This is to count as a construction\textsuperscript{1}

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Abstract
This paper investigates the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic properties of utterances such as \textit{This is to count as a construction}. It is argued that a \textit{construction} is required to capture certain semi-idiosyncratic syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of the pattern. At the same time, these properties are \textit{motivated} by relating the construction to other well-known constructions via a default inheritance hierarchy. The proposal is contrasted with word-based and purely syntactic accounts.

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1. Introduction

Although there has been a growing interest in constructionist approaches to language, much of the discussion has surrounded a very limited range of constructions. Within the domain of argument structure, the focus has largely been restricted to the transitive, ditransitive, dative, resultative and way constructions. Moreover, much work has analyzed one particular construction in isolation, without attempting to motivate its properties by relating it to other existing constructions.

This paper attempts to broaden the discussion by focusing on a relatively understudied case that involves interesting pragmatic as well as syntactic and semantic properties. In particular, we argue that a construction is required to account for examples like those in (1)-(4), in that such examples convey certain semantic, syntactic and pragmatic restrictions that do not follow compositionally from any of the lexical items involved.²

1. The match is to begin at 11 pm.
2. “Arguments are to be avoided; they are always vulgar and often convincing.”
   (Oscar Wilde)
3. “You are to recall each detail about the dancer you saw who has no shadow.”
4. “Junior was to become a lawyer and then Chairman of the Board of Deco Industries”

The constructionist account builds on many of the insights of earlier accounts (Dik 1983; Goossens 1992; Sugayama 2005; Palmer 1979; Declerck 2010). The present account differs from these accounts in positing a not-strictly compositional construction in lieu of assigning the non-compositional meaning to just to or be or to a novel complex form is to. Moreover, we argue that positing a construction allows us to motivate various semi- idiosyncratic aspects of the construction, by relating the construction to other well-known constructions via a default inheritance hierarchy (cf. also Sugayama 2005). That is, while the properties are not strictly predictable, neither are they completely arbitrary. Instead, almost all of the construction’s properties can be motivated by other, independently needed constructions. In addition, we detail certain semantic relationships and pragmatic restrictions that have not been observed previously.

The formal, semantic, pragmatic and temporal properties of the construction are discussed in turn below in sections 2-5. We then motivate the construction’s various properties in section 6. We discuss some non-productive but related constructions in section 7, and address the interaction of the is-to construction with other constructions in section 8. In section 9, we discuss alternative proposals.

2. Formal properties

² Unless otherwise noted, all attested examples (indicated by quotes), come from the 400 million word Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), made freely available by Stan Davies at http://www.americancorpus.org/.
One striking constraint on the construction is that the copula must be finite, as is clear from the infelicity of examples (5)-(9) (cf. also Kayne 2007; Sugayama 2005):  

5. *He will be to become President.  
6. *He had been to become President.  
7. *He has been to become president.  
8. *He was being to become President.  
9. *She believed to be to President.

Evidence that the finiteness restriction is an idiosyncratic fact comes from the observation by Visser (1969) that it did not always hold, as illustrated in (10) and (11):

10. “this young lady…instead of being to marry Frederick, is to marry James Benwick” (Jane Austen 1815, quoted in Visser 1969: 1449)

11. “You will be to visit me in prison with a basket of provisions.” (Jane Austen 1814, quoted in Visser 1969: 1450)

In other ways, like many other constructions and idioms, the syntax of the *is-to construction is unremarkable. The copula behaves as an auxiliary, as it does generally. For example, it is inverted in subject-auxiliary inversion (12) and it can be directly followed by negation (13) (Declerck 2010; Huddleston & Pullum 2002; Kayne 2007a; Sugayama 2005):

12. “am I to be charged?”  
13. “You are not to kill this pup, smallwolf.”

We can represent the form of the construction as in (14):

14. \[BE_{\text{tense}} [VP_{\text{to}}],_{\text{vp}}\]

That is, the construction is a recursive verb phrase (VP) construction headed by tensed be with an infinitive marked VP complement.

3. Semantic properties

One of the most general aspects of the semantics of the construction is that the subject of the *is-to construction must be interpreted as the subject of the lower clause (cf. also Kayne 2007a, b). That is, example (1), repeated below as (15a) can be paraphrased roughly by (15b):

15. a. The match is to begin at 11 pm.  
b. The match begins at 11 pm.

