On the Original Forms of the Subject of the Infinitive in English

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Introduction

Transformational Grammar provides various hypothetical structures for infinitival clauses and attempts to explain their syntactic characteristics. The major themes of their theories are (A) clausal nature of the infinitival structure, (B) semantic properties of infinitival clauses distinctive from the other imbedded clauses (i.e., finite clauses and gerundive clauses), and (C) related to the first item, hypothetical endorsement of the subject of the infinitival clause (i.e., overt and covert (=PRO)subjects). Needless to say, many difficulties are involved in the assignment of a grammatical category—SUBJECT—to a null category or a (group of) lexical item(s) in a different form and case from a grammatically original subject. It is an attempt to include, in a main stream of grammatical principle, what has been dealt with in interpretation rules. In case the subject of the infinitive is lexically expressed, it usually takes the form of either 'PREPosition + NP' or 'Accusative (or common case) NP' preceding the infinitive. In the former structure, the PREP is 'for' or 'of' as illustrated below. (note.1)

(1) I decided for John to represent us.(cited from P.Rosenbaum 1976.)
(2) It was splendid of them to be so attentive. (cited from D.Bolinger 1977,p.137.)
In the latter structure, the NP is discussed in relation to the semantic property of the predicate of the superordinate clause. The following examples make the point clear.

(3) I wanted the boy to be examined by the doctor.(cited from F.R.Palmer,1974,p.181.)
(The above sentence doesn't include the meaning "I wanted the boy.")
(4) They believed him to be insane. (OALD)
 (=They believed that he was insane.)
(5) I saw the boy cross the road.(F.R.Palmer,ibid.)
 (the above sentence partly includes the meaning "I saw the boy.")
(6) We persuaded John to come. (P.Rosenbaum,ibid.)
 (The above sentence partly includes the meaning "We persuaded John.")

Not all of the underlined NP(or simple N)are directly taken as the subject of the following infinitive. (5) and (6) might be explained more clearly by 'Equi NP Deletion'or 'the Interpretation Rule for 'PRO'"(cf.Wasow,1979), while 'the boy' in (3) and 'him' in (5) may also be explained as 'object raising' (P.Postal,1974.) even if they are directly taken as the subject of...
the following infinitive. On the other hand, in case the subject of the infinitive is not lexically realized, it is theoretically (in the scope of transformational Grammar) assigned a mere feature bundle without phonetic matrices—PRO, whose distribution is backed by control conditions. (cf.Chomsky 1981, Bresnan 1982, etc.) Such an abstract category as PRO characterizes the transformational way of linguistic analysis, which tries to analyze not only superficial linguistic phenomena but the underlying mechanism of linguistic competence of man as well. Whether this way of analysis is essential to explanation for a natural language or not, it is surely dependent or based on the syntactic sense (or consciousness) of speakers. Just as symbolized by the formless PRO, syntactic sense hasn't been explicitly encoded in the semantic subject–predicate configuration. This could be the motivation of tracing back the original form of subject–predicate relation in infinitival expression in English.

In OE, infinitives and gerundives were noun equivalents (or a kind of abstract noun) derived from their verbal stems, so that their syntactic way of expansion was surely endocentric. But in the course of its development they gradually came to exert their innate semantic property as a semi-verb. (note.2.) It means that their way of syntactic expansion changed to exocentric with the components being related by some sense of unity. The simplest and the most primitive syntactic sign of a verb is to be followed by adverbial modifiers. Syntactic forms of subjects and objects for infinitives, in most cases, depend on the corerelative positions and cases of the lexical items in the matrices in question. Their occurrence without help of other lexical items (i.e., prepositions) gives clearer signs of fixed relation of SVO in PE. In OE, however, cases were the major signs to indicate roles of nominal arguments, which makes it difficult for us to find out the syntactic consciousness of the early writers. On the other hand languages tend to have quite a few of established patterns and cliches based on certain prevailing ideas or linguistic backgrounds of the speakers. This could be a hint to understand the syntactic sense of early writers. The purpose of this paper is to present a tentative groping to find out the origin of the syntactic sense expressed in the history of English, under which infinitival expressions have been composed, and on which such analyses as mentioned in (C) are properly based. This paper will be divided in three parts: first, we will discuss relations between VP and bare Inf., second, Acc.NP + Inf., and third, ‘for’/‘of’ + NP + Inf.

