Origins and development of the Pennsylvania German ‘for…to’ construction

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Abstract

This paper examines the development of infinitival complementation in the variety of Pennsylvania German (PG) spoken in Waterloo County, Canada (WCPG). In particular, it focuses on the fer...zu ‘for...to’ construction which has developed from marking an adjunct of purpose to being a general infinitival marker. A parallel change has led to the almost complete loss of zu amongst younger speakers. We consider data from other varieties of PG, the few historical sources of WCPG that exist and our own recordings of WCPG from the last ten years. We put this data in the context of other Germanic varieties and conclude that contrary to a view held by other researchers, this development is not due to influence from English. We consider the consequences these changes have had for the clause structure of WCPG and how these may be accounted for within syntactic theory.

1. Introduction

In this paper, we will describe the development and distribution of the non-finite fer...zu construction in Pennsylvania German (PG), in particular in the variety spoken in Waterloo County, Canada (WCPG). The construction was originally found only in purposive constructions, but has rapidly spread to complement positions. In section 2, we consider briefly purposive clauses in earlier forms of PG as described in the literature and compare with purposive clauses in other varieties of Germanic. The main purpose of this paper is to describe the development of fer...zu from purposive marker to general non-finiteness marker. This is a change which has taken place in a number of varieties of Germanic and in section 3, we provide an overview of such varieties in order to place the WCPG changes
in a Germanic context. We include information about other varieties of PG and descriptions of earlier stages of PG.

In section 4, we report on our own study of the construction in WCPG. This section is based on recordings which we have made over the last ten years or so. The spread of *fer...zu* clauses in PG from adjunct to subject and complement functions has taken place at the same time as a related and very pervasive change in the language, namely the loss of the infinitival marker *zu*. It is therefore more correct to refer to the construction type as the *fer(...zu)* construction. Examples to illustrate this are given throughout and the environments in which *zu* is still used are sketched in section 4.4, where the semantic implications of the different forms are also discussed.

Explanations for the type of change that has taken place in PG have been proposed in the literature and these are discussed in section 5. Here we also discuss proposed explanations for similar changes in other languages. We evaluate these proposals in the light of the PG data.

The purpose of this paper is not to provide a detailed analysis of non-finite clauses in (WC)PG, but in section 5, we discuss the structural properties of *fer* in contemporary WCPG. We suggest different ways of capturing these properties and of linking them to the functional change discussed in section 4. We also consider some consequences which the distribution and development of the *fer(...zu)* construction have for syntactic theory and theories of grammatical change.

2. Purposive *for...to* infinitivals in varieties of Germanic.

It is not uncommon in Germanic languages for adverbial clauses expressing purpose to be marked by the preposition *for*/*fer*/*für* in combination with an infinitival marker. In English, a purposive *for...to* exists alongside the *in order to* construction as in the example in (1) (contrary to what Huffines (1990:103) claims in her discussion of the PG construction: “‘for to’ plus infinitive is an obsolete English construction to express purpose”; see the discussion of different types of purpose clauses in English in Quirk et al (1985:48)). As
the examples in (2) show, standard English only allows the *for...to* purposive when there is an overt subject.\(^2\) It is also possible to use *for* with *in order to* if a subject is present, as in (3).

(1)  
\begin{enumerate}
  \item a. Oscar gave Sarah a banana for her to eat when she got hungry.
  \item b. For him to win, he needs to play at his best.
\end{enumerate}

(2)  
\begin{enumerate}
  \item a. *For to win, he needs to play at his best.
  \item b. In order to win, he needs to play at his best.
\end{enumerate}

(3)  
\begin{enumerate}
  \item a. Oscar gave Sarah a banana in order for her to eat when she got hungry.
  \item b. In order for him to win, he needs to play at his best.
\end{enumerate}

A *for...to* purposive is also found in standard varieties of the Scandinavian languages; some examples from Swedish are provided in (4). Here the preposition and the infinitival marker appear to form a unit (it is described as ‘lexicalised’ by Teleman et al 1999) and only when a subject is lacking does the verb occur in a non-finite form (4c). Interestingly, Icelandic does not have this construction, but forms the purposive with *til* (*pess*) *a* or *svo a*.

(4)  
\begin{enumerate}
  \item a. Sara gav Oscar en banan *för att* han inte skulle bli hungrig.
      Sara gave Oscar a banana for to he not should(fin) become hungry\(^4\)
      ‘Sara gave Oscar a banana in order to make sure he wouldn’t be hungry.’
  \item b. *För att* han skall kunna vinna, måste han spela på topp.
      for to he shall(fin) can win must he play on top
      ‘In order for him to win, he must play at his best.’
\end{enumerate}
c. Han åt banan för att kunna spela på topp.
   he ate banana for to can(inf) play on top
   ‘He ate bananas in order to be able to play at his best.’

d. *För honom att kunna vinna, måste han spela på topp.
   for him to can(inf) win must he play on top

In standard German, the preposition um is used in the purposive construction, as in (5)
(similarly, standard Dutch has om...te and Frisian om...ta).

(5) a. Ich bin geblieben um ihm zu helfen.
   I am remained purp him to help
   ‘I stayed in order to help him.’

   b. Ich arbeite um zu leben.
   I work purp to live
   ‘I work in order to live.’

There are, however, non-standard varieties of German which have a für...zu purposive; an example from the dialect of the Rhein-Palatinate (Pfälzisch) is provided in (6) (Henn 1980:53). A für...zu purposive construction is also reported for other continental dialects, Frankish (cf. Lockwood 1968:154) and Swiss German (cf. Reed 1948:244). Both Lockwood (1968) and Ebert (1978:31) trace this back to the French pour / pour a infinitival construction. Whether or not the construction is ultimately French or whether it was independently motivated in these dialects is not clear, but as we have shown here, a for...to construction occurs in Germanic languages where French influence would not be a plausible explanation.
he went there for in-to-buy
‘He went there in order to do the shopping.’

Another Germanic languages which has a purposive construction with for is Luxembourgish. There is a finite construction with fir...datt and a non-finite construction with fir...ze. (Bruch 1973:102-104; Christophory 1974:93), the latter is exemplified in (7).

(7) a. Si kommen fir eis rosen ze maen,net fir eisze hellefen.
they come for us angry to make not for us to help
‘They come to make us angry, not to help us.’ Christophory (1974:93)

b. Fir ze stierwe brauch een net vill, awer fir ze liwen.
for to die need one not much but for to live
‘One doesn’t need much to die, but to live one does.’ LW I

As we shall see in section 3, the similarities between the Luxembourgish and Pennsylvania German fer...zu / fir...ze constructions extend beyond the purposive.

In Swiss German, für is also used in purposives. The construction is slightly different from the ones we have considered so far in that zu appears as zum, the form involving an incorporated definite article. This may lead one to assume that the infinitive is actually a nominal form here. Still, as Henk van Riemsdijk has pointed out to us, it is verb-like in that its complement occurs on its left and without preposition. The examples provided by Weber (1964:32) indicate that für is often deleted as in (8b). Indeed (8a) is the only example Weber gives with für.
(8) a. I hä z wenig Gält ghaa für zum chöne boue. Swiss German
   I have too little money had for to.the can build
   ‘I had too little money to be able to build (a house for myself).’

   b. Er macht das nur zum äim ëërgere.
   He does that only to.the one irritate
   ‘He only does that to irritate people.’ (Weber 1946:302)

Turning now to dialects of Pennsylvania German spoken in the US (USPG), we
find that as far back as there is a written record, a purposive fer...zu construction can be
found.\textsuperscript{11} The oldest texts we have had at our disposal are from an anthology of PG texts
published in 1905, but compiled by 1875 (Horne 1905).\textsuperscript{12} The book contains a very brief
section entitled ‘Pennsylvania German Grammar’ (1905:221–225), but clause structure is
not discussed. The prose texts included in the book do, however, give ample examples of
the fer...zu construction in purpose clauses. The status of the texts in Horne (1905
[1875]) is not clear; some texts, for instance, appear to be translations and in some cases
we find expressions which are more likely to have belonged in Standard German than in
the dialect spoken at the time. However, since neither the Standard German nor the
English sentences corresponding to these examples would have contained a for...to
construction, we can assume that the use of fer...zu in purposives must go back at least to
the previous century. An example from Horne is provided in (9).\textsuperscript{13}

(9) Un grawd so leit hut’s g’num for de Englisha
and exactly such people has-it taken for the English
zu led’ra un’r d’umshtenda, we se wawra.
to beat under the.circumstances as they were
‘And it took exactly this kind of people to beat the English in the
circumstances as they were.’ (Horne 1905:136)
It should be pointed out here though that in the same text, there are also examples of *um...zu* purpose clauses (10), so that the two construction types may have existed side by side at this stage.

