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**Split Infinitive – Corpus Analysis  
(bakalářská práce)**

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### **Prohlášení**

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla úplný seznam citované a použité literatury.

V Olomouci dne .....

Podpis: .....

## **Poděkování**

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## **List of Abbreviations**

BNC	- British National Corpus
COCA	- Corpus of Contemporary American English
COHA	- Corpus of Historical American English
LF	- Lingua Franca
SL	- second language
VOICE	- Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English

## Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	6
2	Methodology .....	8
3	The Split Infinitive Issue.....	12
3.1	The Term ‘Split Infinitive’ .....	12
3.2	Historical perspective .....	13
3.2.1	Middle English.....	13
3.2.2	Modern English.....	14
3.3	Split Infinitive in Contemporary English.....	18
3.3.1	Ambiguity .....	20
4	Occurrence .....	22
4.1	Common Splitters .....	25
4.1.1	Adverbials .....	25
4.1.2	Negation.....	27
4.1.3	Infinitives split by more than one word .....	29
4.2	Perfective Split Infinitives .....	32
4.3	Verbs preceding Split Infinitives .....	35
4.3.1	Split infinitive after auxiliaries and modals .....	36
4.4	Split Infinitives in English as a Second Language .....	38
5	Conclusion .....	42
6	Shrnutí.....	45
	Anotace .....	50
	Annotation .....	50
	List of References .....	51

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The split infinitive construction, which denotes a particular type of syntactic pattern in which a word or phrase, especially an adverb, occurs between the infinitive marker *to* and the infinitive of the verb (Calle-Martin and Miranda-Garcia, 2009<sup>1</sup>, 347), is one of the rather well-known topics in the whole English grammatical tradition and probably the most arguable one since there has been a prescriptive rule and prejudice against it for more than a century (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, 581). Although prescriptive rules are often motivated by the wish to achieve clarity of expression, following the ‘split infinitive rule’ has the potential to reduce clarity and to create ambiguity (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, 581). Strong stylistic objections are made against the placement of adverbials between *to* and the infinitive, however, it can be noted in a present-day English that the prejudice against it is receding (Calle-Martin, 2009, 347).

In this thesis I will focus on the contemporary usage of split infinitive in British and American English by consulting suitable literary sources and more importantly The British National Corpus<sup>2</sup> and The Corpus of Contemporary American English<sup>3</sup>. It is to be noted that split infinitive is sometimes considered an Americanism; however, its first recorded occurrence is in British English and dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Calle-Martin, 2009, 347). I will also provide a brief overview of how split infinitive has been used throughout the centuries, using the Historical Corpus of American English<sup>4, 5</sup>.

Secondly, I will examine the occurrence of the split infinitive construction in both spoken and written form of the English language with the help of the corpora, assuming that especially in formal writing this should be less frequent or not used at all considering the abovementioned. On the other hand, I would also assume that in comparison to the past more and more split infinitive constructions are now used not only in spoken form, but also in writing.

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<sup>1</sup> Hereinafter referred to as *Calle*

<sup>2</sup> Hereinafter referred to as *BNC*

<sup>3</sup> Hereinafter referred to as *COCA*

<sup>4</sup> Hereinafter referred to as *COHA*

<sup>5</sup> no such corpus available for British English

Finally chapter 4 will further focus on the type of phrases (especially adverbials) most frequently used in split infinitive constructions, which according to Quirk et al. shall be expressions of real or implied comparison, most of all emphasizing the focus (1984, 498). I will also provide an overview of the usage of split negative infinitive as this phenomenon seems fairly recent but has also become conventionalized to some extent (Kato, 2001, 312).

Last part of the thesis will be devoted to possible occurrence of split infinitive in utterances of the users of English as a second language (SL), where it can also be expected to be avoided by such users, since prescriptive grammars are against it. This will be analysed with the help of common textbooks for students of English and via sentences of English as Lingua Franca (LF) as represented by The Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (version 1.0 online)<sup>6</sup>.

Based on the literary references and the data acquired from the corpora, I will then summarize the usage of split infinitive in all aspects of contemporary English. I will give an overview of how split infinitives are used in British and American English, and also in written or spoken form. At the same time, I will provide a list of adverbials commonly used as splitters and their description and compare it to what Quirk et al. (1984) state. On the basis of the corpora research I will try to define whether it is advisable to still follow the prescriptive rules against this construction.

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<sup>6</sup> Hereinafter referred to as *VOICE*

## 2 METHODOLOGY

On the basis of the data found in adequate literature I have decided to establish this thesis on the data from four corpora altogether. To trace the occurrence of split infinitive in the past I used COHA, which contains about 400 million words of American English from the period from 1810 to 2009. It would certainly be possible to analyse split infinitives using much older corpora<sup>7</sup>, but this would be a subject for further research beyond the scope of this thesis.

Since the main aim of this thesis is to describe the present situation about split infinitives, I established my further research on the data from BNC and COCA acquired from Mark Davies' interface of these corpora<sup>8</sup>. What makes the comparison less precise than desired is the fact that there are some differences regarding these two corpora. First one would be their sizes, as BNC is with its 100 million words approximately four times smaller than COCA with over 410 million words. That means that COCA might actually contain lower-frequency constructions that are not available in the BNC. Another thing which must be taken into account when analysis the split infinitive occurrence it the number of the spoken English samples. While COCA is fourth times bigger than BNC altogether, its database of spoken English samples is represented by 83 million words, which makes it eight times bigger than BNC with only 10 million words of spoken English.

Not only the number of samples, but the years in which they were taken must be taken into account when carrying out this particular research. Data in BNC come from a different time period than the data from COCA. To be more specific, BNC samples date from 1980s to 1993, while COCA contains samples from the time period between 1990 and 2011, the latest text from March 2011<sup>9</sup>. We can also assume that the occurrence of split infinitive will be (based on the data acquired from COCA) slightly higher. Were there more recent samples in BNC, we could expect the occurrence of split infinitive much more

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<sup>7</sup>*Representative Corpus of Historical English Register* - <http://www.llc.manchester.ac.uk/research/projects/archer/>  
*Penn Parsed Corpora of Historical English* - <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/hist-corpora/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>, <http://www.americancorpus.org/>

<sup>9</sup> First data for the research we acquired in January 2011, before COCA was updated, therefore the numbers might slightly differ now.



frequent in this corpus, especially considering the fact that the prejudice against split infinitive has begun to decline recently, as it was stated before.

Default setting of the corpora is designed to display only 100 most frequent occurrences. Therefore we do not get the total number of split infinitives, but only the sum of these 100 most frequent ones, which is fully sufficient for the purposes of this thesis. The results of all the queries I used for my research also consist of 100 combinations with the minimum frequency of 5<sup>10</sup> each. The basic query sought to find all occurrences of adverbials placed between the particle *to* and the infinitive and reads as follows:

**to [av\*][v?i\*] in BNC**

**to [r\*] [v?i] in COCA and COHA**

, where [v?i\*] stands for a verb in its infinitival form and [av\*] in British English or [r\*] in American English for any kind of adverbial.

Table 1: the *to [av\*][v?i\*]* query

The screenshot shows the KWIC search interface with the following settings:

- SEARCH STRING:** WORD(S)  COLLOCATES POS LIST
- Buttons:** RANDOM, SEARCH, RESET
- SECTIONS:** SHOW (checkbox checked)
- Section 1:** IGNORE (selected), SPOKEN, FICTION, MAGAZINE, NEWSPAPER, NON-ACAD
- Section 2:** IGNORE (selected), SPOKEN, FICTION, MAGAZINE, NEWSPAPER, NON-ACAD
- SORTING AND LIMITS:** SORTING: FREQUENCY, MINIMUM: FREQUENCY, 5
- HIDE OPTIONS:** # HITS: 100, KWIC: 100, GROUP BY: WORDS, DISPLAY: RAW FREQ, SAVE LISTS: NO

<sup>10</sup> for the research of more specific structures e.g. split infinitive after modal verbs, the frequency was lowered from 5 to 1.

Table 2: to [av\*][v?i\*] in BNC

The screenshot shows the BYU-BNC search interface. The search string is 'to [av\*][v\*]'. The results table is as follows:

	CONTEXT	TOT
1	TO ACTUALLY GET	37
2	TO REALLY GET	27
3	TO ACTUALLY DO	25
4	TO EVEN THINK	22
5	TO ACTUALLY GO	20
6	TO JUST GO	20
7	TO ACTUALLY PUT	19
8	TO ACTUALLY MAKE	17
9	TO ACTUALLY SAY	17
10	TO FULLY UNDERSTAND	17
11	TO ACTUALLY BE	16

After *to* we expect basically only infinitival forms of the verbs to occur. To find out whether any other verb forms might occur after *to* I tried to build the queries so that they include verbs in all forms. In the results we get, we see that even the verbs not tagged as infinitival are infinitival in fact, and therefore we would get a slightly higher number of results. I decided not to include these examples as the difference is not remarkable and the verbs tagged in the infinitival form will be fully sufficient for the statistic purposes of this thesis<sup>11</sup>. The inaccuracy of tagging in the corpora will be further described in chapter 4 Occurrence.

The description and syntax of other queries used for carrying out the split infinitive research will be provided later on in this thesis.

For the part where English as LF is used, I used the VOICE corpus, which currently comprises of 1 million words of spoken interactions. Speakers come from a wide range of linguistic backgrounds, as there are more than 1200 recorded speakers with approximately 50 different first languages; the greatest focus being put on European speakers. What makes VOICE different from the abovementioned corpora is that it is possible search only for individual words and multi-word phrases as VOICE is an untagged corpus. When

<sup>11</sup> Apart from comparison. See 4.1.3.

seeking to find split infinitive, the query had to be built in a way **to (specific) adverb** and then there was a need to go through the examples to find a split infinitive. As VOICE is still a relatively small corpus, I searched only for adverbs which showed to be the most common splitters in BNC and COCA.

