

Actual Behaviors of Newly Observed Phraseological Units Comprising Two Prepositions

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Abstract

This paper describes, from a phraseological perspective, phrases created by combining two prepositions into a complex preposition (CP), defined as a word group that functions as a single preposition; for example, *into*, *within*, and *upon*. In particular, this work focuses on the newly observed CPs *on against* and *in to* and proposes that *be on against* and *be in to* are newly observed phraseological units in contemporary English, which have not yet been described in previous research or English dictionaries. A recent trend in English is to combine two prepositions into new CPs such as *in at*, and *in for*. In particular, two adverbial particles *in* and *on* co-occur with various prepositions and help establish new CPs. For example, MED² (*Macmillan English Dictionary*, 2nd edition) lists new CPs such as *in at*, *in for*, *in on*, *on about*, and *on at*. Data obtained from corpora of present-day English show that *on against* and *in to* mainly co-occur with *be* verbs, and *be on against* and *be in to* are also observed. However, an extensive literature review shows that previous research and English dictionaries do not address this trend. This research describes their polysemy in different contexts, their functions, formations, and stress patterns.

Keywords: *be on against*, *be in to*, complex preposition, contemporary English, corpora, phraseology, phraseological units

1. Introduction

Present-day English changes by the hour. Mair and Leech (2006) and Leech et al. (2009) summarized English grammatical changes observed in English over the last few decades by showing data obtained from corpora (Note 1). Research on the changes in present-day English, including Mair and Leech (2006) and Leech et al. (2009), mainly focus on describing English lexical changes and grammaticalization. However, little attention has been paid to showing the actual behavior of newly emerged phrases (generally defined as repeatedly used word-combinations consisting of at least two words). English dictionaries recently published in Europe and the United States attempt to keep current with newly observed phrases, but their descriptions cannot entirely document their actual behavior.

Phraseology, the study of phrases, is based on the idea that phrases play an essential role in the efficiency of language use. When we read a newspaper, we can easily find a large number of phrases consisting of already known and familiar phrases. However, we do not entirely understand their full meanings and such phrases are ubiquitous in language and constitute a significant resource for communication. Further, although such phrases help English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners sound as fluent as native speakers of English, such phrasal expressions can cause difficulties for EFL learners, who need to understand them to gain native-like proficiency in English. Hence, the study focuses on the distribution and behavior of phrases, which have been overlooked so far and not yet been correctly understood.

This study focuses on the following two points. First, it documents the actual behaviors of newly observed phrases such as *on against* and *in to* from corpus data, with the assumption that the meanings of phrases are closely related to their syntactic patterns. In addition, it describes these newly observed phrases as having their own grammatical function as complex prepositions and co-occurring with the *be*, as in *be on against* and *be in to*. In other words, the phrases comprise two function words that behave as a content word because sentences including these phrases do not make sense without them. This phenomenon is the opposite of grammaticalization—that is, they represent a form of degrammaticalization. Second, the study shows how the

phrases functioning as complex prepositions are formed, referring to the general rules of word formations.

2. Phraseology

2.1 Definitions and Goals

2.1.1 What is Phraseology?

As a general word, phraseology is defined as “(A) choice of arrangement of words and phrases; style of expression; the particular form of this which characterizes a language, author, work, etc.” (*Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, 6th edition). Therefore, phraseology can be used as unique English phraseology (compared with other languages), Hemingway’s phraseology (i.e., the characteristics of expressions and stylistics) and legal phraseology (i.e., words, terms, and phrases only used in legal discourse).

In linguistic research, the subfield of phraseology addresses collocations (Note 2), idioms (Note 3), multi-word expressions (Note 4), and formulae (Note 5). However, practically, the coverage of phraseology is much wider and included the syntactic patterns such as the possible complements of verbs, predicative adjectives, and nouns. Consequently, phraseology is a linguistic research field dealing with individual linguistic phenomena or irregularities.

In phraseology, the phrases under discussion have been given varied labels: phraseological unit, phraseme, recurrent-word combinations, or fixed expressions and idioms. The study adopts the most generic term, phraseological units (PUs).

2.2 Relevance of Phraseology

Increased attention to phraseology has been largely due to the advancement of corpus linguistics, the growing interest in lexicography, and the phraseological application for language education, among other factors. The syntactic rules and lexicons assumed in existing linguistic theories are suited for explaining the roles a large number of PUs play in contexts where they are applied for language acquisition and use. Cowie (1998) and Howarth (1999) show that there is significant difference in the use of collocations between academic papers written in English by native and non-native English speakers. In other words, the naturalness of a target language is revealed in the use of PUs. It is possible to infinitely generate sentences by using the syntactic rules and lexicons explained in linguistic theories, but there is no guarantee that the sentences generated in this manner will sound as fluent English, even if they are grammatically correct and semantically congruent. Phraseology investigates what phrases sound consistent with native speech, and can inform language teaching aimed at native-like speech.

