conveyed by the leading part. Consequently, the purpose of the action expressed by the infinitive part (*to argue, to conquer a wild impulse to laugh, to get a drink, to stop us*) is communicatively more important than the action expressed by the leading part:⁹ the infinitive part conveys a higher degree of CD than the leading part. Since the former follows the latter, the two are in agreement with the basic distribution of CD;¹⁰ they do not work counter to it.

The basic distribution of CD, however, is evidently worked counter to in four sentences (out of the above mentioned 149). In these sentences, the context affects, 'dedynamizes', the infinitive part, which consequently, irrespective of its end-position, becomes communicatively less dynamic than the leading part.¹¹ Sentence 7 is the first example of this type.

7. [He could not have tumbled into the river, because we were on the water side of him,] and he would have had to climb over us *to do* it. — Jerome 134,31

The infinitive part of the sentence conveys a piece of information familiar from the previous context (*to do it* standing for *to tumble into the river*), and in this way, though situated at the end of the sentence, carries a lower degree of CD than the leading part (*would have had to climb over us*), which conveys new information.

The same applies to three other final infinitives in my material drawn from fiction prose. One of them is quoted in its wider context under 8 below.

8. [KEVIN: Even in the small restaurants they're not after caring much. MICHAEL (*lighting cigarette*): Why should they? It's this (*rubs thumb and finger together*) that counts, you know that.

KEVIN: Oh, I don't know. You'd've thought it was possible to run a small restaurant that could take pride in its food and make money too.

PETER: [Of course it's possible, my friend —] but you pay *to eat* in it. [It's money. It's all money.] — Wesker 36,10

In ex. 9 it is the leading part that conveys information familiar from the previous context.

9. We're gathered here ... *to discuss* phase one of the operation. — Forbes 21,06

There are two other cases of the same type in my material from fiction prose (they differ only in that the leading part conveys information familiar from the verbal, not from the situational context as in ex. 9).

In each of the three cases of this type, the infinitive part is carrying a higher degree of CD than the leading part. This means that the total number of sentences in which the final infinitive of purpose carries a higher degree of CD than the leading part (irrespective of whether the latter has been communicatively weakened or not) amounts to 145 out of the total number of 149.

Continuing the examination of the material drawn from fiction prose, we shall now concentrate on sentences containing an initial infinitive of purpose. As can be seen from the above table, 10 sentences come under this heading. Leaving aside 2 of them which are of a special type and are to be discussed later (together with cases of the same type found in educational prose), we find that the remaining 8 sentences yield three types.

10. [It was only after we were married that I discovered that it wasn't relaxation at all.] *In order to relax*, you've first got to sweat your guts out. — Osborne 95,04

11. ["It's quite true, you can't live without cash," said Mary. You've got to have a certain amount of it to be able to live and get along...] *even to be free to think* you must have a certain amount of money, [or your stomach stops you]. — Lawrence 31,19

12. [I could not get either George or Harris to see the matter in its proper light, however;] so, *to save* argument, I took the sculls. — Jerome 164,02

As to the degrees of CD carried by the infinitive parts in the three types, the following can be observed.

In 10 and 11 one of the two parts under consideration (the infinitive and the leading part) is entirely affected by the context.¹² The non-affected part will carry a higher degree of CD. In 12, however, neither of the two parts is affected by the context. An examination of the examples of this type shows that the leading part, which follows the infinitive, always carries a higher degree of CD. It evidently contributes more to the further development of the information. As this type is of considerable importance for our discussion, let us quote the remaining five examples.

13. [The stationmaster, on the other hand, was convinced it would start from the local.] *To put* an end to the matter, we went upstairs, ... — Jerome 48,16

14. [The run would have been more delightful still, if it had not been for a lot of wretched small boats that were continually getting in the way of our launch,] and, *to avoid* running down which, we had to be continually easing and stopping. — Jerome 163,14
15. [I knew that,] *to protect* her innocent young, she wouldn't hesitate to cheat, lie, bully and blackmail. — Osborne 52,04
16. As if *to prove* the point the work in the kitchen is heard extra loud. — Wesker 54,22
17. *To be successful*, an army has to be mobile... — Forbes 14,23

The type represented by exx. 12, and 13—17 invites comparison with the type represented by exx. 3, 4, 5 and 6. The comparison shows that provided both the leading and the infinitive part have not become entirely affected by the context, the part that occurs nearer to the end of the sentence carries a higher degree of CD. It follows that it is the basic distribution of CD that in such cases determines the degree of CD carried by the infinitive and the leading part.

