An investigation of
for to infinitive clauses in the BNC

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Carsten Breul

University of Wuppertal

breul@uni-wuppertal.de

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1   Introduction

Infinitive clauses introduced by *for to* have been characterised as a syntactic feature typical of several non-standard varieties of English. In her discussion of Tyneside and Northumbrian English, Beal (1993: 200) mentions the following examples:

(1)   a. The firemen were putting on breathing apparatus for to go into the house

      b. The pair of them tried to contact Debbie for to tell her the news about the baby

She points out (ib.) that *for to* corresponds to standard English *to*, "especially where it has the sense *in order to*." According to her (ib.), "[i]n standard English, this construction only survives in archaic usage, such as in folk songs, but it is still in use in Tyneside, Scots, Irish [English] and some American dialects". These observations by Beal are in accordance with those of Miller (1993) and Harris (1993). The former writes that "[t]he marker of the infinitive in Broad Scots is not *to* but *for to*: *He's come for to collect the rent*." (Miller 1993: 130.) In his discussion of Irish English, the latter gives the example *It wouldn't do for to say that* and comments (Harris 1993: 141):

> This usage has a long history in English – and not just in vernacular varieties either. Besides showing up in a number of present-day non-standard dialects, it is attested in earlier forms of the literary language. There is plenty of evidence of it in Chaucer, for instance, and, as the following example shows, in Shakespeare:
>
> > Forbid the sea for to obey the moon
> > (*Winter's Tale*, 1.2.427)

In Henry's (1995) discussion of Belfast English, the author mentions "Ottawa Valley English (Carroll 1983) and Ozark English (mentioned briefly in Chomsky & Lasnik 1977, Chomsky 1981, Koster & May 1982)" as other varieties that have the *for to* + infinitive clause construction. (Henry 1995: 81.)

The present paper investigates the occurrences of *for to* + infinitive clause constructions (to be called *for to* construction in the following) in the spoken part of the British National Corpus (BNC). One of its aim is to see how widespread and 'alive' this construction is among non-standard varieties of present-day British English as reflected by the BNC. Another aim is to find out whether a corpus investigation allows a more detailed description of the syntactic and semantic properties of the *for to* construction.

The paper starts with a discussion of basic grammatical aspects of *to* infinitive
clauses in next section. Section 3 then is about how the instances of *for to*
constructions have been retrieved from the BNC and which problems and difficulties
related to retrieval have occurred. The analysis of the corpus data is carried out in
section 4, where a macro- and a micro-level perspective on the data are
distinguished. The paper ends with a summarising conclusion.

2   Some grammatical basics of *to* infinitive clauses

In standard English (SE), *to* infinitive clauses are one type of nonfinite clauses
alongside bare infinitive clauses, *-ing* participle clauses, and *-ed* participle clauses.
All four types of nonfinite clauses may have a subject or may be subjectless. The
sentences in (2) (from Quirk et al. 1985: 993) exemplify each type, giving one
example with subject and one without; the respective subject is underlined.

(2)   a. The best thing would be *to tell everybody*
       b. The best thing would be *for <u>you</u> to tell everybody*
       c. All I did was hit *him on the head*
       d. *Rather than <u>you</u> do the job*, I'd prefer to finish it myself
       e. *Leaving the room*, he tripped over the mat
       f. *<u>Her aunt</u> having left the room*, I asked Ann for some personal help
       g. *Covered with confusion*, they apologized abjectedly
       h. *<u>The discussion</u> completed*, the chairman adjourned the meeting for half
           an hour

As shown in (2b), the subject of a SE *to* infinitive clause is, and must be, preceded by
for (cf. **The best thing would be <u>you</u> to tell everybody*). As pointed out by Quirk et
al. (1985: 1004), "[s]ince *for* may be combined with the subordinator *in order to* [as
in *In order for you to be eligible for a student grant, your parents must receive less
than a stipulated annual income*], it seems to be a device for introducing the subject
rather than to be a true subordinator".[1] Indeed, in generative grammar it is commonly

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[1]   What Quirk et al. (1985) mean by 'true subordinators for *to* infinitive clauses' here are
       words like *whether*, *unless*, *once* in sentences such as the following (from ib.: 1004f.):

       (i) a. I don't know whether to put on the air-conditioning today
           b. Unless told otherwise, be here every night
           c. Once having left the premises, you must buy another ticket to reenter

argued that *for* is needed to assign case to the subject noun phrase (or to check the case of the subject noun phrase). Whereas subject case assigning/checking is done by the finite verb in finite clauses, a nonfinite verb is unable to assign/check case so that another case assigner/checker, namely *for*, is needed.[2]

Like all nonfinite clauses, SE *to* infinitive clauses can only be embedded (subordinate) clauses. In Quirk et al.'s (1985) framework of grammatical description, a *to* infinitive clause may take various of the major syntactic functions within its superordinate clause:

(3)   a.   subject: *To be neutral in this conflict* is out of the question

        b.   direct object: He likes *to relax*

        c.   subject complement: The best excuse is *to say that you are ill*

        d.   object complement: They knew him *to be a spy*

        e.   adverbial clause of various semantic kinds (see below)

Note that a *to* infinitive clause may also be a so-called extraposed (or postponed) subject, with an expletive, anticipatory *it* in clause initial, canonical subject position, as in (4a) below (see Quirk et al. 1985: 1391ff.). The example from Harris (1993) mentioned in section 1 above (repeated below as (4b)) instantiates a *for to* construction built on the same pattern.

