

Infinitives in the History of English*

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Sohng, Hong-Ki & Moon, Seung-Chul. 2007. Infinitives in the History of English. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 15(3), 285-308. This paper aims to explore the use and properties of bare infinitive and *to*-infinitives in Old, Middle, and Modern English. It is found that the use of the two types of infinitives in VOSI constructions receive a natural account under the proposed Implicative Condition. It is suggested that, in general, *to*-infinitival complements are preferred over bare infinitival complements in a variety of constructions in the history of English, except for the VOSI constructions. We have noted that, in addition to the nominal function, the *to*-infinitive has performed adjectival and adverbial functions in a variety of constructions in English. This paper then provides a unified account of the use of the two types of infinitives in VOSI, impersonal, and other constructions in the history of English in terms of a set of universal, hierarchical constraints.

Key Words: history of English, Old English, Middle English, Modern English, bare infinitives, *to*-infinitives, VOSI, impersonal constructions, constraints, Implicative Condition

1. Introduction

The use and properties of infinitives have been one of the most interesting research topics for scholars in the history of English. This paper is a study on the use of infinitives, especially in two distinctive constructions, in the history of English.

Like Modern English, Old and Middle English had two forms of

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- b. I *beleue* euerlasting liif to be or to come
 I believe everlasting life to be or to come
 'I *believe* everlasting life to exist or to come into existence'
 (c1445 Pecoock, *The Donet* 104, 7) (ME)
- (3) a. She can go.
 b. They wants to go there.
- (4) a. I let them do homework.
 b. I believe them to be honest.

In the Old English examples (1) and Modern English examples (3), the bare infinitives or *to*-infinitives immediately follow the auxiliary verbs or regular main verbs. On the other hand, in the Old English example (2a), the Middle English example (2b), and the Modern English example (4), the infinitives immediately follow the verbal objects, which function as the subjects of the infinitives. The sentence patterns in (2) and (4) are thus called as VOSI constructions, in which the verbal objects constitute the subjects of the infinitives. We note that the use of the types of the infinitives is determined by the subcategorization properties of the main verbs in the above sentences.

In Old English, there were constructions in which the two types of infinitives seemed to be used almost interchangeably with hardly any distinction in meaning. VOSI and impersonal constructions were two such constructions which exhibited the occurrences of both bare infinitives and *to*-infinitives. This section will discuss in detail VOSI constructions in Old, Middle, and Modern English.

Some more examples of VOSI constructions are given below.

- (5) a. *gehyrde myccle menigo him beforan feran* (BIHom 15.14)
 heard great multitude him before go
 '(He) heard a great multitude go in front of him'
- b. *Se ælmihtiga god geðafað þam arleasan antecriste*(DAT)
 The almighty God *allows* the evil Antichrist
 to *wyrçenne*(INF) *tacna* and *wundra*
 to work wonders and miracles
 'The almighty God allows the evil Antichrist to perform
 wonders and miracles' (*ÆCHom* I (Pref) 4.29)

- c. And treowa(ACC) he *deð* færlíce blowan(INF)
 And trees he *causes* suddenly bloom
 'and he causes the trees to bloom suddenly'
 (*HomU* 34 (Nap. 42) 109)
- (6) a. Y saugh him *carien* a wynd-mill... (*HF* 1280 in Chaucer)
 You saw him carry a wind-mill...
 'You saw him carry a wind-mill.'
- b. the schippe men *supposiden* summe cuntre to apere to hem
 the sailors supposed some country to appear to them
 'the sailors *supposed* some country to appear to them'
 (Wyclif, Acts 27, 27 in (Gelderen (1989: 21ff.)))
- (7) a. She made them leave.
 b. She told them to leave.

Once again, the examples from Old English (5), Middle English (6), and Modern English (7) attest to the occurrences of both bare infinitives and *to*-infinitives in the VOSI constructions.