2.3 Function of PUs

The significance of PUs originally came from the necessity for effective foreign language education, as expressed in the following:

- (1) ... communicative competence is not a matter of knowing rules for the composition of sentences... It is much more a matter of knowing a stock of partially pre-assembled patterns, formulaic frameworks, and a kit of rules, so to speak, and being able to apply the rules to make whatever adjustments are necessary according to contextual demands. Communicative competence in this view is essentially a matter of adaptation, and rules are not generative but regulative and subservient. (Widdowson, 1989, p. 135, also quoted in Willis, 2003, p. 142)

This idea completely differs from linguistic theory, which focuses on syntax. (1) states that patterns or PUs such as multi-word expressions or formulae lie at the heart of language. Grammatical rules merely play a coordinating role subordinate to PUs. Hence, it is clear from this that the knowledge necessary for communication is about a large number of PUs and patterns, and not about grammatical rules.

3. Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Assumptions

The present study is a descriptive investigation that examines linguistic phenomena concretely and does not rely on any major linguistic theory such as those of generative grammar. The basic thesis on which this research is based is the theory of semantic syntax, which is based on the assumption that the part of the meaning of a word is closely related to the syntactic characteristics of the word.

3.2 Definitions

As described in 2.1, phraseology is an inclusive term for the study of phrases.

As Cowie (1998) states, “in phraseology, as in other fields within linguistics, it is not uncommon for individual scholars to apply different terms to the same category (or the same term to different categories). I have, therefore, thought it essential—while not suppressing individual differences—to provide a general framework, in which the terms used by any one individual can be understood in relation to those used by others.” As mentioned in 2.1, this study adopts the most widespread term in phraseological research, phraseological units (PUs), defined as repeatedly used word-strings consisting of at least two words.

3.3 Data

Data used in this study comes from BNC, Word Banks *Online*, the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), and the Larry King Live Corpus (Note 6). A corpus study is optimal for this investigation for the following three reasons, as noted by Sampson (2001).

First, it is objective because a corpus is simply a collection of actual spoken and written text. In addition, a corpus study permits easy access to data for language research requiring spontaneously generated data.

Next, it is a basic requirement of research for a third party to verify the research results. Corpora make it possible for a third party to verify the research results. In other words, human intuitions, which allow no access to any person besides the researcher, would not make objective data available for validation by a third party.

The final advantage of using a corpus is that it allows researchers whose native language is not the language under investigation (in the present case, English) to study that language on an equal footing with native-speaking researchers. Corpus studies simply make it easier for non-native speakers to have access to quality data (Inoue, 2007).

3.4 Stress Patterns of Phraseological Units

Inoue (2009) investigated and analyzed the stress patterns of various PUs, and then proposed four tentative rules for PU stress patterns, shown in (2).

- (2) a. Stress patterns of phrases cannot be predicted simply by whether a word is a function or content word
- b. Stress is placed on the word with which a speaker wants to convey the most important meaning
- c. Set phrases have stable stress patterns, as do words
- d. Set phrase does not necessarily consist of one tone group and each word consisting of set phrases has each tone (Inoue, 2009, pp. 133)

This study investigates whether the four rules adapt to the stress patterns of PUs (*be on against* and *be in to*) by analyzing them using the phonetic analysis software, Praat (Note 7).

3.5 Word-formation Processes

There has been a good deal of discussion in the literature on word formation (Allen, 1978; Bauer, 1983; Bybee, 1985; Ito & Sugioka, 2002; Lieber, 1983; Pinker, 1994; Plag, 2003; Siegel, 1974; Nishikawa, 2013) among others. (3) summarizes the general processes of word formation:

- (3) a. compounding e.g., sleep walk, highway
- b. derivation e.g., unkind
- c. borrowing e.g. nintendo
- d. conversion e.g., Xerox (n.) — xerox (v).
- e. acronym e.g., CALL, CIA, FBI
- f. backformation e.g., begger → beg
- g. shortening e.g., mathematics → math, gasoline → gas
- h. blending e.g., breakfast + lunch → brunch
- i. lexicalization of phrases e.g., catch-me-if-you-can, passer(s)-by
- j. metaanalysis e.g., hamburger → ham + burger (rather hamburg + -er)

- k. root creation e.g., bow-wow, hic, zzz, beep, sniff, snore

It is natural to assume that new words are coined by combining familiar and well-known words. This process is very similar to kennings in Old English, which produced new words by combining previously existing words. Processes (3a), (3b), (3e), and (3f) are highly productive. It is noteworthy that the PUs discussed in this study differs from new words coined through the processes in (3), in that the PUs are composed solely of free morphemes such as *on* and *against*. However, this study shows how the process in (3) can help explain the formation of newly observed PUs.