(10) M’r broucht yuscht on de olt sich’l un de sens
weneeded only on the old sickle and the scythe
zu denka, un de moshina mit f’rgleicha,
to think and the machines with compare
*um* sich *zu* f’rwun’ra.
purp refl to amaze.inf
‘We need only think of the old sickle and scythe and compare them with the machines to be amazed.’  
(Horne 1905:136)

The various pedagogical grammar books of USPG which exist; for example, Frey (1981 (originally 1942)), Buffington and Barba (1965), and Haag (1982) provide little information on complex clauses, but they do all describe a *fer...zu* adverbial (purposive) clause. They give examples like those in (11). These authors also point out that *zu* may be omitted from these purposive constructions, an issue to which we will return in section 4.

Buffington & Barba exemplify with (1b).

(11) a. Mer muss gude Aage hawwe *fersell zu* lese.
one must good eyes have for that to read
‘You have to have good eyes to read that.’  
(Buffington and Barba 1965:80)

b. Ich bin do,*fer’s schere.*
I am here for it shear
‘I’m here to shear it.’  
(Buffington and Barba 1965:79)
Our own recordings of modern WCPG provide ample examples of the *fer(...zu) construction used as an adjunct of purpose, the loss of *zu is striking here, a point to which we return in section 4.3. Some examples are provided in (12).

(12) a. Een owed hot en arme mann en schupkarrich g’nunme one evening has a poor man a wheel-barrow taken fer zu eme nochbar blatz geh ferriewe holle. for to a neighbour place go for turnips fetch ‘One evening a poor man took a wheel barrow to go to a neighbouring farm to fetch turnips.’

b. Ich nemm die schuh zum schumacher *ferg’fi xt waere. I take the shoes to the cobbler fer mended be ‘I take the shoes to the cobbler (in order for them) to be mended.’

In this section, we have seen that non-finite purposive clauses with for...to are then not uncommon in varieties of Germanic. They occur both in standardise varieties and non-written dialects.

3. Non-purposive for…to infinitivals in varieties of Germanic

3.1 Varieties of English and their analyses

It is a well-known fact that in English, there is a for...to construction in complement and subject clauses. In standard varieties, for is only possible when there is a subject in the infinitival clause and then for is obligatory (except when the clause is the complement of verbs like expect or believe, which are assumed to give rise to so-called Subject-to-Object Raising (SOR), S-bar deletion or Exceptional Case Marking). In fact such data led to the postulation of the *[for-to] filter in Chomsky and Lasnik (1977). Later the obligatory
occurrence of *for* with an overt subject in infinitival clauses led to the assumption that *for* assigns Case to the following noun phrase. In the “subjectless” clauses, a zero element PRO fills the subject position and this element is assumed to lack Case, so that it need not, indeed cannot, be assigned Case and hence it occurs without *for* in these constructions.

There are, however, non-standard varieties of English which have a *for…to* construction also in subjectless constructions, possibly most well-known one being Ozark, a variety spoken in the Ozark region of northwestern Arkansas and southern Missouri.

Ozark was introduced into the debate by Chomsky & Lasnik (1977) and taken up in Chomsky (1981:281, 300) and Koster & May (1982:121). Chomsky & Lasnik (1977:455) assume that the *[for-to] filter is a dialect-specific and does not apply to Ozark. In the analyses of Chomsky (1981) and Koster & May (1982) *for* is assumed to assign Case only optionally in Ozark; when *for* is combined with a subjectless clause it does not assign case, when it is followed by a subject NP, it does. Little information about the distribution of *for* in Ozark is provided; the impression given is that *for* has the same distribution in Ozark as it does in standard English when the infinitival clause has a subject but that it can also occur wherever standard English has a subjectless to-infinitive.

Of more interest to the topic of this paper are two varieties of English for which this construction type has been more well-described; Ottawa Valley English (OVE, Carroll 1983) and Belfast English (BE, Henry 1992, 1995). Both varieties are of interest because they contain constructions which are similar to, yet different from, the ones we discuss here and because analyses are suggested by Carroll and Henry to which the PG data can be compared (we will return to this in section 5.4).

OVE is of special interest since it is spoken geographically relatively close to WCPG. Carroll (1983:416, fn 1) points out that OVE is not actually the general dialect of the Ottawa Valley area, but an Irish-based dialect spoken in certain parts of rural areas and small towns within the region. According to the *Linguistic Survey of the Ottawa Valley*, a project at Carleton University, Ottawa, the situation is more complex than this: “Early
research established that, outside of the city of Ottawa itself, the legendary ‘Ottawa Valley accent’ [...] consisted of at least nine different varieties of English; several with clear roots in Ireland, other with equally clear roots in Scotland.”¹⁹ We should point out at this stage, that we do not believe influence from any variety of English to be an important factor in the development of the fer(...zu) construction in WCPG. In fact, in section 5.2 we will argue explicitly against this. It is interesting to note here that the Linguistic Survey of the Ottawa Valley suggests that some OVE varieties may in fact have undergone early influence from varieties of German, though there is no information about specific properties that may have arisen from this influence and hence there is no suggestion that there is a connection between the fer...zu of these varieties of German and the OVE for...to.²⁰

Unlike Ozark, OVE does not permit for to occur in obligatory control clauses (13a), in constructions with believe verbs (Subject-to-Object Raising or Exceptional Case Marking), (13b), or with seem verbs (Subject-to-Subject Raising), (13c). In all these cases, the standard English construction without for is grammatical also in OVE.

(13)  a. *John tried for to learn the poem. Ottawa Valley English

       b. *We all believe for Fifi to be having a good time.

       c. *Fifi seems for to be having a good time. (Carroll 1983:419&421)

Verbs and adjectives that allow either a control construction or a non-finite clause with an overt subject do, on the other hand permit for. In this class of constructions, if there is no overt NP, for is optional, as in (14). For all adjectives and most verbs in the class, if there is an NP present, for must also occur, as in (15), but with certain verbs, for instance with want, prefer and like, for is optional also when there is an overt NP, as (16) shows.²¹
Carroll shows that in many cases where *for is followed by a subjectless infinitival clause, there is an alternative construction in which it can be followed by an ordinary NP; *I am here for the fish* vs *I am here for to fish*. She then suggests that this is because in these environments *for really is a preposition which takes an NP argument and hence she analyses *for followed by a subjectless infinitive as a P+NP combination. When *for is followed by an infinitival clause containing an overt NP, on the other hand, it is assumed to be a complementiser.22 The complementiser *for is a governor and a Case assigner, just like it is in the analyses of standard English by Chomsky (1981) and Koster & May (1983) and hence it cannot occur with PRO. Sentences such as those in (13) are then ruled out because these verbs do not subcategorise for a PP (compare (13a) with *Dodo tried for Peake Freans (1983:426)). A clausal construction with the complementiser *for is ruled out in (13) since PRO would then be governed. The optionality of *for in (14) and (16) is not, as far as we can tell, explicitly accounted for.

Even though a number of properties which distinguish some of the varieties of OVE from standard English are said to go back to Irish dialects, the *for...to construction reported for Belfast English (Henry 1992, 1995) is radically different from the OVE construction we have just considered. There are in fact two types of *for...to dialects spoken in Ireland, in one, *for...to is restricted to purposive clauses. This variety is not discussed further by Henry and it is also of limited interest to us. In the more radical, less
frequent, Irish dialect, subjectless *for...to* clauses can occur with *want* type verbs (17a), but also in obligatory control constructions (17b), Subject-to-Subject Raising constructions (17c) as well as in Subject-to-Object Raising constructions (17d).

