24.910 Topics in Linguistic Theory: Propositional Attitudes
Spring 2009

For to Infinitives in Belfast English

❖ **Reading: Alison Henry, *Belfast English and Standard English* (OUP, 1995), Chapters 1 and 4.**

1. Summary of the Data

1.1.   *For* with <u>lexical</u> subjects – propositional subject / extraposition

[Assumption: "lexical" = full NP, including pronoun ?]

➢ Obligatory with lexical subjects in infinitive clauses

[3a]   <u>For</u> John to win would be amazing.   [^{ok}Std./^{ok}Bel.]

[3b] * John to win would be amazing.   [*Std./*Bel.]

➢ Positioned to the left of the subject:

[16a]   <u>For</u> him to pay the mortgage would be just as expensive.   [^{ok}Std./^{ok}Bel.]

[16b] *Him <u>for</u> to pay the mortgage would be just as expensive.   [*Std./*Bel.]

[17a]   It was stupid <u>for</u> them to do that.   [^{ok}Std./^{ok}Bel.]

[17b] *It was stupid them <u>for</u> to do that.   [*Std./*Bel.]

➢ There can't be two instances of *for*:

[16c] * <u>For</u> him <u>for</u> to pay the mortgage would be just as expensive.   [Std./Bel.]

[17c] *It was stupid <u>for</u> them <u>for</u> to do that.   [Std./Bel.]

1.2.   *For* with <u>lexical</u> subjects – complement of adjective

➢ Positioned to the left of the subject:

[18a]   Mary was keen <u>for</u> them to be there.   [^{ok}Std./^{ok}Bel.]

[18b] *Mary was keen them <u>for</u> to be there.   [*Std./*Bel.]

➢ No double occurrence:

[18c] * Mary was keen <u>for</u> them <u>for</u> to be there.   [Std./Bel.]

1.3.   *For* with <u>lexical</u> subjects – complement of *want*-type verbs

➢ Positioned <u>after</u> embedded subject in complement of *want*:

[20]   I wanted Jimmy <u>for</u> to come with me.   [*Std./^{ok}Bel.]

[21]   I don't like the children <u>for</u> to be late.   [*Std./^{ok}Bel.]

➤ … including with expletive constructions:

[25]   I want there <u>for</u> to be some peace and quiet sometime.   [*Std./okBel.]

[26]   I'd hate there <u>for</u> to be ill-feeling.   [*Std./okBel.]

➤ <u>Cannot</u> appear before the subject:

[20]   *I wanted <u>for</u> Jimmy to come with me.   [[?]Std./*Bel.]

➤ Not obligatory (in Standard or Belfast Eng.):

[23]   I wanted Jimmy to come with me.   [okStd./okBel.]

➤ Special case: where something comes between the matrix verb and subject:

[19a]   I want very much <u>for</u> him to get accepted.   [okStd./ okBel.]

[19b] *I want very much him <u>for</u> to get accepted.   [*Std./*Bel.]

➤ Again, no double *for*:

[19c] *I want very much <u>for</u> him <u>for</u> to get accepted.

Presumably, then, this means that Belfast Eng. has minimal contrasts like the following (check?):

[20] *I wanted <u>for</u> Jimmy to come with me.		[[?]Std./*Bel.]
[20'] I wanted <u>very much</u> <u>for</u> Jimmy to come with me.	[?]	[[?]Std./okBel.]
[19b] *I want <u>very much</u> him <u>for</u> to get accepted.		[*Std./*Bel.]
[19b'] I want him <u>for</u> to get accepted.	[?]	[*Std./okBel.]

1.4.   *For* with <u>null</u> subject (PRO / raising)

<u>For to</u> widely available in constructions thought to contain PRO:

➤ Propositional subjects:

[9]   <u>For</u> to stay here would be just as expensive.   [*Std./okBel.]

[10]   <u>For</u> to pay the mortgage is difficult.   [*Std./okBel.]

➤ Exclamatives:

[7]   <u>For</u> to let that mongrel into my yard!   [*Std./okBel.]