I. VP + bare Inf.

In OE, the infinitive had two forms; common case (nominative and accusative) and dative case according to its semantic role in a sentence. As to the forms of the infinitive in OE, Callaway’s statement (Callaway 1913, p.2. cited from Mitchel 1982, p. 387.) helps us understand them in brief.

.... the Anglo-Saxon had two infinitives: (1) the uninflected, or simple, infinitive in-an (occasionally written -on, -um, -en, and in Northumbrian, -a, with loss of n), which in origin is the petrified nominative—accusative case of a neuter verbal noun; and (2) the inflected, or gerundial, or prepositional infinitive, made up of the preposition to plus the dative case of a verbal noun ending in -anne (-enne, occasionally -onnie; and, with simplification of the double consonant, -ane, -ene), though occasionally the to is followed by an infinitive in -an and occasionally by an infinitive in ‘-ende’ (by confusion with the form of the present participle),
both of which forms are counted as inflected in this study. Very rarely, too, we have the 
-anne infinitive not preceded by to; and twice preceded by for to.

As we can guess from the forms (inflected and uninfl cted), the infinitive, which had 
orinally had a form to indicate the relation to other components, especially to VP and NP, 
gradually lost the distinctive features. The use of the forms of infinitives seems to have 
arity been mixed up. Confusion of the forms possibly suggests decay of the original 
sense of the syntactic function of the definite. This might, at the same time, suggests 
ning of a new syntactic movement, which caused differences of the meaning and 
ctions of the infinitive caused not only formal identity of infinitives but loss of 
ial distinctions. Therefore a bare infinitive, which indicates direct relation to its 
uperordinate verb, seems to have kept the original syntactic sense proper to English 
guage. Development of verbal compounds such as "sculan (=shall)/willan (=will) + (Act) 
without to) illustrate this. Infinitives following these verbs, though not being related 
 the idea of requiring their subjects just as most of the other 
itives, necessarily came to be considered to take superordinate subject as their own.

(7) ic wille thissum Ætemestan sellan ealle swa miæl swa the. 
(= I mean to give to this last just as much as I give to you.) (N. Davis, Sweet's Anglo Saxon 
Primer 1953.p.50.)
(8) hie wendon thaet hie scolden mare onfón. 
(=they expected to receive more.) (Ibid.)
(9) ...and hie wolde drifan to thæs cynings tûne, thý he nyst hwæt hie wæron. 
(= ...they wished to rush into the king's village...) (Ibid.))
(10) ðæt hie scoldæ done Godes alter habban uppan aholodne. 
(= then he had to have hallowed up God's aler.) (Ibid.)
(11) ðæt hie thone Godes man æbitan scolden 
(= in order that they should devour the man of God.) (Ibid.p.61.)
(12) gif hwa thâs bóc Æ-wrítan wile 
(= if any one wishes to copy this book .. ) (Ibid.)

Wilan and sculan became semantically subordinate to the following infinitive. Their position 
in the subordinate clause illustrated in (11) and (12) shows that they were used as auxiliaries. 
This doesn't necessarily mean grammatical subordination. This is a matter of comparison of 
the burden of meanings. In example sentences (7) to (10), they function as a full verb. The verb 
willian (= to wish, long for, or will) was used in the same way;
(13) we wilniad mid urum hlaforde clænkice swelten, swidenor doneclaelince mid eow 
lyban. 
(= without the Lord we wish to die purely much more than to live uncleanly with you.) 
(AECHom.i.432.25.cited from Mitchel 1982.p.403.)

Through these examples we could also have a glance at a prototype of 'will + bare Inf.' and 
'wish + to Inf.'. From the viewpoint of the outcome of English progress, the bare infinitive 
seems to have tighter relation to the superordinate verb. This stage of English syntax might 
provide more or less reasonable grounds for such arguments as 'auxiliary - main - verb 
theory' and 'direct nature of bare Inf. theory' and the like. (cf.M.Nakau,The rising generation, 
the verb wuton (= subjunctive form of witan (= to go)), functioning like an intransitive verb 
phrase complement in P.Rosenbaum's term (cf. P. Rosenbaum (1967)), provides an illustration
of further decay of superordinate structure.

(14) Uton we forthon gethencean hwylc handlean we him forth to berenne habban.

 (= Let us think of what recompense we have to extend to him from now.)
(BHom.91.13. -- -- cited from B.Mitchel (1985)p.401.)

(15) Uton lufian ure gebrodrâ.

 (= Let's love our brethren.) (AECHom.52.23. -- -- Mitchel.p.402.)