### 3 THE SPLIT INFINITIVE ISSUE

When it comes to infinitival clauses containing the marker *to*, there are two variants of the pre-verbal central position, one in which the adjunct precedes *to*, the other one where it is placed straight before the verb (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 581). The structure in which a word or phrase, especially an adverb, occurs between *to* and the infinitive of the verb, was labelled as ‘cleft infinitive’ or ‘split infinitive’, the second of which is now generally used (Visser 1984, 1035). Altogether, the split infinitive phrase usually looks like this:

**(preceding verb)<sup>12</sup> + *to* + splitter(s) + infinitive**

As in:

**I want (preceding verb) to just (splitter) go (infinitive)<sup>13</sup>**

#### 3.1 The Term ‘Split Infinitive’

According to some linguists<sup>14</sup> the term split infinitive is a misnomer in fact, as the marker *to* no longer belongs to the infinitive as a preposition and thus the necessary part of it, therefore nothing is being split actually, as *to* is felt rather as an introduction to the whole infinitival clause. The infinitival subordinator *to* enters into construction with a whole verb phrase<sup>15</sup>, not just a verb, which shows that *to* is not syntactically in construction with the verb base (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1183-1184).

The prejudice against split infinitive can be dated back to the 19th century, though it occurred in English much earlier<sup>16</sup>. The same prejudice appeals to the usage of the term itself. Jespersen in his *Growth and Structure of the English Language* (1930)<sup>17</sup> for instance views this even more radical since he considers the term split infinitive as truly absurd since “*to* no more belongs to the infinitive as a necessary part of it, than the definite article

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<sup>12</sup> Split infinitives might be introduced by other words than verbs, however later on in this thesis the focus will be devoted specifically to the preceding verbs.

<sup>13</sup> ”I **want to just go** and have a look...” (BNC: KBD S\_conv )

<sup>14</sup> See Huddleston and Pullum 2002, Jespersen 1930, Curme 1914

<sup>15</sup> Hereinafter referred to as VP

<sup>16</sup> For further information see 3.2 Historical Perspective

<sup>17</sup> in *Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language*, edited by David Crystal. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

belongs to the substantive, and no one would think of calling *the good man* a split substantive.” He further explains the incorrectness of the term by the hypothesis that *to* is viewed rather as belonging to the preceding verb than to the following one as in “Will you go there?” – “I’m going to.” (Jespersen 1930, 209). This theory, however, doesn’t deal with the fact that it provides no explanation for cases such as “to almost succeed is not enough”, which Curme described much earlier in his *Origin and Force of the Split Infinitive* (1914, 42).

## 3.2 Historical perspective

### 3.2.1 Middle English

In Old English *to* before an infinitive was considered nothing but a preposition and had become firmly attached to the infinitive quite independent of any governing word but already in the course of Old English it began to lose its original meaning and became the mere formal sign of an infinitive (Curme 1914, 43)<sup>18</sup>.

Adverbs, pronouns and other word phrases were inserted between *to* and the infinitive as early as in the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>19</sup>, therefore it can be claimed neither a modern phenomenon nor an Americanism as it is sometimes wrongly assumed. In fact, this phenomenon emerged due to a cluster of morphological and syntactic changes in Middle English and has been used quite commonly ever since. In Old English, the infinitive was shown by an inflectional ending, which then began to decay as the particle *to* began to take over and later developed a function as a purpose maker, but then lost all its semantic content, acting solely as a sign of the infinitive. No sooner had it been used as an infinitive marker, than we found it separated from its verb (Crystal 1985, 45), presumably because of the tendency to put modifier of a verb as close before it as possible (Visser 1984, 996)

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century there were some occurrences of split infinitive including the works of many famous writers for that time e.g. Chaucer. As Crystal (1985, 46) states,

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<sup>18</sup> “There is in the history of the language a close relation between *that*-clauses and infinitive clauses. A marked difference between the language of the thirteenth century and that of the following period is the gradual replacement of the *that*-clause by the infinitive constructions. Today the infinitive is a great favourite and we prefer it to a *that*-clause wherever it is possible, i.e. where its subject is the same as that of the principal verb: “I firmly intend to always do the right thing,” but “I firmly intend that they shall always do the right thing.” Often as here yields to do the newer order “to always do the right thing” because there is a growing tendency to give the infinitive clause a fixed and definite form introduced by *to*.” (quotation modified)

<sup>19</sup> See Huddleston, Jespersen, Calle

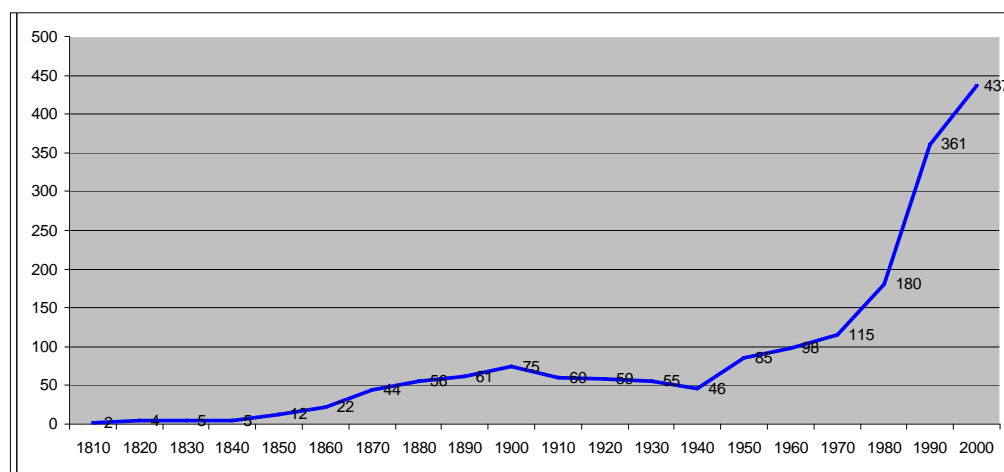
in the majority of the writing the occurrence of split infinitive was of an occasional character, being more frequent in the works of some authors, while less frequent in the works of the others and in some writings also non-existent. He further states that the fact we are able to find examples of the infinitive-splitting in those times demonstrates that this process is by no means unnatural and therefore should not be considered ‘un-English’. As we are able to trace the usage of split infinitives, it would be also possible to trace the complaints about them. However, there is no mention of the problem until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as there is absolutely no mention of it in any of the main 18<sup>th</sup>- century grammars<sup>20</sup>.

### 3.2.2 *Modern English*

After a drastic drop throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, without any apparent justification for the disappearance of that structure, the usage of split infinitive was renewed towards the end of the eighteen century, but with a difference that one type of splitting common in Middle English was not revived, namely that with a pro(noun) between *to* and infinitive (Visser 1984, 997). Unfortunately, there is no example to be found in the corpora I used, here namely the COHA.

To map the usage of split infinitives from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century till present, we can see the following graph:

Graph 1: COHA: *to* [r\*] [v?i\*]



It shows the occurrence of split infinitive with an adverb inserted between *to* and the infinitive in both written and spoken form of the American English. At the same time,

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<sup>20</sup> See Crystal (1985)

it has to be taken into account that there are more samples from the recent years in the corpus. This also causes the sharp rise of the occurrence of this phenomenon up from the 1980s. Considering the data from COHA – naturally, there will be more samples of English in recent years; however it is possible for us to make a conclusion based on the acquired data (see Table 3), gained via query **to [r\*] [v?i\*]**. Some of the examples from the time period at the beginning of the chart (1810 – 1830) read as follows:

(1) ... a foreign minister with that of some of the men we send abroad nowadays, **to fully appreciate** the value of general information, and a true sense of personal and...  
[COHA:1818:MAG\_NorthAmRev]

(2) ... married and settled, and were too much the seniors of the present young party **to ever have been** in habits of intimacy with them.  
[COHA:1828:FIC\_CharlottesDaughter]

Not all of the examples were suitable, for instance *to time be*, where the whole clause usually goes like from *time to time be*, therefore it is not really a split infinitive.

(3) Pressure to use monetary policy for domestic purposes will from **time to time be** irresistible. (COCA : 1990 MAG NatlReview)

Of course it is not only single adverbs that might split the infinitives. It might also be a sequence of two or more adverbs, not to forget the negative sentences. On the other hand, for the research of split infinitive in historical English, the samples with just one adverb were fully sufficient.

The biggest concerns about the usage of split infinitive began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and culminated at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the majority of English grammarians criticised the structure. When examining Graph 1, we can clearly see that it was the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the frequency of split infinitives began to decline, reaching the lowest values in 1940s (46) as a result of the writers' worries of not being taken seriously when using the structure. This led to their trying to avoid it. We can further observe that the avoidance of split infinitive has begun to decline since that point and is nowadays quite a common English structure. Since it is not only adverbs, which may split the infinitives there are also examples of negative split infinitives in COHA. The data gained via **to not [v?i\*]** show that tendency is quite similar to that of adverbs i.e. the

frequency of occurrence was quite high around the beginning of the twentieth century, then begun to decline and in the recent years it has been of a more common use again – see Table 4.

Basically, the linguists<sup>21</sup> agree that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, obviously due a to a growing concern to define the ‘correct’ English, there was a strong oppression against the split infinitive, making it one of the most significant language taboos. Especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the whole fuss about the split infinitive began, it was crucial to possess knowledge of Latin and its grammatical principles. As Crystal (1983, 28) says, many pieces of English grammar, including the infinitives, were being formed according to the lines of Latin grammar, as they wished English could live up to the standards of a language like Latin. Because infinitival phrases like *to go*, *to work* i.e. two words in English, would be translated to Latin by one word and as it is not possible to split infinitives in Latin, English should adhere to the same principles. However, Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 1183-1184) contradict this on the following example:

In Latin there is an infinitive from of the verb, which is traditionally translated into English by means of *to* + the plain form. Latin *amare*, for example, is translated as *to love*. But while *amare* is a single word, *to love* is not: it is a sequence of two words. Thus the fact that no adjunct can be positioned within *amare* provides no basis for expecting that it should be contrary to grammatical principles to

position	one	between	<i>to</i>	and	<i>love</i> .
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<sup>21</sup> See Kroeger, Crystal 2004 etc.