Having discussed the material drawn from fiction prose, let us now turn our attention to that drawn from EDUCATIONAL PROSE.

Even here, the final infinitive part carrying a higher degree of CD than the leading part is the most frequent phenomenon. Out of the total number of 105 final infinitives occurring in educational prose, this applies to 98 cases: in 97 cases, both the leading and the infinitive part convey some information unknown from the context (exx. 18, 19 and 20 are illustrative of this type), in 1 case the leading part conveys known, the infinitive part unknown information (cf. ex. 21).

18. Most students seem willing to endure the drill sessions *in order to achieve* long-range gain. — Carroll 181,11
19. A man may and should revise his speech-habits *in order to keep* pace with life and custom. — Potter 77,16
20. ...; we shall give several instances at the end of the section *to impress* the fact. — Fowlers 254,23
21. [One may suggest an analogy in the goods and equipment of a store. On the one hand we have the articles for sale — dresses, hats, fur-coats; and on the other hand price-tickets, stands, coat-hangers, and measuring-tapes,] which are used *to handle* the goods [in which the shop deals]. — Quirk 75,23

Exx. 18, 19 and 20 are of the same type as exx. 3, 4, 5 and 6 (quoted from fiction prose), ex. 21 is the same type as ex. 9.

A special case is ex. 22. In it neither the leading nor the infinitive part is entirely affected by the context, and yet the final infinitive part is less dynamic than the leading part.

22. It is to an important series of historical events that we must look *in order to understand* the development of English, [and...] — Quirk 7,10

This is due to the *It is ... that* construction which brings into special prominence the leading part, inducing it to carry the highest degree(s) of CD within the sentence and in this way operating counter to the basic distribution of CD. As is well known, the *It is ... that* construction is an important semantic means of FSP.¹³

The initial infinitive of purpose is much more frequent in educational than in fiction prose (cf. the table on p. 124). How is this fact to be accounted for?

Let me first adduce some typical examples of the initial infinitive in educational prose.

23. *To complete* the list of specialties most closely associated with linguistics we must mention philology. — Carroll 3,03
24. *To neutralize* the subordinating effect of *as*, and *secure* the proper accentuation, we must place the clause at the beginning; ... — Fowlers 307,33
25. *To illustrate* his skill, we may cite a single instance [for which we happen to have his source]. — Quirk 248,14

Unlike fiction prose, educational prose usually does not 'conceal' its author (the subjects of all the above sentences refer to the author himself or to him and his readers). This is because a work of educational character mostly presents results of the author's research and his own view of the given problems. To make his ideas and conclusions clear to the reader, the author often explains why in his research or in his account of it a particular kind of procedure has been followed. That is why he uses the infinitives of verbs such as: *to illustrate, to complete, to return to, to summarize, to implement, to explain, to make sg. concrete* etc. In such sentences the infinitive itself is usually new, not affected by the context, while the other elements of the infinitive part mostly convey information known from the preceding context. (This applies to the following elements of exx. 23, 24 and 25: *the list, the subordinating effect of as, accentuation, his skill*). By placing an infinitive part of this type at the beginning of the sentence, the author joins two sentences together, lowers the degree of CD of the infinitive part and consequently raises the CD of the leading part. He does so because the information conveyed by the leading part is usually communicatively more important than the mere 'procedural' information conveyed by the infinitive part.

In all of the 42 sentences with an initial infinitive part occurring in my material drawn from educational prose, the infinitive part carries a lower degree of CD than its respective leading part. It follows that educational prose does not differ from fiction prose in the amount of CD carried by the initial infinitives. It differs from it, however, in their frequency.

Another point of difference between fiction and educational prose consists in the latter showing a higher frequency of two special types of infinitive of purpose the discussion of which has so far been deferred.