4. Complex Prepositions

Prepositions are morphologically classified into the three types: (i) polysemous simple prepositions such as *at*, *in*, and *of*; (ii) complex prepositions comprising two or more prepositions (e.g., *into*, *within*, *in front of*), some of which are polysemous, but others monosemous; (iii) monosemous group prepositions formed by a preposition and another category (e.g., *according to*, *in accordance with*, *with regard to*, etc.).

This study applied a CP to phrases comprising “a preposition + (an element) + a preposition” and defined CPs as PUs repeatedly used in different contexts. In reference to the classification of prepositions in Yasui (1983), this study adopts group prepositions for CPs used in Quirk et al. (1985), Akimoto (1999, 2002, 2005), Quirk and Mulholland (1968), Hoffman (2001, 2004, 2005), and Tottie and Hoffman (2001).

MED² lists new word combinations used with *be* such as *be in at*, *be in for*, *be in on* under the entry for *in*, *be on about*, and *be on at* under the entry for *on*. In addition, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 8th edition (OALD⁸) describes *be in at*, *be in for*, *be in on*, and *be in with* as word combinations. It is not difficult to find new word combinations besides those listed in English dictionaries in contemporary English corpora such as COCA; for example, *in and of*, *in and out*, *on against*, and *in to*. This study focuses on *on against* and *in to*.

A word combination must serve one of several functions to be considered a CP. These functions are listed in (4):

- (4) a. place adverb
 b. sentence adverb
 c. intransitive verb complement
 d. predicate adverbial (with linking verb)
 e. transitive verb complement
 f. nominal modifier
 g. prepositional adverb
 h. transitive verb complement adverbial
 i. modification by adverbs (rare)

The CPs *on against* and *in to* only fulfill condition (4d). We can see from (3) that not all word combinations consisting of two prepositions fulfill the conditions shown in (4).

5. The PU *Be On Against*

This section examines how *be on against* functions in context and how it evolved.

5.1 Functions of *On and Against*

No attempt has been made to give a functional explanation of *be on against*. *On*, as discussed in this work, appears as the complement of *be* and functions as an adverb. It is used to mean that something is happening. In case words like actor/actress, TV program, or movie appear as a subject and follow *on*, *on* is used to show that the actor/actress, TV program, or movie is being broadcast. Please look at the following examples of *on* quoted from dictionaries.

- (5) a. Eastenders is *on* TV tonight. (MED²)
 b. What time is Star Trek *on*? (LDCE⁵)
 c. She'll be *on* soon. (Youth)
 d. You should go to Chicago while the festival is *on*. (Longman)

A preposition *against* is commonly understood to mean “in opposition to somebody or something,” which means that it retains its lexical meaning. Also, there is no significant different in the definition of *against* in previous studies.

5.2 Meanings of *be on against*

The function of *be on against* is described in the section. The following are a few examples of its use (italicized by the author).

(6) KING: One hour?

MCGRAW: It's going to be an hour.

KING: You said 3:00, 4:00 in the afternoon. Are you going to *be on against* Oprah?

MCGRAW: Oh, absolutely not. My mama didn't raise a fool. (Larry King Live, Feb., 2002)

(7) KING: -would they have stayed with you?

DON HEWITT: -we've been on what, 29 years?

MIKE WALLACE: Twenty-eight.

DON HEWITT: I would have taken 29 weeks. Well, it will be 29.

KING: You *were on against* Marcus Welby, right?

DON HEWITT: Marcus Welby, M.D. Great doctor. (Larry King Live, May, 1996)

(8) KING: She, of course, is starting her fourth season this Monday on—she's with Paramount domestic television. She's in 217 markets. And now her rival, replacing Mayor Ed Koch as the host of "The People's Court," is Judge Jerry Sheindlin, and that show is produced by Warner Brothers. And in many markets, they will *be on against* each other. Why, Jerry? (Larry King Live, Sep., 1999)

(9) KING: Bill Moyers - simply one of the best. Sports for Sale tomorrow night on PBS, a three-hour special including your phone calls. We'll be back tomorrow night with a full hour with H. Ross Perot—We'll *be on against* each other. Americans have a great choice tomorrow! Wolf Blitzer is on The Larry King Radio Show in one hour. Bernard Shaw and Susan Rook are next. Good night. (Larry King Live, Mar., 1991)

(10) KING: And of course, he hosts the "Dr. Phil Show," syndicated. You would have to check newspapers in your area for time and station. One thing though, if you see Oprah, he won't *be on against* her. It's a Harpo. It's involved in the productions and they ain't going to allow that. (COCA, spoken, 2001)

On the basis of the above examples, *be on against* is used most often to mean "compete." In that case, *be on against* appears in the syntactic pattern of "subject + *be on against*." Its prototypical syntactic pattern is "subject + *be on against*." Two other syntactic patterns also occur for *be on against*: "subject (somebody, a TV or radio program) + *be on against* + somebody/ a TV or radio program" and "subject (somebody or races) + *be on against* + each other." The first one is used to mean that somebody or a TV/radio program is competing with another person or TV/radio program broadcast simultaneously on another station. Examples (6), (7), and (10) exemplify the first pattern. The second is used to express the idea people or races are competing with each other. Examples (8) and (9) exemplify this usage.

