# Making Impersonal Comments via *it*-Extraposition: Perspectives of Syntactic Structure, Semantic Denotations and Pragmatic Aspects via Literature, Magazines and Applied Linguistics Articles in English

การแสดงความคิดเห็นโดยใช้โครงสร้างการย้ายประธานไปที่ส่วนท้ายประโยคแล้วแทนที่ด้วย คำไร้ความหมาย "มัน" มุมมองผ่านโครงสร้างวากยสัมพันธ์ ความหมายเชิงอรรถศาสตร์ และด้านวจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์ในวรรณกรรม นิตยสารและบทความ ภาษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์ที่เป็นภาษาอังกฤษ

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## Abstract

This study examined *it-* extraposition with adjectives followed by *to*-infinitive clauses (i.e., *it is important to note that this research paper excludes that-clauses*) via the perspectives of syntactic structure, semantic denotations, and pragmatic aspects. While most previous studies have focused on using *it-* extraposition in selected academic articles, the current study contributes to the views of English literature, magazines and applied linguistics articles. The entire 450,000 words contain 34 extracted tokens in the three datasets. This study shows that the use of *it-* extraposition occurs mostly in applied English linguistics articles at 64.71 percent. The use of *it-* extraposition in English magazines and literature is 23.53 percent and 11.76 percent, respectively. Extended projection principle could explain the lower use of *it*-extraposition in this study via the expletive. The semantic denotations between the three datasets appear to be different. The three datasets show similarities in that they apply the pragmatic aspects of the end-weight principle. It is hoped that this research will be useful for those learners of English as a second language and learners of English as a foreign language in making impersonal comments in different text varieties.

*Keywords: it in literature; applied linguistics; English literature*

## บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาวีธีการแสดงความคิดเห็นของโครงสร้างวากยสัมพันธ์ ความหมายเชิงอรรถศาสตร์ และด้านวจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์ของโครงสร้างการย้ายประธานไปที่ส่วนท้ายประโยคแล้วแทนที่ด้วยคำไร้ความหมาย "มัน" ในวรรณกรรม นิตยสาร และ บทความวิชาการ เช่น (i.e., *it is important to note that this research paper excludes that- clauses constructions*) ในขณะที่งานวิจัยก่อนหน้านี้ให้ความสำคัญกับโครงสร้างนี้ในเอกสารวิชาการ งานวิจัยนี้จึงศึกษาโครงสร้างนี้ในมุมของตัวบทวรรณกรรมภาษาอังกฤษ นิตยสาร และบทความภาษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์ คลังข้อมูลของโครงสร้างการย้ายประธานไปที่ส่วนท้ายประโยคแล้วแทนที่ด้วยคำไร้ความหมาย "มัน" มีจำนวนทั้งสิ้น 450,000 คำ ซึ่งประกอบด้วย 34 ตัวอย่างจากทั้งสามคลังข้อมูล การวิเคราะห์เนื้อหาทำตามรูปแบบของ Fillmore's (2019) Semantic Frame ผลการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่าโครงสร้างนี้ปรากฏในตัวบทความภาษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์เป็นจำนวนร้อยละ 64.71 นิตยสารเป็นจำนวนร้อยละ 23.53 และวรรณกรรมภาษาอังกฤษเป็นจำนวนร้อยละ 11.76 โครงสร้างวากยสัมพันธ์ของโครงสร้างการย้ายประธานไปที่ส่วนท้ายประโยคแล้วแทนที่ด้วยคำไร้ความหมาย "มัน" อธิบายได้โดยหลักการการเชื่อมต่อระหว่างภาคประธานกับภาคแสดง ความหมายเชิงอรรถศาสตร์ในทั้งสามตัวบทถูกใช้แตกต่างกัน โครงสร้างการย้ายประธานไปที่ส่วนท้ายประโยคแล้วแทนที่ด้วยคำไร้ความหมาย "มัน" ทั้งสามตัวบทถูกใช้เหมือนกันในด้านวจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์ ซึ่งสามารถอธิบายได้โดยหลักการน้ำหนักปลาย การศึกษานี้จะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ ผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่สอง เพื่อเรียนรู้วิธีการแสดงความคิดเห็นในตัวบทที่ต่างกัน