\(^3\) Declerck (2010: 289) found untensed *If I had been to +INF examples on the web. Our search for this type of example indicates that all instances appear to be pre-20\(^{th}\) century.
The copula can be considered a “subject-raising” verb, because it does not semantically restrict the subject argument (i.e., it does not “assign a semantic role”) (Sugayama 2005). That is, only the lower verb semantically constrains what types of arguments can appear. This is apparent from the fact that the semantically bleached existential *there* can appear as subject.

16. “There are to be no unlawful assemblies or disorderly demonstrations.”

Since *be* is a subject raising verb in its regular use (cf. 17), no stipulation beyond the fact that *be* is involved is required for this fact.

17. There are no unlawful assemblies or disorderly demonstrations.

There do exist certain semantic restrictions on the construction that cannot be predicted by *be* or *to* or by other constructions, although in section 6 we motivate these properties as well. In particular, instances of the construction imply that the event designated by the lower clause has been prearranged, predetermined, or is suitable or appropriate, and the construction can be used as an indirect command (cf. also Palmer 1979: 146-148; Declerck 2010; Sagayama 2006 for discussion of multiple senses).

The range of senses for the *is-to* construction are discussed below and ultimately diagrammed in Figure 1.

A. Prearrangement

The most common use of the construction conveys that some official arrangement is in place for an event or state to hold at some point of time subsequent to the reference time. When the copula is in the present tense, the reference time is the speech time and the event or state has been arranged to hold in the future.

18. “Egypt and Jordan…are to receive $1.3 billion and $250 million each.”

19. “the six witnesses … are to be available at nine this morning”

When the copula is in the past tense, the reference time is in the past, and the state or event that was arranged must be subsequent to that time. A past perspective on a subsequent arrangement is motivated in two contrasting situations. The past tense can be used to imply that the prearranged event did *not* take place.

20. He was to be here by now. (implies that he is not here)

The counterfactual interpretation is a pragmatic implicature: if the speaker intended to say that the event took place, then he would have; since he only conveyed that the event was prearranged, an implicature arises that the event did not take place. Notice that the same implication arises when other expressions of prearrangement are asserted:
21. He was supposed to be here by now. (implies that he is not here)
22. He said that he would be here by now. (implies that he is not here)

There is another motivation for taking a past perspective on a future occurrence and that is that the speaker is foreshadowing a future event that he knows will hold. This use is common when the speaker adopts a narrator’s perspective, in which he is omniscient. This leads us to a second sense of the construction.

B. Predetermination

The omniscient perspective or predetermination interpretation of the construction appears in the following examples:

23. “Considering he was to become one of the two principal rulers of the Empire in a matter of months”
24. “It was nothing to her, that an innocent man was to die for the sins of his forefathers”

This interpretation is also possible in the present tense, as long as there is an assumption that the speaker believes she can see into the future, as, for example, in (25):

25. “It is to rain tomorrow,” said the fortune teller.

Without the idea of an omniscient observer, the predetermination use is infelicitous.

26. #Billy said it is to rain tomorrow.

C. Indirect command

Another immediate extension of the prearrangement sense is a use of the construction as an indirect command. That is, if the arrangement is understood to be created by the speaker at the time of the utterance, a command interpretation may arise as in (27):

27. “You are to be discharged from this jury”

D. Suitability or Advisability

A further sense simply expresses the suitability or general advisability of a state or event as in (28) and (29):

28. “Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested” -Francis Bacon
29. “Wilma is to be congratulated on her exemplary effort”
This sense overlaps with the indirect command interpretation. Note, for example, that (29) could be used as an indirect command if spoken by Wilma’s coach as an indication to begin a round of applause.

As is typical in the case of constructional polysemy, expressions are often ambiguous or vague as to which sense they instantiate; in fact, this is how multiple senses often arise historically (e.g. Heine 2002). One sense can be interpreted as an instance of another sense and the latter sense becomes recognized as a possible extension. Although we do not have diachronic evidence to suggest a particular pattern of development, a suggestion for how to relate the four senses synchronically is offered in Figure 1. In representing the semantics of the construction, we will refer to the possibility of prearrangement (Pr), indirect command (I), predetermination (P) or suitability (S) senses as PrIPS.