Let us examine some of the preceding examples. In (6), King and McGraw are discussing Oprah Winfrey, who hosts a popular talk show in the U.S. *Be on against* is used to ask McGraw whether his talk show will compete with his show broadcast simultaneously on another station. *Be on against* in (7) is used to show that the program co-hosted by Hewitt and Wallace for 28 years has been competing with Marcus Welby, which aired at the same time. In (8), the second syntactic pattern (subject + *be on against* + each other) is used. The pattern means that the two programs under discussion competed against each other as if in a series of market competitions.

The above examples of *be on against* lead us to believe that *be on against* is used to show that a person, TV/ radio programs simultaneously compete with someone else or another TV/radio program. This is the major difference between *go against* and *be on against*.

5.3 Analysis of *be on against*

As is commonly assumed, *be on against* syntactically consists of [be on] [against], as in [The war is on] [against poverty], which means that the war to eliminate poverty continues. However, [be on against] is reanalyzed as a lexical unit by its repeated use, coming to hold the idiomatic meaning *compete*. For example, [the war is on] [against poverty] becomes [the war [is on against] poverty], which means that the war continues as a fight against poverty. By moderate advances, any word implying *compete* can appear as the subject of a sentence, so *be on against* develops the meaning that one program or person competes with another that is counterprogrammed. The formation of *be on against* suits for metaanalysis and lexicalization of phrases already mentioned in (2). *On against* co-occurs with a noun (phrase), so it has a function as a complex preposition within

grammatical category and a function word in sentences. However, *on against* semantically behaves like a verb and is essential in sentences. This is a very interesting example in contemporary English, in which a PU consists of functions words acting as a content word.

5.4 Distribution of Verbs with *on against*

Verbs besides *be* can be used with *on against*: *go, work, carry, focus, hold, hang, move, come, and keep*. From a cursory examination of these verbs, the following fact emerges: All verbs co-occurring with *on* are established as phrasal verbs (e.g., *go on, work on, carry on, focus on, hold on, hang on, move on, come on, and keep on*). To cite a couple of examples, *carry on against* syntactically consists of [carry on] [against] and *work on against* is formed of [work on] [against]. The syntactic structure pattern holds true for other phrasal verbs. In other words, expressions such as *work on against, hold on against, and focus on against* result from phrasal verbs such as *work on* and *come on* appearing alongside *against*. Hence, the lexical meanings of each phrasal verb survive.

On the other hand, *be* is the most appropriate verb for *on against* to show its meaning (i.e., compete) because other verbs such as *go, come, carry, focus, and hold* are not semantically bleached, as is *be*. In other words, *be* is the most semantically bleached verb (i.e., unmarked) and it does not impede the meaning of *on against*.

5.5 Stress Patterns of *be on against*

I asked seven native speakers of English (four Americans, a Canadian, a speaker of British English, and an Australian) to read the following passages in (11) to confirm whether the tentative stress rules of PUs in (2) are valid in the case of *be on against*.

- (11) a. KING: And of course, he hosts the “Dr. Phil Show,” syndicated. You would have to check newspapers in your area for time and station. One thing though, if you see Oprah, he won’t be on against her.
- b. KING: One hour?
MCGRAW: It’s going to be an hour.
KING: You said 3:00, 4:00 in the afternoon. Are you going to be on against Oprah?
MCGRAW: Oh, absolutely not. My mama didn’t raise a fool.
- c. DON HEWITT: We’ve been on what, 29 years?
MIKE WALLACE: Twenty-eight.
DON HEWITT: I would have taken 29 weeks. Well, it will be 29.
KING: You were on against Marcus Welby, right?
DON HEWITT: Marcus Welby, M.D... Great doctor.
- d. KING: She, of course, is starting her fourth season this Monday on – she’s with Paramount domestic television. She’s in 217 markets. And now her rival, replacing Mayor Ed Koch as the host of “The People’s Court” is Judge Jerry Sheindlin, and that show is produced by Warner Brothers. And in many markets, they will be on against each other. Why, Jerry?
- e. KING: Was it a hit right away?
VAN DYKE: No. We went in the toilet the first year.
KING: You are kidding!
VAN DYKE: We were on against “Perry Como,” which was a very, very popular show. And, of course, my name didn’t mean any –nobody had ever heard of me.
- f. KING: They have lit it up in blue and white tonight, the colors of the New York Yankees, who are participating in their 35th World Series. As you know, they’re on against us. But, this program is repeated at midnight, Eastern time, 9:00 Pacific.
- g. KING:.... We’ll be back tomorrow night with a full hour with H. Ross Perot–We’ll be on against each other. Americans have a great choice tomorrow! Wolf Blitzer is on The Larry King Radio Show in one hour. Bernard Shaw and Susan Rook are next. Good night.