**Keywords:** *มันในวรรณกรรม ภาษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์ วรรณกรรมภาษาอังกฤษ*

## Introduction

English structure is one of the most important elements in learning the English Langauge (Radford, 2009). English is a language where a subject is required in every sentence. Avoiding using the subject in an English sentence could result in ungrammaticality. Radford (2009) mentioned that the subject in English must exist in a sentence to fulfill a principle called *Extended Projection Principle*, stating that all clauses require a subject.

Although most English users know about the importance of having a subject in a sentence, some constructions in English allow the English language users to move the subject to the final position. It is called extraposition, where the expletive is required to be filled in the subject slot. With the appearance of this construction, it is intriguing to investigate why English users need to move the subject to the final position of a sentence.

The expletive *it* that fills the position of the subject is required syntactically. However, it is semantically empty. With this condition, it seems necessary for English language learners to learn structure, meaning and use at the same time.

Concerning the function of *it*- extraposition, previous studies (Larsson & Kaatari, 2019; Zhang, 2015) indicate that it is used to make impersonal comments. This function of language use is one of the critical skills for English language learners. However, some English language learners confess that making impersonal comments on other people's pieces of work is challenging for them. In addition, different text varieties of English have their own styles regarding how comments can be made. For example, some genres prefer personal comments via the use of the pronoun *I*, whereas it is more common for other genres to make impersonal comments.

One of the common structures used for making impersonal comments is *it*-extraposition. This construction is normally used for objective comments where the speakers or the writers avoid presenting themselves on the stage via using the pronoun *I*, such as 1.

1. It is important to note that this project is required to be finished by June.

Example 1 is called *it*- *extraposition*. The *to*- infinitive clause *to note that this project is required to be finished by June* is the subject of the sentence that is shifted toward the final position. The slot of *Spec TP subject*, referring to the actual subject position (Radford, 2009) is filled with the expletive *it*, which is semantically empty (Hussein, 2015). When making impersonal comments, the writers do not include themselves on stage as in 2.

2. I think that we need to finish this project by June.

When compared with 1, example 2 is a subjective comment where the writer presents themselves on the stage via the pronoun *I*. While subjective comments are commonly used in a spoken register, it is premised that objective comments via *it*-extraposition are likely to be used more often in a written register.

Aside from its assumption- extraposition in a written register, especially in academic texts (Larsson & Kaatari, 2019), some scholars believe that extraposition has its own counterparts as in 3.

3.

(a) It is important to note that this project is required to be finished by June.

(b) To note that this project is required to be finished by June is important.

Although some scholars may agree that examples 3(a) and 3(b) could be counterparts as their semantic denotations could be considered the same, syntacticians may disagree as they are located in different positions. *Note that this project must be finished by June* given in 3(a), is located in the adjunct position, referring to additional information (Radford, 2009). However, the *to*- infinitive clause in 3(b) is located in the subject's position, technically known as Spec TP (Radford, 2009).

Although providing impersonal comments on people's work seems to be useful for them, this skill is regarded as being difficult for learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) and learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). One of the major problems for ESL and EFL learners is that they tend to avoid commenting on other people's work. This may be because they are shy to make a comment or don't know which English structures they should use to comment on other people's work. This study fills the gap by demonstrating to ESL and EFL learners that they can learn grammar implicitly from authentic text varieties in addition to learning English grammar from classrooms and grammar books. Learning grammar in this way could avoid students' boredom and improve their *linguistic performance*, refering to the ability to apply the use of English outside classrooms. Accordingly, this study compares the functions of making impersonal comments via the English construction *it-* extraposition with *to-* infinitive clauses between academic and non-academic texts. While academic texts in this study refer to English applied linguistics texts, non-academic texts refer to English magazines and literature.  To fill this gap, the objectives of this study were to investigate the frequency, semantic denotations and pragmatic aspects of *it-* extraposed subjects with adjectives followed by *to-* infinitive clauses in English literature, magazines and applied linguistics articles. This study would answer the following research questions.