(4)   a.   It is a pleasure to teach them

        b.   It wouldn't do for to say that

Among the various *semantic* roles which finite and nonfinite adverbial clauses in general can take, *to* infinitive clauses seem to be restricted to expressing a temporal or purposive meaning (or some meaning related to or shading into purpose), or to introduce a clause of comment (see Quirk et al. 1985: 1077ff.):

(5)   a.   temporal: I woke one morning to find the house in an uproar

        b.   purpose: I left early to catch the train

        c.   comment: I'm not sure what to do, to be honest

Instead of bare *to*, infinitival purpose clauses are alternatively introduced by *so as to* or, especially in more formal discourse, *in order to*.

In addition to the syntactic functions exemplified in (3), *to* infinitive clauses may complement an adjective or a noun, or may be appositive:

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[2]   For accounts along these lines see e.g. Haegeman & Guéron 1999: 97ff., 132f., 205ff., Radford 1997: 54ff, 449ff.

(6) a. adjective complementation: I'm very eager *to meet her*

   b. noun complementation: The man *to help you* is Mr Johnson

   c. appositive: Your ambition, *to become a teacher*, requires energy and perseverance

The difference between the functions in (3) and those in (6) is that the former are conceived of (in the descriptive framework of Quirk et al. 1985) as syntactic functions of immediate constituents of the (superordinate) clause, while those in the latter are functions of more deeply embedded constituents.[3] Finally, *to*-infinitive clauses function in combination with several verbs which are neither typically auxiliary nor typically lexical (see Quirk et al. 1985: 136ff.). A couple of examples for illustration may suffice:

(7) a. You ought to stop smoking

   b. She has got to leave by tomorrow

   c. France is not going to win the World Cup again

   d. He appeared to have fallen unconscious

3   Retrieving *for to* constructions from the BNC

A first set of data results from a SARA phrase query with the search phrase *for to* over the spoken part of the BNC. (Alternatively the 'quick query' field in the SARA toolbar can be used.) This set, which comprises 78 occurrences of the *for to* string within 64 BNC-documents, has to be 'manually' checked for relevant instances.

The irrelevant material can be divided up into several classes. I have distinguished nine such classes, which will be presented in the sequel.

1. In the actual utterance, *for* is followed by a noun phrase, such as typically a name, which has been deleted by the editors of the BNC for anonymisation. The noun phrase is followed by a *to* infinitive clause. Thus we are in fact confronted with a *to* infinitive clause with a subject introduced by *for* as discussed in section 2. An example of irrelevant hits of this kind is (8), given in the plain version provided by the SARA-listing of hits in (8a) and showing the SGML-tags including the POS-tags in (8b).

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[3]   For details see Quirk et al. 1985: 1061, ch. 16, 17.

(8) a. I see on the agenda this morning that an invitation has been extended *for*
     to come along and speak to us (HDU 30)

     b. <w PNP>I <w VVB>see <w PRP-AVP>on <w AT0>the <w
        NN1>agenda <w DT0>this <w NN1>morning <w CJT>that <w AT0>an
        <w NN1>invitation <w VHZ>has <w VBN>been <w VVN>extended
        <w PRP>for <gap reason=anonymization desc="last or full name"> <w
        TO0>to <w VVI>come <w AVP>along <w CJC>and <w VVI>speak <w
        PRP>to <w PNP>us

Obviously, the SGML-tag indicating the deletion of the noun phrase is ignored in the
retrieval by phrase query or 'quick query'. There are nine irrelevant instances of this
kind: HDU 30, HER 604, HMN 74, HUT 92, J9T 8, JJ8 546, JJV 635, JN7 322, KN2
577.

2. The sequence *for to* is the result of a *to* infinitive clause construction
following a prepositional verb whose particle is *for*.[4] An example of this case is (9).

(9) But, it's up to organisations like the ones we work *for to* respond to that ...
     and to not be doing the planning on behalf of other people (FLF 247)

There are seven instances belonging to this category: F7A 702, F7V 219, FLF 247,
HLX 80, JNK 477, KCE 6203, KD1 3786, KS7 1338.

3. The *for* of the *for to* string is the paratactic conjunction *for*. The only
instance of this kind is given in (10), where the conjunction is followed by a *to*
infinitive clause which functions as subject of the main clause introduced by *for*.