Table 1. Stress patterns of *be on against*

	be ón against	be on ágainst	be ón ágainst	sum
(11a)	6	1	0	7
(11b)	7	0	0	7
(11c)	6	1	0	7
(11d)	6	1	0	7
(11e)	6	0	1	7
(11f)	7	0	0	7
(11g)	7	0	1	7

The following facts emerge from Table 1. First, in *be on against*, *on* is generally stressed. In other words, rule (2c) holds for *be on against*. Primary stress falls on *on* because *be* is pronounced as a weak form, meaning rule (2b) is valid. Finally, (2d) is true for *be on against* because some informants put stress on all components of *be on against*.

6. PU *be in to*

This section examines *be in to*, a newly observed PU in contemporary English, not described in previous research nor in English dictionaries. We demonstrate that *in to* behaves as a CP.

Consider the following examples of *be in to* appearing in contemporary English (italicized by the author).

- (12) WHITFIELD So, is it feasible, in your opinion, to think that a shuttle could be launched by this fall?
CABBAGE: I think it's feasible. But I think it may *be in to* 2005 before the shuttle actually does fly. There are a lot of people within NASA who think that it's going to take that long, not only to make the organizational changes, get them underway, but also hardware changes they'll have to make as well.
(COCA, spoken, 2004)
- (13) BILL HEMMER, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Miles, good morning to you again from Tallahassee. Again, that deadline coming up quickly, tomorrow five o'clock when any amended votes have to *be in to* the Secretary of State's office here in Tallahassee.
(COCA, spoken, 2000)
- (14) Mr. RODRIGUEZ: Police can't do what mothers and fathers and schools and churches and other things should be doing. In many ways the police are dealing with the back end of the problem. The kids already are raging; already has a gun in his hand; already *is in to* the drug trade.
(COCA, spoken, 1993)
- (15) GREENBERG: I know a little bit about him. I know that he grew up in the north suburbs, ended up in Plainfield, which is way in the far south suburbs. He's an avid hunter, loves to hunt. I don't know if that adds anything to the case or not. And he knows a lot about the criminal law aspects, because he *was in to* some computer criminalistics kind of specialty work that he was trying to develop.
(COCA, spoken, 2007)
- (16) "Listen, Phil. I know you can listen even if you can't talk. Do you know the whereabouts of Rose Hilaire? She hasn't *been in to* Belmodes, and is not answering her phone...."
(BNC, written, 1990)

What do all of these examples of *be in to* mean? Are they used in the same manner semantically? The three tentative findings are as follows: (i) *Be in to* tends to have been used mainly in spoken English, and British and American English. Even the Database of Analysed Texts of English (DANTE), which contains a large number of phrases, does not contain *be in to*; (ii) *be in to* is observed in any tense and aspect; and (iii) *be in to* is frequently used with a noun (phrase), implying a location.

6.1 Difference Between *be into* and *be in to*

Quirk et al. (1985) and Ishibashi (ed.) (1966) note that *onto* can be spelled as *on to* in British English and that there is no semantic and functional difference between *onto* and *on to*. Similar to *onto*, there is concern that *in to* is the same as *into*. This section clarifies the issue. Consider the examples of *be into*.

- (17) a. I *was not into* ambition, manipulation, or the politics of getting on. (DANTE)
 b. At home, everyone *is into* health-food and diet drinks. (*ibid.*)
 c. Q: *Are you into* pilates or yoga? (*ibid.*)
 d. Suddenly, she's *into* yoga and things like that. (MED²)

These examples illustrate that *be into* is used to state what activity or subject someone is interested in, and that *be into* is followed by an abstract or a common noun implying activity or subject. In contrast, *be in to* in (13) to (17) co-occurs with a proper noun (e.g., a place) or a common noun. Consequently, *be into* and *be in to* appear in distinct environments with different uses.

6.2 Behavior of *be in to* in Natural Speech

This section describes the actual behavior of *be in to* in various contexts.

6.2.1 Functions of *in* and *to*

According to MED², *in* and *to* have the following functions as demonstrated in (18) and (19), respectively.