1. What is the frequency of *it-* extraposed subjects with adjectives followed by *to-* infinitive clauses in English literature, magazines, and applied linguistics articles?

2. What are the semantic denotations of *it-* extraposed subjects with adjectives followed by *to-* infinitive clauses in English literature, magazines, and applied linguistics articles?

3. What are the pragmatic aspects of *it-*extraposed subjects with adjectives followed by *to-* infinitive clauses in English literature, magazines and applied linguistics articles?

The objectives of the study are given as follows:

1. To study the frequency of *it-* extraposed subjects with adjectives followed by *to-* infinitive clauses in English literature, magazines and applied linguistics articles

2. To study the semantic denotations of *it-* extraposed subjects with adjectives followed by *to-* infinitive clauses in English literature, magazines and applied linguistics articles

3. To study the the pragmatic aspects of *it*-extraposed subjects with adjectives followed by *to*- infinitive clauses in English literature, magazines and applied linguistics articles

## Literature Review

This section provides the background notion of the syntactic structure of *it*-extraposition. The analysis of semantic denotations of adjectives used with *it*- extraposition follows Fillmore (1982) based upon the framework of *Semantic Frames.* In addition, the analysis of pragmatic aspects to interpret *to*- infinitive clauses in this study follows Smolka (2005).

### Syntactic Structure

The *it*- extraposed subject with adjectives followed by *to*- infinitive clauses is being used productively in present-day English (Linden, 2010). Historically, this structure began with the use of manipulative verbs, such as *order* and *command* (i.e., *it is important to command her to do it*). This structure has become paradigmatic, referring to the spreading of this structure to be used with other verbs in English today (Linden, 2010).

Syntactically, *it*- extraposition is defined as the structure used to make impersonal comments (Wilinski, 2019), where the speaker, who comments, is covert as in 4.

4. It is important to note that this project needs to be finished by June.

*It* is considered extraposed as the subject of the sentence *to note that this project needs to be finished by June* has been shifted to the final position. The subject position is filled with the expletive subject *it* (Radford, 2009). This structure is originally derived from 5.

5. To note that this project needs to be finished by June is important.

Both the expletive *it* and the *to*- infinitive clause *to note that this project needs to be finished by June* are located at the subject position of the sentence, which is syntactically equivalent to DP (Radford, 2009). However, *to*- infinitive clauses are common in the subject position as they can be used as an alternative to a gerund as in *running is good for health* vs. *to run is good for health* (Wongkittiporn & Chitrakara, 2018).

### Semantic Denotations

In addition to the added feature of the expletive *it* as equivalent to the DP subject, the semantic denotations of adjective clauses, such as *important, necessary* and *difficult* follow the conceptual framework of *Semantic Frame* (Fillmore, 1982).

The theoretical framework of Semantic Frame was first noted by Fillmore (1982). Semantic Frame describes the combination of syntactic structure and semantic denotations as a paradigmatic pattern. There are various linguistic components in Semantic Frame, such as *proportionality*, *paradigms*, *taxonomy*, *redundancy elimination*, and *dictionary and encyclopedia*.

Fillmore (1982) refers to proportionality as the semantic relation between a pair of words, such as *men* and *woman*. Proportionality allows us to understand the opposite meaning between a group of words.

Paradigm is the semantic frame where words are classified into the same categories. For example, the words *cattle, sheep, horses,* and *swine* could be classified as livestock (Fillmore, 1982). Likewise, the adjectives - important, crucial and vital fit with this principle under the same paradigm of importance.

Taxonomy refers to the semantic network. It is follows the general to specific principle. For example, when one has the words *animals*, *dogs* and *poodles* in his taxonomy, the word *poodles* could be classified as more specific than *animals* (Fillmore, 1982).