(10) About twenty to twenty five percent of the senior cl[5] clinicians opposed the
      application and the percentage figure amongst other disciplines will be far
      higher and, as has been said, the main motivation to seek Trust status, is
      based upon a financial squeeze on with it's neighbours and also seeking
      Trust status. *For to* remain as a directly managed unit would place a
      question mark on it's future (J9G 214)

4. The two components of the *for to* string are only superficially adjacent. In
terms of generative syntax, there is a so-called trace in between *for* and *to*, i.e. a
phonologically empty syntactic category. This trace has been left behind by the

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4 On prepositional verbs which, together with phrasal and phrasal-prepositional verbs,
   belong to the class of multiple-word verbs, see Quirk et al. 1985: 1150ff.
5 This is a truncated word. Truncated words, whose occurrence is characteristic of spoken
   discourse, have been retained by the compilers of the BNC. There will be some more
   instances of them in the examples to come.

movement of a *wh*-phrase, which occupies the trace position at an earlier stage of the syntactic derivation. (11a) is one instance of this type of irrelevant data. (11b) expresses the basic idea of the movement analysis of the embedded clause *which we were able to buy plates for to use for that event*. The indices for the trace *t* and the *wh*-phrase *what* signals that *what* occupied the position of *t* at an earlier stage of the syntactic derivation of the clause. This stage is given in (11c).

(11)   a.   […] we had some old trophies which we were able to buy plates *for to*
            use for that event (J3N 196)
        b.   which$_i$ we were able to buy plates for t_i to use for that event
        c.   we were able to buy plates for which to use for that event

While an understanding of the details of the syntactic analysis just alluded to is not essential for the purposes of the present paper,[6] it is essential to see that this example does not belong to the cases we are interested in. This can be immediately seen if we consider that leaving *for* out does not result in a proper SE counterpart of the *for to* construction that is in focus here. The deletion of *for* would be ungrammatical:

(12)   * […] which we were able to buy plates to use for that event

The two examples which fall into this class are J3N 196 and KCF 2057.

    The cases discussed so far are irrelevant because the *for to* sequence belongs to a syntactic construction which is not the one we are interested in. The following cases have to be filtered out for a different kind of reasons.

    5. The *for to* sequence is actually composed of *for* as the last word of an utterance by one speaker, followed by *to* as the first word of an utterance by another speaker. Instances of this kind, exemplified by (13), are among the search hits since the SGML-tags indicating a change of speaker are ignored by phrase or 'quick' query.

(13)   And they used to go to Belgium, they, they er walked them through to get a
        boat at Newcastle and they used to got to Belgium for <PS29V>: To sell the
        horses? (GYS 137)

Into this class of data to be filtered out belong three examples: GYS 137, HYX 126, KBD 3966. It should be noted that in cases like these the utterance of the first speaker is incomplete. We cannot know how the speaker intended to complete it. It may of course be possible that he/she intended it to be completed by a construction

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[6]   The details of an analysis along these lines can be studied on the basis of Haegeman & Guéron 1999 or Radford 1997, for example.

which would make it a relevant case. But this remains speculation which does not contribute to an answer to the question of which *for to* constructions one finds in the corpus.

6. *For* is followed by the SGML-tag <unclear> (ignored by the query tool), indicating that there was a word (sequence) in between *for* and *to*. Although it is not absolutely certain that what intervenes between *for* and *to* makes the sequence irrelevant, if one does not know what exactly it was, it is unlikely that the instances in question are relevant. (14) gives an example with SGML-tags, including POS-tags.

(14) <w PNP>I <w VM0>used <w TO0>to <w VVI>go <w PRP>to <w NP0>Orkney <w PRP>for <unclear> <w TO0>to <w VVI>go <w CJC>and <w VVD>asked <w PRP>for <w DT0>some <w AJ0-NN1>cardboard <w NN2>boxes <w AV0>only <w PNP>we <w VVB>call <w PNP>them <w NN1>pasteboard <w NN2>boxes (HV5 150)

The four instances of this kind are HV5 150, J3U 29, K6U 294, KPH 93.

7. There are a number of cases where the utterance is gibberish due to performance errors so that the intended meaning and grammatical structure can only be guessed or not reconstructed at all:

(15) a. <PS1V2>: It's, it's sort of following the demise of part of er Trevor's empire.<PS1V5>: Thus making it even cheaper.<PS1V6>: *For to* a smaller an empire. (FUL 14)

b. <w DT0>This <w VBZ>is <w PRP>in <w AT0>a <w CRD>twelve <w NN1>hour <w AV0>so <w PRP>for <w AT0>a <w AJ0>daily <w NN1>flow <w PNP>we<w VHB>'ve <w DT0>This <w VBD>was <w AT0>a <w AJ0-NN1>surveying <w NN1>period <unclear> <w AV0>about <w CRD>twenty <w NN0>percent <w PRP>*for* <unclear> <w PRP>*to* <w DT0>these <w PRP>for <w AT0>a <w AJ0>full <w NN1>day (J9U 807)

I have classified the following eleven instances as belonging into this category: FUL 14, HEM 197, J9U 807, JA3 75, JP7 698, K6L 525, K6T 691, KB8 11678, KC2 3965, KDT 241, KCT 6353.[7]

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[7] Hit K6T 691, *a cousin came out for to Sanday* given below, may not actually be gibberish. The sequence *for to* may be a non-standard multiple-word preposition. It is irrelevant anyway.