Several previous studies (Visser (1963-73:§177), Molencki (1991: 133), Kegeyama (1992), etc.) argue that bare infinitives are isomorphic with *to*-infinitives, with no difference in meaning, in VOSI constructions. Visser (1963-73:§177) claims that there was no meaningful difference between bare infinitives and *to*-infinitives in Old English.

to ... which already in the earliest examples is void of the original meaning of direction or purpose, and is nothing but a meaningless infinitival proclitic.

Kageyama (1992:91) also notes that the two types of infinitives were isomorphic with each other, with no distinction in implications, in Old English, even though infinitival *-to* in Modern English involves an unrealized futuristic meaning.

such a meaning does not particularly characterize OE *to*-infinitives as differentiated from bare infinitives, because both types of infinitives may be used almost interchangeably in verb complementation with control structures.

functional category CP. And we note that the head of the functional category T in the complement clause in (9b) is filled by the infinitival marker *to* in contrast to the head in (9c). Thus, under the principle in (8), it is expected that the semantic bond between the matrix verb and its complement is strongest in (9c), which has the fewer nodes between the matrix verb and its clausal complement than in (9a–b), and that the semantic bond is stronger in (9b) than in (9a). As the conditional phrase *if you look in the files* implies the subject's indirect involvement with finding the fact that she is Mexican, (9a) sounds perfect, whose matrix verb has a more distant semantic relationship with its complement. Along the same line of reasoning, (9c), in which the semantic bond between the verb and its complement is tightest, is ill-formed, and (9b) is judged grammatical, but a little marginal.

Under Haiman's iconicity principle or the principle (8), it is also expected that the semantic bond between the verb and its complement becomes tighter in the order of (10c), (10b), and (10a). In (10), the phrase *from what Sue told me about her meeting with Fred* indicates that the subject *I* is indirectly perceiving his growing rather hostile. In that kind of context, the matrix verb *feel* is most compatible with the finite CP complement, as in (10a), and is also compatible with the *to*-infinitive clause, as in (10b). However, it is not compatible with the participial clause, as in (10c).

Let us consider again VOSI constructions in English, repeated here as (11–13).

- (11) a. *gehyrde myccle menigo him beforan feran* (BIHom 15.14)
 heard great multitude him before go
 '(He) heard a great multitude go in front of him'
- b. *Se ælmihtiga god geðafað þam arleasan antecriste*(DAT)
 The almighty God allows the evil Antichrist
 to wyrçenne(INF) tacna and wundra
 to work wonders and miracles
 'The almighty God allows the evil Antichrist to perform
 wonders and miracles' (ÆCHom I (Pref) 4.29)

- (12) a. Y saugh him *carien* a wynd-mill... (*HF* 1280 in Chaucer)
 You saw him carry a wind-mill...
 'You saw him carry a wind-mill.'
 b. the schippe men *supposiden* summe cuntre to apere to hem
 the sailors supposed some country to appear to them
 'the sailors *supposed* some country to appear to them'
 (Wyclif, Acts 27, 27 in (Gelderen (1989: 21ff.)))
- (13) a. She made them leave.
 b. She told them to leave.

As the terms "semantic relationship" and "semantic/cognitive distance" have rather broad implications, we will narrow them down to an implicativity relationship or condition that holds for VOSI constructions in English. Consider first the examples (13a-b). The matrix verb in (13a) is an implicative verb in the sense of Karttunen (1971a, 1971b). Thus, if the matrix clause in (13a) is true, it follows that the embedded clause is also true, and we can say that "they left" is true in that context. This relationship does not hold for (13b). Even if the matrix clause in (13b) is true, we are not sure about the truth value of the embedded clause in (13b). As can be verified in the Old English examples (11), the Middle English examples (12) and the Modern English examples (13), the shorter linguistic distance there is between the matrix verb and its clausal complement, the stronger implicativity relationship the two are in.

Adapting Haiman's and Hwang's insightful proposals, we advance the following Implicative Condition for VOSI constructions in English,

(14) Implicative Condition in VOSI Constructions in English

The more silent morphology of a functional head there is in the clausal complement, the stronger implicative relationship exists between the matrix verb and its clausal complement in VOSI constructions.