The absence of the subject of 'uton' in (15) indicates pragmatic fixation of the use of "Uton..." (Let us...) which seems to serve only as an introduction to an activity only in mind, unreal or unfulfilled (=subjunctivity). It is the following infinitive that describes what should come up in mind or be done in future. The coming development of auxiliary and the expression of inducement seems to indicate tight connection between the verb and the bare infinitive and the close subject - predicate relation between superordinate subject and the infinitive. We feel further interested, though it is out of our scope, in the fact that the verb wîtan came to be used in Mod. E. in a structure 'go + bare Inf.';

(16) Son, go work today in my vineyard.

 (Authorized Version. -- -- cited from S.Ichikawa (1937.))

(17) Go tell my brethren that they go into galilee. (Ibid.)

(18) But let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house. (Ibid.)

(19) And so go help your mother to make the gooseberry pie. (Thackeray. -- -- Ibid.)

II. Verb + Acc.NP + Bare Infinitive.

It is logically impossible to add to an exocentric node of subject in a structure that allows only endocentric ways of expansion. As is mentioned before inflections of infinitives in OE were a kind of evidence that they were still governed by an idea that they were nominals. Even after they were considered as semi-verbals, it seemed impossible for them to require their own syntactically motivated subjects for many reasons: in addition to the flexibility of word order, infinitival units didn't have a marker to seclude themselves from the rest of the components in the principal clause while finite clauses had one -- -- a conjunction. The following examples illustrate this:

(20) Crist and his apostolas ùs tæton ægther to healdenne.

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
S & \text{Dat.} & V \\
\end{array}
\]

Inf.

 (=Christ and his apostles taught us to observe both.) (Yamakawa 1963.)

(21) ...him leofre wæs se cristendom to beganne ponne his scira to habbanne.

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Dat.} & C & V \\
\end{array}
\]

S

Inf.

 (=It was more preferable for him to worship Christianity than to have his office.)
(Kin Alfred's Orosius. vi.xxxi.286.7-9.) (Ibid.)

(22) thā ærestan scipu Denisca manna the Angelcynnes land ē-sohton.

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Antecedent} & \text{R. P.} & \text{Acc.} \\
\end{array}
\]

V

 (=The first Kanish ships that came to England.) (N.Davis.1953.p.61.)

(23) thā hie thā hamweard wendon mid thære herehype, thā metton hie micelne sciphere

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
S & V & V \\
\end{array}
\]

S

Acc.

wicinga.

 (= As they were going homewards with the booty, they came upon a great fleet of pirates.)
(Ibid.)
Of course there were prevailing patterns of word order such as S-V-O, demonstrative Adv. (or Adv-phrasse) V-S-O in principal clauses, and connective S-O-V-(AUX) in dependent clauses, but identification of the elements which followed infinitives seems to have depended largely on semantic relations. This complexity of the word order seemed to make it hard to add new syntactic elements to existing structures. Even if there were dative or accusative cases that implied the agent of the following infinitives, they were doubtlessly taken just as the cases meant (i.e., nonsubject). Zeitlin (pp.10—11.), quoted in Mitchel (pp. 878—879.), guesses the development of this construction as follows:

The whole matter is made very plain by Brugmann and Delbruck. The infinitive was originally a dative noun of action, used to express purpose. The action of the infinitive did not at first need to have a distinct subject; its subject might be that of the main verb or a dative or accusative dependent upon the main verb. This forms the basis of our construction. In time the accusative, which originally belonged to the transitive verb, was attracted to the infinitive as its subject—a confusion of syntactical relations which was produced, partly, by analogy to dependent clauses with a distinct subject (cf. 'I saw him flee' with 'I saw that he fled'). Later, verbs which were never associated with an accusative object assimilated the construction.

Yamakawa (1963), also according to Zeitlin (The Accusative with infinitive and some kindred constructions in English III. (1908)), points that the first sign of SUBJECT—PREDICATE relation in 'Acc. NP + Inf.' configuration in OE were introduced by Latin influence. He lists four kinds of verbs that induced this structure: (i) verbs of causation, (ii) verbs of sense perception, (iii) verbs of mental perception, and (iv) verbs of declaration. But in his explanation there are no clear examples for 'Acc. NP + Inf,' in SUBJ—PRED relation. His explanation is rather on the proto type of this relation.