8. There is one case in which the *for to* sequence is part of a quoted written text from an older stage of English (a quotation from John Milton (1608-74)):

(16) I began thus *for to* assent both to them and diverse of my friends here at home and not less to an inward prompting which daily now grew upon me, that by labour and intent study, which I take to be my portion in this life, joined with a strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes as they should not willingly let it die.

Although the *for to* construction used here may be considered be of the relevant kind, the example is nevertheless irrelevant in that the text type (written, late Early Modern English) is not the appropriate one for our purposes.

9. Finally, there are three examples which are doubtful as to whether they have to be filtered out or not. They are doubtful because there is a pause following the *for*, indicated by three periods in (17).[8]

(17) a. <PS0K2>: What, well who's er ... conversations are you recording?<PS0JX>: Well everybody's conversations *for ... to* build up the new ... Lo , Longman's dictionary ... with the new words and things (KD5 1526)

b. and I'll say [...] ... he said ... leave it ... he left a message *for ... to* say, will you accept three fifty? (KD7 2140)

c. ... and the big race is worth five thousand so that's an early erm plug *for ... to* keep in your diary, like the Pall Mall which is March the twenty third (KS7 290)

The pause may be due to a change of mind as to how the speaker intended to continue their construction. But it may also be that the speaker hesitated for another reason, and that the construction comes out as intended. In the former case these examples would have to be filtered out, in the latter case they would have to be kept. I opt for the former alternative.

Thus, of the 78 hits which contain the sequence *for to*, 42 have been filtered out as irrelevant, which leaves another 36 for further investigation. Actually, this number reduces to 35, for there is one hit which is to be interpreted as a repetition by

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(i) <PS5M6>: Yes. I I remember once a cousin came it was a trip day <K6TPS000>: Mhm.<PS5M6>: and this a c a cousin came out for to Sanday

[8] The SGML-tag for a pause is <pause>.

the same speaker within the same utterance, not as being part of separate constructions. The case in point is this:

(18) Er ... well er I d I remember the er in the infants, er in the infants section it was necessary *for to* er *for to* touch y touch your hat, touch your little cap, er when the er when the headmistress when the headmistress er went by (FYJ 79)

The list of all utterances which contain the 35 relevant instances of the *for to* sequence is given in the Appendix. It contains 34 numbered utterances, not 35, which is because one utterance (number 6) contains two different *for to* constructions.

Before I turn to the next section I would like to point out that a negative version of the *for to* construction, i.e. *for not to* + infinitive clause, does not appear in the corpus. This is noteworthy, for we do of course have negative counterparts of the SE equivalents of this construction, i.e. {*not to / in order not to*} + infinitive clause, as illustrated in (19).

(19) a. Now in order to understand this and *not to* misunderstand terms, we've got to <trunc> unders </trunc> the first thing we have to understand is what Darwin's Theory of Evolution by Natural Selection is all about […]. (HUM 437; spoken)

   b. After another fond peep at his sleeping face, she crept out of the room, softly closed the door, and gathering up her skirt *in order not to* trip over the hem on the way down the stairs, swiftly retraced her steps back to the kitchen and Cissie. (FPK 1423; written)[9]

This raises the question whether *for not to* is ungrammatical or only very rare in those varieties which have the *for to* construction. We cannot answer this question by corpus linguistic means, but would have to tap the grammatical intuition of speakers of the respective variety. Thus this question supplies an example of a general problem for corpus linguistics, namely that a corpus contains only 'positive' data. That is, it contains actually produced utterances, be they grammatical or not in a given theory of grammar, but does not supply information about which expressions are judged *impossible* in a given language or variety by a speaker (or speakers) of

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[9] a) Actually, *in order not to* seeems to be rare. There are only two instances in the whole BNC, both from written sources.
b) There is one hit for the search sequence *for not to*, namely (i), which seems to be irrelevant:

   (i) I'm happy for <unclear> not to have a change (KM4 1332)

this language or variety.[10] Note that we are not allowed to conclude from the lack of *for not to* constructions in the corpus to its ungrammaticality in every variety of English.

4   Analysis of the corpus data

4.1   A macro-level approach

There are 25 different speakers who produced the 34 utterances that contain *for to* constructions. One speaker (PS269 in FYJ) is responsible for five occurrences, two speakers (PS5R1 in K7G; PS1HJ in KDN) for three occurrences respectively, one speaker (FXDPS000 in FXD) for two occurrences, and all the other 21 speakers for one occurrence each. Biographical data about these speakers, including the indication of their dialectal background as determined by the compilers of the corpus, is not always available to the same extent for all of them. The following table summarises some of the information concerning the speakers or the situational circumstances of the text production. Question marks indicate that the respective piece of information was not available in the corpus.

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[10] See e.g. McEnery & Wilson 1996/2001: ch. 1 for a discussion of the 'positive data problem' and its historical-theoretical background in linguistics.