Consider the internal structures of the Old English examples (11a-b) and the Middle English examples (12a-b) and the Modern English

examples (13a-b) below, repeated as (15-17).¹⁾²⁾

- (15) a. *gehyrde* [_{TP} *myccle menigo him beforan feran*] (BIHom 15.14)
 heard great multitude him before go
 '(He) heard a great multitude go in front of him'
- b. *Se ælmihtiga god geðafað þam arleasan antecriste*(DAT)
 The almighty God *allows* the evil Antichrist
 [_{CP} *to wyrceenne*(INF) *tacna and wundra*]
 to work wonders and miracles
 'The almighty God allows the evil Antichrist to perform
 wonders and miracles'
- (16) a. *Y saugh* [_{TP} *him carien a wynd-mill...*] (*HF* 1280 in Chaucer)
 You saw him carry a wind-mill...
 'You saw him carry a wind-mill.'
- b. *the schippe men supposiden summe cuntre* [_{CP} *to apere to hem*]
 the sailors supposed some country to appear to them
 'the sailors *supposed* some country to appear to them'
- (17) a. She made them leave.
 b. She told them to leave.

Under the implicative condition in (14), the matrix verbs and their clausal complements in (15a, 16a, 17a) are in strong implicative relationship, as there is an infinitive particle with a null spellout in the complement clauses.³⁾ If the matrix clauses in (15a, 16a, 17a) are true,

1) Under the studies by Lightfoot (1974, 1997), Canale (1978), Traugott (1965), etc., the base word order of Old English was SOV. The surface main clause SVO order was assumed to be driven by such movements as Topic movement and V-to-C movement. It was also assumed that the base word order of Old English remained unchanged in the subordinate clause in Old English. This is why the embedded verb *feran* 'go' appeared clause-finally in (15a).

2) Aarts (1992:189) considers the embedded clauses of the type that appears in 'they saw [_{sc} her laugh]' as verbal small clauses.

3) Radford (2004: 121-124) argues that all infinitive clauses are TPs headed by an infinitival T which is overtly spelled out as *to* in infinitive clauses like those bracketed in (i), but which has a null spellout in infinitive clauses like those bracketed in (ii).

- (i) a. I expect [him *to* win]
 b. I believe [him *to* be innocent]

it follows that the embedded clauses are also true.⁴⁾ For example, in (15a), it was true that a great multitude went in front of him, if he heard a great multitude go in front of him. In contrast, the matrix verbs in (15b, 16b, 17b) are in little or no implicative relationship with their clausal complements, as there is more overt morphology of a functional head in the clausal complements. Even if the matrix clauses in (15b, 16b, 17b) are true, we are not sure about the truth values of the embedded clauses. To take (16b) for an example, even if the sailors supposed some country to appear to them, we are not sure whether

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- (ii) a. A reporter saw [Senator Sleaze *leave* Benny's Bunny Bar]
 b. You mustn't let [the pressure *get* to you]

Under this compelling approach, the infinitive particle *to* is inserted from Lexical Array into the syntactic representation for a sentence like (iia), and the structure undergoes syntactic computations. After that, the structure is handed over to LF, where the other lexical items receive an interpretation, except for the particle *to*, which is marked as contentless. The structure then passes on to PF, where the marked particle *to* is null spelled out and unpronounced.

4) It is interesting to note the difference between the Old English example (5c), repeated here as (i) and the Modern English example (ii).

- (i) And treowa(ACC) he deð færlice blowan(INF)
 And trees he causes suddenly bloom
 'and he causes the trees to bloom suddenly' (HomU 34 (Nap. 42) 109)
- (ii) a. He caused them to leave.
 b. He forced Mary to leave.
- (iii) He made them leave.