Examples of causative verbs:
(24) se cing het hi feohton agien Pihtas.
(25).hie heton him sendan maran futlum.
(26).loetad hilde-bord her on-bidan.
(27)...he hine gelomlice herde secgan in thære mægœ bi thæm wundrum.
(28). that mæst wæl the we secgan hieldon.

NII-Electronic Library Service
(29) gif sum dysig mann thäs bōc ræct othþe rædan gehierth...

(= if some foolish man reads this book or hears it read (or hear someone to read it) (Ibid.)

(30) ...leode gesawon hira willzifan wundor cyæan...

(= the people saw their Ruler reveal a wonder...) (Cynewulf’s Elene.1110-1) (Ibid.)

 Paying a close attention to the order of the components in (27) and (28), we see the same connotation as that in (25) or (26). Considering the positions of hine and secgan in (27) and secgan in (28), these examples illustrate a double accusative construction more clearly here than in (25) and (26). The example (30) is a little different in that the infinitive could be understood as passive. (Latin influence). This rule would have made this sentence a good example of ‘Acc. NP + Inf.’ in SUBJECT-PREDICATE relation. But if rædan had been interpreted as an active infinitive just as the spelling goes, it would have been interpreted as an OBJECT of gehierth. The different translations for a sentence with the verb hatan will reveal a similar argument.

(31) Heton him theh thet andwyrdre secgan. (Mitchel, vol. II, P. 872, l. 31.)

(a) ..they order him to be told the answer anyhow. (Translation by Stewart.)

(b). they ordered (someone) to tell him the answer. (Tr. by Callaway.)

B. Mitchel (1985) introduces various discussions on the interpretation of the relation between ‘Acc. NP and Inf.’. Stewart (1976,PP.34-5.) sees tighter relation between the verb and each of these elements in a sentence like

(32) ..geseah his mondryhten | | under heregriman hat throwian.

His interpretation is, roughly, “He saw his band of retainers. + He saw suffering.”

As for the tightness of the relation between the main verb and ‘Acc.NP and Inf.’, Callaway (1913,p.204.) maintains that the union between ‘Acc.NP and Inf.’ after the verbs of commanding and of causing and permitting, is looser than that after the verbs of mental perception. Yamakawa seems to have taken after Callaway on this point. Miller – Hilmer is said to have considered that the accusative and the infinitive merged into one concept after gefrigan (frigian = to ask, inquire) and gehyran (hieran = to hear), but as two separate objects after hatan, lætand, and verbs of perception – – – among which Callaway includes gerigan and gehyran. In the case of such verbs as hatan and bidan, Zeitlin (p.108), (quoted in Mitchel, op. cit. vol. II, p. 873. l. 10 ~20.) refers to this relation as follows:

...in some cases, as after hatan and bidan, the two elements were apparently felt as separate objects of the main verb, though they were loosely united by the logical relation of subject and predicate. But after verbs of direct causation it is impossible thus to analyze the component parts of the locution. In a sentence like ‘he caused him to work,’ him cannot be construed independently the object of caused but must be considered as associated with the infinitive and forming with it a single objective conception dependent on the verb of the main clause. The tendency to dissociate the accusative from the main verb and attach it to the infinitive is even stronger in those instances in which the latter element has a passive force. In ‘he ordered the army to be sent,’ army is manifestly not the direct object of the command, but rather the patient of the vt. send

Bock (1931,pp.221-6, quoted in Mitchel, op. cit. vol. II, p. 873. l. 35 ~ ) classifies the verbs in question into three subclasses: first, verbs of compelling, enticing, hindering, inducing, urging, and the like, to which the nominal object is more closely attached than the infinitive, and in
which the infinitive preserves its original function of expressing purpose; second, verbs such as hatan, biddan bebeodan (= to bid, command, require), lætan, seon, and hieran, after which the accusative and the infinitive are syntactical additions of equal value, and to which they are equally closely attached; and third, verbs of saying and thinking, after which the accusative and the infinitive form a unit which is directly dependent on the governing verb. In summing up the various arguments on the 'Acc.NP + Inf.' configuration in OE, Mitchel says:

...there does seem to be a general consensus that there exist the two classes distinguished by Bock (1931,p.217): first, those in which the accusative is directly dependent on the governing verb, and the infinitive and the governing verb are also directly related—according to Bock, the presence or absence of to with the infinitive denotes a different degree of closeness in their relationship—and second those in which the accusative and the infinitive from a united group dependent on the governing verb. But there is no consensus about which verbs govern which form of the construction. (Mitchel. op. cit. vol. II. p. 873. l. 26—34.)