Table 3: COHA : to [r\*] [v?i\*]

SECTION	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
FREQ	13	41	62	119	217	284	616	675	583	618	464	376	330	260	419	565	833	1075	2113	2872
PER MIL	11.01	5.92	4.50	7.42	13.17	16.65	33.19	33.23	28.30	27.97	20.44	14.66	13.41	10.68	17.07	23.56	34.98	42.46	75.62	97.13
SEE ALL YEARS AT ONCE																				

Table 4: COHA : to not [v?i\*],

SECTION	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
FREQ	0	4	1	2	3	2	4	8	6	8	24	6	14	9	17	17	23	42	100	143
PER MIL	0.00	0.58	0.07	0.12	0.18	0.12	0.22	0.39	0.29	0.36	1.06	0.23	0.57	0.37	0.69	0.71	0.97	1.66	3.58	4.84
SEE ALL YEARS AT ONCE																				

### 3.3 Split Infinitive in Contemporary English

In the English speaking world not much attention is devoted to the issue of split infinitive as such. On the other hand, when it comes to questionable issues in the English grammar, the split infinitive remains one of the most discussed topics among grammarians and strong stylistic objections have been towards it for more than a century. However, examining adequate literature, no reasons can be found as to why this construction should be objectionable. Fowler (1965) divided the English-speaking world into "(1) those who neither know nor care what a split infinitive is; (2) those who do not know, but care very much; (3) those who know and condemn; (4) those who know and approve; and (5) those who know and distinguish." Strang (1962, 152) then states the following:

Fussing about split infinitives is one of the more tiresome pastimes invented by nineteenth-century grammarians. The question is, in any case, one of usage, not principle, and though much remains to be explored in this matter, one thing that is clear is that in speech the split infinitive is common even among speakers who on principle reject it with horror.

However, the widespread prejudice against split infinitives shall not be underestimated, specifically with respect to formal writing, as it is a feature of usage on which the strongest critical native reaction frequently focuses (Quirk et al. 1984, 497). As we can see on the following example in the *Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery* (1994, 1231), using split infinitive in formal writing might seem very disturbing for some readers:

*To the editor:* - As scrupulous reader of literature, I am concerned with clear theses, experimental studies, and appropriate conclusions presented in an erudite and syntactically and grammatically correct manner. In this later regard, the split infinitive has insinuated itself at an alarming rate of frequency in numerous professional periodicals. I can scarcely pick up a publication without running into several of these inappropriate constructions. While this may appear to be nit-picking, the purity if language can be reflective of the precision of the science that it attempts to describe. We cannot afford these lapses, despite the fact that "Star Trek's" Captain Kirk mandate "to boldly go..."<sup>22</sup> my have validated the split infinitive as part of our

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<sup>22</sup> Probably the most famous split infinitive ever from Star Trek television episodes and films, from 1966 onward: "Space: the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its *five-*

vernacular. At any rate, devising your reviewers and editorial staff in this matter could only serve our common interest in maintaining, as you have so well, the highest of journalistic standards<sup>23</sup>.

On the other hand, when we can observe a completely different opinion on the usage of split infinitive when we look at the editor's response, which is clearly mocking the prejudice against split infinitive:

*In Reply:* - I appreciate Dr Schabes' respect for the purity of the language. However, it is difficult for me to logically equate a split infinitive with a lack of scientific precision. Our first objective in editing is to definitely assure the accuracy of the material contained within the article. However, at the same time, we want to properly maintain the literary quality of the publication. I'm not sure whether splitting an infinitive is an indication that we have not been able to adequately fulfil the latter requirement. In fact, there are those, including me, who often find it possible to more easily read a sentence with a split infinitive than when an effort has been made to syntactically and grammatically avoid making such an error<sup>24</sup>.

According to Visser (1984, 1039) it deserves notice that one kind of split infinitive exists, to which no objections have ever been made, more specifically to the case of split infinitive, which occurs "when an utterance contains two infinitives connected by *and*, the former of which is preceded by *to* and the latter by an adverb".

(1) To leave a habitat **to degenerate and perhaps be** destroyed is to injure all its animals. (BNC: B04 W\_non\_ac\_soc\_science)

(2) ... of temperatures at which complex organic molecules, such as proteins and DNA, are able **to persist and yet be** chemically active! (BNC: AMS W\_non\_ac\_nat\_science)

While some grammarians, writers and editors might go on vetoing the general use of split infinitive, others say that on the other hand the occasional use is of certain advantage. This applies especially to the cases where, according to Onions (1904)<sup>25</sup> "it is

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*year mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before.*

<sup>23</sup> George A. Schabes, DDS

<sup>24</sup> Daniel M. Laskin, Editor-in-Chief

<sup>25</sup> Quotation in Visser's *An Historical Syntax of the English Language*

desired to avoid ambiguity by indicating this manner the close connection of the adverb with the infinitive, and thus preventing its being taken in conjunction with some other word.” For further information see 3.3.1. The pieces of information on the topic provided in contemporary handbooks of English grammars are, however, not entirely clear. Not much space is actually devoted to this issue and no strict recommendations considering the usage of this structure is being defined. What the grammarians agree on is that these structures, no matter how controversial they are, are commonly used in contemporary English, although no notes on frequency of the usage are made. According to *Collins Cobuild – English Grammar* (1990, 284), it is “some people do put adverbs between the *to* and the infinitive, but this use is considered incorrect by some speakers of English.” Similarly it is stated by Eastman (1994, 146) that although split infinitives are of a common usage, they are regarded incorrect by some users and should be avoided especially in writing. On the other hand he admits that sometimes there might be a necessity for splitting. Swan (2005, 256) is of the opinion that it is informal style where the split infinitives are common and are usually considered incorrect, careless and if possible, they should be avoided. *Longman English Dictionary* (1988, 304) describes split infinitive as usually unacceptable, but at the same time admits that infinitives are sometimes being split in spoken English. Since all of the definitions do not really specify the kind of speakers using the split infinitive structures and nothing entirely specific is said about the cases of the occurrence of split infinitives, we could consider these definitions vague.

### 3.3.1 *Ambiguity*

As it was stated before, certain grammatical rules and patterns against split infinitive have merged. Such rules and recommendations are followed in order to achieve the clarity of expression i.e. to avoid the possibility of creating ambiguity. Curious feature about split infinitive is that its avoidance actually does lead to ambiguity. That might be the reason why the prejudice against split infinitives has slowly begun to weaken. As Onions<sup>26</sup> (1904) declares, “occasional use if of advantage in cases where it is desired to avoid ambiguity by indicating in this manner the close connection of the adverb with the infinitive, and thus preventing its being taken in conjunction with some other word.” It is easy to tell when the author decided to avoid split infinitive, as often awkward and unidiomatic sentences may result from the conscious avoidance of using the split infinitive

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<sup>26</sup> Quotation in Visser’s *An Historical Syntax of the English Language*

(Quirk et al. 1985, 497). On one hand it might be more elegant to place the adverb before *to*, on the other hand the clearness of the expression is sometimes more important than its elegance (Visser 1984, 1039). Later 20<sup>th</sup> century grammarians actually begin to point out the desirability of splitting so as to make the distinction of meaning which would otherwise be awkward or ambiguous<sup>27</sup>.

The ambiguity of utterances created through the conscious avoidance of split infinitive can be illustrated on the following examples (taken from Quirk et al. 1985, 497)

- (1) She has tried consciously to stop worrying about her career.
- (2) She has tried to stop consciously worrying about her career.
- (3) She has tried to consciously stop worrying about her career.

In the first example (1), we cannot decide whether it was her trying that was conscious or whether she wished the stopping to be conscious. On the other hand, with an alternative avoidance as in (2) it cannot be determined whether the sentence refers to a conscious stop. Were the former intended, the usage of split infinitive would at least make the meaning clear.

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<sup>27</sup> See Visser 1984, Crystal 1985

## 4 OCCURRENCE

Let us focus on the actual occurrence of split infinitive structures in contemporary English, more specifically of written and spoken form of both British and American English. The next matter I focused on would be the occurrence of split infinitive in written and spoken English. I got the following numbers: at the time the search was made, there were 935 occurrences of split infinitive in the BNC, 600 examples of which were actually in spoken English. In the case of American English the numbers were considerably higher, 9689 altogether, 4797 in spoken English to be more specific<sup>28</sup>. To carry out this research I used the **to [av\*][v?i\*]** for the BNC and **to [r\*] [v?i]** for COCA queries to elicit all the adverbs that go between the particle *to* and all the verbs in infinitive.

Graph 2: BNC : to [av\*][v?i\*] & COCA : to [r\*] [v?i]

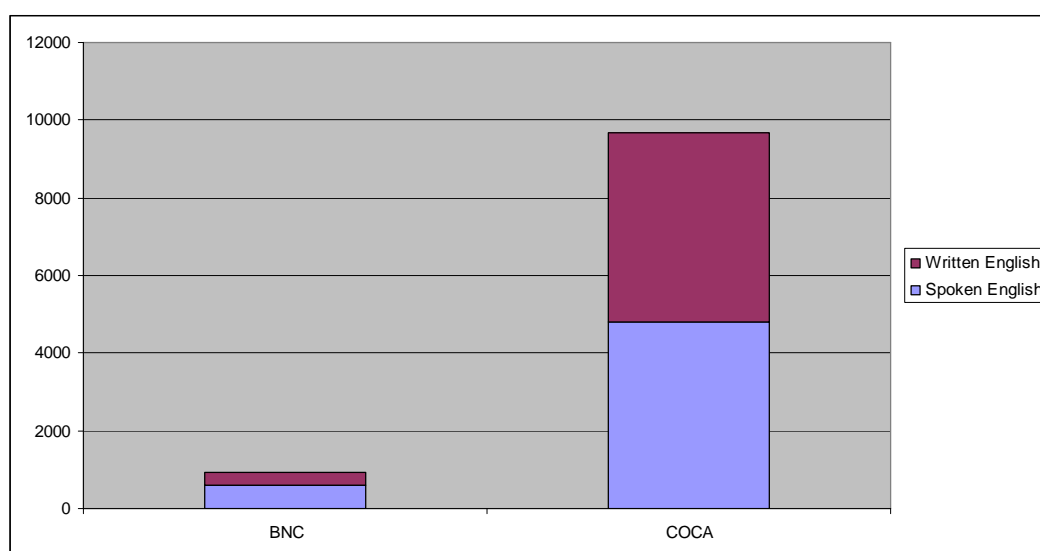


Table 5: BNC : to [av\*][v?i\*] & COCA : to [r\*] [v?i]

BNC		COCA	
	935		9689
Written English	335	Written English	4892
Spoken English	600	Spoken English	4797

Even though there is a difference in the size of the both corpora as COCA is approximately four times bigger than BNC, as the figures show, the occurrence of split infinitive

<sup>28</sup> *Not concerning negation*

considerably prevails in American English. However, when it comes to distinguishing between the written and the spoken variant, we can notice that in British English the split infinitive seems to be more limited to spoken English. Both Graph 2 and Table 5 show that in British English, one third of split infinitive is spoken English, while in American English the distinguishing is not that strict as it is 50% of infinitives altogether, actually prevailing in written English.