The implicative relationship holds between the matrix verb *deð* and its clausal complement in (i), as it is true that the trees bloom suddenly, if it is true that he causes the trees to bloom suddenly. Thus, the Implicative Condition (14) holds for (i) with the phonetically silent infinitive particle. In contrast, the Implicative Condition does not hold for the present-day VOSI construction (ii) with the phonetically realized *to*. We assume that another version of Haiman's iconicity principle might apply to (ii), which states that the linguistic distance between expressions corresponds to the temporal distance between them. The difference between (ii) and (iii) with regard to the temporal distance is explained under this new version of the iconicity principle, which is assumed to hold in Modern English, not in Old English. We could come up with a Temporal Condition which ranks highest in Modern English, for this matter. We, however, will leave this subject for our next research.

some country really appeared to them.

We will pursue an Optimality Theoretic account of the use of VOSI constructions in the history of English in Section 4.

3. Infinitives in Impersonal Constructions and Other Constructions in the History of English⁵⁾

Old English had impersonal constructions, the type of constructions in which bare infinitives and *to*-infinitives seemed to be used almost interchangeably with hardly any distinction in meaning at all. The impersonal constructions were widely used in Old English, but decreased over time in Middle English and completely disappeared at the threshold of Modern English, around 16 C. The impersonal construction is one where there is no Nominative Case, the verb always takes the third person singular form, and an animate Experiencer noun or pronoun in the Dative or Accusative, if there is one, tends to occur before the verb.

An example of an impersonal construction from Old English is provided below.

- (18) He sǣgde þæt hine hingrede
 he said that him(ACC) hungered
 'He said that he was hungry' (C: HomU 1(Belf 10) 32)

In (18) above, the verb *hyngrian* 'hunger' is a one-place predicate, and the Experiencer argument is in the Accusative, not in the Nominative.

The following is an example of an impersonal verb which functions as a two-place predicate.

- (19) him ofhreow þæs mannes
 him(DAT) rued the man(GEN)
 'He was sorry for the man' (BT)

5) Other constructions refer to the sentences besides VOSI and impersonal constructions that have the infinitival complements.

In (19), the Experiencer argument is in the Dative, and the Cause argument is in the Genitive.

Consider the impersonal constructions with the infinitival complements below.

- (20) Us sceamað to secgenne ealle ða
 us(DAT/ACC) shames to say all the
 sceandlican wiglunga
 disgraceful witchcraft
 'We are ashamed to say all the disgraceful witchcraft'
 (LS(Auguries) 100)
- (21) him lyst gehyran þa halgan lare
 him(DAT) wish to-hear the holy teaching
 'He wishes to hear the holy doctrine'
 (ÆLet2(Wulfstan 1) 5)

As is shown above, the impersonal construction (20) has a *to*-infinitival complement, while (21) has a bare infinitival complement.

With regard to the two types of infinitives occurring in the impersonal constructions, Mitchell(1985:429) argues:

A study of Wahlen's examples with the infinitive (pp. 113-26) will show that, while some verbs, e.g. *onhagian* (pp. 113 and 121), prefer the inflected infinitive, others, e.g. *gelystan* (p. 116), prefer the simple form. There seems no point in attempting to lay down rules.

Based on Elmer (1981), Wahlen (1925), and Kim (1996), Kim (2001) investigated into the use of such impersonal verbs as *onhagian* 'feel inclined; attract', (*ge-*)*lician* 'like; please', *gelustfullian* 'be pleased; please', (*ge-*)*lystan* 'desire; please', *sceamian* 'be ashamed; shame', and found that, out of the impersonal verbs under consideration, (*ge-*)*lystan* took bare infinitives in most cases, while the rest of them showed a strong tendency to take *to*-infinitives. Kim(2001:78-81) thus argues that there must be functional differences between bare infinitives and *to*-infinitives in Old English impersonal constructions. She goes on to claim that bare infinitives tended to have a strong verbal (predicative)

function, whereas *to*-infinitives tended to have a strong nominal function. She provides the following supporting arguments for the nominal function of *to*-infinitives. First, the *to*-infinitive with the *-enne* ending was classified as a gerund in some traditional grammar books on Old English (e.g. Moore, Knott, & Hulbert 1977). Second, the impersonal verbs that had taken the *to*-infinitives in Old English all occurred with the pleonastic *it* in Middle English if they survived into the Middle English period, as shown below.