Some linguists subcategorize temporal and modal uses of the construction. Thus Palmer (1979: 146-148) would classify prearrangement and predetermination as temporal, and suitability and indirect command as modal. Others take is-to as primarily temporal (e.g. Bergs 2010, who briefly touches upon is-to in Construction Grammar account of the English expressions of future). Nothing much hinges on this for present purposes; the discussion invokes the long-standing debate on the relation between futurity and modality (e.g. Salkie 2010). We will, however, stress in section 6.3. that the is-to construction is formally similar to modal auxiliaries, as is future-modal English will for that matter.
Figure 1: Distinct senses (with ambiguous and non-ambiguous examples) of the *is-to* construction
4. Register and relative status restriction

The *is-to* construction is subject to special pragmatic requirements, in that it has a slightly literary or archaic flavor to it. This register restriction explains why one child is not likely to scream at another:

30. #You are to stay away from my toys!
31. #Candy gushers are to be eaten one at a time!

Another constraint is that the indirect command and suitability senses are only felicitous if the speaker assumes authority over the listener. For example, it would be considered rude for a child to use the construction when speaking to a parent, or for a student to use it to address a teacher.

(A) child to parent (indirect command):
32. #You are to arrive at the concert at 9.

(A) child to parent (suitability interpretation):
33. #Cars are to drive on the right side of the street.

This is not always true of indirect commands, as the following paraphrases demonstrate:

(A) child to parent (indirect command):
34. You’re supposed to arrive at the concert at 9.

(A) student to teacher (future-oriented use)
35. Cars are supposed to drive on the right side of the street.

Therefore it seems to be a special constraint on the *is-to* construction. We will represent the constraint that the speaker assumes a higher status than the addressee will be with the following diacritic: >:-| . This authority constraint does not hold of the prearrangement sense, as the following example can be uttered by a student to a professor without any ill-formedness.

4 The construction sounds more archaic in American English than in British English where *is to* is declining at a slower rate (Leech 2003: 229; Nesselhauf 2006: 518; Robberechts 2008: 47).

5 The construction strikes us as even less commonly used by younger speakers with the predetermination construal.

a. #Who knew my little brother was to become taller than me?!
36. Professor, my sister is to be on Oprah tomorrow!

The authority constraint is also not relevant to the predetermination sense.

5. Temporal dimension

The construction evokes three distinguishable times: 1) the speech time, 2) a past reference time at which some prearrangement or determination of the future was made and 3) a situation that is potentially realized at a subsequent point in time (cf. Reichenbach 1947). When the copula is in the present tense, the temporal dimension can be diagrammed as in Figure 2:

![Figure 2: Time periods evoked by the is-to construction in the present tense](chart)

When used in the past tense, the interpretation of the construction requires reference to a distal past reference time (see Figure 3). The time at which the predication is supposed to hold can be before the speech time (37a), at time of speech (37b) or after the time of speech (37c):

37. a. He was to be here yesterday.
   b. He was to be here now.
   c. He was to be here tomorrow.
6. Motivation the Form and Function of the Construction

We can represent the construction as follows:

38. Syntax: [BE\text{tense} [VP_{to}]]_{vp}
   Semantics: “subject raising” PrIPS
   Pragmatics: Formal register; I-S >:--]

The construction inherits its syntactic and properties from the more general recursive VP construction that involves VP complements. This more general construction is instantiated with several intransitive “subject-raising” verbs such as seem and appear, as well as other verbs that take infinitive complements. However, unlike these verbs, the is-to construction must specify additional special semantic, formal, and pragmatic properties. In what follows, we motivate many of these properties by appealing to independently needed constructions; aspects of the is to construction that are motivated are indicated by italics in 38.

6.1 The copula predicative construction

The copula predicative construction (e.g., Elena is a doctor) is distinct from the is-to construction, even though the predicate may be an infinitival verb phrase as it is in (39) and (40). Notice that in these, regular copula examples, the grammatical subject, the hope or the goal is not the semantic subject of the lower clause. For instance, example (40) does not imply that the hope itself will reintroduce bison; rather it is understood that people would be the ones to reintroduce bison.

39. “The hope is to reintroduce bison to the landscape one day”
40. “The goal is to overwhelm them with the visual experience.”