To see what combinations of adverbials and verbs in infinitive occur the most we can see Table 6 below.

Table 6: Most common split infinitives

	<b>BNC</b>			<b>COCA</b>	
1.	to actually get	37	1.	to better understand	722
2.	to really get	27	2.	to really get	332
3.	to actually do	25	3.	to just be	327
4.	to even think	22	4.	to really be	251
5.	to actually go	20	5.	to still be	251
6.	to just go	20	6.	to just go	243
7.	to actually put	18	7.	to just say	229
8.	to actually say	17	8.	to just get	225
9.	to fully understand	17	9.	to always be	216
10.	to actually be	16	10.	to just sit	198
11.	to actually make	16	11.	to really make	193
12.	to actually see	16	12.	to even think	179
13.	to even consider	16	13.	to fully understand	179
14.	to sort of get	16	14.	to actually get	148
15.	to just get	15	15.	to just let	148
16.	to just sit	15	16.	to really understand	146
17.	to further reduce	13	17.	to actually do	144
18.	to still be	13	18.	to just take	136
19.	to actually find	12	19.	to actually be	134
20.	to further develop	12	20.	to actually have	125

More results would have been gained if we included all verb forms into the search, as there is an inaccuracy in tagging in both corpora, which has been stated in chapter 2 Methodology.

Altogether, when we carry out the research in BNC, we get 914 results for **to** [av\*][v?i\*] and 935 for **to** [av\*][v\*]<sup>29</sup> The inaccuracy in tagging can be illustrated on the following; the query aimed at verbs in infinitival form shows us 18 examples of *to actually put* in BNC [1], while query including all forms of the verb 19, the ‘nineteenth’ example being fully relevant as well [2].

[1] ... be able to pay to take advantage of the window of opportunity we now **have** **to actually put** European money into the county... (BNC: HYX S\_meeting)

[2] ..." Yes please, " said Rex. It would, of course, be unthinkable **to actually put** **down** in print what Rex and Laura got up to during the next hour ... (BNC: W\_fict\_prose)<sup>30</sup>

When we examine the percentage change between the numbers we got for **to** [av\*][v?i\*] and **to** [av\*][v\*]<sup>31</sup>, which is 2.2%, we can state that here is no significant difference as Graph 3 indicates.

Graph 3: BNC: to [av\*][v?i\*] x to [av\*][v\*] & COCA : to [r\*][v?i\*] x to [r\*][v\*]

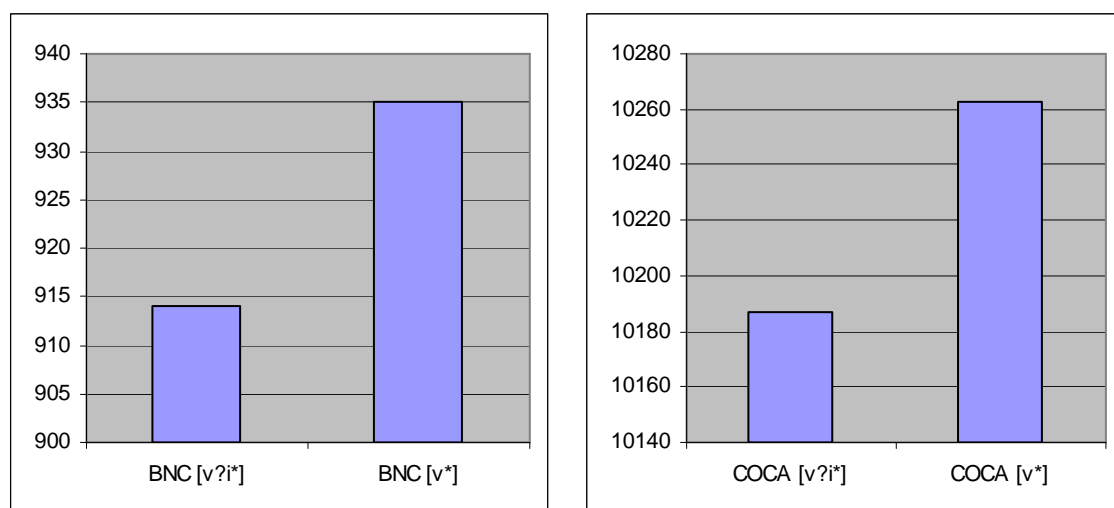


Table 7: to [av\*][v?i\*] & to [r\*][v?i\*]

<sup>29</sup> Showing verb in all if its forms

<sup>30</sup> to [av\*][v\*]

<sup>31</sup> to [av\*][v?i\*] and to [av\*][v\*] in American English



BNC		COCA	
to [av*][v?i*]	914	to [r*][v?i*]	10185
to [av*][v*]	935	to [r*][v*]	10265

To further explore the occurrence of split infinitives in English we can separately analyze infinitives split by adverbials and negative split infinitives.

## 4.1 Common Splitters

### 4.1.1 Adverbials

When talking about split infinitive, we can observe that adverbials are the most common splitters<sup>32</sup>. This chapter aims to analyze what kind of adverbials exactly split infinitives and in what situations. As *Longman English Grammar* (1988, 304) states, people often feel the need to split infinitive in dependence on where the emphasis falls. Adverbials can be placed in different positions within a sentence and there is a certain level of freedom considering this placement, with possible changes to the meaning of the sentence. We are talking about initial, medial and end position; split infinitive being one of the cases of the medial position of an adverb in a sentence. Some of these positions are more likely to occur than the others, depending on the type of adverbial, single-word adverbs being the most and finite clauses the least mobile (Quirk et al. 1984, 491). Other important factors are the semantic typology and grammatical typology. Semantically, adverbials can be divided into seven categories and that is space, time, process, respect, contingency, modality and degree, with possible further subdivisions (Quirk et al. 1984, 479). Initial position i.e. that preceding any other clause element, is possible for nearly all types of adverbials, the degree adverbials would be an exception here. Similar pattern applied to the end position, with the difference that the semantic role of modality is rarely expressed here (Quirk et al. 1984, 500).

Medial position, preliminary described as the position between subject and verb, is freely used for focusing and intensifying subjuncts. In general, adverbials at this position are rather short adverb phrases associated with degree or modality (Quirk et al. 1985, 493). One of the variants of the medial position is split infinitive, which is what this thesis is focused on. There are several conditions that are prone to splitting the infinitive (Mitrascu

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<sup>32</sup> Negation not taken into account

2009, 123). According to Mitrasca, the important grammatical function is most likely to be fulfilled by an adequate usage of subjuncts. Two basic types of subjuncts we distinguish are subjuncts of wide orientation, which as Mitrasca (2009, 122) claims “applies to adverbials that are semantically subordinated to the whole clause or sentence” and subjuncts of narrow orientation, where the adverbial is related to part of a clause. According to Quirk et al. (1984, 497) split infinitive is very common with subjuncts of narrow orientation, to be more specific with those, which usually don’t occur initial-medial or end position of the adverbial. When an adverb or adverbial phrase is inserted between *to* and the infinitive it is so to intensify the focus, which is most effectively achieved when the subjuncts is placed as close to the verb as possible.

In his article, Mitrasca (2009, 122-123) describes the most common types of splitters, those being

1. adverbs marking completion e.g. *actually, really, completely*
2. adverbs marking inclusive or exclusive relationship with other possible occurrences e.g. *even, simply, only*
3. adverbs going with occurrences that can be imagined as taking place sooner or later along a time scale e.g. *suddenly, finally, gradually*
4. adverbs modifying a gradable verb<sup>33</sup> e.g. *totally, thoroughly*

The table of the adverbials most commonly used as splitters can be found in the table 8.<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> *Verb that accepts comparatives*

<sup>34</sup> *According to BNC & COCA*

Table 8: to ‘specific adverbial’ [v?i\*]

BNC		COCA	
actually	430	just	3620
just	273	really	3405
really	217	actually	1992
even	149	better	1780
further	148	even	1616
fully	135	further	1182
completely	74	fully	1168
always	61	kind of	826
finally	54	always	779
better	41	simply	687
still	38	also	629
correctly	25	still	511
seriously	23	accurately	449
greatly	19	completely	418
jointly	19	truly	345
boldly	12	seriously	311

After examining the data it is not possible to make a conclusion as for whether so called simple adverbs are used more often than *-ly* adverbs or vice-versa, as the distribution seems to be nearly equal without any significant differences. On the other hand, we can clearly what Quirk et al. say about the most common splitters proved to be right as the adverbials in Table 8 above are indeed most of all of degree or modality.

#### 4.1.2 Negation

The particle *not* may also split infinitives; therefore I included this issue to my thesis. This kind of split infinitives is, however, not as common as the one with an adverb inserted between the particle *to* and the infinitival form. Constructions split by a negative operator have received less attention from perspective grammarians and therefore remained less obtrusive in conscious linguistic behaviour (Fitzmaurice, 172). According to the data acquired via the corpora<sup>35</sup> these constructions are scarce to find in British English, while being quite commonly used in American English. Distribution among written and spoken English is illustrated in table 4. There are 55 examples in the British English, 25 in the spoken variant, while in the American English the numbers are as high as 2298, out of which 1130 in spoken English. In both corpora I used the following query: **to not [v?i]**.