For his second class he presents the following two examples:

(33) 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acc. NP</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>Inf.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.ealne thone here</td>
<td>he het mid them scipum thanan wenden...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(34) 
..and het hi faran geond ealne middan geard..  
V Acc. Inf.  
(../.and ordered him to travel all over the world.) (AECHom.i.28.7.) (Ibid.)

Mitchel adds three examples, two of which are cited below, in which the subject of the infinitive is not 'Acc.NP'

(35) 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acc. NP</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>Inf.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tha geseah he semninga on midre niht sumne mon with gongan. (Bede.128.15.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(= then suddenly he saw something like the moon as he went in the midnight.)

(36) 
..thatha Crist hine arisan het. (AECHom.i.234.13.)  
(= then Christ promised him that he ascend (to Heaven).)

These examples seem to include different elements from the structure in question: the first one is in a different structure, and the second one requires another meaning of hatan (i.e., promise, not order, here), which would be classified in the first class of Bock’s, or else, in some other different classes.

Without any crucial illustrations of 'mental perception verbs + Acc.NP + Inf.', we have studied only vague signs of SUBJECT — PREDICATE relation in 'Acc.NP + Inf.' configuration in OE. For summing up this section, Callaway’s (1913,p.208) conclusion provides a general view.

To sum up the matter as a whole, the predicative infinitive with accusative subject is probably native with: (1) certain verbs of commanding (bebeodan, biddan, and hatan); (2) certain verbs of Causing and Permitting (lætan and its compunds, alætan and forlætan); (3) certain verbs of Sense Perception (hieran and seon, and their compounds); (4) certain verbs of Mental Perception (afindan, findan, gefrignan, gehythan, gemetan, gemittan, gewitan, onfindan, and witan).

It is probably due more or less to foreign (Latin) influence with: (1) the verb of Commanding, (forbeodan); (2) certain verbs of Causing and Permitting (began or began, don,
gedon, gthafian, getholian, geunnan, and niedan); (3) certain verbs of Sense Perception (gefelan, gehawian, sceawian); (4) certain verbs of Mental Perception (æteawan, eowan, gecyhan, gehatan, gliefan, gemunan, getriwian, laeran, ongietan, tellan, and wenan); (5) all the verbs of Declaring represented (cwehtan, foresecgan, ondettan, and secgan).

Its origin is indeterminable with: (1) this verb of Sense Perception, (behealdan); (2) certain verbs of Mental Perception (geacsian and taligian); (3) with certain Other Verbs (habban and todaelan).

In the large, the foregoing result tallies with the conclusion reached by previous students of the construction (Mitchel, op. cit. I. 22~39.)

One point emerges from our paper, that is, when the meaning of the infinitive after the Acc. expresses STATE, not ACTION, the relation can be more easily understood as SUBJECT — PREDICATE. In other words, the syntactic sense is largely dependent on the semantic properties of constituents. The fact that the infinitives in passive meaning were raised from translations from Latin and Greek, indicates a foreign (mainly Latin) influence over syntactic connotation in English.

In ME, many verbs of causation, sense or mental perception, and declaration came to take the structure ‘Acc. NP + Inf.’ in accordance with the increase of ‘borrowed verbs’ and the settlement of the form of ‘to − Inf.’ This construction is said to have increased very rapidly from 13th c. to 15th c., which indicates that the syntactic connotation (i.e., Acc. NP + Inf. representing a ‘SUBJ. + PRED.’ unit) had settled in English.

III. For/Of + NP+ To − Infinitive.

The form ‘for + NP + to − Inf.’ is quite different from the one without NP (i.e., for to − Inf.’) in terms of their semantic and syntactic values and their origins as well. Rising of ‘for to − Inf.’ was, as generally accepted, due to the decay of the original function of ‘to’ preceding bare infinitives. The process resembles that of the formation of ‘to + Inf.’. Just as ‘to’ came to be fixed as a mere marker of an infinitive according as the inflexions denoting cases decayed, it came to lose its original meaning of direction denoting the use of purpose and simply function as a marker of an infinitive. Toward the end of 11th century the number of ‘to − Inf’s is said to have been a little more than twice as many as that of ‘bare Inf.’. (Callaway, 1931.) It seems a matter of course that at the same time the form ‘for to Inf.’ was in use in order to be clearly marked by nervous speakers. The first example of this form is reported by Shearin (1903.p.18.) (quoted in Mitchell. 1985. vol. I p.387. l. 34−5)

(37) and ich bidde eon alle th ge bien hym on fultume at thyh cristendome Godes yerichtten for to setten. (Ch.1163. A.D.1066.)