Table 1

	dialect	age/sex	occupation	location of text production	date	remarks
PS1MT	Welsh	70+/f	retired	Harlow, Essex	1983	
FLKPS008	?	?	?	Edinburgh	?	TV discussion
FXDPS000 (2)	?	?	?	Strathclyde, Lanarkshire	?	
PS269 (5)	?	70/m	retired	Nottingham	?	
PS2CE	Scottish	87/f	housewife	Edinburgh	1985	
PS28U	?	?	doctor	Strathclyde, Lanark	?	
PS29U	Scottish	72/f	farmer	Kilmarnock, Strathclyde	?	
PS2A0	Scottish	76/m	retired	Edinburgh	?	
PS2A5	Scottish	72/m	retired	Galashiels, Borders	?	
PS2UU	Scottish	72/m	retired	Orkneys	1993	
PS2W5	Welsh	93/m	retired	Gwynedd, Caernarfonshire	1987	
J9VPS002	?	?	?	Strensall, North Yorkshire	1993	public county council meeting
PS40G	?	54/m	professional interviewer	near Glasgow	1994	
PS4GG	?	35/m	salesperson	Southwell, Nottinghamshire	1994	
PS5M9	central Midlands	47/m	?	Nottingham	1994	
PS000 in K77	?	?	?	Central London	1994	
PS5PU	Scottish	54/m	?	Inverness, Lothian	1983	
PS5R1 (3)	Scottish	71/m	retired	?	1983	
PS17M	Irish	70/m	retired	Morpeth, Northumberland	1992	
PS000 in KD8	?	?	?	Buckley, Clwyd (Wales)	1992	
PS1HJ (3)	Irish	45/f	housewife	Belfast	1992	
PS0SJ	central Midland	55/f	wages clerk	Leicester	1992	
PS000 in KM2	?	?	?	?	1993	BBC Radio Nottingham broadcast
PS5RS	?	?/m	?	?	?	radio broadcast
PS6CP	?	?/m	?	London	?	TV news

The frequency of *for to* constructions in the spoken part of the BNC is not remarkably high. Its use in this corpus distributes for the greatest part over speakers of Scottish varieties of English. If we concentrate only on those speakers which *are* classified with respect to dialect by the compilers of the BNC, we find seven Scottish English speakers and respectively two of a central Midland, Welsh and Irish dialect. We may speculate with some reason that the dialectal background of those speakers which are not assigned a dialect label tends to correspond to the location where the texts were produced. For example, it is more likely for a speaker to have a Welsh dialectal background if the location of the recording is Wales.[11] If we take this into account, then the majority share of speakers with a Scottish background as the producers of the *for to* construction becomes even greater, since of the ten cases where no dialect but a location is given, four originate in Scotland, two in Nottinghamshire and London respectively, one in North Yorkshire and one in Wales. However, in view of the fact that the frequencies are low and that we do not know what the relative shares in the corpus of the speech production as a whole by speakers of different dialects is,[12] we are hardly allowed to conclude that the *for to* construction is more firmly entrenched in Scottish varieties of English than in others.

There are two more things that may be mentioned with respect to table 1: First, the users of the *for to* construction tend to be rather advanced in age. This may mean that this construction is beginning to die out, i.e. that it is found rarely with younger speakers and perhaps ever more so in the course of time. But again, the number of occurrences in our corpus do not seem to allow such a conclusion to be called other than speculation. Second, there are no instances among the cases where a dialect label is given where the producer of the *for to* construction is said to be a speaker of a northern North England dialect. This is noteworthy in view of the fact that the quotations from Beal (1993) in the introduction of the present paper are from an article about Tyneside and Northumbrian English, i.e. varieties associated with the extreme north-east of England. Of the North dialects, the central Midland variety is the most northern one in which we find an instance of the *for to* construction. Note that the central Midland variety is commonly said to belong to the group of central

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[11] But see the lines PS1MT and PS17M in table 1, where there is no such correspondence between dialect label and location of recording.

[12] In principle it would of course be possible to have a computer programme count the number of words uttered by BNC-speakers of a given dialect and thus to calculate relative frequencies of *for to* constructions for different dialects.

North dialects (see Trudgill 1990), while Tyneside and Northumbrian English belongs to the group of northern North dialects.[13]

4.2 Micro-level aspects

Turning my attention now to the individual cases of *for to* constructions, I start by reviewing their syntactic and semantic functions. As regards syntactic function, most of the *for to* infinitive clauses are adverbial clauses. But there are also cases of noun complementation (item 3 of the Appendix: *something for to give her some energy*; item 4: *something for to pep her up a bit*; item 9: *the need for to play some part in …*; item 14: *a plan for to build a building*),[14] adjective complementation (item 5: *necessary for to touch your hat*; item 27: *too high for to hear them singing*), and subject complement (item 20: *the purposes are for to analyse everybody's linguistic ability*).[15] Note that the SE counterpart to these *for to* constructions in non-adverbial functions is the *to* construction, not the one with *in order to*. To exemplify:

(20) a. it was this background that gave me at least the need for to play some some part in … (item 9)

　　　a'. it was this background that gave me at least the need (*in order) to play some part in … (SE)

　　　b. it was necessary for to touch […] your little cap, when the headmistress went by

　　　b'. it was necessary (*in order) to touch […] your little cap, when the headmistress went by (SE)

As regards the semantic roles of the *for to* infinitive clauses in adverbial function, most of them are purpose clauses. This is to be expected in view of Beal's (1993) remark quoted in section 1 that *for to* corresponds to standard English *to*,

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[13]　It is likely, however, that speaker J9VPS002, who produced one instance of the construction in a public county council meeting in North Yorkshire, is a speaker of the local dialect so that this case may instantiate an occurrence in a northern North dialect.