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<sup>35</sup> BNC, COCA

Graph 4: to not [v?i]

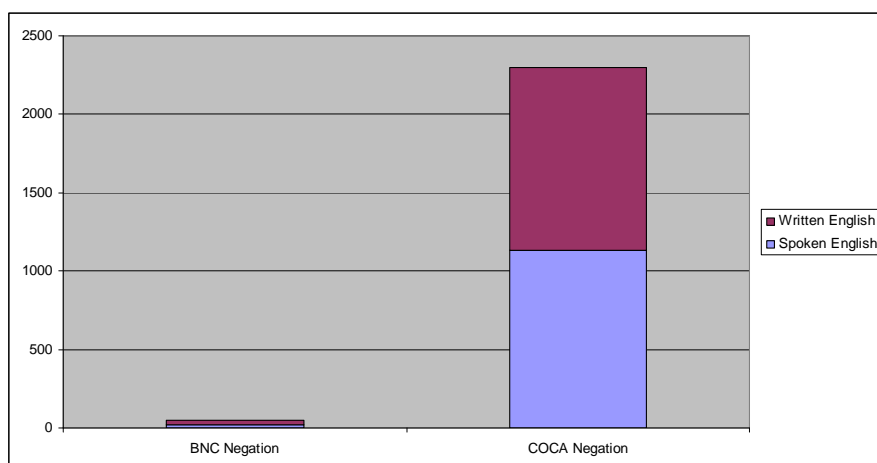


Table 9: BNC & COCA: to not [v?i]

BNC	55	COCA	2298
Written English	30	Written English	1168
Spoken English	25	Spoken English	1130

(1) And when -- inevitably -- you do capsize, you soon learn how **to not make** the same mistakes again. (BNC : CMD W\_pop\_lore)

(2) They will give young people yet another reason **to not go** to church. (COCA : 2010 MAG USCatholic)

According to Huddleston and Pullum (803) *to* carries no identifiable contribution to meaning, therefore sentences such as ‘It looks bad for them not to smile.’ and ‘It looks bad for them to not smile.’ should be semantically equivalent, without any scope contrast between them. However, when the particle *not* is placed before the *to* it appears less negative than negation where *not* is inserted between *to* and the verb infinitive (Fitzmaurice, 177). The way how the placement of *not* within the infinitival phrase affects the scope of negation varies from sentence to sentence. For instance<sup>36</sup>:

a) She decided not to identify the culprit but to ignore him

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<sup>36</sup> See Fitzmaurice 2000, 174

b) She decided to not identify the culprit but to punish him

Both utterances share the entailment, 'she did not identify the culprit', but as Fitzmaurice (177) argues, there could be the bigger proximity of the particle *not* to the VP, which then leads to greater negative force, which enables us to assume that (b) is pragmatically more forceful than (a), because (b) could be paraphrased as 'she decided to make no effort in order to come to some identification of the culprit'.

As Fitzmaurice (174) explains "in (a) the negator *not* has scope over the infinitive VP and the infinitive marker *to* which marks the VP boundary. By contrast, in (b) the negator *not* falls within the scope of *to*, and within the VP proper. It is possible that the marker *to* loses its grammatical infinitive meaning in structures like (b), and assumes a pragmatic, purposive, meaning which is conveyed when *not* is dominated in this way by *to*."

### 4.1.3 *Infinitives split by more than one word*

The next thing I focused on was whether the infinitives are also split by the whole phrases and the length and syntax of such phrases.

The cases of split infinitives in which the splitting is acquired by more than one word are ten times more common in American English, the exact numbers being presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Infinitives split by adverbial phrases

BNC		COCA	
to [av*][av*][v?i *]	40	to [r*][r*][v?i *]	1681
to [av*][av*][av*][v?i *]	0	to [r*][r*][r*][v?i *]	104
to [av*][av*][av*][av*][v?i *]	0	to [r*][r*][r*][r*][v?i *]	27

There were a few obstacles when acquiring the data, as for example *sort of* is in BNC acquired via **to [av\*] [v?i \*]**, whereas in COCA we need to formulate the query in a way that a sequence of adverbs is used - **to [r\*][r\*][v?i \*]** .

Table 11: *sort of* in BNC & COCA

BYU-BNC: BRITISH NATIONAL CORPUS		MIKULOVA.HANA	
100 MILLION WORDS, 1980s-1993		COMPARE RESULTS: COCA COHA TIME BNC	
DISPLAY <input checked="" type="radio"/> LIST <input type="radio"/> CHART <input checked="" type="radio"/> KWIC <input type="radio"/> COMPARE SEARCH STRING WORD(S) <input type="text" value="to [av*] [v?i*]"/> COLLOCATES POS LIST <input type="button" value="RANDOM"/> <input type="button" value="SEARCH"/> <input type="button" value="RESET"/>		history   lists   profile   log	
14	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO SORT OF GET	16
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO JUST GET	15
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO JUST SIT	15
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO FURTHER REDUCE	13
18	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO STILL BE	13
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO ACTUALLY FIND	12

CORPUS OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ENGLISH		MIKULOVA.HANA	
4.25 MILLION WORDS		COMPARE RESULTS: COCA COHA	
DISPLAY <input checked="" type="radio"/> LIST <input type="radio"/> CHART <input checked="" type="radio"/> KWIC <input type="radio"/> COMPARE SEARCH STRING WORD(S) <input type="text" value="to [r*] [r*] [v?i*]"/> COLLOCATES POS LIST <input type="button" value="RANDOM"/> <input type="button" value="SEARCH"/> <input type="button" value="RESET"/>		history   lists   profile   log SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD OR SELECT WORDS + [CONTEXT] [HELP...]	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT	TOT
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO KIND OF GET	99
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO SORT OF GET	77
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO SORT OF BE	46
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO AT LEAST HAVE	43
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO AT LEAST GET	41

Based on this research the most frequent compound adverbs used in American English are *kind of*, *sort of* and *at least*. Similar ones occur in British English; however, they are not tagged as compounds. The list of the most common compound adverbs in American English is the Table 12 below.

Table 12: to kind of etc. [v?i\*]

COCA <sup>37</sup>	
kind of	887
sort of	872
at least	584

More complex adverbial phrases (occurring only in American English according to BNC & COCA) include expressions such as *just sort of*, *sort of just*, *kind of just* etc. see Table 13.

<sup>37</sup> In BNC no results can be found for *to sort of/kind of/at least* [v?i\*], however when we build the query like *to sort of/kind of/at least* we get 7 split infinitives with *sort of* and 4 for *at least*.

Table 13: COCA : to so much as etc. [v?i\*]

COCA	
so much as	27
kind of just	7
sort of just	7
at least partially	4
kind of really	3
just kind of	2
just sort of	2
sort of really	2

(1) ... 's just -- it's just very different. It was very, very interesting **to just sort of be** on the sidelines here this week and watch all of this... (COCA: 1995 SPOK CBS\_SunMorn)

Another case compound splitting is associated with the negation - **to not [av\*] [v?i\*]**<sup>38</sup>, however its occurrence in British English is minimal (2 tokens) and highly prevails in American English (133 tokens).

(2) ... here they gather for national identity. “Now, the general public seems **to not only be** open to but also willing to hook into world music...(BNC: 1996 NEWS CSMonitor)

The most complex one concern fixed expressions like *all of a sudden* or *once and for all*.

(3)... the states he's won, the red states, is they're not likely **to all of a sudden turn** blue in November... (COCA: 2008 SPOK Fox\_Susteren)

Another interesting fact concerning splitting infinitive by compounds is that of adverbial comparison, which according to the corpus data occurs only in American English as BNC gives us no results via the query **to more [av\*] [v?i\*]**<sup>39</sup>. Such a comparison in COCA is then to a higher degree (**to more [r\*][v?i \*]**). Altogether, there were 62 samples, for the most common ones see Table 14.

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<sup>38</sup> In BNC; **to not [r\*] [v?i\*]** in COCA

<sup>39</sup> or **to less [av\*] [v\*]**, however, via query **to more [av\*] [v\*]** we get 21 result, 5 of which irrelevant

Table 14: COCA : to more [r\*][v?i \*]

COCA	
more fully	13
more effectively	7
more closely	6
more easily	6
more accurately	4

(4) ... to be. It gives me more energy. It makes me able **to more fully participate** in life. That's what spirituality is all about... (COCA :1998 MAG USCatholic)

The last type of compounds I decided to examine were adverbs connected with the conjunction *and*. Such constructions rarely occur and their tracking is difficult in the corpora due the fact that the verbs are often not tagged as in the infinitival form, therefore we find 3 examples in COCA and none in BNC using the query **to [av\*] and [av\*] [v?i\*]**<sup>40</sup>, but 21 examples in BNC and 113 in COCA when formulation the query **to [av\*] and [av\*] [v\*]**<sup>41</sup>. After manually going through all the samples from BNC, we can see that 90% are in fact cases of split infinitives; we could therefore assume that the ratio might be similar in American English.

(5) ...some in our party miss no opportunity **to roundly and loudly condemn** affirmative action ... (COCA: 2002 SPOK CNN\_Crossfire)

## 4.2 Perfective Split Infinitives

So far only split infinitives without an aspect were concerned. This section will therefore focus on the occurrence of perfective split infinitives and also such infinitives in continuous form.

(1) ... and many seemed never **to even have heard** the word. (BNC : A0K W\_ac\_soc\_science)

(2) Mack, who is believed **to also have been** using the names of Darren Stone and John Smith. (COCA : 2007 SPOK CBS\_48Hours)

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<sup>40</sup> *to [r\*] and [r\*] [v?i\*] in COCA*

<sup>41</sup> *to [r\*] and [r\*] [v\*] in COCA,*



Following the queries **to [av\*] have [v?n\*]**, **to [av\*] [av\*] have [v?n\*]** etc.<sup>42</sup>, I got the following numbers – Table 15.

Table 15: Adverbial phrase(s) splitting *to* - *have* [v?n\*]

BNC		COCA	
to [av*] have [v?n*]	6	to [r*] have [v?n*]	81
to [av*][av*] have [v?n*]	1	to [r*][r*] have [v?n*]	5
to [av*][av*][av*] have [v?n*]	0	to [r*][r*][r*] have [v?n*]	1

(3) ... dropped out of high school, and seems **to sort of have fallen** in love with a music career ...(COCA : 2008 SPOK Fox\_Susteren)

When it comes to splitting perfective infinitive, there is one more type i.e. when an adverbial doesn't follow the *to* directly as in **to have [av\*] [v?n\*]**<sup>43</sup>. This is not exactly the case of split infinitive as it was described before, however as the placement of *to* in this position is also not desirable, it is worth our attention.