The redundancy elimination in Semantic Frame refers to the repetition of the meaning of lexical items. Having classified the meaning of words into groups, the core meaning of a word needs to be focused.

Semantic Frames differentiate the meaning between dictionary and encyclopedia meanings. Semantic frames only pay attention to a pure semantic denotation. For instance, the word *carpenter* is defined as a worker who works with wood. Minor semantic features of the word *carpenter* are not significant.

With the notion of Semantic Frames, Wilinski (2019) applied Semantic Frame into the semantic denotations of adjectives, as in *importance, difficulty, statement, awareness, expectation, evaluation, likelihood* and *prediction*. These Semantic Frames and their application will be applied to the use of semantic denotations of adjective clauses in different text varieties within this study.

### Pragmatic Aspects

The study of pragmatic aspects in *it-* extraposition in this study follows Smolka (2005), who highlighted the *End-Weight Principle* to investigate this structure. As aforementioned in the section of syntactic structure, *it-* extraposition is the movement of *to-*infinitive clauses into the final position. Doing this complies with the pragmatic aspects of

the End-Weight principle, referring to moving the longer and heavier chunk to the final position as in 6.

6.

(a) To win this game in only 30 minutes is difficult.

(b) It is difficult to win this game in 30 minutes.

Moving the longer and heavier part as in *to win this game in 30 minutes* to the final position supports the flow of reading. In this example, it is more likely that the *to-* infinitive used in the final position is because of the End-Weight Principle.

Another pragmatic principle that is applied with *it-* extraposition with *to-* infinitive clauses is called the *pragmatic discourse of given and new information*. Based upon this principle, given information comes first, while new information is presented later. The use of *to-* infinitive clauses at the final position is due to the writer providing new information.

### Text Varieties

In addition to the theoretical principle of syntactic structures, semantic denotations, and pragmatic aspects of *it-* extraposition, this study focuses on different text varieties.

### Academic Genres

Willinski (2018) examined *it-* extraposition in academic genres. The results showed that this genre's top three semantic denotations are importance, likelihood, and certainty. The pragmatic aspect to explain the high frequency of *it-* extraposition in this study is the principle of formality in academic texts.

Wilinski (2019) repeated his study using the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) to investigate its subgenre- extraposition in academic texts. Again, the results appear similar. The semantic denotation of adjectives in academic text appears to be 'difficulty' such as *hard to imagine* and 'importance' such as *important to note*.

Zhang (2015) studied *it-* extraposition in academic writing, such as 7.

7. It is quite impossible for them to find replacement for losses upon this scale, and they resorted to paying preachers stipends to travel around circuits.

(Zhang, 2015, p. 5)

Zhang (2015) showed that the use of *it-* extraposition is frequent in academic texts. It complies with the pragmatic principle of the End-Weight Principle, where a longer chunk of information is placed at the final position.

Hewings and Hewings (2015) studied *it-* extraposition in doctoral dissertations as in 8.

8. Interestingly, the Western State of Nigeria identifies the following as the seven characteristics that small-scale industries process: household craft or factories.

Hewings and Hewings (2015) found the semantic denotation of interest to indicate the writer's attitude marker. The pragmatic aspect to explain this phenomenon is the End-Weight Principle, where the writer tends to place the more extended information at the final position. In addition to the text variety of academic studies, only a few studies focus on the use of *it*- extraposition in the field of non-academic texts, which will be discussed in the following section.

### Non-academic Genres

Larrson and Kaatari (2019) studied *it*- extraposition with *to*- infinitive clauses in Swedish university students' conversations, such as 9.

9. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the Department of Transportation's totally incompetent [….]

(Larsson & Kaatari, 2019, p. 44)

They found that the semantic denotation of the adjective occurs in the paradigm of difficulty. However, *it*- extraposition is rarely found in the non-academic genre.

Hussein (2015) studied *it*- extraposition in religious speech, as in 10.

10. It is nice to have money in the bank.

(Hussein, 2015, p. 31)

He found that semantic denotation occurs in the paradigm of pleasance due to the adjective *nice*.