- (18) a. used for showing where someone or something is
 b. into something
 c. arriving somewhere
 d. used for showing when something happens
 e. used for talking about numbers and amounts
 f. used for stating areas of activity
 g. used for describing a particular state, situation, or relationship
 h. wearing something
 i. used for stating what changes
 j. used for talking about the way something is done
 k. used for describing ways of writing, drawing, or painting
 l. included as part of a group
 m. used for describing how things are arranged
 n. used for referring to colours
 o. used for referring to the weather
 p. used for mentioning the book, film etc where someone or something appears
 q. used for showing in what way something is true
 r. written or drawn to complete something
 s. doing something with a particular feeling
 t. given, sent, or received
 u. used for stating what contains a particular substance
 v. available at a shop
 w. used for stating who is BATTING in CRICKET
 x. used for stating who or what has particular qualities
 y. elected
 z. fashionable
 α. when the sea is high
 β. breaking inwards (MED²)
- (19) a. used as part of an infinitive
 b. going somewhere
 c. when you tell, give, or show someone something

- d. facing or pointing towards someone/something
- e. used for saying where someone/something is
- f. when someone is affected by something
- g. in a particular relationship with someone/something
 - (i) used for explaining a relationship between people or thing
 - (ii) used for stating which person or organization someone does a particular job
- h. when something is connected or fastened
- i. when something changes or develops
- j. as far as a limit
- k. until
- l. before the hour
- m. used for stating someone's opinion
- n. causing a particular reaction
- o. used for showing how numbers are related
- p. used for giving the score in a game
- q. closed or almost closed.
- r. used for showing a possible range
- s. needed for something
- t. while there is a sound.
- u. touching something

(MED²)

6.2.2 Meaning and Function of *be in to*

Examples (20), (21), (22), (23), and (24) are the same as Examples (12), (13), (14), (15), and (16). Example (26) is quoted from the corpora.

- (20) WHITFIELD So, is it feasible, in your opinion, to think that a shuttle could be launched by this fall?
 CABBAGE: I think it's feasible. But I think it may *be in to* 2005 before the shuttle actually does fly. There are a lot of people within NASA who think that it's going to take that long, not only to make the organizational changes, get them underway, but also hardware changes they'll have to make as well. (COCA, spoken, 2004)
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- (22) Mr. RODRIGUEZ: Police can't do what mothers and fathers and schools and churches and other things should be doing. In many ways the police are dealing with the back end of the problem. The kids already are raging; already has a gun in his hand; already *is in to* the drug trade. And we want them to resolve the issues.... (COCA, spoken, 1993)
- (23) GREENBERG: I know a little bit about him. I know that he grew up in the north suburbs, ended up in Plainfield, which is way in the far south suburbs. He's an avid hunter, loves to hunt. I don't know if that adds anything to the case or not. And he knows a lot about the criminal law aspects, because he *was in to* some computer criminalistics kind of specialty work that he was trying to develop.... (COCA, spoken, 2007)
- (24) "Listen, Phil. I know you can listen even if you can't talk. Do you know the whereabouts of Rose Hilaire? She hasn't *been in to* Belmodes, and is not answering her phone....."(BNC, written, 1990)
- (25) ELLIE JOSTAD, NANCY GRACE PRODUCER: They'd spend some time together in the afternoon. And then Dad would go back to the house, which he was trying to make more habitable for the kids. So, apparently, he was unaware that the kids hadn't *been in to* school all last week until on Saturday, he got a letter from the school saying they'd been absent.

(COCA, spoken, 2011)

As noted in Section 6.1, *be in to* tends to be used mainly in spoken British and American English, and is frequently used with a noun (phrase), implying a location. This is seen in examples from (20) to (25).

Be in to appears in all tenses and aspects; however, semantic differences distinguish past and present tense *be in to* and perfective *has/have been in to*. Consider Examples (24) and (25). When *be in to* is used in the perfect aspect, it tends to appear in negative sentences and means that someone has arrived at a place and stayed there. In other words, *has/have been in to* is a monosemous expression. The reason why *has/have been in to* has not evolved into a polysemous expression is the survival of the original meaning of the verb *be* (present) and the influence of similar expressions *have been in/to*.

However, *be in to* is a polysemous PU and the meanings of *be in to* differ according to the nouns *be in to* takes as its complement, as seen in Table 2:

Table 2. Meaning and complements of *be in to* and *has/have been in to*

Examples	Meanings of <i>be in to</i>	Complements
(20)	reach	<i>be in to</i> + a number
(21)	arrive at and stay	<i>be in to</i> + a place
(22)	get involved in	<i>be in to</i> + an occupation
(23)	get involved in	<i>be in to</i> + an occupation
(24)	have arrived at and stayed	<i>have been in to</i> + a place
(25)	have arrived at and stayed	<i>have been in to</i> + a place

Furthermore, the following finding can be drawn from Table 2: The functions of *to* are decisive elements that give a specific meaning to *be in to* in each context. As Example (19) illustrates, *to* is a multifunctional preposition. Table 3 summarizes the function of *to* in Example (19) that greatly influences the meaning of *be in to*. Please note that Table 3 does not include the examples of *has/have been in to*.