[14]　Actually, this example is ambiguous. It could also be interpreted with the *for to* clause being an adverbial rather than noun complementation. The larger context of the passage does not allow definite conclusion either. Yet I consider adverbial interpretation ('a plan which helped us to fulfill our purpose to build a building with dressing accommodation') less likely.

[15]　I note here without further consideration that a proper analysis of items 6 (*it was for to get a foothold in the future …*) and 28 (*it's only for to keep your name right …*) requires syntactic argumentation which would exceed the limits and purposes of the present paper.

"especially where it has the sense *in order to*." But there are also other types: The *for to* construction in item 11 of the Appendix (*How long did it take you for to come round?*) seems to instantiate a result clause rather than a purpose clause.[16] Also more resultative than purposive is the *for to* clause in item 33 (*does it have to have a particular [rhythm] for to be recognised and accepted as a piece of poetry ...?*). The *for to* clause in item 24 (*We lose a holiday for to get an hour off the working week*) seems to blend conditional and purposive meanings (cf. *We lose a holiday if we get an hour off the working week / In order to get an hour off the working week, we have to endure the consequence of losing a holiday*). However, as already pointed out in footnote 16, both conditional-purposive and resultative meanings are closely related to more typically purposive meanings. This capacity of the *for to* construction in adverbial function to express a range of related meanings which shade one into the other rather than to express one clearly delimited meaning is nothing special; it is also true for SE *in order to* as well as German *um zu* constructions.

Consider once again item 20 (*the purposes are for to analyse everybody's linguistic ability*). Note that the subject of the superordinate clause of the *for to* clause, i.e. the phrase *the purpose*, is inherently purposive by virtue of the lexical-semantic nature of its head *purpose*. It may be asked whether *for to* infinitive clauses in subject complement function are restricted to cases where the subject expresses a purposive meaning. In other words, is it possible or not for *for to* infinitive clauses to function as subject complements associated with semantically non-purposive subjects, as in (21a), given that the situation in SE is as illustrated in (21b)?

(21) a. the {idea / difficulty} is for to analyse everybody's linguistic ability
          (possible or not in *for to* varieties?)
      b. the {difficulty / idea} is {to / *in order to} analyse everybody's linguistic
          ability (SE)

Theoretically, the answer to the question just raised seems to depend on the following consideration: If *for to* constructions are strictly equivalent to SE *to* constructions, then the answer should be 'yes'. If, however, there is only partial overlap between the syntactic functions and meanings of SE *to* and non-standard *for to*, then there is a possibility that expressions like those in (21a) are not acceptable in *for to* varieties of English. We have seen above that although non-SE *for to* often

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[16] See Quirk et al. (1985: 1079, 1108, 1109, n. a) for the close relation between *to* infinitive clauses which express purpose, result and those which "blend the meanings of time and outcome" (ib.: 1109, n. a).

corresponds to SE *in order to* it is not restricted to this correspondence. On the other hand, it is not clear that the non-SE *for to* construction has the same range of functions and meanings as the SE *to*-construction.

Note that the *for to* infinitive clauses retrieved from the corpus are all subjectless. We certainly cannot conclude from this that they may not contain subjects. The corpus data raise the question whether subjects in *for to* clauses are grammatical or not, but does not provide an answer.

Another micro-level aspect which I would like to address is whether the speakers of a *for to* variety are consistent in their use of this non-standard feature. It may appear that this question could be directly expressed in the following way: Do such speakers use the *for to* construction always instead of its standard counterpart, or do they switch between them? However, recall that we do not know what the exact SE equivalent of the *for to* construction is – or indeed, whether there is such an equivalent in the first place. That is, the problem of consistency in usage is linked to the problem of the precise syntactic and semantic properties of the *for to* construction. But this does also mean that approaching the question of consistency may shed some light on the syntactic/semantic problem. I have chosen to make a few steps in that direction by taking a closer look at the utterances of the speaker with the most *for to* utterances (PS269 in FYJ). More specifically, I am interested in whether this speaker produced also (SE) *to* constructions, and given that he does, whether we can make out systematic differences between his use of *to* and *for to* constructions. In order to access all the utterances which contain *to* constructions by this speaker, I had SARA perform a search of *to* tagged TO0 (i.e. *to* as infinitive marker, not as preposition (PRP)) over the subcorpus consisting of only text FYJ. This yields also utterances by the second speaker in this text, which have to be ignored.[17]

The first thing to be noted is that PS269 actually uses a number of *to* constructions. I am going to classify them with respect to syntactic criteria. The (parts of) utterances given are exemplary, not exhaustive:

1. After verbs which are neither clearly auxiliary nor lexical:

    (22) a. So it didn't seem to be of any hardship to to anybody for for the mother to be involved in er political activity

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[17] Originally I tried to have SARA perform a search of *to* tagged TO0 in the utterances made by PS269 by making use of the query builder such that I edited the scope node with the 'who' attribute in the 'u' element being assigned the value PS269. In principle, this would have given the *to* infinitive constructions used by PS269 only. For some reason though this kind of search process did not terminate, irrespective of whether the search was carried out over the whole corpus or the subcorpus consisting of only text FYJ.

    b. he was dismissed, and was unable to get employment in the er in the industry, until er the latter thirties, middle thirties

    c. they ought to you know help the Spanish people in a real, serious, and er and personal capacity

2. As noun complementations:

(23) a. … helped him in er in his endeavour to become a county councillor after the er after the second world war

    b. And d it was the duty of these police to protect these er er these people

    c. ... political determination to do something about it

3. As adjective complementations:

(24) a. it's hard to say whether they were any

    b. it's difficult for people to appreciate today er ... the amount of political activity that took place during this early thirty period

4. As direct objects:

(25) a. they started to run ... and everybody else started to run

    b. they er they decided to er to send out barrels of beer

    c. people wanted to give er expression to their support to the maximum

5. As adverbial clauses, with purposive meaning:

(26) a. he gave the signal that these that these reserves should er should clear the street to make way for the to make way for the scabs

    b. people would try front doors to see if they could get in front doors

    c. he was supposed to g go to West Bridgford *to talk to this Co-op Comrades Circle on the problems of the Saar*

    d. And he sent me to tell them he couldn't come, you see

    e. we were going forward to take up positions on er on the river

Especially the last category of examples suggests that PS269 is not consistent in his use of *for to* constructions, for he uses the *to* construction even in the syntactic/semantic domain where *for to* is most strongly represented in general. It does not seem to be possible to detect a syntactic or semantic reason for his choosing a *to* construction rather than *for to* in these cases. That is, we are probably confronted with the phenomenon of variety switching here: The speaker uses the non-SE construction sometimes and the SE construction at other times. The same can be said about this speaker's use of *to* and *for to* constructions as adjective and noun

complementations; see items 5 and 9 in the Appendix in comparison to the examples of *to* infinitive clauses as adjective and noun complementations mentioned above. Our hope that comparing the speaker's use of the *for to* construction with that of the *to* construction may shed some light on potential syntactic and semantic restrictions on the former is shattered by the existence of variety switching.

5   Conclusion

The investigation of *for to* constructions in the spoken part of the BNC carried out in the present paper has raised more questions than it has answered. The construction is certainly still in use in present-day English. However, the number of instances found in the corpus is rather low. This may be due to an observer effect. By this I mean an increased probability that recording the utterances of speakers adds a situational factor which causes them to use more standard features than otherwise, even if the other situational factors are so arranged as to suggest an informal context, i.e. one in which non-standard features are likely to be encountered. But it may also be that *for to* constructions are actually rather rare. Anyway, Beal's (1993) observation that it is primarily used with a purposive sense is supported by our investigation. But we have also noted exceptions to this usage. Also supported (within the limits of the low number of occurrences) is the claim that the construction is typical of Scottish, Irish and North England non-SE varieties. It may be pointed out in addition that the construction does not seem to be restricted to northern North England varieties and that it appears to occur in Welsh English as well.

There are a couple of questions about *for to* in *for to* varieties which the corpus investigation has drawn our attention to, but has not been able to anwer: Is it possible to have negated *for to* infinitive clauses? Is it possible to have a subject of *for to* infinitive clauses? Are there any syntactic and/or semantic restrictions on *for to* constructions which make them different to both SE *to* and *in order to* constructions? We have seen indications that *for to* is not completely equivalent to either of these SE counterparts, but the corpus material does not allow us to reach firm conclusions here. The fact that speakers appear to switch between standard and non-standard usages – or, at least, that we have to take the possibility of variety switching into account – blurs the picture considerably.

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Appendix: List of *for to* constructions in the BNC