Further evidence that these examples are not instances of the special is-to construction comes from the fact that predicative instances readily allow the copula to be nonfinite:

41. Steve wants to the goal to be to overwhelm them with the visual experience

At the same time that the two constructions are distinguishable, they are clearly related. In fact, the copula predicative construction helps motivate the is-to construction. Notice that the semantic interpretation of these predicative constructions is that the predicate holds of the subject argument. We can represent this in the very simple predicate-argument structure in (42):
42. a. Doctor (Elena)
   b. reintroduce-bison-to-the-landscape (hope)

In the case of the *is-to* construction, we see that the range of possible semantic interpretations is not entirely distinct from predication. What could it possibly mean to predicate a state or activity of an entity? The entity would be interpreted to perform the activity or be in the state. The semantic aspects that are not strictly predicted by the simple predication construction are a) the fact that the situation is to hold at a subsequent point of time, and b) the specific PrIPS interpretations (recall Figure 1). It is possible to motivate the fact that the construction is typically used to convey an attitude toward future events with the regular infinitive marked construction.

6.2 The to-infinitive construction

The *is-to* construction by hypothesis involves both the normal copula and the normal *to*-marked infinitive. Wierzbicka (1988: 217ff) points out that the *to*-marked infinitive is often associated with future orientation. She observes the difference between the following two sentences:

43. He thought about falling down.
44. He thought to fall down.

The future orientation of *to* infinitives is also evident in adjuncts with an “in order to” interpretation:

45. He stopped to see her.

In both (44) and (45) the event designated by the infinitive is subsequent to the event designated by the main verb. When the order of events is reversed, the *to* infinitive is typically not allowed:

46. *She regretted to go.
47. She regretted going. (the regretting follows the going)

48. She was condemned to go. (the condemning precedes the going)
49. She was condemned for going. (the condemning follows the going)

Thus the [V[ VPₜₜₜ]] construction is naturally associated with the interpretation of a future event.

6.3. Relationship to Modals
In all of its uses the is-to construction has a modal-like meaning and the requirement that be must be tensed is reminiscent of other modal verbs such as must or should (cf. also Suragayama 2005; Declerck 2010):

50.  a. She must/should go.
     b. *She was musting/shoulding to go.
     c. *She will must/should go.
     d. *She did must/should go.

On the other hand, unlike most modal verbs, the is-to construction requires its infinitival complement to appear with the marker to:

51a. *She is go.
     b. She is to go.

Kayne (2007a, b) takes the latter fact to conclusively indicate that be is not a modal. However, it is difficult to state categorical properties of the whole category of modals, which is currently undergoing change also, esp. with respect to the presence of the to infinitive marker (Krug 2000). As Kayne acknowledges, ought, uncontroversially a modal, does optionally allow the infinitive marker, to:

52. She ought to go.

An abstract Modal auxiliary construction captures the requirement that modals must often be tensed and that they inherit “NICE” properties (Huddelston 1976: 333) from a general Auxiliary construction.

53. NICE Properties of Auxiliaries
   a. Negation: they can be directly followed by negation.
   b. Inversion: they invert in subject-auxiliary inversion.
   c. “Code”: they can serve as answers to questions with their VPs elided.
   d. Emphasis: they can be used for emphasis.

We can represent the is-to construction within a default (non-monotonic) inheritance hierarchy (Flickinger 1985; Goldberg 1995) such that daughter nodes inherit all non-conflicting information from their mother nodes. Following Lakoff (1987) and Goldberg (1995), we can understand the inheritance relationship to capture the notion of motivation: the existence of the mother nodes motivates the daughter node, making it more likely to exist and presumably easier to learn and use. A diagram of related constructions is provided in Figure 4.
Figure 4. The constructions that motivate the various properties of the *is-to* construction
There’s no getting around the fact that the *is-to* construction is a quirky construction of English with particular synchronic formal, semantic and pragmatic properties. Still, its form-function mapping is strongly motivated by its relation to the general copula predication construction, the to-infinitive complement construction, and the modal construction.

It would be possible to further support the idea that the form/function combination is motivated by investigating whether young children or second language learners who do not use the construction and who have rarely witnessed it, can nonetheless figure out what its intended meaning is. In this way, the construction could be established as an *encoding* idiom (Makkai 1972), that is, an idiom or construction that is easy to decode due to its being motivated by other constructions.

7. The “object-raising” *is-to* construction

The *is-to* construction under discussion must be distinguished from a number of other constructions. The first is a superficially similar, highly restricted construction, in which the subject argument is semantically the *object* of an active lower clause verb (54a). Notice that there is no tense restriction (54b) in this case:

54. a. He is to blame for the failure.
54 b. He has always been to blame for the failure.