With different text varieties in the field of *it*- extraposition, it seems that we do not know enough about *it*- extraposition in non-academic genres. Since grammar and meaning should be learnt simultaneously, this study focuses on *it*- extraposition in  literature, magazines and applied linguistics articles in English.

### Methodology

This study focuses on comparing *it*- extraposition with *to*- infinitive clauses between academic texts and non-academic texts. While the academic texts in this study refer to English applied linguistics articles, the non-academic texts in this study refer to English magazines and English literature. The analysis of this study follows Fillmore's (1982) frameworks of *Semantic Frames* as elaborated in the literature review. This Semantic Frame

will be used as a fundamental criterion to classify *it-* extraposed subjects with adjectives followed by *to-* infinitive clauses.

### The Data Collection

The data collection in this study was made up of a total of 450,000 words from 3 sources. They were manually extracted.  Each source contained 150,000 words. This study focuses on comparing the use of *it-* extraposition in academic text and non-academic texts in English.  The academic texts in this study refer to English applied linguistics texts. Not only does the use of English academic texts in this study provide language learners a way to improve their understanding of academic journals, but it also would be a guideline for making impersonal comments in the field of English applied linguistics. The data of English applied linguistics were collected from three reliable sources.  The first one is *English for Specific Purposes* (ESP). The second one is British and American Studies, and the third one is *the Journal of English Studies*. They include six articles for each journal. These research articles were selected as they were classified as reliable academic resources collected from Q1 and Q2 Scopus database (www.scimagojr.com). According to this website, these selected journals have gained a high number of citations.

On the other hand, the non-academic texts in this study are English fashion magazines and literature. It is interesting to study *it-* extraposition in English fashion magazines because they are authentic texts. Even though the use of authentic texts to study the use of language is not a new idea, it is an effective and practical way to learn a language (Mestari & Malabar, 2016). In regard to availability, English fashion magazines are available everywhere. Learning language from fashion magazines can be entertaining as they contain pictures to help readers understand texts easier. The second advantage of English fashion magazines is that they are not long and take little time to read. Usually, a magazine is a thin book. Therefore, readers can spend a shorter time reading an article in a magazine. This study selected the best-selling English fashion magazines and the best-selling literature as ranked by the website "amazon.com". Two Vogue and two ELLE magazines as issued in June and July 2021 were selected to study *it-* extraposition. Vogue and ELLE magazines were selected because they have a higher level of readership. Vogue and ELLE magazines receive 23 million and 25 million online readers per month.

Regarding literature, literature is classified as a semi-formal genre. It is interesting because it is uniquely organized. The organization of literature starts with orientation which refers to setting place, time and participants. Then, the writers need to provide comments

about each character. In addition to orientation, literature is required to have a complication. This relates to what is happening in the story. Finally, it ends with a resolution which is the story's ending. Apart from organization and ideas, making comments in literature is regarded as difficult for English language learners. This is because literature writing requires its own language features to make comments (Helala & Aboubou, 2020). Finally, one could learn the writer's style of comments at the end of the story as literature sometimes ends with what is right and wrong to teach people to be good people in society (Writer, 2018).

With regard to literature, this study selected *The Annotated Alice* as written by Lewis Carroll and *the Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* as written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. They are best sellers in literature. The whole series of the two stories were selected to be analyzed.

### Data analysis

Fillmore's (2019) semantic frame is based upon the data analysis of semantic denotation. The data analysis is processed by examining the data that contain *it*-extraposition in the three datasets. Once found, the data were manually extracted. After that, the adjectives, such as *important*, *difficult* and *possible*, are grouped into categories. To illustrate, the adjectives employed with the semantic frame of importance are *essential*, *crucial*, and *important*. The adjectives having semantic frame of difficulty are *complex, difficult* and *hard.* The semantic frame of mental stimulations consists of the adjectives *exciting* and *nervous*. The adjectives used in the semantic frame of awareness are *mindful* and *aware.*