- (22) Syth hit lyke you to take so symple an offyce
 since it pleases you to take so simple an office
 ‘since it pleases you to take so simple an office’
 (OED: 15c. Malory Wks. 361/18)

It thus follows that the *to*-infinitive in the impersonal construction performed a nominal role, functioning as the subject of the sentence, which the bare infinitive cannot.

However, we note that, in addition to the nominal function, the *to*-infinitive has performed adjectival and adverbial functions in a variety of constructions in the history of English. The *to*-infinitive in the impersonal constructions (20) and (22) does function as a noun, performing the subjecthood of the sentence.⁶⁾

Consider the following sentences from Old to Modern English, with the *to*-infinitives performing adjectival or adverbial functions.

- (23) Fela ic hæbbe eow to secganne
 ‘I have many things to tell you.’ (CP 237.12)
- (24) a. and he wæs gearo ungeladod to siðigenne lichamlice
 and he was ready uninvited to journey bodily
 mid þam hundredes ealdre.
 with the hundred’s elder
 ‘and he was ready, uninvited, to go bodily with the

6) Another word-for-word interpretation of the construction (20) is “to say all the disgraceful witchcraft shames us”, in which the infinitive functioned as the subject.

- centurion.’ (ÆCHom I. 128)
- b. heo for oft bið swiðe unwynsum on to eardigenne
 she too often is very unpleasant in to dwell
 ‘it[the sea] is too often very unpleasant to inhabit’
 (ÆCHom I. 184)
- (25) when we er strengthfull to stande agaynes þe pryue
 when we are strong to stand against the secret
 ‘when we are strong (enough) to stand against the secret’
 (Butler: FL 9.3 (LME))
- (26) a. They were ready to go.
 b. Seattle is pleasant to inhabit.

The pattern in (23), in which the *to*-infinitive followed the noun as a modifier and performed an adjectival function, was widely used in Old English (Callaway 1913:181). In addition, we see that the *to*-infinitives in (24) from Old English, (25) from Late Middle English, and (26) from present-day English all modify the preceding adjectives and perform an adverbial function.

We will provide an Optimality Theoretic account of the use of the infinitives in impersonal and other constructions in the history of English in Section 5.

4. An Account of the Use of the Infinitives in VOSI Constructions in the History of English

In Section 2, we have advanced an implicative condition for VOSI constructions in English to handle the two kinds of infinitives in VOSI sentences, repeated below along with the examples.

- (27) Implicative Condition in VOSI Constructions in English

The more silent morphology of a functional head there is in the clausal complement, the stronger implicative relationship exists between the matrix verb and its clausal complement in VOSI constructions.

- (28) a. gehyrde [_{TP} myccle menigo him beforan feran] (BIHom 15.14)
 heard great multitude him before go
 '(He) heard a great multitude go in front of him'
- b. Se ælmihtiga god geðafað þam arleasan antecriste(DAT)
 The almighty God *allows* the evil Antichrist
 [_{CP} to wyrçenne(INF) tacna and wundra]
 to work wonders and miracles
 'The almighty God allows the evil Antichrist to perform
 wonders and miracles'
- (29) a. Y saugh [_{TP} him carien a wynd-mill...] (*HF* 1280 in Chaucer)
 You saw him carry a wind-mill...
 'You saw him carry a wind-mill.'
- b. the schippe men supposiden summe cuntre [_{CP} to apere to hem]
 the sailors supposed some country to appear to them
 'the sailors *supposed* some country to appear to them'
- (30) a. She made them leave.
 b. She told them to leave.

We have seen that, under the Implicative Condition in (27), the matrix verbs and their clausal complements in (28a, 29a, 30a) should be in strong implicative relationship, as there is a null infinitive particle in the complement clauses. These sentences are in accordance with the Implicative Condition (27), as the implicative relationship holds for the event expressed by the matrix verb and the event denoted by the complement clause.

