La question de la classification des relatives infitives

Présentation séminaire IDEAL UPEC, 5 février 2021
Olivier SIMONIN, CRESEM (UPVD) : osimonin@gmail.com

I. Définition(s) et propriétés objectives

A. Définition(s) et exclusions

Relative infinitive clauses form one type of non-finite postmodifier. In Mary is the person to do it the infinitive clause corresponds to the finite relative clause Mary is the person who should do it, where the relative marker who functions as subject of the relative clause… The infinitival clause with its marker to functions as postmodifier to a noun phrase. The antecedent, which is also the head of the noun phrase, has a syntactic function in the infinitive.

Geisler 1995, 12

Critère (implicite) : paraphrase

PB 1 : Les propositions relatives infinitives (PRI) peuvent se trouver avant l’antécédent :

Ex : recherche GOOGLE “to do thing” ⇒ 25 100 occurrences

Mar 31, 2016 - A multi level scaffolding with multiple chandeliers and exquisite flower work is the to do thing for your reception gala !!
https://br.pinterest.com/pin/130956301649275752/ [dernier accès : 03/02/2021]

<w2b-021 030> A spider monkey can hang by its tail from a branch with no trouble while it picks leaves or fruit to eat.

⇒ A spider monkey . . . picks leaves and fruit in order to eat them (so that he could eat them).

⇒ A spider monkey . . . picks leaves and fruit which it can then eat (or will eat).

PB 2 : « Circonstancielles elliptiques de but »/propositions de but affaibli (weak purposive clauses)

<jespersen 1914, 340>
1. Les infinitives gigognes

the last man to arrive → the man that was (the) last to arrive [in arriving]
(That was) an easy thing to do → a thing that is easy to do [= To do that thing is easy]

<s1a-013 248> It wasn’t the right thing to be reading at all to her.
<s2b-026 091> She seems an unlikely candidate to have created the unruly anti-intellectual specimen of eternal boyhood.
<s2b-050 002> I must be the first minister in history to have resigned because he was in full agreement with government policy.

[such a thing/what a thing to have done; the thing to have done…]

[proposition de nouvelle définition: proposition relative dont le procès principal est posé par un verbe de forme infinitive (qui peut être postposé ou antposé à « l’antécédent »)]

B. Propriétés objectives

- Introduction du sujet par for (ou autre préposition ou par une structure génitivale/équivalente):

<s2a-048 072> And it became… the script for the scribes to learn first the style of their education.
<s2a-039 026> And there is today quite a scramble by each of the major parties to appropriate the word.
<s1b-054 065> I do not wish to cut the time of backbenchers to participate in this debate.
<s2b-005 100> Devereaux investigates an IRA plot to kill one of England’s most powerful men, Lord Slough.

- Hamelinage (ou préposition isolée en fin d’infinitive, ou occultée):

<w1a-007 003> In an attempt to evaluate the usefulness and validity of the medical model as a framework with which to conceptualize psychopathology, a number of fundamental issues concerning the existence and recognition of mental illness will be discussed.

<s1b-025 133> The thing to spend your money on is a subscription to the local horticultural society.
<w2c-004 034> They lacked the means to get back into the game.

- Forme passive:

<w2b-014 046> Policies and politicians are rapidly reduced to commodities to be sold like lager.
<w2f-011 005> Murder, on the other hand, is a practice not to be encouraged.
- rôle appositif (non-constitutif) :

&w2c-015 041> Lord James is expected to announce details of a new publicity drive to coincide with the extension of the rent-to-mortgage scheme.

&w2c-015 048> These sentiments have been enshrined in law in the Children Act of 1989, soon to be implemented in England.

[pb de classification si l’on se remet uniquement à ces propriétés/ à la fonction syntaxique de l’élément relativisé au sein de l’infinitive]

II. Les infinitives exprimant l’usage destiné (earmarking)

A. Les propositions de but affaiblies

&w2b-021 030> A spider monkey can hang by its tail from a branch with no trouble while it picks leaves or fruit to eat.

Interprétation circonstancielle (résultative/) :
⇒ A spider monkey . . . picks leaves and fruit in order to eat them (Is so that he could eat them).

Interprétation relative (appositive, non constitutive) :
⇒ A spider monkey . . . picks leaves and fruit (,) which it can then eat (or will eat).

- Propositions de but affaiblies et lacunes syntaxiques :

<s2b-017 013> The United States is preparing to mobilise major combat units from the reserves to send ___ to the Gulf.
<s1a-078 136> So basically you’ve got 86 pounds a week to live on ___.
<s1b-028 001> Dr Sacks I’m not going to ask you to encapsulate your arguments in a few sentences because if that were possible the BBC would feel rather foolish I think at having offered you three hours of air time to develop them [___].