(17)  

a. I want for to meet them.  

b. I persuaded John for to go home.  

c. John seems for to be better.  

d. I believe them for to have done it.  

(Henry 1992:279, 283, 285)

In *for...to* constructions with an overt subject, *for* precedes the overt NP in most constructions (18a, b), but with ECM constructions and with *want* type verbs, the overt NP precedes *for* (17d) and (18c), except where something else, like an adverbial, appears immediately following the matrix verb (18d).

(18)  

a. For him to pay the mortgage would be just as expensive.  

b. Mary was keen for them to be there.  

c. I wanted Jimmy for to come with me.  

d. I want very much for him to get accepted.  

(Henry 1992:284)

The position of the negation in BE *for...to* constructions is crucial to Henry’s analysis. Generally, *not* can only follow *for...to* as in (19a, b). However, in the cases where *for* can precede a subject (18a, b), the negation may precede *to* as shown by (19c, d).

(19)  

a. I would prefer them for to not go.  

b. For to not go would be foolish.  

c. For John not to go would be foolish.  

d. For John to not go would be foolish.  

(Henry 1992: 285-286)
Based on complementary distribution with other complementisers, Henry argues that *for* in these constructions is itself generated in C and that hence *for to* is not just a lexical variant of *to.* Given this and the assumption that a complementiser like *for* can govern and assign Case to a following subject (as in (18a, b, d)), the question then arises as to how *for...to* can occur with PRO subjects as in (17) and also why an overt subject can precede *for* as in (17d) and (18c). If one applied the solution offered by Chomsky (1981) and Koster & May (1982), that *for* is an optional governor and only governs the subject position when this is filled by an overt NP, then the negation placement would remain a puzzle. Under this assumption, the assertive versions of (19b) and (19c/d) would be identical in structure *For PRO/John to go would be foolish* and there would be no obvious explanation for why the negative cannot immediately follow the subject when this is PRO. Henry (1992, 1995) assumes that in the cases where there is no overt subject or where *for* occurs to the right of an overt subject, *for* has moved down into I, where it cliticises to *to*. This then also explains why the negation cannot occur between the two elements in these cases, but has to follow, as in (19a, b). Cliticisation of *for* may only take place when there is nothing in the subject position which requires *for* in C to assign it Case, hence, where there is an overt NP, *for* remains in C, as in (18 a, b, d). In (18c), it is assumed that *want* can function as an Exceptional Case Marker into the lower clause and hence *for* is free to move from C.

To sum up, we can say then that in OVE, if there is an overt NP, *for* is obligatory except with a small number of verbs, the *want*-type, which could also have occurred with a PRO subject. If the matrix verb obligatorily takes subjectless infinitivals, then *for* is not permitted. With the *want* type verbs, *for* is optional also when there is no overt subject. In most of the constructions then, *for* and PRO occur in complementary distribution and an analysis in which *for* is a Case assigner is the most plausible option within a transformational approach. In the radical variety of BE, on the other hand, there appear to be no *to*-infinitivals where *for* is excluded, regardless of whether or not the subject is present. Henry (1992, 1995) still assumes that *for* is in nature a Case assigner, but one
which often lowers to cliticise to to and therefore does not assign its Case. The motivation for this lowering is not explicitly accounted for.

3.2 Luxemburgish

We are not aware of any detailed description of fir…ze in Luxemburgish (L), but it is clear that the construction has expanded beyond the purposive. Bruch (1973:103) states that infinitival fir…ze clauses ‘do not only substitute for the infinitive which would be constructed with um zu in German, but also for the nominalised infinitive with zum (a) and the infinitive which uses only zu (b).’ The examples given under (a) are all purposive in nature, similar to the examples provided in (7) in section 2, but the sentences Bruch uses to illustrate the (b) type, found here in (20), show some of the extent of the spread of fir…ze.

(20) a. Ech si frou fir ze raschten. L
   I am happy for to rest
   ‘I am happy to take a rest.’

   b. Gëf mer eppes fir z’iessen!
      give me something for to-eat
      ‘Give me something to eat.’

   c. En huet probiért fir op de Bam ze klammen.
      he has tried for on the tree to climb
      ‘He tried to climb the tree.’
d. Hie versteet et fir engem de Mond wässereg
he understands it for someone. dat the mouth wa te ry
ze maachen.
to make
‘He knows how to make your mouth water.’

e. En huet mech gefrot fir em eng Hand unzelleen.
he has me asked for him a hand put (up)
‘He asked me to lend him a hand.’ (Bruch 1973:103)

f. Et schéngt alles drop ze weisen, wéi wann si
it seemed everything on it to indicate as if they
an deem rouegen, déiwe Gallesche bësch
in the quiet deep Gallic forest
prett wire fir un den dësch ze goën.
ready were for at the table to go
‘Everything seemed to indicate that in the deep quiet Gallic forest they were
ready to sit down for their dinner.’ (Goscinny & Uderzo 1990:1)25

As we can see from these examples, fir...ze clauses can function as the complement
of an adjective (20a) and (20f) or a noun (20b) or as the complement of verbs
(20c)–(20e). The example in (20c) and (20d) are subject control constructions and (20e)
an object control construction.

Examples in which the fir...ze clause functions as extraposed subject can also be
found, as (21) shows.
In some of these constructions, *fër* is optional and if *fër* is omitted, then *ze* may also be omitted, but *fër* can never occur without *ze*. Bruch (1973) discusses this optionality only with respect to constructions of the type illustrated by (21), which should be compared with (22).

(21)  
\[
{\text{‘t as nêt gutt }} \text{fër} \text{ eppes te soën.}
\]

it is not good for something to say

\[
\text{‘It is not good to say something.’} \quad \text{(adapted from Bruch 1973:104)}
\]

(22)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. ‘t as nêt gutt eppes te soën.} & \quad \text{L} \\
\text{it is not good something to say} & \quad \text{(adapted from Bruch 1973:104)}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{b. ‘t as nêt gutt eppes soën.} & \quad \text{L} \\
\text{it is not good something say} & \quad \text{(Bruch 1973:104)}
\end{align*}
\]

It is, however, clear that *fër* can be deleted also in other environments, as (23) shows, but the exact conditions for this have, to our knowledge, not been described.

(23)  
\[
\text{Gëf mer eppes } z’iessen.
\]

give me something to eat

\[
\text{‘Give me something to eat.’} \quad \text{(Bruch 1973:104)}
\]

Even though the details of the distribution of *fër*…*ze* clauses are not known, it is clear that the clause type has spread from purposive clauses to subject and to different types of complement functions. In at least some environments, *fër* can be omitted and *ze* can also be omitted, but only in cases where *fër* has been deleted too.
3.3 Infinitival Clauses in Descriptions of US Pennsylvania German

It is not entirely clear when the fer(...zu) construction started to spread to complement positions in Pennsylvania German. We have found examples of the extended use in the texts in Horne (1905 [1875]), this includes use of fer without zu as in (24b) and (24c).

(24)  a. Der Bill war zu ehrlich
    the Bill was too honest
    fer sei land fon die Insching zu schtaela
    for his land from the Indian to steal
    so hat er es widder von ihnen gekauft.
    so had he it again from them bought
    ‘Bill was too honest to steal his land from the Indians and so he bought it back from them.’
    (Horne 1905:201)

    b. Se wore ols so shlim fer danse.
    they were always so eager for dance
    ‘They were always so eager to dance.’
    (Horne 1905:130)

    c. Erhat die Inschingall eiglauda ferkumma.
    he has the Indians all invited for come
    ‘He invited all the Indians to come.’
    (Horne 1905:201)

As we pointed out before, the status of the texts in Horne (1905 [1875]) is unclear. However, since these construction types could not be ascribed to influence either from Standard German or English, we can assume that in the PG spoken at this time, the use of the fer...zu construction had already spread from purposive constructions. We will return to the matter of influence from English in section 5.2, where we will take issue with the claim of Reed (1948), Costello (1978) and van Ness (1994: 436) that the development of
the *fer* (...zu) construction is an example of influence from English. Keeping in mind that the texts in Horne (1905) were compiled before 1875, we can conclude from these examples that the expansion of *fer*(…zu) was already underway in the 1800s.