1. (PS1MT in F7Y 120) This is ... how we felt. And we had so many good people ... in the beginning, as I say, that really ... wanted to help ... **for to** make ... entertainment, you know?
2. (FLKPS008 in FLK 390) It's actually women of our age group that has gotta take the responsibility **for to** make changes, so that women in the next generation have got that opportunity that we did nah have till now ... and that's the whole point of it.
3. (FXDPS000 in FXD 60) I don't like to ask you but me mam asked you me to ask you if you could give her something **for to** give her some energy, she's sleeping all the time now.
4. (FXDPS000 in FXD 66) Just something **for to** pep her up a bit.
5. (PS269 in FYJ 79) Er ... well er I d I remember the er in the infants, er in the infants section it was necessary for to er **for to** touch y touch your hat, touch your little cap, er when the er when the headmistress when the headmistress er went by.
6. (PS269 in FYJ 145) and these two men would employ half a dozen other men, you see, and whether w whether it was **for to** to to to get a foothold in the future **for to** be one of these contractors or not, I j I just don't know.
7. (PS269 in FYJ 299) but what we were able to do on one occasion was er to raise enough money for one or two of us, **for to** er go to London by the train, and er be in Hyde Park when er the er the various contingents from e er from various areas er of London, marched er marched into er marched into Hyde Park.
8. (PS269 in FYJ 357) Er ... not really. I er I was a keen cyclist. ... Er, mind many people, many people relied on the cycle er **for to** get about you see.
9. (PS269 in FYJ 459) And it was this background you see that er that er th th that gave me at least the need **for to** to play some some part in
10. (PS2CE in G62 252) No oh he would no he had always his his idea coming **for to** sell something.
11. (PS28U in GY9 77) Mm. How long did it take you **for to** come round?
12. (PS29U in GYS 154) And he, he got a good price for them with them being washed **for to** put potatoes in.
13. (PS2A0 in GYU 288) That was one [laugh] we got our free milk [...] as many pints of milk as we required **for to** keep our fam but no more, no more than that, just [...] much your family had they'd allow you a pint per [...] per person.
14. (PS2A5 in GYW 554) And er we had a plan **for to** build a building with er dressing accommodation and er this was gonna cost seven thousand pound
15. (PS2UU in HE9 978) No we got we got an oilskin coat and a pair of rubber boots.<PS000>: [laugh] <PS2UU>: **For to** to protect you [...] in the tunnel they said you wear a helmet, but nobody hardly ever wore it.
16. (PS2W5 in HEU 33) There was two of them and they used to go all day at the quarry **for to** get bring the slates down to [...].
17. (J9VPS002 in J9V 178) And the other material consideration or one of the other material considerations that comes into play **for to** determine particular applications is indeed Government guidance.
18. (PS40G in J9X 643) Now we ask er the club to supply er in between us signing them up **for to** to do the cards to them to the consultant erm er getting there getting there to do the assignment could be five or six months.
19. (PS4GG in JNX 492) [...] **for to** protect your furnishings [...]
20. (PS5M9 in K6W 4) For the purposes of the tape I think er we ought to explain that our management meetings are always run on very serious lines with no, no jokes allowed, er first of all I think we should just place on the record that this meeting is being taped everybody recognises that, and the purposes are **for to** analyse everybody's linguistic ability and later on Tracy's going to recite her piece her presentation for the purpose of the tape.

21. (PS000 in K77 235) but our feeling very much on surplus is that the money is there first **for to** pay pensions and until pensions are paid up to Inland Revenue levels whatever they are, then no money should go back to the company.
22. (PS5PU in K7D 292) And there would be always a beast or two cut up **for to** be given to the village.
23. (PS5R1 in K7G 7) As a family we couldn't get away from school quick enough to try and earn a bob or two **for to** help my mother.
24. (PS5R1 in K7G 308) We lose a holiday **for to** get an hour off the working week.
25. (PS5R1 in K7G 409) But one of the complaints that I was very bitter about was at that time I cycled to my work and they had paving stones in the bakery with the slits in them **for to** keep bikes.
26. (PS17M in KB8 11327) And now I'm starting to look **for to** get some
27. (PS000 in KD8 5853) you can't, I know I don't hear very well, but it was too h too high **for to** hear them singing.
28. (PS1HJ in KDN 4265) I said he knows he's in the wrong ... and [...] he's being nice to the other two because they're not present ... [...] . I says it's only **for to** keep your name right.
29. (PS1HJ in KDN 4773) They do it **for to** keep him going and then they'll say ... he says you know I'm used to getting up at half four and going so many miles every morning for a big jog.
30. (PS1HJ in KDN 4794) And he sends her money home every week, when he's in the army and he's not here ... **for to** help her get the place sorted out ... and with the price of everything so dear.
31. (PS0SJ in KDV 2537) I've got some of that Footworks **for to** <ptr target=KDVLC0W0> <u who=PS0SC> <ptr target=KDVLC0VY> If, I show you mine will me show me yours? <ptr target=KDVLC0W0> rub off hard skin.[18]
32. (PS000 in KM2 771) <PS30G>: But a Guinness a day you know. <PS30C>: [laughing] Helps you [] <PS30G>: Helps you on your way or something like that.<PS000>: [...] <PS000>: Helps you **for to** get out of play.
33. (PS5RS in KRF 759) Are there any rules for writing poetry in the sense that does it have to rhyme, does it have to have a rhythm, does it have to have a particular **for to** be recognised and accepted as a piece of poetry as opposed, perhaps, to a piece of prose?
34. (PS6CP in KRU 582) In Kuwait, the resistance, we are not trying to kill them, we are trying to destroy their tanks, to destroy their erm bases, to take their weapons, and to bring them to our sides **for to** send them to Saudi.

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[18] The SGML-tags '<ptr target=…> serve to indicate overlapping speech by different speakers. In this case, the utterance starting with "If" by speaker PS0SC sets in after "for to" by speaker PS0SJ (indicated by the tag with 'target=KDVLC0VY'). The continuation of PS0SJ's utterance ("rub off hard skin") is indicated by the second tag with 'target=KDVLC0W0'.