In English the object-raising construction is essentially a relic (Jespersen 1961: 233; Visser 1969: 1459). It is only possible with certain lower verbs, such as *blame*:

55. *He is to criticize for the failure.
56. *He is to praise for the success.

Interestingly, there may be reason to speculate that the *is-to* subject-raising construction may have played a role in the demise of the *is-to* object raising construction. That is, the two constructions largely fill the same semantic niche when the lower clause of the subject-raising construction is an agentless passive as in (57):

57. He is to be blamed for the failure. *is-to* construction with passive lower verb

58. He is to blame for the failure. Object-raising construction (relic)

And it turns out that passive lower clauses are unusually common in the construction. In a study of written British and American English, based on random samples of 100 instances from the LOB, FLOB, BROWN and FROWN corpora, Robberechts (2008: 14) found that the passive infinitives accounted for 40% of all occurrences. It may also be relevant that while the English subject-raising *is-to* construction is productive, and the object-raising construction is not, the reverse situation exists in Dutch and German. In the latter languages, it is the object-raising construction that is productive and they do not have the subject-raising construction (cf. also Kayne 2007a, b). At least in West
Germanic therefore, languages would seem to have one or the other (as a productive construction), but not both. This idea predicts that passivized lower verbs may also be unusually frequent in Dutch and German, which remains to be tested.

In addition to uses involving the verb, blame, there are additionally a few other highly restricted subcases of the object-raising be to construction. The construction exists as the What’s to VP? construction as in (59), which has a Yinglish (Yiddish-English) ring to it.

59. “With everyone so darned nice, what's to report?”

There are also a few other fixed phrases such as this is (not) to say, as in (60).

60. “This is not to say that the dialogue in a Hitchcock film is incidental”

In (60) the subject of is-to, i.e. this, is neither the subject nor the object of say. Visser (1969: 1464-1465) points out that is to say may be a loan translation from French. Another fixed phrase is is to do with, as in (61).

61. “Good science journalism is to do with sharing information about and providing an understanding of science

According to Visser (1969: 1471) this phrase is fairly recent (20th century), and it is due to analogy to or confusion with has to do with. Is to do with sounds decidedly marked to us.

8. Predicting how the construction interacts with other constructions

The constructionist proposal allows us to explain many properties of the construction that have been stipulated in other accounts. For example, we can account for the fact that the copula is not present in certain utterances by appealing to predictable interactions with other independently needed constructions. In particular, the prearrangement semantics of the is-to construction is evoked by the following attested headlines:

   b. Chelsea Clinton To Host Bike Ride For Haiti Charity (Huffington Post, August 23, 2010).

But of course, headlines quite generally allow the omission of the copula and other inferable items, as the following examples demonstrate:

63 a. Cabbie-slash suspect taken to psych ward (MSN.com August 27, 2010)
    b. Kim Kardashian Reggie Bush vacationing in Las Vegas (globalgrind.com/ August 27, 2010)
In 63b, not only is the copula omitted, but the conjunction, and, is as well. Presumably no one would want to say that and is not a critical part of the general conjunction construction. Clearly, headlines (and telegrams) have their own peculiar properties that serve to override certain normal constraints on use.6

Similarly, there exist infinitive relative clause uses that share properties with the is-to construction, but that lack the copula verb (Akiyama 2010). But postnominal modifiers generally do not require a tensed verb, whether they are instances of the is-to construction (64-65) or some other predicative construction (66-67).

64. “Fritz Henderson is the right person to assume this role,”
65. John is the man to wash the dishes.
   (Dik 1983: 138; Goossens 1992: 61)
66. She saw a man in the barn
67. She saw a man leaving the theatre

Therefore, we do not need to base the entire function of the construction on to (pace Dik 1983; Goossens 1992). In fact, it is critical to include the copula in a statement of the construction in order to account for the requirement that the copula must be tensed when it is present. The constructionist proposal allows us to assign the function of the construction to the combination of be and the to marked infinitive phrase, as opposed to assigning the special function to either be or to or the infinitive construction on their own. When the is-to construction is combined with certain other independently needed constructions, predictable effects ensue, such as the omission of an otherwise obligatory copula.7

8. Some previous accounts

8.1 Word Grammar and Functional Grammar

Sugayama’s (2005) offers an account of the construction within the Word Grammar (“WG”) framework, a cousin framework to CxG. Several similarities between the present account and the WG proposal have already been mentioned. These include treating be as an instance of the normal (tensed) copula and using a default inheritance hierarchy to relate aspects of the pattern to both the copula and modal constructions.