This section develops an Optimality-theoretic account of the use of the infinitives in English VOSI constructions in terms of a set of hierarchical constraints that are taken to be inherent in English speakers' language faculty. For the purpose of an account of the optionality of the infinitival particle *to*, we need to motivate an economy principle which will be necessary to explain the phonetic silence of the particle. We will refer to them as ECONOMY, whose definition is given in (31). It is also necessary to motivate a principle which filters out VOSI sentences that do not observe the Implicative Condition in (27). We will refer to it as SATISFY_{ImplicativeCondition(VOSI)}. We need to motivate one more constraint FAITHFULNESS, which functions in PF, but still

works as a PF-LF interface constraint.⁷⁾ Thus the three constraints motivated so far can be summarized as follows:

(31) Constraints for VOSI Constructions in English

- (A) SATISFY_{ImplCond(VOSI)}: Implicative Condition must be satisfied in English VOSI constructions.
- (B) ECONOMY: Do not pronounce it if it is recoverable.
- (C) FAITHFULNESS: Every segment of the input has an identical correspondent in the output.

The interactions among these three constraints during the periods of historical changes have produced different results with respect to the presence of the infinitival marker in the history of English. For a proper account of the use of the infinitival marker *to* in VOSI constructions in Old - Modern English, the following hierarchy is proposed.

(32) Ranking of the Constraints for VOSI Constructions in Old, Middle, and Modern English

SATISFY_{ImplCond} > FAITHFULNESS > ECONOMY

- (33) a. *gehyrde* [_{TP} *myccle menigo him beforan feran*] (BIHom 15.14)
 heard great multitude him before go
 ‘(He) heard a great multitude go in front of him’
- b. **gehyrde* [_{TP} *myccle menigo him beforan to ferenne*]
 heard great multitude him before to go
- (34) a. *Se ælmihtiga god geðafað þam arleasan antecriste*(DAT)
 The almighty God *allows* the evil Antichrist
 [_{CP} *to wyrcenne*(INF) *tacna and wundra*]
 to work wonders and miracles
 ‘The almighty God allows the evil Antichrist to perform
 wonders and miracles’
- b. **Se ælmihtiga god geðafað þam arleasan antecriste*(DAT)
 The almighty God allows the evil Antichrist

7) FAITHFULNESS, functioning in PF, still looks into LF and PF, both sides of the interface, under the framework of *Minimalist Inquiries* (Chomsky 1998).

[CP wyrca(n)(INF) tacna and wundra]
 work wonders and miracles

(35) Tableau for the Use of the Infinitives in VOSI from Old to Modern English

INPUT	SATISFY _{ImpCond}	FAITHFULNESS	ECONOMY
(33a) $\left[\begin{smallmatrix} \text{ } \\ \text{ } \end{smallmatrix} \right]$		*	
(33b)	*		*

In the OT mechanism, the candidate that violates the lower-ranked constraint(s) than the other candidates is chosen as optimal. Consider (33a) from the perspective of the constraint interactions. The implicative relationship holds for (33a), where the infinitive particle *to* is unpronounced. To put it another way, it was true in (33a) that a great multitude went in front of him if he heard a great multitude go in front of him. Thus, (33a) with a silent infinitive particle is in accordance with the Implicative Condition in (27), and observes the constraint SATISFY_{ImpCond}. In contrast, (33b) with an overtly realized functional category contradicts the Implicative Condition and violates SATISFY_{ImpCond}, since the implicative relationship holds in (33b) with an overtly spelled out *to*. Next, (33a) observes ECONOMY, since the particle *to* is unpronounced, and its semantic content is recoverable from local context, where the infinitival T has [-Tense, -AGR] specifications and precedes the VP node. It thus follows that (33b) violates ECONOMY. Since the particle *to* is null spelled out in (33a), the OT constraint FAITHFULNESS is violated in (33a). In contrast, FAITHFULNESS is observed in (33b), where no segment of the input is unpronounced or deleted. As can be verified in (35), (33a) is in violation of lower ranked FAITHFULNESS, whereas (33b) is in violation of the highest ranked SATISFY_{ImpCond}. Thus, the former is chosen as optimal.