Table 3. Functions of *to* that influences to decide the meaning of *be in to* in contexts

Examples	Meanings of <i>be in to</i>	Syntactic patterns	Functions
(20)	reach	<i>be in to</i> + a number	(19d) direction, arrival
(21)	arrive at and stay	<i>be in to</i> + a place	(19b) destination
(22)	get involved in	<i>be in to</i> + an occupation	(19g) (ii) organization
(23)	get involved in	<i>be in to</i> + an occupation	(19g) (ii) organization

Tables 4 and 5 confirm that *be in to* is a new PU because of its frequent use in contemporary English, that it is a polysemous PU, that the function of *to* is critical to the complete meaning of *be in to* in each context, and that *in to* functions as a CP because it is followed by a noun or noun phrase.

6.2.3 Stress assignment for *be in to*

I asked seven informants (an English, two Americans, three Canadians, and an Australian) to read Example (26) to verify whether each hypothesis in Example (2) is supported. Table 4 reports the informants' responses:

- (26) a. I think it is feasible. But I think it may be in to 2005 before the shuttle actually does fly. There are a lot of people within NASA who think that it is going to take that long, not only to make the organizational changes and get them underway but also hardware changes they will have to make as well.
- b. Again, that deadline coming up quickly, tomorrow five o'clock when any amended votes have to be in to the Secretary of State's office here in Tallahassee.
- c. Police cannot do what mothers and fathers and schools and churches and other things should be doing. In many ways the police are dealing with the back end of the problem. The kids already are raging; already has a gun in his hand; already is in to the drug trade.

- d. I know that he grew up in the north suburbs, ended up in Plainfield, which is way in the far south suburbs. He's an avid hunter, loves to hunt. I don't know if that adds anything to the case or not. And he knows a lot about the criminal law aspects, because he was in to some computer criminalistics kind of specialty work that he was trying to develop....
- e. Do you know the whereabouts of Rose Hilaire? She has not been in to Belmodes, and is not answering her phone.
- f. And then Dad would go back to the house, which he was trying to make more habitable for the kids. So, apparently, he was unaware that the kids had not been in to school all last week until on Saturday, he got a letter from the school saying they had been absent.
- g. Are you a total woman now? And you think that is the best position to be in to counsel people like Nikki and Lisa and Angie and...

Table 4. Stress assignments of *be in to* and *have been in to*

	be ín to	be in tó	be in tó	sum
(26a)	0	7	0	7
(26b)	0	6	1	7
(26c)	0	7	0	7
(26d)	0	6	1	7
(26e)	2	3	2	7
(26f)	2	5	0	7
(26g)	0	7	0	7

The results in Table 6 demonstrate that *to* is the main determinant of the meaning of *be in to* because the primary stress is put on *to*. Thus, Hypotheses (2a) and (2c) are supported.

In Examples (26e) and (26f), the results concern the stress patterns of *has/have been in to*. Similar to *be in to*, the semantic focus of *has/have been in to* is on *to* because the stress is on *to*. However, stress assignment for *has/have been in to* changes in response to the position with the most semantic importance, that is, the constituent *in* or *to*. Hypothesis (2c) applies to this case.

In Rows (26b) and (26d) of Table 6, the primary stress of *be in to* is on both *in* and *to*; thus, Hypotheses (2b) and (2d) are supported.

Consequently, the four interim rules for the PU stress patterns stated in Hypotheses (2a)–(2d) are supported for *be in to* and *has/have been in to*.

6.2.4 Semantic Derivation and Origins of *be in to*

This section discusses the semantic derivation and evolution of *be in to*.

6.2.4.1 Semantic Derivation

Examples of *be in to* in contemporary English show that its core meaning is “to arrive at a place/destination,” and that its typical syntactic patterns is [*be in to* + a place/destination]. Thus, the extended meanings of *be in to* such as *reach*, *get involved in*, and *turn into* have evolved, and as the outlying meanings develop, the lexical or literal meanings of *in* and *to* undergo semantic bleaching.

