

The modal *be bound to* constructions and the dynamic English construction

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One possible characterization of the essence of a diachronic construction grammar approach to language change is that it tries to account for the emergence of individual constructions in the construction of a language, as well their disappearance from it, with reference to relevant other parts of the construction. For instance, rather than considering the emergence of grammatical constructions as individual linear changes happening to certain lexical material in particular morphosyntactic contexts, diachronic construction grammar works with snapshots of the construction of a language taken at different intervals and explains the appearance of new constructions against the backdrop of old ones which were already there. In such a model, analogy is the major mechanism of change, at least as far as the creation of new form-meaning pairings is concerned. The purpose of this paper is to illustrate this model on the concrete example of the English modal *be bound to* constructions.

Present-day English has two *be bound to* constructions, the deontic one illustrated in (1) and the often, and perhaps erroneously but conveniently, called “epistemic” one illustrated in (2).

- (1) If you are dismissed with pay in lieu of notice, or without notice, and you obtain new employment during the notice period, you are bound to bring into account those earnings.
- (2) Mistakes are bound to happen sometimes.

Though they often feature in lists of modal expressions and though their meanings have received some discussion, the development of both constructions has so far not been the object of a dedicated study. This paper will consider the question of how they became entrenched parts of the English construction.

Judging by what we can glean from the entries for *bind* and *bound* in the *OED*, the deontic construction is virtually as old as the *be bound to* pattern itself, dating back to the 14th century. The metaphor AN OBLIGATION IS A TIE was obviously already a well-established one at the time and expressions with both the verb *bind* and the noun *bond* could instantiate it long before the verb came to be combined with a *to*-infinitive. However, rather than stop there and look no further for an explanation for the deontic construction’s entrenchment, this paper will ask whether the English construction of the time contained both formally and semantically similar patterns which may have made deontic *be bound to* very normal grammar.

The *OED* also suggests that “epistemic” *be bound to* only goes back to the second half of the 19th century. Is this a mere case of the DEONTIC > EPISTEMIC grammaticalization path, i.e. a case of the pragmatic inference that obligations lead to likely outcomes which took the best part of five centuries to fossilize? It will be argued instead that language users aligned *be bound to* with an epistemic *be + adj + to* construction after a now extinct epistemic construction containing the form *bound* had made this a very small and natural step.

Various diachronic corpus resources will be used to reconstruct pertinent parts of the relevant historical constructions.

Constructional templates at the morphology-lexicon interface – meaning and the layered structure of the Irish word.

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This paper examines derivation in Modern Irish within a layered structure of the word (LSW) within the Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) model. In addition, we examine the role of the lexicon, the need for a lexeme store in the lexicon and a separate morpheme inventory. We consider derivation within an account that addresses the formation of the nominal and other lexical categories.

Morphology, of course, is the part of linguistics that deals with word structure, word formation, the internal structure of words, and the identification and study of morphemes. As such, it has interfaces to semantics, syntax and phonology. Under derivation, we discuss how a new member of a lexical category is formed, and its meaning captured, and how lexical meaning may be modified within the LSW in RRG. We indicate in our conceptualisation of the layered structure of the word how it would operate in support of derivation. We discuss the need for an inventory of morphological constructional schemata for lexemes, similar to the syntactic inventory, such that morphemes that carry semantic or conceptual meaning might be suitably represented in a lexeme store within the lexicon. We argue that lexemes, those morphemes with a meaningful semantics, are to be found within the lexicon and formulated as a concept of a specific category type, mediated by the RRG linking system.