This kind of perfective splitting is more common than the previous one and prevails neither in American nor in British English as is illustrated in the Table 15 below. However, when we take into account the size of both corpora, we can see that the structure **to have [av\*][v?n\*]** would be nearly 50% more common in British English.

Table 16: Adverbial phrase(s) splitting *to have* - [v?n\*]

BNC		COCA	
to have [av*][v?n*]	115	to have [r*][v?n*]	253
to have [av*][av*][v?n*]	12	to have [r*][r*][v?n*]	71
to have [av*][av*][av*][v?n*]	0	to have [r*][r*][r*][v?n*]	3

(4) By 9.30 I would have expected him **to have already been** at the dinner party (BNC: CBC W\_newsp\_other\_social)

Concerning compounds, not all the examples were relevant. There were structures which were syntactically not a split infinitive as can be seen below. All the misleading

<sup>42</sup> In BNC; [r\*] in COCA; [v?n\*] all verbs in past participle

<sup>43</sup> In BNC; **to have [r\*] [v?n\*]** in COCA

examples<sup>44</sup> contained the verb to have in its possessive meaning and the second verb in its passive form such as:

Table 17: to have [av\*][av\*][v?\*n]

BYU-BNC: BRITISH NATIONAL CORPUS																																									
100 MILLION WORDS, 1980s-1993																																									
<b>DISPLAY</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> LIST <input type="radio"/> CHART <input type="radio"/> KWIC <input type="radio"/> COMPARE <b>SEARCH STRING</b> WORD(S) <input type="text" value="to have [av*] [av*] [v?*n]"/> COLLOCATES POS LIST <input type="button" value="RANDOM"/> <input type="button" value="SEARCH"/> <input type="button" value="RESET"/>	<b>SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD OR SELECT WORDS + [CONTEXT]</b>																																								
<b>SECTIONS</b> <input type="button" value="SHOW"/> 1 <input type="button" value="IGNORE"/> SPOKEN FICTION MAGAZINE NEWSPAPER NON-ACAD 2 <input type="button" value="IGNORE"/> SPOKEN FICTION MAGAZINE NEWSPAPER NON-ACAD	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th><th></th><th>CONTEXT</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>TO HAVE SO FAR ESCAPED</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>TO HAVE WHEN JUST PUSHED</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>TO HAVE TOO MUCH ARMED</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>TO HAVE SO PLEASANTLY SURPRISED</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>TO HAVE PRETTY MUCH GIVEN</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>TO HAVE ONLY JUST STARTED</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>TO HAVE NEVER REALLY SUPPORTED</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>TO HAVE NEVER EVEN KNOWN</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>TO HAVE NEVER ACTUALLY SERVED</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>TO HAVE BLOODY WELL DISAPPEARED</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>TO HAVE ALMOST ENTIRELY FAILED</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="3">TOTAL</td></tr> </tbody> </table>				CONTEXT	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE SO FAR ESCAPED	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE WHEN JUST PUSHED	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE TOO MUCH ARMED	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE SO PLEASANTLY SURPRISED	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE PRETTY MUCH GIVEN	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE ONLY JUST STARTED	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE NEVER REALLY SUPPORTED	8	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE NEVER EVEN KNOWN	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE NEVER ACTUALLY SERVED	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE BLOODY WELL DISAPPEARED	11	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE ALMOST ENTIRELY FAILED	TOTAL		
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1	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE SO FAR ESCAPED																																							
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7	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE NEVER REALLY SUPPORTED																																							
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE NEVER EVEN KNOWN																																							
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE NEVER ACTUALLY SERVED																																							
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE BLOODY WELL DISAPPEARED																																							
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	TO HAVE ALMOST ENTIRELY FAILED																																							
TOTAL																																									
<b>SORTING AND LIMITS</b> SORTING <input type="button" value="FREQUENCY"/> MINIMUM <input type="button" value="FREQUENCY"/> <input type="text" value="5"/>																																									

(5) But it doesn't give me a bitey-bluesy sound that a valve amp ought **to have when just pushed** into distortion. (BNC: C9K W\_pop\_lore)

In this example *have* is of a possessive meaning and *when just pushed* could be paraphrased as *when it is pushed*. Similarly in sentence (2) where *thought* is a noun in fact.

(6) When every American is involved in the war, you're going **to have a lot more thought** on whether or not we should go over there, as... (COCA :1990 SPOK PBS\_Newshour)

As we could deduce from the previous searches, according to the acquired data, the occurrence of split infinitive has always been approximately 30% higher in American English. The perfective splitting (BNC:7; COCA:87) is when taking into account the size of both corpora approximately 70% higher in American English.

<sup>44</sup> 2 out 12 in BNC

When we examine present perfect continuous in combination with split infinitives via **to [av\*] have been [v?g\*]**<sup>45</sup> or **to have [av\*] been [v?g\*]**<sup>46</sup> we get the following results, based on which we can conclude that with present perfect continuous split infinitive is not common at all.

Table 18: Adverbials splitting present perfect continuous

BNC		COCA	
to have [av*] been [v?g*]	1	to have [r*] been [v?g*]	0
to [av*] have been [v?g*]	0	to [r*] have been [v?g*]	2

(7) Mack, who is believed **to also have been using** the names of Darren Stone and John Smith... (COCA: 2007 SPOK CBS\_48Hours)

(8) ... the affect seems **to have often been stultifying** for the manufacturer. (BNC: EDH W\_ac\_soc\_science)

### 4.3 Verbs preceding Split Infinitives

To view the split infinitive structure in a more complex way, I decided to focus on the verbs preceding split infinitives as well. Verbs most commonly preceding split infinitive are listed in Table 19 below.

Table 19: Verbs commonly preceding split infinitives

	BNC			COCA	
1.	want	112	1.	want	616
2.	seem	53	2.	seem	239
3.	try	50	3.	try	181
4.	begin	32	4.	fail	165
5.	tend	27	5.	begin	141
6.	plan	20	6.	refuse	137
7.	expect	19	7.	decide	129
8.	wish	17	8.	expect	127
9.	would like	17	9.	agree	125
10.	continue	14	10.	continue	123

<sup>45</sup> In BNC; **to [r\*] have been [v?g\*]** in COCA; [v?g\*] denoting verbs in -ing form

<sup>46</sup> In BNC; **to have [r\*] been [v?g\*]** in COCA; [v?g\*] denoting verbs in -ing form

11.	decide	14
12.	appear	13
13.	intend	13
14.	manage	12
15.	refuse	12
16.	fail	10
17.	hope	10
18.	aim	8
19.	ask	7
20.	agree	5

11.	plan	123
12.	hope	118
13.	would like	115
14.	appear	107
15.	tend	106
16.	intend	104
17.	mean	103
18.	manage	102
19.	prepare	99
20.	ask	77

In both British and American English the most common verbs are *want*, *seem* and *try*. Furthermore, in British English verbs introducing split infinitive seem to be limited solely to those three – as they are the only verbs where the number of samples exceeds number 50, whereas the others don't occur very often. In American English it appears there are no such restrictions and split infinitives are commonly used with all kinds of the verbs without any significant limitations.

#### 4.3.1 *Split infinitive after auxiliaries and modals*

As a next step I analysed split infinitive after common infinitival structures such as after marginal modals like *used to*, *ought to*. Considering *ought to*, there is a difference in a frequency of using *ought to* compared to *should*; *ought to* as the more formal one being used considerably less. Again, splitting occurs very rarely, as can be seen in Table 18. As we can observe, structure *ought to* is ten times more used in American English than in British English. In both British English and American English only 2% of the utterances with *ought to* contain a split infinitive. See Table 20.

Table 20: split Infinitives after *ought to*

BNC	
should [v?i*]	68280
ought to [v?i*]	422
ought to [av*][v?i*]	11

COCA	
should [v?i*]	198004
ought to [v?i*]	16904
ought to [r*][v?i*]	165

(1) I'm all in the favour of the decentralising in principle, but I think we ought to perhaps look at it a bit closer... (BNC: F7V S\_meeting)

After *used to* we can also say that there is a greater tendency of splitting the infinitive in British English. One of the obstacles here was that the query formulated like **used to [av\*] [v?i\*]**<sup>47</sup> included samples where *used to* would be a part of a passive voice structure and not a marginal modal as in (2)

(2) These groups were used to further confirm the findings from the individual interviews, to increase reliability and validity... (COCA: 2009 ACAD HealthSocialW)

To reduce the samples only to the modal ones we have to formulate the query in a way when either a noun or a pronoun precedes *used to* i.e. **[nn\*] used to [av\*] [v?i\*]** or **[pn\*] used to [av\*] [v?i\*]**<sup>48</sup>. These queries give us the following data:

Table 21: Split Infinitives after *used to*

BNC		COCA	
used to [v?i*]	5771	used to [v?i*]	15534
used to [av*] [v?i*]	104	used to [r*] [v?i*]	212

(3) He used to tell me that! Didn't you? Yeah he used to always say that. (BNC: KB7 S\_conv)

Similarly, we can examine the occurrence of the modal *need*. However, here we don't mind passive structure as *need* in this form doesn't lose its modality.

Table 22: Split Infinitives after *need*

BNC		COCA	
[need] <sup>49</sup> to [v?i*]	17938	[need] to [v?i*]	91097
[need] to [av*] [v?i*]	78	[need] to [r*] [v?i*]	267

(4)... community college leaders need to better understand their characteristics, attitudes, and needs. (COCA: 2011 ACAD CommCollegeR)

<sup>47</sup> In BNC; *used to [av\*] [v?i\*]* in COCA

<sup>48</sup> In BNC; *[nn\*] used to [av\*] [v?i\*]* or *[p\*] used to [av\*] [v?i\*]* in COCA

<sup>49</sup> *[need]* includes all of the forms e.g. *need, needs, needed*.