Here are some illustrative examples of the first type:

26. *To give* one more example from this novel — Sigmund has hardly settled down in the cottage [... before Helena points out the volume of Nietzsche...] — Beal 14,02
27. *To sum up*, then, English has a very definite and complex grammar with some variation... — Quirk 113,04
28. *To put* the matter in common-sense terms, the linguist is not interested in what an individual is talking about... — Carroll 12,24

In this type, in contrast to all the types we have so far discussed, the unexpressed subject of the infinitive is not the same as that of the finite verb. The subject of the infinitive is practically the author himself, the leading part of the infinitive in fact remaining unexpressed. Thus all the examples given above could be amplified by some such phrase as *I/we may say that*, coming after the infinitive of purpose. So 'amplified', ex. 27, e.g., would run as follows:

Type of Infinitive	Infinitive Part		Leading Part		Fiction Prose		Educational Prose			
	of a Sentence				number of cases	CD	number of cases	CD		
	sentence position	contextual dependence		sentence position	contextual dependence	number of cases	CD	number of cases	CD	
		of the whole inf. part	of the inf. itself							
ordinary (i.e. non-absolute) infinitive of purpose	initial			following the infinitive part		6	~ =	29	~ =	
							0	/	3	~ =
							1	~ =	2	~ =
							0	/	0	/
	medial			surrounding the infinitive part		0	/	2	~ =	
							0	/	0	/
							0	/	0	/
							0	/	0	/
	final			preceding the infinitive part		141	- ≈	97	- ≈*	
							1	- ≈	1	- ≈
							4	= ~	0	/
							3	- ≈	1	- ≈
absolute infinitive of purpose	initial					2	~ =	8	~ =	
	medial					2	- ≈ =	4	- ≈ =	
	final					0	/	6	= ~	

* except ex. 22 (see p. 122)

entirely contextually independent

partly contextually dependent, partly independent

entirely contextually dependent (= entirely 'dedynamized')

not entirely 'dedynamized'

~ infinitive part

- leading part

≈ infinitive part carrying a higher degree of CD than the leading part

= leading part carrying a higher degree of CD than the infinitive part

To sum up, then, we may say that English has a very definite and complex grammar with some variation ...

Viewed in this light, the infinitive of purpose is only an additional explanation, remark, offered by the author, and in a way interrupting the normal flow of his account or narration. It often resembles the 'procedure' infinitive, but does not function in the sentence in the same way (if only because of its subject being different from that of the leading part). After R. KARLSEN I shall refer to this type as the 'absolute infinitive of purpose'.¹⁴

As the following examples show, the absolute infinitive occurs not only initially, but also medially and finally.

29. [The users of these two varieties,] who, *to judge* from the title at the head of their articles, are one and the same person, ... — Fowlers 38,18

30. [It is implied here] that among these forces is one compelling a certain measure of stability — a steady state, *to use* the chemist's phrase. — Carroll 154,23

As further examination shows, it is not only in regard to grammatical structure, but also in regard to FSP that the absolute infinitive of purpose constitutes a special type. This is borne out by the fact that in spite of its conveying new information and occurring in end-position, the absolute infinitive does not carry a higher degree of CD than the leading part. In this respect it markedly differs from all the other infinitives of purpose. Its semantic character, that of an additional explanatory remark interrupting the normal flow of the account or narration, is to be regarded as a semantic means of FSP capable of acting counter to the basic distribution of FSP. Irrespective of position, the absolute infinitive of purpose carries a low degree of CD. All the instances of this kind of infinitive occurring in my material have been interpreted as thematic.

There have occurred only 4 cases of the absolute infinitive in my material drawn from fiction prose, while in that drawn from educational prose I have found 18 of them. It follows that the absolute infinitive constitutes 2.5 per cent of the total number of the infinitives of purpose in my material drawn from fiction prose, but as much as 11.8 per cent in that drawn from educational prose.

As has been mentioned above, besides the absolute infinitive of purpose there is another type that shows a markedly high frequency in educational prose (24 cases against 3 in fiction prose). Ex. 31 may be adduced in illustration of this type.

31. Steps should be taken *to organize* a program for the collection of data on a large number of languages and dialects ... — Carroll 228,16

In regard to grammatical structure, the finite verb occurs in the passive, the infinitive having an unexpressed indefinite subject of its own.¹⁵

In regard to FSP, the infinitive type under discussion behaves as the other non-absolute infinitives of purpose. In the statistical table presented on p. 124 it has therefore not been treated under a separate heading.

Before closing the present paper, let us examine how the context affects the components of the infinitive part. For convenience' sake, it has been stated in note⁸ that the leading, as well as the infinitive, part is interpreted as conveying new information as long as at least one of its components does so. It is worth noticing, however, that in the infinitive part the new information

is mostly conveyed by the infinitive itself. Out of the total number of 285 non-absolute infinitive parts that convey at least some new information,¹⁶ the infinitive is contextually affected only in 7 cases. If we add to them the 7 infinitives from the entirely affected infinitive parts, we find that though there are altogether 292 non-absolute infinitives of purpose in my material drawn both from fiction and educational prose, only 14 appear as affected by the context.