(38) oc se kyng hit dide for to hauene sibbe of se eorl of Angeow. (Chron.E.256−34.A.D.1127)(Ibid. l. 37)

(= but the king did it in order to have a peaceful relation with the earl of Angeow and to have an aid in return to his new kingdom.)

S.Ichikawa (1937. 39.) says you all find several examples of this form on every
page of Chaucer. The following example is one of them.

(39) Wel han they cause to gladen ofté | | Sith eoch of them recovered hath his make;

(= Well have they cause to be glad often, since each of them has recovered his mate;)

(Chaucer A Roundel, cited from E.Brunden A hundred English poems. pp.1–2.)

In this example ‘for to ‘is not a marker of expressing purpose: it is just a marker of the infinitive in general. The form was taken over into Mod. E. The following examples are cited in Ichikawa (Ibid.pp. 39–40):

(40) “But what went ye out for to see. (A.V.(A.D.1604)xi.8.)

(41) And if ye will receive this, this is Elia, which was for to come. (Ibid.xi.14.)

(42) All their works they do for to be seen of them. (Ibid. xxiii.5.)

(43) Let your highness | | Lay a more noble thought upon mine honour | | than for to think that I would sink it hear. (Shakespeare, All’s Well, viii. 181.)

(44) My house ain’t much for to see. (Dickens, David Copperfield.)

(45) How came that for to happen? (Marryat Peter Simple.)

(46) You make me for to laugh. (Goldsmith She Stoops to conquer.)

Although it has lost its value as a standard usage in English both in Britain and in America, this form still remains in small dialects such as Ozark English and Ottawa Valley English in Canada, on which S.Carroll (1983.Linguistic Analysis Vol.12.No.4.) proposes two properties of infinitive: island nature and the absence of reflexive subject.

On the other hand, the form ‘for NP + Inf.’ has its origin in much earlier stage and quite different sources in OE. It was a general tendency in OE that, in adjectival predications related to actions or states expressed by infinitives, adjectives of judgment or state of affairs came first, and then agents or else themes expressed by infinitives. This resulted in frequent occurrences of impersonal constructions which lacked introductory formal subjects. In the structure ‘beon + predicative Adj. + Inf.’, proto-type of the sense subject of the Inf. was put after the Adj. in dative case. But in those days, Inf. and the dative remained subordinate to the Pred. Adj.

(47) betere the is mid anum eggan gan on Godes rice, thonne twa egan haebbenda sy aworpen on helle fyr....

(= it is better for you to go into the kingdom of God with one eye than to be cast into hell fire having two eyes.)

(48) fortham leofre ys me gefon fisc thaere ic maeg ofslean, thonne fisc, thena thaet an me ac eac swycle mine geferan mid snurn slege he maeg besencean oththe gecwylman

(= Because I would rather catch the fish that I can kill than the fish that can sink or kill, with one blow, not only me but also my companions.)

(AELFric’s Colloquy,116–8.)

(49) ..selre the bith anegede faran to hefonan rice, thonne mid twan eagum beon aworthen on ece susle (eternal torment.)

(Examples above are borrowed from Yamakawa(1963)pp.8–9.)

The ‘to–Inf.’ after an Adj. in the construction was originally used to specify the direction in which the meaning of the Adj. was focused. Later, however, according as relations among the elements within a sentence changes (to a new syntactic connotation), the infinitive was separated from the Adj. and the dative came to be related more closely to the Inf. than the Adj. The following examples illustrate this:

(50) Forthaem is gescedeawislice to thenceanne hwelcum tidum him gecothus sie spreca...
ne. sie: subj. sing. pres. of wesan.

(= Therefore he is sagacious enough to consider when it is most suitable for him to speak.

(Wulfstan Serme Luniad Anglo.xxviii.274.17–8.

(51) . . . him was lath to anyrrenne his agenne folgath.

(= it was loathsome for him to spoil his own earldom.

(The Anglo Saxon Chronicle, E.1048)

(52) . . . god ys us her to beonne. . . A.S.Gosp. Matthew xvii.

(= . . . it is good for us to be here.)

(53) . . . bohte ænne and me is need to farende and thone geseon.

(= I bought a field and it is necessary for me to go and see it.)

(AECHom.ii.372. 18. l.c.)