[8]   <u>For</u> to tell her like that!   [*Std./okBel.]

➤ 'Subject control':

[1]   I want <u>for</u> to meet them.   [*Std./okBel.]

[2]   It is difficult <u>for</u> to see that.   [*Std./okBel.]

[11]   I tried <u>for</u> to get them.   [*Std./okBel.]

Notes:

- In purpose-type clauses as in [1], *for to* occurs in a wide variety of English dialects in a way similar to *in order to* (but Belfast English is different)
- In Standard English: *want* and *difficult* do take *for* complements in other contexts (with lexical subjects), but *try* doesn't.
- *Try* doesn't allow lexical embedded subjects in Belfast Eng.:

[12] * I tried for him to go home.

➢ 'Object control' / 'ECM':

[13]   I persuaded John <u>for</u> to go home.   [*Std./^{ok}Bel.]

[14]   She convinced them <u>for</u> to give up.   [*Std./^{ok}Bel.]

[28a]   I believe them <u>for</u> to have done it.   [*Std./^{ok}Bel.]

Compare to:

[28b] *I believe for them to have done it.

➢ But it's not allowed with *whether*:

[15] * I don't know whether <u>for</u> to go.   [*Std./*Bel.]

[Note: This suggests that *for* is a complementizer in Belfast Eng. *for to*]

➢ Raising:

[27a]   John seems <u>for</u> to be better.   [*Std./^{ok}Bel.]

Compare to:

[27b] *It seems <u>for</u> John to be better.   [*Std./*Bel.]

1.5.   With Negation

➢ If *for to* occurs with *not*, the order must be <u>*for to not*</u>:

[29a]   I would prefer them <u>for</u> to not go.   [*Std./^{ok}Bel.]

[29b] *I would prefer them <u>for</u> not to go.   [*Std./*Bel.]

[29c] *I would prefer them not <u>for</u> to go.   [*Std./*Bel.]

[30a]   <u>For</u> to not go would be foolish.   [*Std./^{ok}Bel.]

[30b] *Not <u>for</u> to go would be foolish.   [*Std./*Bel.]

[30c] *<u>For</u> not to go would be foolish   [*Std./*Bel.]

2. Implications

2.1.   *For* is not part of the infinitive marker [*For to* ≠ *to*]

For is not part of the infinitive marker (T) because:

➢ *For to* is There are cases where *to* is allowed and *for to* is not:

- with another *for* complementizer [*19c]
- with *whether* [*15]

2.2.   *For* in *for to* is not P

For is not a preposition selected for by embedding verbs because:

➢ *For to* infinitives occur in isolation [7, 8]

➢ *For to* infinitives <u>can</u> co-occur with the preposition *for*:

[48]   What I'm longing for is <u>for</u> to have a break.

2.3.   Conclusion: *For* is a C

Conclusion: *For* must be a complementizer.

Issues this brings up [p. 90]:

➢ *For (*in *for to)* can occur with PRO.
[Standard explanations of the restriction against **for to* in standard dialects
depend on the assumption that PRO is not case-marked, and *for* appears to assign
case to a lexical subject.]

➢ Lexical subjects can appear before the C *for*.

➢ Negation has surprising restrictions on its position.

➢ *For* appears with verbs that are thought to take IP (not CP) complements.

2.4.   Analysis

The basic idea: *For* is a complementizer that cliticizes to the infinitive marker *to*.

3. Henry's suggestions about other *for to* varieties

3.1.   Ottawa Valley English [Carroll 1983]
        [and possibly Ozark English, Chomsky 1981]

for only occurs with verbs that standardly select for *for*. Possibilities:

➢ *for* is a preposition   [OR]

➢ *for* is only <u>optionally</u> an item that case-marks NPs (and thus is compatible with
PRO)

3.2.   "Weak" *for to* varieties of Northern Irish English

For only occurs in purpose clauses. Suggestion:

> ➢ *for* is an item like *in order* (as in *in order to*) – whatever that is.
>   [perhaps *for to / in order to* are something like complex prepositions?]