**Table 1** Semantic denotations of *it*- extraposed with adjective clauses.
11.

| Semantic Denotations | Examples |
|---|---|
| **Difficulty and Easiness** | a. *It's not hard to find* other reasons why people from comfortable backgrounds are scabbing around, trying to find some hard-luck story they can tell. |
| **Importance** | b. It is *important* to move beyond the so-called evangelical picture of CLIL. |
| **Interest** | c. It is *interesting* to note that, although denying the socio-political aspect, it was precisely this aspect that brought about the rise of modernism and aestheticism as one of its movements. |

Different semantic denotations of adjective clauses are presented in Table 1: Difficulty and Easiness, such as *hard*, Importance, such as *important*, and Interest, such as *interesting.* The analysis is based upon adjective phrases.

### Data validation

Although this study is based upon Fillmore's (2019) framework, the analyzed data were given to three English university instructors who checked the accuracy of the data analysis again.

**Table 2** Data Validation of Adjective Clauses

        12.

| Semantic Denotations | Examples | Rater 1 | | Rater 2 | | Rater 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | A | D | A | D | A | D |
| Difficulty & Easiness | a. It's not hard to find other reasons why people from comfortable background are scabbing around, trying to find some hard-luck story they can tell. | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Importance | b. It is important to move beyond the so-called evangelical picture of CLIL. | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |

Table 2 shows that three experts in the field of English were asked to validate the data. A stands for agreement, whereas D stands for disagreement. The data analysis gains high validity when two or three experts tick 'agree'. However, if zero or only one expert ticks 'agree', the analysis will be reanalyzed. This methodology leads to the following result and discussion.

### Results

The entire 450,000 words is divided into 150,000 for each dataset. Table 3 provides the answer for research question 1 - "what is the frequency of *it-* extraposed subjects with adjectives followed by *to-* infinitive clauses in English literature, magazines and applied linguistics articles?", as in Table 3.

**Table 3** Frequency of *it-* extraposed subjects with *to-* infinitive clauses in different genres

| Genres | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Literature | 4 | 11.76 |
| Magazines | 8 | 23.53 |
| Applied linguistics articles | 22 | 64.71 |
| Total | 34 | 100 |

Table 3 shows the frequency of *it-* extraposition in the different text varieties. The majority of the use of *it-* extraposition occurs with applied linguistics articles at 64.71 percent. The use of *it-* extraposition in literature and magazines occur at 23.53 percent and 11.76 percent, respectively.

The following section provides the answer for the research question 2 –"What are the semantic denotations of *it-* extraposed subjects with adjectives followed by *to-* infinitive clauses in English literature, magazines and applied linguistics articles?".

The following are examples of *it-* extrapositions in the different text varieties.

13. English Literature

a. If you drink too much from a bottle marked "poison," it is almost certain to disagree with you, sooner or later.

b. She fears it was more likely to be a wild beast.

c. It was difficult to refuse any of Sherlock Holmes' requests, for they were always so exceedingly definite and put forward with such a quiet air of mastery.

14. English magazines

a. "She's a natural performer, and it was inspiring to see how she transformed in front of the camera."

b. Gentle and thoughtful in conversation, it's not hard to discern the eye-drawing quality that makes her so captivating on-screen.

c. "But what I love most about my home is being in it. It is very nice to work from home, you know?"

d. It is easy for me to believe in climate change, […]

e. It is nice to use colour and texture on bags and shoes to add excitement to outfits.

15. Applied linguistics articles

a. It is important to note that the moves and steps are not always linearly presented in N&V articles.

(Yin & Parkinson, 2021, p. 8)

b. It is important to move beyond the so-called evangelical picture of CLIL.

(Diezmas, 2019, p. 279)

c. It is interesting to note that, although denying the socio-political aspect, it was precisely this aspect that brought about the rise of modernism and aestheticism as one of its movements.