As we see *used to* is used more or less 30% more in British than in American English considering different size of the corpora and splitting after modals therefore seems to be twice as common in British English as in American English. Since *need* provides similar number of samples, we can conclude that split infinitives after modal verbs prevails in British English.

For the occurrence of split infinitive after semi-auxiliaries see Table 23.

Table 23: Split Infinitives after Semi-auxiliaries

BNC		COCA	
[have] to [av*][v?i*]	130	[have] to [r*][v?i*]	896
[be] able to [av*][v?i*]	89	[be] going to [r*][v?i*]	342
[be] going to [av*][v?i*]	38	[be] able to [r*][v?i*]	220
[be] obliged to [av*][v?i*]	4	[be] supposed to [r*][v?i*]	111
[be] bound to [av*][v?i*]	2	[be] willing to [r*][v?i*]	90
[be] supposed to [av*][v?i*]	2	[be] about to [r*][v?i*]	32
[be] about to [av*][v?i*]	0	[be] bound to [r*][v?i*]	11
[be] willing to [av*][v?i*]	0	[be] obliged to [r*][v?i*]	0

(5) Thomas Edward Laurence was able to successfully organise Arab tribesmen to fight for the Allies cause. (BNC: W\_non\_ac\_humanities\_arts)

(6) This was supposed to originally be an hour, but the tragedy in California changed today...(COCA: 1998 SPOK CNN\_King)

#### 4.4 Split Infinitives in English as a Second Language

If we are to examine the issue of the speakers of English as a SL, we should examine what the handbooks for students of English say about this topic. In fact, there is usually no mention of split infinitive in the grammar books nowadays commonly used by the students of English like Hewings' *Advanced Grammar in Use*, Murphy's *Grammar in Use* or Swan's *Practical English Usage* etc. The usage of *to*-infinitives is discussed with no connection whatsoever to the positions of adverbs in a clause, which is discussed separately.

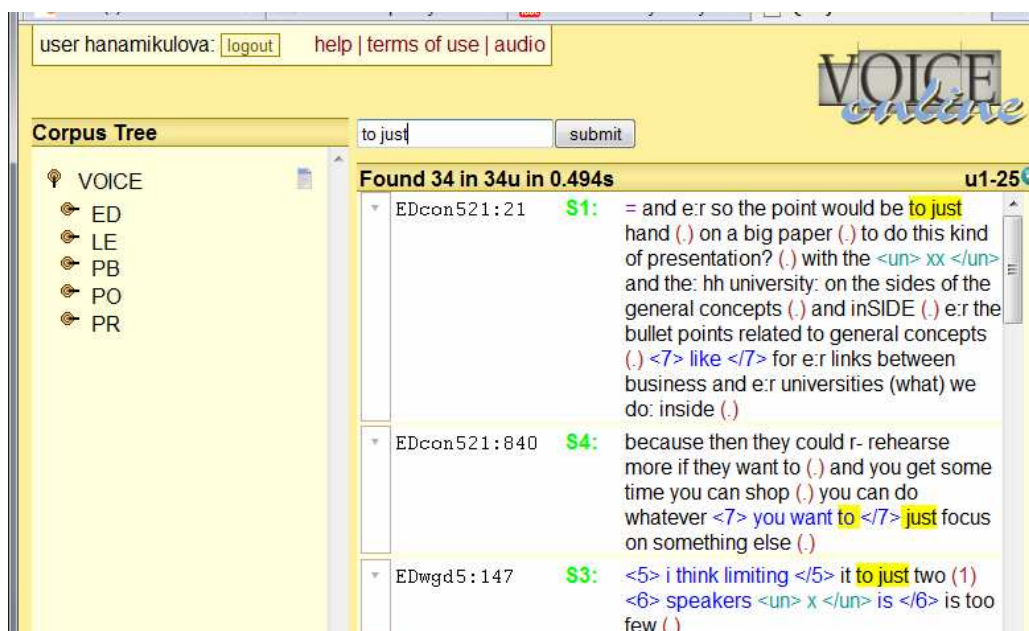
Split infinitives in the speech of non-native speakers do occurs as we can see on the following examples from the VOICE<sup>50</sup> and in Table 24.

(1) LEcon565:93S2: it takes longer to find the book than **to actually do** the cooking.

(2) EDint328:489S2: so I have had to explain why you know and now I think he has started **to really settle down** in Maltese to talk perfect Maltese<sup>51</sup>

(3) LEcon562:830S1: and then I had **to just go** and buy pizza and I have...<sup>52</sup>

Table 24: the VOICE query



To trace the occurrence of split infinitives I used the most common splitters in both British and American English - see Table 8 + compounds and particle *not*. Results can be seen in Table 25.

<sup>50</sup> VOICE currently comprises 1 million words of transcribed spoken ELF from professional, educational and leisure domains

<sup>51</sup> Sample modified

<sup>52</sup> Sample modified

Table 25: Adverbials splitting infinitives in VOICE

VOICE	
to sort of	45
to really	33
to actually	22
to just	20
to kind of	10
to not	10
to always	3
to fully	3
to further	3
to still	3
to at least	2
to better	2
to even	2

It was necessary to go through all the examples manually, as not all of the *to* + adverbial structure was followed by a verb in infinitive as in:

(4) EDwgd5:150S3: i think limiting it **to just** two speakers is too few...

As the VOICE always catches the original utterance, some sentences were therefore incomplete or the *to* structure was repeated as in:

(5) POWgd14:461S11: and be able **to sort of** erm

(6) POMtg314:63S5: and my task is to erm **to actually to enhance** teaching in English?

Unlike sample (4), numbers (5) and (6) were fully relevant for the research as the verb following the *to* and an adverbial can be expected.

On one hand, we could expect that since there is no mention of split infinitives in the most commonly used grammar books, the users of English as SL would not use this construction altogether as they would have no sources to learn this structure from. On the other hand, for some speakers (depending on their language background) using of split infinitives might come as natural. We can also assume that these users have picked up this grammatical pattern from the native speakers, who according to grammars shouldn't use split infinitives. Therefore we can conclude that the natural tendency to split infinitive is present among native speakers and they are prone to using this structure.



As this research shows, there is a tendency to use split infinitive among non-native speakers and they seem not to hesitate to use it when trying to achieve clarity of expression. Perhaps it would be useful to provide an explanation of this phenomenon in the textbooks of English to prevent the learners from using it. Especially, as there are so many quarrels concerning split infinitive among native speakers. On the other hand, were it really so grammatically wrong, we could expect that there would have been rules and recommendation in the textbooks already. This brings us again to the dispute as for whether or not it is still advisable to follow these prescriptive rules.

## 5 CONCLUSION

Split infinitive is a grammatical phenomenon with its occurrence dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Regardless of the rules and recommendations made against its usage, it is a structure which is of a common use in both British and American English, especially in recent times. Usage of this structure is still increasing, rising from 13 to 2782 in the time period from 1810 to 2009, as can be shown for example on the data from COHA.

The occurrence of split infinitive increases continually, regardless of many rules and recommendations which were introduced by grammarians. While some of them disapprove of split infinitive completely, others admit that using split infinitive might be of a certain advantage in some situations. However, any explanation of what kind of situations should that be, or which words specifically can split the infinitive is missing in grammar books.

According to the data from contemporary corpora, split infinitive occurs more often in American English. The hypothesis that split infinitives would be more common in American English in comparison to British English therefore proved right. In general split infinitives are used approximately 50% more in American English, the number varies depending on individuals splitters. Most common splitters proved to be single-adverb phrases and also the particle *not*. Numbers of occurrences are illustrated in the Tables below.

Table 5, repeated here as Table 1: BNC: to [av\*][v?i\*] & COCA : to [r\*] [v?i]

<b>BNC</b>	935	<b>COCA</b>	9689
Written English	335	Written English	4892
Spoken English	600	Spoken English	4797

Table 9, repeated here as Table 2: BNC & COCA: to not [v?i]

<b>BNC</b>	55	<b>COCA</b>	2298
Written English	30	Written English	1168
Spoken English	25	Spoken English	1130

Furthermore, in American English, more complex phrases are sometimes used as splitters, while their occurrence in British English is rare. See Table 3.

Table 10, repeated here as Table 3: Infinitives split by adverbial phrases

<b>BNC<sup>53</sup></b>		<b>COCA</b>	
to [av*][av*][v?i *]	40	to [r*][r*][v?i *]	1681
to [av*][av*][av*][v?i *]	0	to [r*][r*][r*][v?i *]	104
to [av*][av*][av*][av*][v?i *]	0	to [r*][r*][r*][r*][v?i *]	27

To focus on the differences between written and spoken variant of English, we can see the occurrence is not always higher in written English as we assumed. Again, there are certain differences between British and American English. When we take a closer look at adverbials splitting the infinitive in British English, we see that 63% of all samples occur in written English, which corresponds to our theory. However, in American English the ratio between written and spoken form is 51% to 49%, split infinitives even slightly prevailing in written English. It is very similar when negation is concerned, only with the difference that negative split infinitives in writing prevail slightly in both British (54%) and American English (51%).

In respect to whether split infinitive is used more often in formal speech, we can conclude that the tendency to avoid splitting in formal language is not as big as we expected. In American English there is almost no difference in the numbers of samples in written and spoken form and in British English split infinitives prevail in speech only slightly (63%).

Adverbials proved to be the most common splitters. The research verified Quirk's hypothesis, that adverbials in this position are predominantly short adverbs associated with degree in modality as is listed in Table 4 below.

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<sup>53</sup> *sort of/kind of/at least* in BNC tagged as one adverbial

Table 8, repeated here as Table 4: to ‘specific adverbial’ [v?i\*]

<b>BNC</b>		<b>COCA</b>	
actually	430	just	3620
just	273	really	3405
really	217	actually	1992
even	149	better	1780
further	148	even	1616
fully	135	further	1182
completely	74	fully	1168
always	61	kind of	826
finally	54	always	779
better	41	simply	687
still	38	also	629
correctly	25	still	511
seriously	23	accurately	449
greatly	19	completely	418
jointly	19	truly	345
boldly	12	seriously	311

Concerning English used as LF, we can say that there is the same tendency to use the split infinitive structure among the learners of English as among the native speakers. Should the prescriptive rule against split infinitive still be followed, it would be useful to include an explanation of this structure and reasons against its usage in textbooks for learners of English. There should be some guidance at least in respect to formal writing, as some learners might be more prone to using this structure than the others.