As mentioned in section 2, grammars like Frey (1981 [1942]), Buffington and Barba (1965) and Haag (1982) mention the *fer*(...zu) construction in purpose clauses, but do not discuss any extended use. Nouns and adjectives are described as taking the infinitive with *zu* as their complements, as are verbs, with the exception of a set of verbs (including the modals) which take the infinitive without *zu*. Examples such as (25) are provided, these also include examples where the clause serves as extraposed subject (25c) (though this is referred to as an infinitive modifying an adjective).

I have three hundred dollar tax to pay
‘I have three hundred dollars tax to pay.’ (Buffington and Barba 1965:78)

b. Des iss hatt *zu* lese.
this is hard to read
‘This is hard to read.’ (Buffington and Barba 1965:79)

c. Es iss net schee, die Veggel *zu* schrecke.
it is not nice the birds to frighten
‘It is not nice to frighten the birds.’ (Haag 1982:178)

When discussing complementation, Buffington and Barba (1965) do not mention the *fer* (...zu) construction and *fer* is not included in the list of subordinating conjunctions (1965:91). However, the texts used in Buffington and Barba do contain examples like (26) that suggest *fer*(...zu) was spreading beyond adverbial clauses to other clause types also in the varieties that they describe.
(26) Erwaar wiescht genunk feren noch viel wieschderer Naam
he was ugly enough for an even more uglier name zu hawwe.
to have
‘He was ugly enough to have even a much uglier name.’
(Buffington and Barba 1965:79)

Costello (1978), assuming that Buffington and Barba (1965) provide an accurate description of what he refers to as Standardized Pennsylvania German (StdPG) of that time and ignoring examples like (26) concludes that StdPG does not have a complementiser fer. 26 He contrasts this with data which he provides from what he refers to as Southeastern Pennsylvania German (SPG), i.e. as spoken in southeastern Pennsylvania. He provides the examples in (27) of extraposed subject clauses and that in (28) of complements of verbs.

(27) a. Es iss en Wunner, fer Clarence selli Biecher zu lese. SPG
it is a wonder for Clarence these books to read
‘It is unusual for Clarence to read these books.’

b. Eswaar schee, fer ihr Brief zu griege.
It was nice for their letter to receive
‘It was nice to receive their letter.’ (Costello 1978:36)

(28) Ich gleiche fer Balle zu schpiele. SPG
I like for ball to play
‘I like to play ball.’ (Costello 1978:39)
In all \textit{fer...zu} clauses where there is no subject — here (27b) and (28) — Costello indicates that \textit{zu} can be deleted. He contrasts (27a) and (27b) with finite clauses introduced by \textit{as} in StdPG and (28) with a StdPG \textit{zu} clause. His argument is that the \textit{fer(...zu)} construction in SPG is due to influence from English, a claim which we will dispute in section 5.2. Given the existence of examples like (26), the contrast between StdPG and SPG is unlikely to have been as stark as Costello (1978) puts it.

Louden (1988, 1997) provides a thorough discussion of the distribution of the \textit{fer(...zu)} and states that “‘fer’ is generalized in all contexts where overt complementizers are required” (1988: 209). Van Ness’s sketch of general PG grammar describes \textit{fer} as a general complementiser (1994:436). Both Louden and van Ness discuss possible parallels with English constructions, to which we will return in section 5.2. Both authors also maintain that in USPG, it is only older speakers who show remnants of the earlier variation between \textit{fer...zu} and \textit{zu}.

Huffines (1990) carried out a study of the use of the \textit{fer(...zu)} construction in different contexts by different sub-groups of PG speakers in Pennsylvania. According to her results, there is still some use of \textit{fer...zu} and \textit{zu}, but only amongst the non-sectarian groups (this is what is often referred to as the non-plain people, see further in section 4.1), which include some non-native speakers of PG.

We can conclude then that amongst the sectarian, or plain, USPG speakers, \textit{zu} is virtually lost. The loss of \textit{zu}, had started as early as in the 19th century as the examples in (24) from Horne (1905 [1875]) showed, and the possibility of leaving \textit{zu} out is mentioned in many of the later grammars, even though these deal exclusively with the purposive (Buffington & Barba 1965:79, Frey 1981:82 and Haag 1982:179).

4 Non-purposive \textit{for-to} infinitivals in Waterloo County Pennsylvania German

4.1 The community

After a brief discussion of some previous sources on Canadian PG in section 4.2, we turn to the major focus of this paper, an account of the recordings which we have done over the
last ten years with a community of Mennonites in Waterloo County, Canada. Before this, we give some background to the community and their language.

A detailed discussion of the historical background of the Waterloo County Mennonites can be found in Fretz (1989), here we will simplify and summarise somewhat. The Mennonites, like many other Anabaptist groups, were persecuted in Europe and fled to America. They settled mainly in Pennsylvania, where they were offered religious freedom and land. Some of this migration took place in the late 17th century, but the bulk of it occurred in the 18th century. The migration north to Canada took place in the beginning of the 19th century. Events relating to the American War of Independence were the prime cause for the migration and it is generally recognised that two factors were particularly important. Firstly, the Mennonites had sympathy for the British since they felt that it was they who had offered them freedom from persecution in their new country. Secondly, the Mennonites are strict pacifists and when war eventually broke out between the colonies and the British, this led to serious difficulties. Canada then offered another chance to live without persecution under British rule on good farm land and large numbers of Mennonites moved north. It should be said also that many stayed behind in Pennsylvania and there is a lot of contact between the two groups today.

Since the 1870s, the Mennonites have been experiencing continued factionalism and the result is now a complex pattern of different sub-groups. The best way to view the situation is probably in terms of a continuum of conservatism — from the most conservative groups (for example, the Old Orders and The David Martins) through to the so-called “Progressive” Mennonites, who are indistinguishable from mainstream Canadians. The community with which we work consist of what we may refer to as “Plain Mennonites”, or in Huffines’ (1990) terms “sectarians”. The term we use is commonly used and it refers to the fact that these groups still adhere to rigid codes of clothing and thereby distinguish themselves from the modern Mennonites whose style of living and church buildings fairly closely resembles other modern radically reformed Christian communities. The group defined by the term Plain Mennonites is interesting to us because
it also defines a community which is reasonably homogenous linguistically. There are two major groups of Plain Mennonites, the Old Orders (OO) and the Markham Mennonites (MM).\textsuperscript{27} We have not been able to discern any structural linguistic differences between these two groups, with the exception that young Markham Mennonites use slightly more English words in their PG. The speakers themselves confirm this impression and say that they cannot tell the difference between the two groups by their language.\textsuperscript{28} There are differences in dress and the Markham Mennonites are more liberal for instance in that they use (black) cars, whereas Old Orders travel by horse and buggy. A number of the Markham Mennonites we have recorded grew up in Old Order families and have siblings who remain Old Orders. This does not cause any social problems and there is normal family contact in such cases. Old Orders and Markham children usually attend the same Mennonite run schools and often church buildings are shared in that there is a week by week rota, though on any particular occasion, the service will only be attended by members of one group. The church services differ in that the sermon is in PG in the Old Order and in English in the Markham services, this does lead to a difference in the status of the language as argued in Burridge (In Press). Still, sociologically and linguistically, the Old Orders and the Markham Mennonites remain closely bound.

All speakers we have recorded have grown up as monolinguals until the age of about six, when they start school. Even though Plain Mennonites run their own schools, the language of instruction is English, and for many children this will be the first time that they are required to interact in English. Since the community does not have radio or television, or indeed use the internet, young PG people’s contact with English is more limited than for many young speakers of minority languages in English speaking countries. All adult PG speakers are bilingual PG and English.

4.2 Early examples of WCPG

WCPG is not a written language and early examples of the language are therefore hard to come by. The earliest reliable examples date from the 1930s in the form of poetry written
by the Old Order Mennonite Ben Sauder (Der Nachbar an de Schtroas, published 1955 by the Folklore Society). Admittedly poetry is not ideal for the study of syntactic change, but in this case it is all we have.