They hired John [___] to go over the reports.
The documents were passed on to the records department (for them) to be classified.

- Analyse et propriétés sémantiques :

La proposition dominante pose ou implique que l’entité coréférentielle au sujet ou bien à un autre élément lacunaire s’il y en a (au sein de l’infinitive), est disponible et mobilisable en l’état pour la fonction considérée.
L’infinitive exprime un usage destiné pour cette entité, qui se trouve caractérisée en retour comme étant destiné à cet usage : la possibilité d’une lecture relative (appositive, non constitutive) est ainsi mécaniquement induite (sauf blocage syntaxique).

... it picks leaves or fruit to eat.
→ ‘It picks leaves or fruit’ + ‘the leaves or fruit are (earmarked) for (the purpose of) eating’

The documents were passed on to the records department, and they were meant to be classified.
*The documents were passed on to the records department, which were meant to be classified.

- Double relativation :

<s1a-001 032> I enjoyed the time that I was given to study…

I was given time to study ↔ I was given time during which I was able to study.

I enjoyed the time that ___ I was given ___ to study ___

[...] and also thank her for the much appreciated cherry cake ___ she gave me ___ to bring up ___ here.

<w2d-015 055> Pressure is exerted on the player in possession of the ball by challenging him or moving towards him, cutting down on the time and space he has available in which to play.

B. Les relatives infinitives constitutives (/déterminatives) exprimant l’usage destiné

- Quand l’infinitive opère une restriction référentielle (= constitutive ou déterminative) :

<s1b-031 146> I don’t think that would give me any excuse to report something wrongly.
<w1b-026 047> Large medium sized firms have so much to offer.
<w2d-001 053> You will also get a voucher to help you pay for your glasses.

- Quand la détermination de l’infinitive est intégrée (article défini) :

<s1a-005 233> He’d already given Xepe the money to get the strawbs and Pimm’s.
<s2b-003 058> I could give them the backing to go out and win the election.
<w2b-034 042> They did not have the expertise to design transmitters.

- Quand la dominante ne pose plus la disponibilité du référent désigné par l’antécédent :

<s2b-004 041> It’s clear the coalition is not in a mood to negotiate over its demands.
<w2b-014 046> Policies and politicians are rapidly reduced to commodities to be sold like lager.
<w2f-012 044> It was the moment to be honest with her.
III. L’hypothèse des « clivées présentatives » et PRI exprimant l’obligation déontique

A. Une autre famille de relatives infinitives

Nombreux contextes avec tour présentatif *(there is, X has, with…)* + sens nécessité (déontique) :

<s1a-039 308> And I’ve got so many events to go to.
<s2a-016 101> He’s got five kilometres to go now.
<s2a-016 125> Bruno Cenghialta here always checking over his shoulder with two kilometres to go to see if he can see those riders closing in on him.
<w2d-013 134> There are four basic points to remember when hitting a low volley.
<w2f-013 043> There was the future to consider, after all.

- Argument 1 contre une analyse de relative classique : intonation

My brother who lives in Nairobi prefers sake to green tea:

- Déterminative : /My brother who lives in Nairobi/ prefers sake to GREEN tea/
- Appositive : /My BROther/ who lives in Nairobi/ prefers sake to GREEN tea/  
  (adapté de) Tench 1996, 21

There’s the future to consider.
/There’s the FUTURE to consider/

There is loads to do.
/There is LOADS to do/

- Argument 2 contre une analyse de relative classique : introduction avec pronom relatif

UD: There were many opponents to fight against [, after new members joined the karate club.]
OD: There were too many foes to fight against [: the Greeks were greatly outnumbered.]

- There were many opponents against whom to fight.
- ?! There were too many foes against whom to fight.

UD: There’s a new show to talk about [, that’s quite exciting !]
OD: There’s another issue to talk about [before we end this meeting.]

- There’s a new show about which to talk.
- ?! There’s another issue about which to talk.

- Hypothèse des « clivées » présentatives (ou « clivées de spécification non exhaustives ») :

*There’s the use of clefts he wants to explain.*
[There’s this type of infinitive to explain: /There’s this type of inFInitive to explain/]
Presupposition: ‘he wants to explain x, y, z’  ‘We have to explain x’ (not exclusive)
Focus: ‘the use of clefts’  ‘this type of infinitive’
Assertion: ‘x = the use of clefts’  ‘x = the use of clefts’

(adapté de) Lambrecht, 2001, 505

?! There’s another issue about which to talk.
→ another issue peut difficilement être dans le focus, puis en position thématisée.