The main difference between the two approaches stems from the fact that WG attempts to account for all of grammar in terms of asymmetric dependencies between

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6 We are assuming that the fact that only the prearrangement interpretation is possible is predictable on the basis of the function of headlines.
7 We are assuming that it is possible to predict the fact that only the prearrangement interpretation exists in copula-less headlines and only the suitability sense appears in the postnominal modifier construction. If the semantics is not predictable, we would require a special daughter construction that inherits from both the headline (or postnominal modifier) construction and the is-to construction but that has a particular semantic requirement of its own.
words. WG “basically [makes] no reference to any grammatical unit larger than a word” (Sugayama 2006: 69). In particular, Sugayma states, “the sense of the whole construction is determined by the sense of to” (2005:81). However, clearly the range of PrIPS interpretations do not exist in other uses of to. Moreover, the fact that the regular copula predication construction helps motivate the function of the construction is not captured by an account that posits the entire function in to.

The Amsterdam Functional Grammar model is like Word Grammar in that the modal sense is exclusively tied to the to infinitive (Dik 1983, Goossens 1992). Their key argument is that infinitival relatives lack be (recall examples 64-65). The constructionist account treats this fact as predictable from the combination of the is-to and postnominal-modifier constructions.

In addition, the present account extends these and other earlier studies by observing several additional semantic and pragmatic properties of the construction, and by explicitly relating the various senses (see Figure 1).

8.2 Be to as a modal auxiliary

Declerck (2010, combining and refining observations and hypotheses from his 1991 grammar) observes many special semantic properties of the pattern, as cited above. He ultimately suggests eight distinct senses, while we have posited four interrelated ones; this difference is likely due to a greater tolerance for underspecification on our part. There is additionally an excellent discussion of tense, conditionals and negation in Declerck’s work, while the present work adds pragmatic restrictions to the construction. The present analysis also adds an explicit discussion of the relationship among the senses.

A more major difference between the two proposals is that Declerck treats be to as a unit, a modal auxiliary, explicitly distinguishing it from the copula plus to infinitive (2010: 276) (cf. also Quirk et al 1985: 141). That is, be to is posited as a unitary modal; the to is not interpreted as an infinitive marker. In support of this, Declerck notes that be does not have the modal meaning when to is not present. This latter fact is clearly true, but it follows from a constructionist account in which the special meaning arises from the combination of copula plus infinitival verb phrase.

Syntactic evidence suggests that the construction is syntactically a copula plus to-infinitive (cf. also Sugayama 2005). In particular, adjuncts can intervene just as they can with other similar complements:

68. He was never to see her again.
69. He hoped never to see her again.

Only the copula is inverted:

70. Was he to see her again?
71. *Was to he see her again?
And finally, the irregular forms of *be* are the same as the copula, which wouldn’t necessarily be true if *be* *to* were a distinct, unique auxiliary, but is predicted by an account which treats *be* as the regular copula:

72. He *is*/They *are*/I *am* to have an appointment tomorrow.

Moreover, as was discussed in section 6.2, the *to* marked infinitive is generally associated with futurity, as it is in the *is* *to* construction. Therefore recognizing the pattern as a construction with formal and functional properties allows us to capture its idiosyncratic properties while simultaneously motivating them.

8.3 Kayne’s (2007) account of the *is*-to construction as a passive

Kayne (2007a, b) offers an analysis in which the oddity of *is*-to expressions is entirely located in the syntax. He posits a silent past participle EXPECTED and the semantics is assumed to follow from the corresponding passive syntax. That is, (73a) is argued to be identical to (73b), except that the past participle is invisible in (a) and not in (b).

73. a. She is to be home at midnight.
   b. She is EXPECTED to be home at midnight.

This analysis is motivated by an attempt to assimilate this case to the familiar case of passives. If the special properties of the construction did follow from positing this single null word, the analysis might be compelling.

Unfortunately, neither the formal, nor the semantic, nor the pragmatic properties are accounted for by positing an invisible past participle. Consider first the syntactic properties of the construction. The *by* phrase in Kayne’s example is not a passive *by* phrase and no such *by* phrase can appear:

74. *She is to be home at midnight by me/*by her parents.