## 6 SHRUTÍ

Tato práce se zabývá problematikou gramatického jevu, známého jako *split infinitive* (do češtiny možno přeložit jako rozdělený infinitiv). Jedná se o syntaktickou strukturu, kdy se slovo či fráze, většinou však adverbium vyskytuje mezi *to* a samotným infinitivem. Mezi lingvisty a gramatiky je toto téma všeobecně známé a od jeho použití spíše odrazují.

Historicky můžeme nalézt split infinitivy již v dílech z 13. století, tudíž o něm nemůžeme hovořit ani jako o moderní gramatické struktuře, ani jako o amerikanismu, jak se často lidé mylně domnívají. V 19. století se potom začínají objevovat první zmínky o nesprávnosti používání této struktury. Odpůrci se většinou odkazují na latinskou gramatiku a na to, že angličtina by měla, co se formálnosti týče, dodržovat tytéž gramatické principy, což v tomto případě není plně aplikovatelné. V poslední době se názory na používání split infinitivu různí, gramatici se však povětšinou shodují v názoru, že v psané angličtině by se tato struktura objevit neměla.

Co se týče dalších doporučení ohledně použití, není zcela jasné, v jakých případech je ‘povoleno’ split infinitiv používat a jaká slova se mohou objevit v pozici mezi *to* a slovesem. Učebnice anglické gramatiky pro studenty se potom této problematice vyhýbají úplně.

Jedním z nejdůležitějších argumentů pro použití split infinitivu je, že ve snaze, vyhnout se mu často vznikají věty, které si buď lze vyložit více způsoby, nebo věty stylisticky neohrabané, jak uvádí Quirk et al. (1985, 497) na těchto příkladech:

(1) She has tried consciously to stop worrying about her career.

(2) She has tried to stop consciously worrying about her career.

(3) She has tried to consciously stop worrying about her career.

Z první věty, kde se adverbium vyskytuje už před infinitivem, není zcela jasné, zda se příslovce *conscious* pojí s *tried* nebo se *stop*. Z druhého příkladu pro změnu nevyplývá jednoznačně, zda věta odkazuje na *conscious stop* nebo ne. Použití split infinitivu by v tomto případě mnohé ujasnilo.

Struktura fráze obsahující split infinitiv vypadá přibližně takto:

**(sloveso) + to + slovo nebo fráze + infinitiv**

V korpusech šla vyhledat pomocí **to [av\*][v?i\*]** v Britském národním korpusu a **to [r\*] [v?i]** v Korpusu současné americké angličtiny.

Co se týče zmapování výskytu této gramatické struktury v současné angličtině, můžeme se řídit daty z korpusů anglického jazyka, v této práci konkrétně to byly převážně korpusy BNC a COCA. Při zkoumání rozdílů mezi britskou a americkou angličtinou musíme brát v potaz rozdílnou velikost obou korpusů – COCA je přibližně čtyřikrát větší než BNC. Nicméně i přes tyto rozdíly je výskyt split infinitivu v americké angličtině srovnatelně vyšší viz Tabulka 1.

Tabulka 5, zde jako Tabulka 1: BNC: to [av\*][v?i\*] & COCA: to [r\*] [v?i]

<b>BNC</b>	935	<b>COCA</b>	9689
psaná angličtina	335	psaná angličtina	4892
mluvená angličtina	600	mluvená angličtina	4797

Patrné jsou také rozdíly mezi mluvenou a psanou angličtinou. Výskyt split infinitivu není vždy vyšší v mluvené angličtině, jak jsme se domnívali, obzvláště pak v americké angličtině. BNC ukazuje, že 63% všech příkladů se split infinitivem je z mluvené angličtiny, zatímco v americké angličtině je poměr mezi psanou a mluvenou angličtinou 51%:49%. Split infinitiv zde ve skutečnosti převažuje, i když nepatrně, v psané angličtině. Co se týče negace, tato struktura se opět čteněji vyskytuje v psané angličtině – 54% britská, 51% americká.

Tabulka 9, zde jako Tabulka 2: BNC & COCA: to not [v?i]

<b>BNC</b>	55	<b>COCA</b>	2298
psaná angličtina	30	psaná angličtina	1168
mluvená angličtina	25	mluvená angličtina	1130

Nejčastější typy split infinitivů, které se podle korpusů v současné angličtině vyskytují, můžeme vidět v tabulce.

Tabulka 6, zde jako Tabulka 3: Nejčastější split infinitivy

	<b>BNC</b>	
1.	to actually get	37
2.	to really get	27
3.	to actually do	25
4.	to even think	22
5.	to actually go	20
6.	to just go	20
7.	to actually put	18
8.	to actually say	17
9.	to fully understand	17
10.	to actually be	16
11.	to actually make	16
12.	to actually see	16
13.	to even consider	16
14.	to sort of get	16
15.	to just get	15
16.	to just sit	15
17.	to further reduce	13
18.	to still be	13
19.	to actually find	12
20.	to further develop	12

	<b>COCA</b>	
1.	to better understand	722
2.	to really get	332
3.	to just be	327
4.	to really be	251
5.	to still be	251
6.	to just go	243
7.	to just say	229
8.	to just get	225
9.	to always be	216
10.	to just sit	198
11.	to really make	193
12.	to even think	179
13.	to fully understand	179
14.	to actually get	148
15.	to just let	148
16.	to really understand	146
17.	to actually do	144
18.	to just take	136
19.	to actually be	134
20.	to actually have	125

Nejčastěji rozdělují infinitivy adverbia. Podle *Longman English Grammar* cítí lidé potřebu rozdělovat infinitivy, když chtějí něco zdůraznit. V anglické větě se adverbia mohou vyskytovat v různých pozicích, záleží vždy na konkrétním adverbium. Podle Quirka et al. (1984, 491) jsou nejmobilnější a tudíž nejvhodnější pro rozdělení infinitivu jednoslovná adverbia, což dokazuje i korpusový výzkum (BNC 935, COCA 9689). Víceslovná adverbia se tak často nevyskytují, jak můžeme opět pozorovat v tabulce.

Tabulka 10, zde jako Tabulka 4: Infinitivy rozdělené víceslovnými výrazy

<b>BNC<sup>54</sup></b>	
to [av*][av*][v?i *]	40
to [av*][av*][av*][v?i *]	0
to [av*][av*][av*][av*][v?i *]	0

<b>COCA</b>	
to [r*][r*][v?i *]	1681
to [r*][r*][r*][v?i *]	104
to [r*][r*][r*][r*][v?i *]	27

<sup>54</sup> *sort of/ kind of/ at least* v BNC označené pouze jako jedno adverbium

Co se dále týče typů adverbíí, potvrdila se Quirkova hypotéza, že nejčastěji rozdělují infinitivy jednoslovná adverbia a to především způsobu, jak je patrné z tabulky.

Tabulka 8, zde jako Tabulka 5: to ‘adverbium’ [v?i\*]

<b>BNC</b>		<b>COCA</b>	
actually	430	just	3620
just	273	really	3405
really	217	actually	1992
even	149	better	1780
further	148	even	1616
fully	135	further	1182
completely	74	fully	1168
always	61	kind of	826
finally	54	always	779
better	41	simply	687
still	38	also	629
correctly	25	still	511
seriously	23	accurately	449
greatly	19	completely	418
jointly	19	truly	345
boldly	12	seriously	311

Co se týče uživatelů angličtiny, kteří nejsou rodilými mluvčími, můžeme konstatovat, že rovněž existují tendence používat split infinitive. Mezi *to* a infinitivem se nejčastěji objevují tato adverbia:

Tabulka 25, zde jako Tabulka 6: adverbia rozdělující infinitiv v korpusu VOICE

<b>VOICE</b>	
to sort of	45
to really	33
to actually	22
to just	20
to kind of	10
to not	10
to always	3
to fully	3
to further	3
to still	3
to at least	2
to better	2
to even	2



Míra použití se u jednotlivých mluvčích může lišit s ohledem na mateřský jazyk. Učebnice anglického jazyka se problematice split infinitivu nevěnují vůbec, studenti tudíž prakticky nemají možnost dozvědět se, že používat tuto strukturu je gramaticky nesprávné.

## **ANOTACE**

Tato práce se zabývá zkoumáním gramatického fenoménu, známého jako rozdělený infinitiv. Ohledně správnosti této struktury se již léta vedou spory a existuje mnoho předsudků proti jejímu užívání. Nejprve je popsán výskyt rozděleného infinitivu od 14. století po současnost, dále jsou shrnuty názory předních lingvistů (Quirk, Crystal, Huddleston a Pullum) na jeho užití. Práce se dále věnuje výzkumu výskytu této gramatické struktury v britské i americké angličtině, jak v psané, tak v mluvené formě, a to pomocí výzkumu v Britském národním korpusu a v Korpusu současné americké angličtiny v rozhraní Marka Daviese. Výsledky tohoto výzkumu a také seznam nejčastějších typů rozdělených infinitivů, adverbíí, či sloves typických rozdělených infinitiv jsou zaznamenány do tabulek. Na základě získaných dat je potom závěrem práce je polemika, zda by se měl či neměl změnit přístup k užívání této gramatické struktury.

## **ANNOTATION**

This thesis is concerned with the topic of a grammatical phenomenon, commonly known as split infinitive. There have been many disputes about this grammatical structure and much prejudice against its usage. First an overview of the usage of split infinitive from the 14<sup>th</sup> century until present is described, and then the approaches of the prominent linguists (Quirk, Crystal, Huddleston and Pullum) are given. The thesis is further concerned with the occurrence of split infinitives in British and American English, both written and spoken variant. The data were acquired via the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English, both Mark Davies' interface. Results of this research together with a list of the most common types of split infinitives and adverbials or verbs most typical for this grammatical structure are tabulated. On the basis of the acquired data, the conclusion of this work provides disputation whether or not it is advisable to change the attitude towards the usage of split infinitive.

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