(Kalaba, 2021, p. 147)

Adjective clauses in English literature usually appear in the semantic denotation of certainty as illustrated in *certain* and *likely*. Moreover, the semantic denotation of adjective clauses in English literature also appears with the meaning of difficulty as in *difficult*. Using *it*-extraposition with *to-* infinitive clauses in English magazines usually indicates positive semantic denotations, such as *inspiring, easy* and *nice*. In contrast, the semantic denotations of adjective clauses in applied linguistics articles are *importance* and *interest*.

This section provides the answer for research question 3 - "What are the pragmatic aspects of *it*-extraposed subjects with adjectives followed by *to-* infinitive clauses in English literature, magazines, and applied linguistics articles?". Pragmatically, the length of sentence in *it*-extraposition in the three datasets appears to be long as in (16)-(18).

16. Literature

It was difficult *to refuse any of Sherlock Holmes' requests, for they were always so exceedingly definite and put forward with such a quiet air of mastery.*

17. English Magazines

Gentle and thoughtful in conversation, it's not hard *to discern the eye-drawing quality that makes her so captivating on-screen.*

18. Applied linguistics articles

It is important *to note that the moves and steps are not always linearly presented in N&V articles.*

In addition to the length, the data of English literature is found to be applicable with the pragmatic principle of given and new information, as in (19).

19.

(a) Notwithstanding the above, it is important *to note that, as diminutive formation, childing, tenderling, bratling, flosculet add to the large collection of expressive that characterize the new global conceptualization of childhood in Early Modern English.*

(b) It is important *to note that the Bohemian Girl is a ballad opera about the fortunes of a girl who is abducted by some gypsies and taken away from her home in Bohemia.*

In English literature, the *to-* infinitive clauses *to note that* are commonly used to add new information. The following section provides the discussion as to why *it*-extraposition are used in this way.

## Discussion

This section provides syntactic explanations, semantic denotations and pragmatic aspects of *it-* extraposition with *to-* infinitive clauses in different text varieties.

### Syntactic Explanation

The comparison of *it-* extraposition with *to-* infinitive clauses in different text varieties allows us to see that the use of this structure is less productive in semi-formal and informal genres of writing. The results of this study comply with previous studies (Larsson & Kaatari, 2019; Zhang, 2015). As explained, the effect is complexity since using *it-* extraposition requires the writer to include the two syntactic features of adding the expletive subject *it* and the movement of the *to-* infinitive clause into the final position. It seems that the writer needs to cognitively process longer in order to use this complex construction.

19. It is nice to use colour and texture on bags and shoes to add excitement to outfits.

Example (19) came from a text on fashion. Using this construction requires the writer to apply the feature of movement by moving the subject *to use colour and texture on bags and shoes to add excitement to outfits* to the final position. Once the actual subject position becomes empty, the writer needs to apply the syntactic notion of EPP feature, standing for Extended Projection Principle, which states that a finite constituent T must be extended into a TP position containing a subject. In other words, the writer needs to find a subject as in the expletive *it* to fill that position. Not only is the use of this structure complicated for the writer, it is also regarded as a complex sentence for the reader to process. The readers need to process who is the cover subject in the lower clause as illustrated in (20).

20. It is nice PRO to use colour and texture on bags and shoes to add excitement to outfits.

PRO in (20) represents a covert subject (Radford, 2009). Radford indicated that all clauses need subjects, so the subject in the lower clause is interpreted as arbitrary, referring to everyone. The effect of complexity could be a reason why this structure gains lower frequency in semi-formal and informal texts. Syntactically, using *it-* extraposition could help to avoid the problem of subject / verb agreement. If the *to-* infinitive is used as the subject of the sentence, which makes the subject too long, it is likely for the writer or the speaker to make an error in this aspect.

### Semantic Denotations

The use of *it-* extraposition in English applied linguistics texts appears the highest in this study. The semantic denotations of this text variety mostly appear to be importance and interest as in 21.

21.

a. It is important to note that the moves and steps are not always linearly presented in N&V articles.

b. It is important to move beyond the so-called evangelical picture of CLIL.

c. It is interesting to note that, although denying the socio-political aspect, it was precisely this aspect that brought about the rise of modernism and aestheticism as one of its movements.