Consider next the sentences in (34a-b).

(36) Tableau for the Use of the Infinitives in VOSI from Old to Modern English

INPUT	SATISFY _{ImpCond}	FAITHFULNESS	ECONOMY
(34a) $\left[\begin{smallmatrix} \text{ } \\ \text{ } \end{smallmatrix} \right]$			*
(34b)	*	*	

The verb *geðafað* 'allow' is not an implicative verb, so the implicative relationship does not hold in (34a). Thus (34a) observes SATISFY_{ImpCond}, since the infinitival T is morphologically realized and the implicative relationship does not hold in the sentence. It thus follows that (34b), where the infinitival *to* is unpronounced, is in violation of the constraint SATISFY_{ImpCond}. It is also in violation of the constraint FAITHFULNESS. Therefore, (34a) is chosen as an optimal output.

We note that the constraint mechanism in (32) holds in Old, Middle, and Modern English, giving an account of the use of the two types of infinitives in VOSI constructions.

5. An Account of the Use of the Infinitives in Other Constructions in the History of English

Kim(2001:78–81) found that, out of the impersonal verbs studied, (*ge-*)*lystan* took bare infinitives in most cases, while the rest of them including *onhagian*, (*ge-*)*lician*, *gelustfullian*, *sceamian*, etc. showed a strong tendency to take *to*-infinitives. She goes on to claim that bare infinitives tended to have a strong verbal (predicative) function, whereas *to*-infinitives tended to have a strong nominal function in impersonal constructions. However, we have noted in Section 3 that, in addition to the nominal function, the *to*-infinitive has performed adjectival and adverbial functions in a variety of constructions in the history of English.

The two constraints FAITHFULNESS and ECONOMY that were motivated to account for VOSI constructions still function as the principal constraints for the use of the infinitives in a variety of constructions in the history of English.

(37) Constraints for the Use of the Infinitives in English

- (A) ECONOMY: Do not pronounce it if it is recoverable.
- (B) FAITHFULNESS: Every segment of the input has an identical

correspondent in the output.

- (38) Ranking of the Constraints for the Use of the Infinitives in Old, Middle, and Modern English

FAITHFULNESS > ECONOMY

- (39) a. Us sceamað to secgenne ealle ða
 us(DAT/ACC) shames to say all the
 sceandlican wiglunga
 disgraceful witchcraft
 ‘we are ashamed to say all the disgraceful witchcraft’
 b. ??Us sceamað secgan ealle ða
 us(DAT/ACC) shames say all the
 sceandlican wiglunga
 disgraceful witchcraft

- (40) Tableau for the Use of the Infinitives from Old to Modern English

INPUT	FAITHFULNESS	ECONOMY
(39a) 		*
(39b)	*	

As the constraint FAITHFULNESS is ranked higher than the constraint ECONOMY in Old to Modern English, (39a) with the phonetically realized *to*, which violates ECONOMY, is preferred to (39b) with the null spelled-out infinitive particle, which violates FAITHFULNESS. Thus, (39a) is chosen as optimal, while (39b) is considered less optimal.

The constraint interaction represented in the hierarchy (38) extends to other infinitival constructions in English.

- (41) a. Fela ic hæbbe eow to secganne
 ‘I have many things to tell you.’ (CP 237.12)
 b. *Fela ic hæbbe eow secgan
 ‘I have many things tell you.’ (CP 237.12)
- (42) a. heo for oft bið swiðe unwynsum on to eardigenne
 she too often is very unpleasant in to dwell
 ‘it[the sea] is too often very unpleasant to inhabit’
 b. *heo for oft bið swiðe unwynsum on eardigan
 she too often is very unpleasant in dwell

- ‘it[the sea] is too often very unpleasant inhabit’
 (43) a. Kim is ready to agree with you.
 b. *Kim is ready agree with you.