In Sauder’s poetry, purpose is overwhelmingly expressed with *fer...zu*, as in (29a) and the first purpose clause in (29b). Only occasionally is *zu* omitted in these adjunct clauses — as in the second purpose clause in (29b).³⁹

(29) a. Ich kan immer noch sene *ferdie aerwet zu* schaffe.
    I can always still see for the work to do
    ‘I can still see to do work.’

    b. Dass der Vodda het ihm Gelt vaschenkt,
    that the Dad has him money given
    *Fier* so en groosi Trip *zu* macha;
    for so a big trip to make
    Un mich nu griega *far* die Erwat schaffa.
    and me now get for the work do
    ‘That his Dad gave him money to make such a big trip and then to hire me to do the work.’

In Sauder’s poetry, complement clauses modifying nouns and adjectives usually appear with single *zu*. There is considerable variation in these poems, however, and many examples show quite clearly that the original *fer(...zu)* purposive construction had already spread to clauses of different kinds. The examples in (30) illustrate this.

(30) a. *Fer* Sauder *zu* haysa is doch gar ke Shand.
    for Sauder to be-called is but absolutely no shame
    ‘To be called Sauder is no shame at all.’
b. Eswaer ke groosi Schand, fa alles zu mache,
is would-be nogreat shame for everything to make
yuscht bei Hand.
only by hand
‘It wouldn’t be any great shame to make everything by hand.’

c. Es iss gewiss ke groosi Schand fa zafridda sei im a kalda Land.
it is certainly nogreat shame for content be in a cold country
‘It’s certainly no great shame to be content in a cold country.’

(Ben Sauder’s poetry)

We have not been able to find a pattern in the use of fer...zu, fer and zu in this data. For instance, in (30b) and (30c), the relevant clauses function as extraposed subjects, but still one has fer...zu and one has fer. In fact, as the examples in (31) show, we find very similar constructions showing the whole gamut of possible clause marking — fer...zu; single fer and single zu.

(31) a. Es iss net dawaert, fier die Schteddla zu saachen.
is is not worth for the townfolk to say
‘It’s not worth telling those not on the land.’

b. Waerr es v’leicht dawaert, ferdes Ding browiera.
would-be it perhaps worth for the thing try
‘It’d perhaps be worth trying the thing.’
c. Es iss nimmi dawaert, Schulde zu mache.

it is never worth debts to make

‘It is never worth making debts.’ (Ben Sauder poems)

There are three other collections of Canadian PG dating from around the 1970s. The first comprises a collection of PG sentences compiled by Alan Buehler, a former Old Order Mennonite (unpublished manuscript). Presumably Buehler devised these sentences himself. Buehler also published his autobiography in Pennsylvania German (1977). The third collection comprises two short taped interviews of Old Order Mennonites (recorded in 1969; Karch & Moelleken 1977).30

The collections from this time are interesting. Although there are clear signs of fer clauses becoming the preferred construction, these texts still show considerable variation between fer...zu, zu and fer clauses. The extract in (32), for example, illustrates both fer...zu and single fer in purposive clauses.

(32) Noh huhn dah teacher ahls die Susanah Weber eerah notebooch then has the teacher always the Susanah Weber her notebook gahvisah fawah viesah vee shay see shriebd, oon noh shown for show how lovelyshe writesand now huhd see aw mie notebooch gahvisah, fawah mich tsoo shehmah. has she also my notebook shown for me to shame

‘Then the teacher always showed Susanah Weber’s notebook to show how lovely she writes, and then she also showed my notebook to shame me.’

(Buehler 1977:89)

Buehler’s autobiography also has several examples of zu and ϕ purpose clauses:
(33) a. Des vawah ah “SHAWDY” mahsheen, oon huhd ah rawd
this was a Shade machine and has a wheel
caht voo mah drayah huhd missah tsoo vehshah.
had which one turn has must to wash.
‘That was a Shade machine and (it) had a wheel which one had to turn in order to wash.’ (Buehler 1977:93)

b. ... ehb ich bawahd oon nehgahl hahvah dairf dehs mahchah.
... if I boards and nails have may this make
‘... if I could have some boards and nails to make this.’ (Buehler 1977:109)

Buehler’s autobiography also shows that he used clauses with fer...zu, fer and zu in subject position and a range of complement clauses. Some examples are provided in (34).

(34) a. Ahs is hied hahd fawah ahn ahldey drehsh mahsheen tsoo finah.
it is today hard for an old thresh machine to find
‘It is hard today to find an old threshing machine.’ (Buehler 1977:95)

b. Dehsvawah kshbahs fawah oof dee trolleys gay.
it was fun for on the trolley go
‘It was fun to go on the trolleys.’ (Buehler 1977:93)

c. See vawrah froh mich tsoo saynah.
they were happy me to see
‘They were happy to see me.’ (Buehler 1977:111)
d. See vawrah surprised fah mich saynah.

they were surprised for me see

‘They were surprised to see me.’ (Buehler 1977:115)

We can conclude then that in WCPG, as in USPG, *fer* as a complementiser had started to spread from purposive to subject and complement clauses at this stage. It is not unlikely that this spread had started before the Waterloo County Mennonites moved north. The data also shows that even though *fer* could occur in a clause without *zu*, there was a lot of variation and *zu* was in regular use certainly into the 1970s.

4.3 The distribution of *fer(...zu)* clauses in contemporary WCPG

Our corpus of WCPG comprises conversations, stories and elicited data from the late 1980s until the present time. What is striking is that it does not contain a single example of a construction involving both *fer* and *zu*, neither in purposives nor in subject or complement clauses. When pushed, language consultants will provide *fer...zu* sentences like those reported above from the older literature, but they find them contrived — at best old fashioned or extremely high style. In contemporary WCPG non-finite adverbial, subject and complement clauses typically appear with single *fer*, though as we shall see, older speakers still use *zu* on its own in certain non-finite environments. We will return to this issue in section 4.4. We will start here by providing an overview of the environments in which *fer(...zu)* clauses — or rather *fer* clauses — can occur. In what follows, unless otherwise specified these examples are from naturally occurring data; elicited sentences are always indicated.

*Fer* clauses are common in subject position and as extraposed subject, as in (35).

(35) a. **Fer** datt anner laafe waer sadde dumm.

for there towards walk would-be sort-of stupid

‘To walk there would be sort of stupid.’ (elicited)
b. Eswaer hatt uff ien feruns sene gee.
   it was hard on him for us see go
   ‘It was hard on him to see us go.’

They also occur as the complement of a noun or an adjective, as in (36) and (37), respectively. Examples like those in (36) can also occur with zu instead of fer in the speech of some older speakers and we will return to the conditions under which this happens in section 4.4.

(36)  a. Ich hab fufzich kieh fermelge
      I have fifty cows for milk
      ‘I have fifty cows to milk.’

   b. Ich hab alsnoch zwee brief ferschreiwe
      I have as still two letters for write
      ‘I still have two letters to write.’

(37)  a. Des buch war interesting ferlese
      this book was interesting to read
      ‘This book was interesting to read.’

   b. Sie waar e bissel e hatte fraa ferlewwe mit.
      she was a bit a hard woman for live with
      ‘She was a bit of a difficult woman to live with.’
c. Ich bin verschtaunt fer dich sene do.
I am astonished for you see here
‘I am astonished to see you here.’

*Fer* clauses can also occur as the complement of any type of verb that can take a non-finite complement. Subject and object control verbs with *fer* clauses are provided in (38) and (39), respectively.

(38) a. Ich hab versproche feriem helfe.
I have promised for him help
‘I promised to help him.’ (elicited)

b. No hot sie so hatt browiert feralles sauwer halde.
then has she so hard tried for everything clean keep
‘Then she tried so hard to keep everything clean.’

c. Ich hab g’denkt ferin schteddel gee.
I have thought for in town go
‘I thought of going into town.’

(39) a. Ich hab ien verschwetzt fergeh.
I have him persuaded for go
‘I persuaded him to go.’ (elicited)

b. Sie ecschpect dich fer kumme frie
she expects you for come early
‘She expects you to come early.’
Sentences of the type usually referred to as raising constructions also involve *fer* clauses. In (40a), we have an example of Subject-to-Subject Raising clause and in (40b), we find an example of Subject-to-Object Raising.