The functions of the infinitive of purpose on the level of FSP as revealed by the undertaken examination may be statistically tabulated as follows:

The absolute infinitive of purpose is comparable to adverbs of place and time, which very often function as mere local and temporal settings to actions and therefore do not carry the highest degree of CD even when situated at the end of the sentence. On the other hand, the non-absolute infinitive of purpose functions on the level of FSP in the same way as the adverb of cause: its degree of CD is determined by the position in the sentence (provided, of course, that the basic distribution of CD is not acted counter to by context).¹⁷

It follows that within the sphere of the non-absolute infinitive of purpose, FSP is not limited in its function as a word-order factor. This is undoubtedly facilitated by the fact that the English infinitive differs in form from other sentence elements. When expressing purpose, it need not therefore be fixed in one position, but as a rule either follows or precedes its leading part according to the requirements of FSP.

NOTES

¹ For a definition of this and other terms of the theory of functional sentence perspective (= FSP), see J. FIRBAS, *Non-Thematic Subjects*, pp. 239–256. See also his study in the present volume, pp. 11–48.

² The following works have been used:

i 1. ANTHONY BEAL, *D. H. Lawrence*, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh and London 1964. (The book could as well be classed with educational prose; its style, however, makes it preferable to class it with non-dramatic fiction.) 2. A. J. CRONIN, *The Citadel*, Victor Gollancz Ltd., London 1937. 3. JEROME K. JEROME, *Three Men in a Boat*, Arrowsmith, Bristol 1946. 4. D. H. LAWRENCE, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, The Harborough Publishing Co., London 1960.

ii 1. BRYAN FORBES, *The League of Gentlemen*, a private tape-recording of a recent screenplay. 2. DORIS LESSING, *Each His Own Wilderness*, New English Dramatists 1, Penguin Books, Middlesex 1960. 3. JOHN OSBORNE, *Look Back in Anger*, Faber and Faber, London (year of publication not stated). 4. ARNOLD WESKER, *The Kitchen*, New English Dramatists 2, Penguin Books, Middlesex 1960.

iii 1. JOHN B. CARROLL, *The Study of Language*, Harvard University Press 1955. 2. H. W. FOWLER and F. G. FOWLER, *The King's English*, Third Edition, Oxford University Press 1962. 3. SIMEON POTTER, *Our Language*, Pelican Books, Middlesex 1950. 4. RANDOLPH QUIRK, *The Use of English*, Longmans, London 1962.

The listed works are referred to by the surnames of their authors.

³ Sentences occurring in quotations have been excluded from my examination.

⁴ The numbers indicate page and line where the example begins. The italics in the quoted examples are mine except in ex. 11 (*think*), in ex. 24 (*as*) and in ex. 8 (*lighting cigarette and rubs thumb and finger together*).

⁵ The number of medial infinitives of purpose is negligible. If they are the so-called absolute infinitives, they are dealt with on pp. 123–125; otherwise they have only been registered in the statistical tables.

⁶ I have not taken into account infinitives of purpose that cannot have another position but final. Here belongs especially the so-called 'improper infinitive of purpose' (which,

according to R. KARLSEN, indicates 'appointment or destination'; see his *Notion of Purpose*, p. 27.) E.g.:

A few seconds later Michael comes in
and sets out his business, *to be followed*
by Hans who escorts Kevin. — Wesker 24,09

Nor have I taken into account infinitives dependent upon indefinite verbal forms (e.g.: *Before giving some examples to help in the decision*, ...) and infinitives that together with the leading verbs constitute set phrases whose word order never changes (e.g.: *to do one's best to ...*, *to go on to say*, *to set oneself out to ...* etc.). The infinitive of purpose after a verb of motion has been considered in my paper only when expanded by another expression.