As in the case of (39a-b), (41a), (42a), and (43a) with the phonetically realized infinitive particle are in violation of lower ranked ECONOMY, while (41b), (42b), and (43b) with the phonetically silent infinitive particle are in violation of higher ranked FAITHFULNESS. Therefore, (41a), (42a), and (43a) are chosen as optimal.

Consider the case of the verb *gelystan*, which prefers to take the bare infinitive.

- (44) a. him lyst gehyran þa halgan lare
 him(DAT) wish hear the holy teaching
 ‘he wishes hear the holy doctrine’
 b. ??him lyst to gehyrenne þa halgan lare
 him(DAT) wish to hear the holy teaching
 ‘he wishes to hear the holy doctrine’

Unlike other OE impersonal verbs *onhagian*, (*ge-*)*lician*, *gelustfullian*, *sceamian*, the verb (*ge*)*lystan* prefers to take bare infinitives. It is interesting to note here that bare infinitives were exclusively used in pre - early Old English(AD 450-900), as illustrated below.

- (45) (a) Cidan on swefnum ceapes eacan getacnaþ (ÆHom iii, 208, 3)
 ‘To chide in dreams betokens increase of goods’
 (b) þa woldon ferian norþ weardes ofer Temese in on
 Eastseaxe (Chron A 893)
 ‘then wished to start north over the Themes into Essex’

As can be seen, the bare infinitives underlined in (45a-b) functioned as subject or object of the sentence. It was not until the beginning of the late Old English period that *to*-infinitives came into existence and came to be widely used. Yespersen (MEG 10. 21(1965)) argues that a

powerful influence to bring about the extensive use of the *to*-infinitive has been the decay of the inflexional endings and the need of some mark to distinguish the infinitive from other part of the verb and from the cognate substantive.

Even though the impersonal verb *(ge)lystan* took bare infinitives in most cases in Old English, it took *to*-infinitives when the dummy pronoun *hit* 'it' occurred with it in Middle English, as shown below.

- (46) Hit lyst me to be fedde in kynge Arthures courte
 'it pleases me to be fed in King Arthur's court'
 (OED: 15c. Malory Wks. 313/4)

We thus assume that, as in the other infinitival constructions, the infinitive particle *to* is inserted into the initial syntactic structure for the impersonal construction (44a), and the particle, which is marked as contentless at LF, is null spelled out at PF.⁸⁾ It might have been by analogy to the bare infinitival constructions exclusively used in pre-early Old English that the impersonal verb *(ge)lystan* took bare infinitives in the later Old English times.

A reverse order of the constraints presented in (38) needs to be motivated to account for the use of the infinitives in (44a-b).

- (47) Tableau for the Use of the Infinitives in *(ge)lystan*-type constructions

INPUT	ECONOMY	FAITHFULNESS
(44a) $\mathcal{L}\mathcal{S}$		*
(44b)	*	

(44a) with the phonetically silent infinitive particle, which is in violation of lower ranked FAITHFULNESS, is preferred over (44b) with the phonetically realized infinitive particle, which is in violation of higher ranked ECONOMY.

As we have examined so far, the use of the two types of infinitives in a variety of constructions in the history of English is nicely

8) See footnote (3) in regards to the null spellout of the infinitive particle.

accounted for in terms of the constraint interactions presented in (40) and (47).

5. Conclusion

This paper is a study on the use and properties of bare infinitives and *to*-infinitives which have been widely used in the history of English, with a special focus on the infinitives in VOSI and impersonal constructions.

In section 2, we have discussed in great detail the use of the infinitives in VOSI constructions in Old, Middle, and Modern English, and have proposed the Implicative Condition that holds for the VOSI constructions throughout the history of English.

In section 3, we have discussed in detail the use of the infinitives in a variety of constructions including impersonal constructions in the history of English.

We have shown in section 4 that the use of the infinitives in VOSI constructions is adequately explained in terms of the interactions of the constraints in (32) that are inherent in English speakers' linguistic faculty.

It is also shown in section 5 that the use of the two types of infinitives in a variety of constructions in the history of English can be nicely accounted for in terms of the constraint interactions presented in (40) and (47).

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