(40)  

a. Erscheint *fer* ehrliche man sei.  
He seems for an honest man be  
‘He seems to be an honest man.’ (elicited)

b. Ich hab ien als ghalde *fer* bissel arm sei.  
I have him always held for a little stupid be  
‘I’ve always considered him to be a little bit thick.’ (elicited)

It should be pointed out here that some older speakers would use *zu* rather than *fer* in (40a) (see discussion in section 4.4).

The use of *fer* has spread to include those constructions where previously *zu* alternated with the bare infinitive. The examples in (41) come from Buehler’s autobiography (Buehler 1977). They show the verb *brawiere* ‘try’ with the full range — bare infinitive, *zu* infinitive and *fer* infinitive. Only examples (41a) and (41c) are grammatical today. In section 4.4 we try to explain the different conditions that trigger these two possible clause markings — $\emptyset$ and *fer*.

(41)  

a. Oof deh nehgschdah pages villich brahveerah mie  
on the next pages will I try my autobiography give  
‘On the following pages I will try to present my autobiography.’

(Buehler 1977:85)
b. .... ahgahbohd, voo see brahveerah **tsoo** hahldah
   .... a commandment which they try to uphold
   ‘.... a commandment which they try to uphold’ (Buehler 1977:97)

c. Erhot **brawiert feriwwerdie fens tschumbe.**
   he has tried for over the fence jump
   ‘He tried to jump over the fence.’ (Buehler’s collected sentences; nd)

Verbs of liking have typically taken a bare infinitive, less usually a *zu* infinitive (but
sometimes with different meanings; compare English *I like reading* versus *I like to read*).
Take for example, the verb **gleiche** ‘to like’. 31 Although speakers still prefer zero marking
here, *fer* complement clauses are now possible. In Section 4.4 we return to this variation.

(42) a. Deedscht du **gleiche feren** teacher sei een daag?
   would you like for a teacher be one day
   ‘Would you like to be a teacher one day?’ (elicited)

   b. Ich hett gaen **ferdich bei zeit kumme hawwe.**
   I had willingly for you in time come have
   ‘I would like to have you come in time/I’d like you not to be late.’ (elicited)

Verbs of perception have always required the bare infinitive. This is still generally
the case. For most speakers sentences like (43) sound contrived — we certainly have no
examples in naturally occurring data. However, in elicitation sessions some speakers did
produce them.
(43) Ich hab ien gsehn ferdie daer reikumme.
I have him seen for the door in-come
‘I saw him coming through the door.’ (elicited)

We can see then that the *fer* construction has spread to the subject function, to complements of nouns and adjectives and to complements of almost all types of verbs. In some cases, a bare infinitive is a more common option, but only modal verbs do not allow *fer* complements at all. For the older speakers, there are a few cases in which there is alternation between *fer* and *zu* and it is to these remaining vestiges of *zu* that we now turn.

4.4 Remnants of *zu* and variation in complementation types
The only environment in which the infinitival marker *zu* occurs in the language of most speakers is in certain fixed expressions like *nix zu mache, nix zu duh* ‘nothing to do’ as illustrated in (44).

(44) Es muss schee sei fer nix zu duh hawwe.
it must lovelybe for nothing to do have
‘It must be lovely to have nothing to do.’

There is also the typical age variation expected of linguistic change — new forms on the increase (here *fer*) are more prevalent in younger speakers, whereas forms on their way out (here *zu*) are preferred by older speakers. One construction type where older speakers will use only *zu* infinitivals is with *wh*-words, as in (45). Younger speakers will use *fer* here as well.
(45) Sie hot nimmi gewisst was zu mache; sie waar she has never known what to do she was am end vun ierembendel. at.the end of her cord
‘She never knew what to do; she was at the end of her tether.’

Raising constructions also retain vestiges of zu complementation that reflect these age differences. For example, both versions of (46) are grammatical. Older speakers, however, are more likely to produce the first — younger speakers the second.

(46) a. Erscheint en ehrliche man zu sei. he seems an honest man to be ‘He seems to be an honest man.’ (elicited)

b. Erscheint feren ehrliche man sei. he seems for an honest man be ‘He seems to be an honest man.’ (elicited)

For older speakers, there are in principle three options for non-finite complementation as in (47). Of these options, (47b) is usually not open to younger speakers. We will show in this section that the three constructions are not equivalent but that their pattern of distribution can be accounted for in terms of semantic distinctions. The semantic distinctions can only be expressed as tendencies, it is rarely the case for instance, that the use of fer instead of zu will result in ungrammaticality.
The first option, the bare infinitive, is used when there is a close link between the action or event referred to by the main verb and that referred to by the verb of the complement clause. The stretch of time covered by the two verbs overlaps and typically the subjects are coreferential. Verbs taking the bare infinitive are modals, verbs of movement and of perception. In addition there are verbs like *gleiche* ‘to like’, *helfe* ‘to help’, *brawiere* ‘to try’ and *laenne* ‘to learn’ that typically take a bare infinitive but can also be used with the two other complement constructions — but, as discussed below, with different semantics. In this sense, the meaning of WCPG bare infinitive corresponds closely to that often ascribed to the English gerund complement. Wierzbicka (1988:59-97), in her semantic account of English complementation describes *-ing* complements as having “simultaneous orientation”. It is not surprising then that the PG bare infinitive can normally be translated by the English gerund. We will return to this issue in section 5.2.

The second two options, *zu* and *fer* marking, are future oriented, rather than oriented towards simultaneity. Whereas constructions with bare infinitives imply sameness of time, these project to an event or an activity in the future, but they do so with subtly different associations. For example, compare the sentences in (48), from Buehler’s autobiography, both involving the verb ‘to begin’.

(48) a. Soh dahn in April 1912 hahvich awfahngah shahfah als gnehcht.
   so then in April 1912 have.Ibegun work.inf as hired man
   ‘So then in April 1912 I began working as a hired man.’ (p. 111)
The implied future orientation of the second example is apparent from the sentence that appears in Buehler’s English version of his autobiography — “Gasoline engines were just beginning to come into use” (1977:94).

It is understandable then that neither *zu nor *fer happily appear in constructions with perception verbs like those in (49) — the simultaneity implied here is simply not compatible with the future orientation of these markers.

(49) a. Ich hab’s kind ghaert heile.
   I have.the child heard cry
   ‘I heard the child crying.’ (elicited)

b. *Ich hab’s kind ghaert *fer/zu heile.

For speakers who use both markers, *zu and *fer are then not equivalent. One way in which they differ is in the degree of confidence in the projected outcome — *fer favours contexts that are less real. This difference coincides with what Wierzbicka (1988:111-132) and others (including Jespersen 1909-42:5; Bresnan 1972; Dixon 1991) have described for *to versus *for *to in English. Where both *to and *for *to are future oriented, English *to has much firmer expectations of effectiveness. As Wierzbicka puts it, the “for-to versions sound more helpless and less confident” (1988:120). Given the more tentative sense associated with *fer, in some environments, *zu is associated with future more strongly and *fer with a more general interpretation.

There are instances where meaning differences between *zu and *fer complementation are conspicuous in the language of those older speakers who retain *zu complementation.
Differences are not always apparent, especially out of context, but where context is supplied these speakers typically prefer *fer* when the event in the non-finite clause is less certain. For example, when presented with the simple sentence ‘I have thirty cows to milk’ all these speakers agreed that either *zu* or *fer* was possible. However, when the speakers were provided with more context, clear preferences emerged. For example, if the speaker was assumed to be in the middle of milking already and was explaining that they had thirty more cows to milk before he was done, then speakers overwhelmingly produced the sentence in (50).

(50) Ich hab thirty kieh *zu* melge.
     I have thirty cows to milk
     ‘I have thirty cows to milk.’ (elicited)

If, on the other hand, the speaker had just met someone for the first time and was explaining the various activities on the farm, including the fact that there were thirty cows to be milked every day, then speakers were more likely to produce (51).