- 7 Another difference between educational and commonly intelligible prose has been observed in regard to German by W. FLÄMING. In his study *Finalsatz im Deutschen*, he points out that the prevalence of infinitives of purpose over clauses of purpose is much higher in educational than in commonly intelligible prose. The differentiation of linguistic means according to the various tasks language is to fulfil has been dealt with at length by B. HAVRÁNEK in his *Spisovný jazyk*, pp. 11—76. What HAVRÁNEK calls 'functional languages' (p. 49) invites comparison with the 'registers' of P. D. STREVEN'S (see his *Varieties*).
- 8 Strictly speaking, not all the elements of the leading part convey new information. The element *the car* is well known from the immediately preceding context. For the purposes of my analysis, I shall interpret the leading as well as the infinitive part of the sentence as conveying new information as long as at least one of the components does so.
- 9 Here I differ from E. KRUISINGA and P. A. ERADES, who commenting on the sentence type *he sat at the gibbet's foot to rest* never consider, in regard to meaning, the infinitive part more important than the leading part. (See their *English Grammar*, Groningen 1950, Volume I, Second Part, pp. 280 and 285.)
- 10 See Note 1 and also J. FIRBAS's study in the present volume, pp. 13—14.
- 11 Strictly speaking, 'dedynamization' by context may also be displayed by the leading or infinitive parts of the 142 sentences mentioned above. Only, as follows from Note 8, such 'dedynamization' is merely partial, not affecting the entire leading or infinitive part concerned. The expression 'dedynamized' is here synonymous with the expressions 'contextually affected' or 'contextually dependent'.
- 12 To be quite exact, the very notion of purpose, expressed by *to* or *in order to*, is always new, i.e. unaffected by the context. This fact unvariably concerns all the 314 sentences examined, i.e. even those whose infinitive parts are referred to as 'entirely affected by the context'.
- 13 See J. FIRBAS's study *Yesterday*.
- 14 See his *Notion of Purpose*, p. 27.
- 15 In op. cit., p. 25, R. KARLSEN, discussing this type of infinitive, uses the term 'unattached infinitive'.
- 16 This wording covers 215 cases that are not affected by the context at all and 70 cases that are partly affected; it excludes 7 cases that are entirely affected.
- 17 On adverbs from the FSP point of view, see my *Situational Adverbs*. (The adverb of cause is dealt with there on pp. 136—137.)

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SOUHRN

ANGLICKÝ ÚČELOVÝ INFINITIV Z HLEDISKA FUNKČNÍ PERSPEKTIVY VĚTNÉ

Ve svém článku navazuje autorka na práce V. MATHESIA a J. FIRBASE o funkční perspektivě větné. Všímá si z hlediska teorie jimi vypracované anglických účelových infinitivů a zkoumá vztah jejich větného postavení ke stupni jejich výpovědní dynamičnosti. Materiál k výzkumu čerpá jednak z prózy beletristické (románové i dramatické), jednak z prózy naučné. Zjišťuje, že v naučné hojněji než v beletristické próze se vyskytuje účelový infinitiv na začátku věty a že v naučné próze se také častěji objevuje tzv. infinitiv absolutní. (Jde o infinitiv, který je vlastně jen jakousi autorskou vsuvkou a jehož podmět se neshoduje s podmětem řídicí části věty, např.: *To sum up, then, English has a very definite and complex grammar...*).

O podstatných rysech účelového infinitivu platí v beletristické i naučné próze totéž: Stupeň výpovědní dynamičnosti neabsolutního účelového infinitivu (vlastně celé infinitivní části věty) závisí od značné míry na základním rozložení výpovědní dynamičnosti, podle něhož se výpovědní dynamičnost větných složek stupňuje od začátku věty směrem k jejímu konci. V soulase s touto tendencí se počáteční infinitivní část neabsolutního typu — pokud není řídicí část věty zezákladněna kontextem — jeví jako výpovědně méně dynamická než řídicí část a působí jako složka základová. Koncová infinitivní část pak — pokud není sama zezákladněna kontextem — je výpovědně dynamičtější než řídicí část a působí jako složka jádrová.

Jinak se chová infinitiv absolutní: bez ohledu na své větné postavení se vždy jeví jako základové. Rozhodujícím prostředkem funkční perspektivy větné se u něho stala jeho základní sémantická náplň, vyjadřující doplňkové vysvětlující sdělení, a tak snižující jeho důležitost ve větě. Statistika autorčina výzkumu ukázala, že absolutní infinitiv stává častěji na začátku věty než na jejím konci, kdežto typické postavení účelové infinitivní části s neabsolutním infinitivem je postavení koncové.

Jsou-li v infinitivní části některé složky oddynamičtěny kontextem, sám infinitiv bývá kontextem zasažen jen velmi zřídka (neabsolutní infinitiv např. jen v necelých 5 % případech).