B. Les PRI constitutives (/déterminatives) exprimant l’obligation déontique

- Absence de tour présentatif :

<s1a-053 002> I think probably the thing to do is to rush through the introduction.
<s2a-022 067> Uhm now that’s something to bear in mind when we look at Caesar’s writings.
<s2b-020 101> Mr Major has become the man to beat.

IV. Les autres relatives infinitives

A. Les PRI provenant d’une infinitive de but liée à un procès nominalisé

- L’infinitive correspond à une circonstancielle de but (+ l’antécédent indique un moyen) :

<s2b-045 046> Thus he undertook work to determine the shape of the earth.
← He worked to determine the shape of the earth.

<w1a-017 119> A ‘drive’ is a change in our voluntary behaviour to satisfy our motivations.
← We change our voluntary behaviour to satisfy our motivations.

<s2b-004 071> British and American engineers are taking part in a major operation to remove wreckage from the main highway north of Kuwait City.
← British and American engineers are acting (doing so within the framework of a military plan) to remove wreckage from the main highway north of Kuwait city.

<w2f-010 083> There had been less and less to sweeten time’s passing in Ägypt.
← Fewer and fewer things happened to sweeten time’s passing in Ägypt.

- L’infinitive correspond à un complément essentiel (= argument) exprimant le but :

<s1b-063 057> I think initially they were arrested for conspiracy to supply drugs.
← They conspired to supply drugs.

<s2b-001 014> The government comes under pressure to bring forward its plans for care in the community.
They pressured the government for it to bring forward its plans…

<w1a-003 005> The Franks did not make **great efforts** to try and govern Brittany.

← The Franks did greatly struggle to try and govern Brittany.

≠

<w1b-040 105> … his great desire to **get back into Downing Street** was to **have his tit for tat with Teddy Heath**.

← He greatly desired to get back into Downing Street…

<w2f-017 035> He had the ability to **understand figures**…

← He could understand figures

### B. Les PRI « be to »

1. **procès à venir, déterminé par un plan, ou un arrangement préalable**
   <w2c-015 041> Lord James is expected to announce details of a new publicity drive to **coincide with the extension of the rent-to-mortgage scheme**.

   ← a new publicity drive that (/, which?) is to coincide with….

2. **futur dans le passé**
   <s2b-014 061> A French light armoured division was one of the forces to **make a thrust into Iraq**.
   <w1b-026 083> It was fascinating to see the wide range of products to **be made by the finalists**.

3. **possibilité, potentialité**
   <w2a-031 065> It appeared that the advantages to **be derived from blind shaft drilling** more than justified the technological investment in the work.

4. **instruction, obligation déontique**
   <w1b-017 101> The dates to **be avoided** are March 20 to 21 and April 22 to June 21 inclusive.
   <w2f-011 005> Murder, on the other hand, is a practice not to **be encouraged**.

5. **expression idiomatique de l’avenir**
   <w2b-029 030> There might yet be other environmental horrors to **spew forth from this war**.
   <w2c-015 048> These sentiments have been enshrined in law in the Children Act of 1989, soon to **be implemented in England**.

6. **nécessaire épistémique**
   <s2a-046 058> As I said before, I’m trained as a toxicologist uh toxicology being the study of the effects of chemicals in the body to **cause harm**, [= which are bound to…]
   <s2b-030 022> But he was not a man to **be influenced by their suffering**, [= who would…]

7. **construction be (=have) to do with**
   <w1b-004 040> He just did everything **to do with the house**.
V. Conclusion

**Statut relatif canonique discutable pour l’infinitive :**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gigognes</th>
<th>prop. de but affaibli</th>
<th>« clivées présentatives »</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>infinitives modifiant</td>
<td>exprimant</td>
<td>exprimant l’obligation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un pivot adjectival</td>
<td>l’usage destiné</td>
<td>(nécessité déontique)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the right thing to do</td>
<td>I gave him two hours to finish</td>
<td>They have much to do.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PRI classiques :**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRI</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>« be to »</td>
<td>provenant d’une inf.</td>
<td>constitutives (/dét.)</td>
<td>constitutives (/dét.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de but lié à un procès nominalisé</td>
<td>exprimant</td>
<td>l’usage destiné</td>
<td>exprimant l’obligation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sans tour présentatif</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a day yet to come</td>
<td>his work to find a vaccine</td>
<td>the time to play</td>
<td>the thing to say</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**BIBLIOGRAPHIE**