(51) Ich hab thirty kieh *fer* melge. (elicited)

The event of milking the cows in the first scenario is strongly associated with the (immediate) future — some cows had just been milked and another thirty were about to be. The orientation in the second scenario, however, is less specific; the speaker is simply making a general statement.

Associated with the difference we have already described, different expectations of effectiveness also show up where the responsibility for the outcome falls to the first person as opposed to some other person. It is striking that when the event is self-oriented, speakers who have this distinction seem to prefer *zu* and when it is other-oriented
they prefer *fer*. For example, in translation tasks where a situation was sketched, speakers overwhelmingly provided (52) with a *zu* infinitive in response to the English sentence.

(52) Ich hab a hunnert doller tax *zu* bezahle.
    I have a hundred dollar tax to pay
    ‘I have one hundred dollars tax to pay.’ (elicited)

It is the speaker who is responsible for paying the tax; the greater control here means he or she can be more confident in the outcome. By contrast, the same speakers produced the sentence in (53) with a *fer* infinitive.

(53) Ich hab e hunnert acker frucht *fer* dresche.
    I have a hundred acres of grain to thresh
    ‘I have a hundred acres of grain to thresh.’ (elicited)

Once again the orientation is less specific here. The speaker is simply making a general statement — there are a hundred acres of grain on the farm that has to be threshed.

The self-versus other-orientation perhaps also plays a role in accounting for the curious shift from *zu* to *fer* in the next sentence:

(54) Ich hab forty kieh *zu* melge
    I have forty cows to milk
    un hab zwee man *fer* mich helfe.
    and have two men for me help
    ‘I have forty cows to milk and have two hired men to help me.’ (elicited)

The semantic contribution of *fer* can also be inferred from examining those verbs which allow *fer* to be included or omitted; in other words in those contexts where the *fer*
infinitive now alternates with the bare infinitive. Once again fer consistently shows a more hypothetical orientation. For example, speakers appeared much happier to use fer where a subjunctive appears in the higher clause; in other words where there is less confidence in the outcome expressed in the infinitive clause. For example, speakers preferred helfe with a bare infinitive in sentence examples like (55a) but produced fer infinitives for sentences like (55b).

(55) a. Erhelft mich de kieh melge.
    he helps me the cows milk
    ‘He’s helping me milk the cows.’ (elicited)

    b. Eskennt helfe ferihn besser behaeve.
    it could help for him better behave
    ‘It could help him to behave better.’ (elicited)

In (55a) the activities in the main clause and in the complement clause are happening at the same time — the helping accompanies the milking. In (55b), however, the appearance of fer follows from the tentativeness of the main clause subjunctive — the clause expresses a potential event.

Similarly gleiche ‘to like’ prefers a bare infinitive. In examples like (56) the enjoyment coincides with the activity — fer clauses are ungrammatical here.34

(56) Ich gleich zu leit schwetze.
    I like to people talk
    ‘I like talking to people.’

It seems fer infinitives with gleiche are only acceptable with a subjunctive in the higher clause — even better with an intensifier like ‘really’.
(57) Ich really deed gleiche fere tisches sei.
I really would like for a teacher be
‘I would really like to be a teacher.’ (elicited)

However, while speakers generally accepted (57), many found the next example borderline (hence the question mark).

(58) ?Deedscht du gleiche fere kobbi kaffee hawwe.
would you like for a cup coffe have
‘Would you like to have a cup of coffee.’ (elicited)

Both sentences have a future component — both refer to unrealized activities. Where they differ is in the nature of the event in the complement clause. Example (57) is a wistful thought, the outcome may never eventuate — certainly it is less assured than the possibility of a cup of coffee.

Similarly, the verb brawiere ‘to try’ typically occurs with a bare infinitive. However, when speakers are not sounding confident, fer clauses may be produced. Compare the two sentences in (59). Again the modifier conveys the notion of strong desire.

(59) a. Ich bin am brawiereDeitsch laenne.
I am on.the try PG learn
‘I am trying to learn Pennsylvania German.’

b. Ich bin really hatt am brawiere ferDeitsch laenne.
I am really hard on.the try for PG learn
‘I am really trying hard to learn Pennsylvania German.’
Wierzbicka (1988) discusses the similar English examples given in (60). She provides these examples to support the assumption that there are clear semantic differences between to infinitives with and without for. According to Wierzbicka (1988:109), (60a) ‘suggests a confident expectation which is absent in the (b) version.’

(60) a. I want him to come,
     b. I want very much for him to come.

It seems likely to us, however, that for is present in (60b) for structural, rather than semantic, reasons; the fact that the adverbial intervenes between the verb and its infinitival complement may trigger a clearer marking of the left edge of that complement and for provides such a marker. In transformational approaches, the explanation would lie in very much blocking Case assignment (or Case checking) in (60b). It is difficult to judge between these two approaches since the number of modifiers that can occur in this position is very limited. We do not wish to exclude the possibility that structural reasons may also motivate the occurrence of fer in some of the WCPG data.

5 The origins and spread of the PG fer(…zu) construction

That which is now an amazingly homogeneous language throughout the Pennsylvania German speaking areas of the US and Canada grew out of a blend of the many different dialects which came into Pennsylvania during the early immigration in the late 17th and early 18th century — from the Palatinate in Germany and surrounding areas like Bavaria, Hessen, Swabia and Württemberg in Germany, as well as the German-speaking areas of Switzerland. When dialects come together in this way, a kind of melting pot effect is usual and in what seems to have been a remarkably short period of time, all the different varieties of these early German-speaking migrants had gone through a general levelling process to produce what we now know as Pennsylvania German. The outcome is a language which, in phonology and grammar, resembles most closely the modern German dialect of the
eastern Palatinate — Rhein-Frankisch (cf. Buffington 1970; Raith 1992). The languages are similar in structure, although prolonged isolation from continental German and increased contact with English has meant Pennsylvania German is now diverging more and more (cf. Burridge (1992, 1998) and Louden (1992, 1997) for an account of both internally and contact-induced changes). In morphology there are also some Alamanic elements, seen for example in the diminutive suffix -li and also in some of the verbal morphology.

5.1  Fer...zu as a purposive construction

Given what we have found in the early sources and what we find in the German dialects of the eastern Palatinate, it seems most likely that the fer...zu construction established itself as the purposive construction in the language as soon as we can actually speak of one language called Pennsylvania German. As we saw in section 2, although it is not used in Standard German, the preposition cognate with fer is a common trait in Germanic purposives and it is not too surprising that it became the standard in PG. The development of the fer...zu construction as an adverbial clause marking purpose is a paradigm example of the process of reanalysis. There is therefore the very good chance that PG acquired it independently. It is precisely the same development that has taken place to give rise to the English complementiser construction for...to (cf. Jespersen 1922; Ebert 1978;12-13; Harris and Campbell 1995: 62), as well as the German infinitival construction um...zu ‘in order to’ (cf. Ebert 1978; 12, 30-1; Harris and Campbell 1995: 62). In both these cases the prepositions (for and um) + NP originally belonged to the main clause but were later reanalysed as part of the infinitival construction.

In the case of the PG construction, we can reconstruct such a path of development. Sentences like the following would originally have involved a prepositional phrase structure:
A child was sent to the store for red pepper, to buy.

A child was sent to the store (for) to buy red pepper.

Once this occurred, it is possible for the new complementiser to appear without an object.

Here’s an example from Horne’s early manual (1905 [1875]).

I came down today to see about some business.’  (Horne 1905:157)

Exactly when these internal forces were at work is impossible to say. Unfortunately there just is not enough early and reliable data to accurately chart the development and the subsequent expansion of this construction. It seems most likely that this reanalysis could have occurred in some of the original input dialects and therefore represents an inherited feature.
5.2 The spread of fer(...zu) to complement clauses

Based on what we know about the dialects in the areas of Germany (and to some extent Switzerland) from which the first PG speakers emigrated, we can assume that when PG was first established as a common language, fer...zu was not used in complement clauses, but we do have evidence that the construction had started to spread to the subject function and to complement positions by the late 19th century. The loss of zu probably started around the same time, but we find fer...zu clauses in general use into the 1970s. Given that in WCPG (and maybe in other varieties of PG, it is hard to be absolutely certain on the basis of the existing sources) fer now occurs in all constructions except as complement of modal verbs and that zu is completely lost amongst younger speakers, this has been a remarkably fast change; it has all happened in about 200 to 300 years. In particular, the final stages of the loss of zu have been remarkably rapid, in only 30 years it has gone from being in productive use to be being completely lost.