Although us and me in (52) and (53) can be understood either in dative or accusative, they may be dealt with in the same way from the view point that they are both related to the infinitive in PE. Considering that dative usually designates personal relations or interest and is also used with many predicates denoting benefit, advantage, disadvantage, etc., it will be easily inferred that most of the datives in this structure changed into ‘for + NP’ according as noun inflection decayed. The use of ‘of’ indicating agent or doer is rather old. OED explains as follows (OED. ‘of’ prep. V. 15.):

The use of ‘of’ is most frequent after pa. pples. expressing a continued non physical action (as in admired, loved, hated, ordained of), or a condition resulting from a definite action (as in abandoned, deserted, forgotten, forsaken of). It is also occasional with ppl. adj.s. in ‘un-’, as unseen of, unowned of. ‘Of’ often shows an approach to the subjective genitive: cf. ‘He was chosen of God to this work.’ with ‘He was the chosen of the electors.’

But it was not until Mod.E that ‘of’ came to indicate the doer of something characterized by an Adj.s., used in this structure, listed in OED are good, bad, right, wrong, wise, foolish, clever, stupid, rude, silly, unkind, (or any adj. by which conduct can be characterized). It is also used with an ‘adj. and sb.’, as a cruel act, a cunning trick, a foolish fancy, a good thought, a kind deed and an odd thing, and with a qualified pa. pple., as cleverly managed, ill done, well done, well thought behavior. As is indicated in the OED, ‘of + NP’ still shows a closer relation to the preceding Adj. or the action qualified by an Adj. though ‘of + NP’ expresses the subject of the action qualified by the Adj. and realized by the Inf. The following contrastive pairs will reveal the syntactic differences between ‘of’ and ‘for’:

(54) (a) It was imperative for Mary to go there.

(b) *It was imperative of Mary to go there.


(55) (a) It was unkind of you to do that. (Ibid.)

cf. (b)*It was unkind for you to do that.

The ungrammaticality in (54)(b) suggests that ‘of’ can not be separated from the preceding Adj. merely to introduce the subject of the following infinitive, while ‘for’ can be done so. (55)(b) shows the same syntactic property from the other side. The differences in the usages between ‘for’ and ‘of’ in current English seem clear, but it is rather difficult to infer the reasons why one of the two, which originally had similar functions (i.e., to specify the sense subject of the infinitive), gets to lose its original function and begins to acquire a new syntactic function as a mere specifier of the following infinitive. Considering that the function of ‘of’ as an
indicator of the subject (i.e., agent or doer) of the passive action lasted for about two centuries (OED), and the range of the use of 'for' as a senseless marker of the infinitival clause remains different from region to region, it seems questionable to analyse variable linguistic phenomena as though they were derived from a stable mechanism of language acquisition innate and settled in man.

CONCLUSION

The original form of the infinitive (i.e., an abstract noun derived from a verb stem) required no syntactically motivated subjects. But semantically motivated subjects for infinitives have been expressed in various forms: (i) in the structure ‘S + V + Inf.’, the SUBJ of the Inf. is automatically the Main SUBJ; (ii) in ‘S + V + Acc./(Dat.) + Inf.’, Acc./(Dat.), except for the case where the V means 'to promise', the logical SUBJ of the Inf. is the Acc/Dat NP. (iii) in another structure represented by ‘S + PREDICATE’ (in this paper, though, we deal with only the case where the predicate is ‘BE + Adj.’) it is expressed by ‘for/of + NP’. In (ii) and (iii), it was not an innate syntactic sense proper to English that assigned subject–predicate relation to ‘Acc./(Dat.) NP + Inf.’ or ‘for/of + NP + to–Inf.’ configuration which had originally been interpreted as the case of each component meant. Whether it was due to an influence from foreign languages such as represented by Latin, or rising new waves of linguistic expressions, it was true that, with a new syntactic sense, they charged, in a long period of time, the syntactic sequences that had already been settled. And the fact that PE still retains the historical remnants from OE, ME, or Mod. E show the long lives of form and rather short span of syntactic senses. The general use of ‘to–Inf.’ might have helped popularize the syntactic sense of sentencial value of the infinitival construction with 'to' as a marker of the unit. Soon, however, 'for' took its place and decayed in about 200 years. In PE, 'for' is considered, in many cases, as a complementizer under the presupposition that there should be a subject for an infinitival construction. This paper helps to see, at least, a bit of complicated mechanism of assigning a new syntactic connotation to foregoing forms. The sense subject of the infinitive has been often dealt with as an indispensable element in current studies of transformational linguistics, in which many linguists try to formalize its structure in a logical or mathematical way. Such way of language analysis may do so far as it concerns mathematical analysis of a linguistic competence of a man in a limited situation or production of language such as a computer language, but it will not be able to cover the whole linguistic phenomena including have been many cliches which produced from unconfina ble competence of individual people.