This in itself would seem to render a passive analysis untenable. Moreover, the passive is clearly under no obligation to be tensed, unlike the *is*-to construction:

75. She wanted to be expected to aim high.
76. *She wanted to be to aim high.

Kayne stipulates additional properties to try to predict the requirement that *be* must be tensed. Briefly, he posits that in addition to the silent EXPECTED, there is also a silent AND and FOR, which move from one side of the overt *be* to the other. This stipulation, together with some theory-internal assumptions that need not concern us, allows Kayne to avoid stipulating that the copula must be tensed. One might argue that there’s no reason to prefer one set of stipulations (invisible AND and FOR that move) over another (the copula must be tensed). However, stipulating an indisputable fact (*be* must be tensed) is not on par with assuming that no less than three invisible elements are present, and that moreover two of the three of them move to particular landing sites.
Simplicity favors that we state the tense restriction directly. The historical fact that the construction did not always require that the copula be tensed further supports the surface structure analysis, since while it may be motivated by a relation to modals, since many modals likewise are necessarily tensed, it is not strictly predictable.

Beyond these arguments from Occam’s razor, the argument for a silent FOR is undermined by the fact that no overt for is ever possible with passive verbs of the expected-type:

77. *She was expected for (him) to leave.

The only way to save the notion that an invisible FOR is present is to stipulate that some invisible elements may become visible (EXPECTED), while others may not (FOR). No discussion of this fact or motivation for the distinction is offered.

Additional problems for the passive analysis is that the verb expected does not capture the meaning of the construction accurately, as is clear from (78):

78. She was expected to become President in 2012.
≠ She was to become President in 2012.

Notice only in b, is there an implication that she actually becomes President, as illustrated by the examples in (79a, b).

79. a. She was expected to become President in 2012, but Smith won.
   b. #She was to become President in 2012, but Smith won.

Other examples are likewise not semantically equivalent to a passive with expected:

80. He is to expect you at 6:00.
≠ He is expected to expect you at 6:00.

81. He was never again to open his eyes.
≠ He was never again expected to open his eyes.

82. If I were to offer, would you accept?
≠ I were expected to offer, would you accept?

The pragmatic restrictions on the construction (its formality, and the speaker’s status vis a vis the addressee) are unaccounted for as well, since these restrictions do not hold of ordinary passives. To summarize, neither the syntactic nor the semantic nor the pragmatic properties of the construction are explained by an appeal to the passive. The account does not account adequately motivate any aspect of the construction.

Finally, there is another important argument against Kayne’s account. The proposed EXPECTED lexical item is invisible. Therefore learners would have to figure out that it exists. But in order to do so, children would need to realize that there is something special about the element (Jensen 2000; Pinker & Jackendoff 2005): the
special properties of form and meaning can instead be directly associated with the surface pattern.

10. Conclusion

We have argued that a construction is required to account for examples like that in (1)-(4), repeated below, because such examples have certain semantic, syntactic and pragmatic restrictions that do not follow compositionally from any of the lexical items involved.

83. The match is to begin at 11 pm.
84. “Arguments are to be avoided; they are always vulgar and often convincing.”
   (Oscar Wilde)
85. “You are to recall each detail about the dancer you saw who has no shadow.”
86. “Junior was to become a lawyer and then Chairman of the Board of Deco Industries.”

In particular, the construction requires that the copula be tensed. Also, there is a family of related meanings for the construction related to the notions of necessity and futurity (cf. also Sugayama 2005; Declerck 2010). Finally, the construction is restricted to a formal register and is used to convey suitability or an indirect command only when the speaker assumes authority over the listener. There’s no getting around the fact that the construction is a quirky construction in English with particular synchronic semantic/pragmatic properties. Still, its form-function mapping is strongly motivated by its relation to the general copula predication construction, the to-infinitive complement construction, and the modal construction.

As was true of the Word Grammar proposal, we argued that positioning the construction within a default inheritance hierarchy allows us to motivate various semi- idiosyncratic aspects of the construction. We argued that the construction inherits from the copular predicative construction, the infinitive VP construction, as well as the modal auxiliary construction. While the constructionist analysis is able to incorporate insights from previous accounts that treat the construction as a special sense of be or to or be to, it is in quite a different spirit than the recent generative proposal to treat the construction as a passive.

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