The higher frequency of *it-* extraposition in applied linguistics texts go along the same lines as previous studies where *it-* extraposition is frequently used in academic papers (Hewings & Hewings, 2015). This is because academic articles prefer objective comments to subjective comments as in, *I think.* The semantic denotations of importance and interest are the writer's attitudes to evaluate their own work.

On the other hand, the semantic denotation in magazines indicates the meaning of pleasance as in 22.

22. It is nice to use colour and texture on bags and shoes to add excitement to outfits.

ELLE and Vogue magazines present luxurious or high-end products which are not important or necessary things to have. That is why the writers avoid using the phrase *important to have* or *necessary to have.*

The lowest frequency of *it-* extraposition occurs in literature. This could be because an objective comment like this is not the style of comment in literature. The writing style in literature usually makes personal comments via *I think* and, *I guess* to obviously indicate each protagonists' comments. As found in Wongkittiporn's (2021) study about children's literature, 162 tokens from approximately 300,000 words were personal comments *("I think I love you too!")*. When comparing the semantic denotation between fashion magazines, literature and applied linguistic articles, it can be seen that the adjectives *important* and *necessary* are frequently used in the latter texts. This may be because it is necessary for the researcher to provide a warning that if he/she controls an experiment by setting a condition in a given way, they could gain a reliable and valid result.

### Pragmatic Aspects

Notwithstanding the differences in terms of semantic denotations, the comparison of *it-* extraposition in different genres allows us to see their similarity in that they are used to comply with the pragmatic aspect of End-Weight Principle, as in 23-25.

23. Literature

a. If you drink too much from a bottle marked "poison," it is almost certain to disagree with you, sooner or later.

b. It was difficult to refuse any of Sherlock Holmes' requests, for they were always so exceedingly definite and put forward with such a quiet air of mastery.

24. English Magazines

a. Gentle and thoughtful in conversation, it's not hard to discern the eye-drawing quality that makes her so captivating on-screen.

b. It's not hard to find other reasons why people from comfortable backgrounds are scabbing around, trying to find some hard-luck story they can tell.

25. Applied linguistics articles

a. It is important to note that the moves and steps are not always linearly presented in N&V articles.

b. It is interesting to note that, although denying the socio-political aspect, it was precisely this aspect that brought about the rise of modernism and aestheticism as one of its movements.

As illustrated, the *to-* infinitive clauses in the three text varieties appear to be longer and heavier. The writers decided to place them at the final position so as to maintain the flow of the reading (Smolka, 2005). It seems that the use of *it-* extraposition complies effectively with the pragmatic principle of end-weight principle as the writers want to put their focused information, or the most important information that they want the readers to actually pay attention to, at the end of the sentences.

### Conclusion

This study examined the use of *it-* extraposition with *to-* infinitive clauses. The lower frequency of *it-* extraposition in semi-formal and informal text varieties could be due to the avoidance of the effect of complexity. It is likely for the writer to work harder and use more effort for their brain to process when using this structure via adding the feature of movement and the expletive *it* in the slot of DP position.

Semantically, the semantic denotations in applied linguistics articles appear with the meaning of importance and interest. The writers attempt to show their attitude and comments to convince readers without presenting themselves on the stage. However, the semantic denotation of importance was not found in magazines. The magazines that were selected to be studied were ELLE and Vogue, both of which advertise luxury products, such as bags, jewelry and expensive perfume. These are not important or necessary products for everyone to have.

Pragmatically, this structure allows English language users to gain understanding about its use in that when *to-* infinitive clauses are longer and heavier, moving them to the final position could better support the flow of reading. This study allows English language users to know when and why *it-* extraposition with *to-* infinitive clauses are used in different text varieties.

However, generalizing the use of *it-* extraposition to other text varieties such as business texts and newspapers may not be applicable to the optimal level. For future research in the field of *it-* extraposition, comparing the use of *it-* extraposition with *to-* infinitive clauses and *that-* clauses may allow us to gain insight into the differences between the two structures.

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