Notes

note.1. Transformationalists don't usually include 'of' as a complementizer or a specifier for the subject of the infinitival clause. But I will include this here because of its formal or semantic similarity in terms of a historical viewpoint.

note.2. The infinitive is said to have developed its function as a verbal earlier than the gerundive. It belonged, together with its counterparts in German and French, to a same
grammatical category in Proto–Indo-European Language. It originally had a suffix of ‘–onom’. In Germanic Gothic, the suffix was contracted into ‘–an’ via ‘–anam’. In OHG and OE, the infinitival form with the ‘–an’ ending was taken as a stem of a nominal, and it was regarded as a nominative and an accusative at the same time. The dative form of the infinitive was expressed in the form, ‘to + -enne/-anne’.

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英語における不定詞の主語を表す
形態の起源について

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摘要

英語における不定詞は、起源的には動詞の語幹から
産生した抽象名詞であった。従って統語的には、単純
形で・動詞の意義素の表現(後に助動詞に続く原形)
という役割を果し、斜格形では内外構造を形成する從
属的要素であった。その後他の準動詞に先かけて、そ
の動詞の機能を発揮し内外構造的統語単位を形成する
ように発展した。その斜格形の意味的形態化は早く、
OE期には既にto付き不定詞の頻度が(屈折だけの)単
純形の頻度を遥かに上回っていたと言われる。toは、
言わば内外構造的不定詞構文の指示の働きをしていた
のである。当初の不定詞構造にはその主語の表現とい
う明確な統語的要求は無く、定形節の動詞の屈折形態
が主語と呼応するのは異った意味論的統語論的役割
を担っていたものと考えられる。不定詞の意味上の主
語を構成要素の関係として精密に分析することはイエ
スペンセン等に負う時でないとと思われるが変形生成文
法的深層構造の設定には歴史的事実との矛盾が感じら
れる。

変形生成文法的分析においては、不定詞構文の深層
構造は「for + NP + to-INF」であるとする。ここで
は、forが不定詞構文の主語の指定辞としての機能を全
面的に定式化していることと、すべての述語の単位に
は主語かなければならないというC.Kirkpatrickの言う『火の無いところに煙は出ない』式の統語意識が前提になっている。その前提を保証する形式として、現時点で特に米語において優勢な統語意識を当てた事は想像に難くない。しかし、不定詞構文の発展にはOE期以来、上記公式とは無関係に新しい統語意識を既存の形式に吸収させるという言語一般の傾向か流れをなくしていた。最も古い形のラテン語の影響を受けた主語述語の関係を持った埋め込み構造は（対格＋単純形不定詞）という二重対格構文の形を借りて反映された。「関与」を表わす主格が不定詞の主語と考えられたのもラテン語の影響を受けた統語関係が英語に反映された14Cの臨時的現象であった。関与を表わす格がfor＋NPに表わされるようになると、（述語 形容詞（＋名詞）＋to－Inf.）の表現において、その述語部分に関与するものは多くfor＋NPで表わされるようになり、15Cにはこの語法が確立されたと考えられている。この構造においてはforは不定詞の主語の指定という機能面と同時にその本来的意味をも維持していた。主体格を表わすofかその述語特性上（形容詞（＋名詞））の方へより強く引きつけられて不定詞主語の一般的指定辞としての機能を発展させ、受動形の行為者を指定するに至って、現在での古用法となっているのと対照的である。米語におけるfor＋NP（＋to－Inf.）の意味上の背表象と統語機能的一般化は、近年において特に著しく英語と対照されるものであり、13Cを中心にfor toの所調の主語の指定とは無関係に単なる不定詞の指標としての役割として約200年間用いられていたが廃れてしまった現象と類似した一般的言語現象であろうと思われる。不定詞の主語の表現形態をその起源的統語意識との関連において考察することにより、不定詞構文の深層構造として設定された公式は一般的言語現象を一般化しようとするものであり、その発展の過程における様々な表現形式を時には現在まで残っている自然言語としての英語の不定詞構文の分析の基盤とするには必然的に無理があると思われるのである。