6.2.4.2 Distribution of *be in to*

The pattern [[a verb + in] [to] + a noun (phrase)] affects the distribution of *be in to*. Verbs used in the pattern retrieved from BNC are as follows:

- (27) *add, address, allow, book, boot, box, break, breath, bring, build, burst, call, come, carry, cave, connect, creep, cut, draft, drag, draw, drive, drop, extend, fall, fill, fit, fly, give, get, go, hand, head, hook, hurry, import, incorporate, indulge, input, invite, jump, lead, let, link, listen, lock, log, look, move, phone, plug, pop, pour, pull, put, race, reach, report, ring, roll, rope, run, rush, send, settle, step, swim, take, tax, tie, tuck, tune, turn, walk, work, write, zoom*

When the verbs in (27) appear in the pattern [[a verb + in] [to] + a noun (phrase)], such as [[break in] [to] + a noun (phrase)], *in* is an adverb and *to* is a preposition. In addition to the verbs listed in (27), various other verbs appear in the pattern [[a verb + in] [to] + a noun (phrase)], and the new pattern [[be in] [to] + a noun (phrase)] evolves through repeated use. The new pattern becomes [*be in to* + a noun (phrase)] by metaanalysis followed by lexicalization. With the newly established pattern [*be in to* + a noun (phrase)], *in* changes its function into a preposition, and *in to* works as a new CP. *Be* of [*be in to* + a noun (phrase)] is semantically bleached, so the various meanings of *to* in Example (20) generate polysemous *be in to*.

7. Stress Pattern Rules and Formation of New PUs

Only rules (2c) and (2d) hold for *be on against* and *be in to*. Rule (2a) does not hold because neither *be on against* nor *be in to* contain content words. As for rule (2b), both *be on against* and *be in to* are polysemous PUs; therefore, their meanings are not compositional. Thus, it is very difficult to decide which component is the most important in each PU. Both *be on against* and *be in to* were formed by metaanalysis followed by lexicalization.

8. Conclusion

Based on data obtained from corpora on contemporary English, this study described newly introduced PUs consisting of function words and has explained their meanings and functions as CPs. This study has also shown how the PUs *be on against* and *be in to* became established and how the stress patterns for PUs apply to *be on against* and *be in to*. Interestingly, the PUs discussed in the study function as content words in sentences despite being formed by function words.

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Notes

Note 1. Among the tendencies they noted were (a) a tendency to regularize irregular morphology (e.g., *dreamed redreamt*) and the elimination of shall as a first-person future marker. (b) revival of the “mandative” subjunctive, probably inspired by formal US usage (*we demand that she **take** part in the meeting*)

(c) elimination of *shall* as a future marker in the first person

(d) development of new, auxiliary-like uses of certain lexical verbs (e.g., *get*, *want*—cf. e.g., *The way you look, you **wanna/want to** see a doctor soon*)

(e) extension of the progressive to new constructions, (e.g., modal, present perfect, and past perfect passive progressive (*the road **would not be being built/ has not been being built/ had not been being built** before the general elections*))

(f) increase in the number and types of multi-word verbs (phrasal verbs, *have/ take/ give a ride*, etc.)

(g) placement of frequency adverbs before auxiliary verbs (even in no emphasis is intended—*I never have said no*)

(h) *do*-support for *have* (*have you any money?* and *no, I haven't any money do you have/ have you got any money?*)

and *no, I don't have any money/ haven't got any money*)

(i) demise of the inflected form *whom*

(j) increasing use of *less* instead of *fewer* with countable nouns (e.g., *less people*)

(k) spread of the s-genitive to non-human nouns (*the book's cover*)

(l) omission of the definite article in certain environments (e.g., *renowned Nobel laureate Derek Walcott*)

(m) “singular” they (everybody came in their car)

(n) *like, same as, and immediately* used as conjunctions

(o) a tendency towards analytical comparatives and superlatives (*politer olmore polite*)

Note 2. Collocations are defined as “word-combinations that have predictability and collocational range such as *deciduous tree, rancid butter*” (Inoue, 2007: 105).

Note 3. Many scholars define idioms in terms of semantic non-transparency or non-compositionality; the overall meanings of an idiom (such as *spill the beans*) cannot be derived from the meanings of each component.

Note 4. Multi-word expressions are defined as phrases consisting of at least two words such as *you know what, here we go, here we go again*, etc. Unlike idioms, the overall meanings of multi-word expressions are compositional, but change with the contexts in which they are used. For example, Inoue (2007) noted that *you know what* has varied meanings depending on context.

Note 5. Formulae are fixed expressions such as *how are you?* Some of these, such as *now you're talking* and *it isn't over until the fat lady sings*, are not completely transparent semantically.

Note 6. Larry King Live Corpus is a spoken corpus downloaded from the transcripts of the “Larry King Live” and “Larry King Weekend” on CNN since 1994. The number of words it includes as of March in 2014 is over 30,000,000. The content and significance of the corpus is fully explained in Inoue (2007: 114ff).

Note 7. Praat is downloadable from <http://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/>

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