We can compare this to the spread of the to infinitive in English. The to infinitive also appeared first as a purposive, but appears to have spread to complement functions as early as the early Old English period (e.g. Miller 2002:187–189). The original semantics of to “direction towards” remains in the purposive and even after the spread to complement clauses — as Los (1999:236ff) points out, when to complementation spread from complement of nouns and adjectives to complements of verbs, it spread first to GOAL arguments. During the Middle English period the directional force weakened and the use of to infinitives increased. But the change was slow — even into the 1500s to was still competing with the bare infinitive (although showing clear signs of winning). As Visser (1963-73:§901) concludes, “it took a long time for the particle to to be reduced from a preposition expressing motion, direction ... to a semantically empty sandhi form, functioning as a mere sign of the infinitive”.

It is common typologically for purposive markers to develop into general infinitival markers, Haspelmath (1989) refers to it as “a universal path of grammaticalisation”.

Indeed, the Old English bare infinitive ending in -an is assumed to have had a purposive meaning too, which was weakened and then reinforced by to (cf. Poutsma 1923, Miller 2002:188). Similarly to the English to, the German preposition zu became a marker of purpose and then spread throughout the system to become a general marker of the infinitive. Following Givón (1971), who described disappearance is the end point of grammaticalisation, we can say then that the WCPG ze has completed the grammaticalisation process.

Even though the spread from purposive to complement that we see in fer(...zu) in PG is a common type of change typologically, we can still ask why it occurred in PG, and why it happened so quickly, especially since it appears not to have taken place in the dialects of German which formed the starting point for PG. A suggestion found in the literature is that it is due to influence from English (Reed 1948:243–244, Costello 1978:36–44, van Ness 1994:436). For a number of reasons, we do not find this a plausible explanation.

Firstly, the PG construction has always been used far more widely than the English for...to construction. As we showed in section 3.1, even in those regional varieties like Ottawa Valley English (Carroll 1983) and Belfast English (Henry 1992) that have a more extensive distribution of the for...to construction, it is much more limited than the PG equivalent. Furthermore, the WCPG community does not speak Ottawa Valley English, nor are they likely to come into contact with people who do. The other aspect of the change, namely the disappearance of zu, has no parallel in English — to the contrary, considering the history of English, it is for which has been on the wane.

Costello (1978) is most explicit in arguing for the spread of fer(...zu) as a contact induced change. Costello assumes that the variety of PG that he studies — spoken in south-eastern Pennsylvania (SPG)— differs from general PG (StdPG, as described in Buffington & Barba (1965)) in a number of respects; for instance in that SPG has a complementiser fer whereas StdPG does not. As already mentioned in section 3.3, even though Buffington and Barba (1965) do not discuss fer(...zu) complementation, such
constructions can be found in the texts that they use. Hence we doubt that there was actually a definite difference in the use of fer(…zu) in subject and complement clauses between SPG and StdPG. If he was right about there being two strikingly different varieties in this respect — one in which fer(…zu) has spread and one in which it has not — this would make his explanation in terms of contact even less plausible, since both varieties would have had the same amount of contact with English.

Costello (1978) steeps his analysis in the transformational framework of the time, but ignoring the formal detail of the analysis, the essence of the analysis is clear. He compares the zu infinitival which he claims is the only option in StdPG with a fer(…zu) construction from SPG and assumes that the difference lies in the inventory of complementisers; SPG does not have fer but StdPG does. In his view, fer has been borrowed from English; “this is all the more plausible inasmuch as the semantic and phonological overlap of E for and SPG fer is otherwise close” (1978:39). In the same non-finite construction in StdPG, he assumes that the complementiser as (standardly used in finite complementation) is selected but the subject to a ‘complementiser deletion rule’. He suggests that this ‘complementiser deletion rule’ is native to PG and the fact that it does not apply to fer in SPG is further evidence that fer is not a native PG word. The outdated theoretical outlook apart, the weakness in Costello’s account lies in the fact that he completely ignores the fact that fer must have been part of the complementiser inventory of both varieties since they both, beyond any doubt, have a purposive fer...zu construction, so that if the fer of infinitival complements is “borrowed” from anywhere, it is from another construction within the language.

A further reason not to believe that the spread of fer...zu is a contact induced change is the fact that the chronology is wrong. Fer...zu in complement clauses is already extensive in Horne’s manual (1905 [1875]), at a time when English would have had little or no influence on the grammar of PG since the PG speakers had limited contact with speakers of English and little knowledge of English. Originally the diglossic arrangement involved High German — this was then and still is the language of the Bible for Plain
Mennonites — as the H-variety. Horne himself devotes half his manual to helping PG speakers acquire English. In the preface to the first edition (1905:7), he describes the PG people as labouring “in their entire ignorance of the English language”. English is described as being to these people “as much a dead language as Latin and Greek”. As he further goes on to explain, “they cannot pick it up on the street, nor do they learn it in school”. Of course, there is now a very different diglossic arrangement, with English replacing High German as the H-variety. This closer contact with English means influence from English on both the vocabulary and grammar of PG. However, it comes too late to provide the birthplace for the original *fer(...zu)* construction. Furthermore, as Louden (1988:209) points out: “That ‘fer’, rather than ‘zu’, which is closely cognate to AE [American English, KEB/KB] ‘to’, should be expanded testifies to the apparent lack of influence from AE.’

We conclude then that the spread of *fer...zu* clauses to subject and complement positions is not a contact induced change, but a language internal change which involves reanalysis and generalisation, like the examples discussed in section 5.1. This type of reanalysis is also assumed to lie behind similar changes from purposive marker to infinitival markers in other languages (for English, see for instance Los (1998, 1999) and references there). Consider example (63).

(63) [Es is ungweenlich *ferde John*] [harti Bicher *zu lese*]

it is unusual for the John hard books to read

‘It’s unusual for John to read difficult books.’

The original clause boundary would have occurred after the *fer* phrase with *fer de John* forming a prepositional phrase which was part of the main clause. The close logical relationship existing here between the complement of the preposition and semantic subject of *lese, John*, comes to be expressed by reanalysing *fer* as a complementiser-like element heading a new subordinate clause. The boundary shifts and the prepositional complement
is reanalysed as the subject of the infinitive. Once this stage has been reached, the \textit{fer}-clause can be preposed to appear in sentence initial position as in (63').\(^{35}\)

(63') \textit{Fer de John harti Bicher zu lese is ungweenlich.}

‘For John to read difficult books is unusual.’

Punctuation in some of the early examples supports this development. On several occasions in Ben Sauder’s poetry from the 1930s, for example, commas are used to separate the \textit{fer} prepositional phrase constituent from the \textit{zu} infinitive clause. An example is provided in (64).

(64) \textit{Sei Heimuthhut ga-kusht, Finf Hundert Dolla,}

\textit{his home has cost five hundred dollar}

\textit{Un Finf Dolla des Yahr, vor der Tox, zu be-zahle}

\textit{and five dollar the year for the tax to pay}

‘His home cost 500 dollars, and five dollars a year tax to pay.’

As the prepositional force of \textit{fer} weakens and it expands into more and more constructions, it shifts from a prepositional-like element to a complementiser-like element, eventually taking over from \textit{zu} (we will discuss the syntactic status of \textit{fer} in Section 5.4.)

With further generalisation, the \textit{fer}-clause can extend to appear after adjectives, nouns and verbs which would not otherwise take the preposition \textit{fer}. The (understood) subject of the infinitive verb is no longer restricted to an original prepositional complement.

(65) \textit{Ich hab net’s haez fersaage er sol net.}

\textit{I have not the heart for say he should not}

‘I haven’t the heart to say he shouldn’t.’
Louden (1988, 1997), who agrees that the \textit{fer(...zu)} construction is native to PG, presents an interesting proposal for more recent developments in PG complementation that does appeal to contact with English. He notes the correspondences in the current distribution of PG \textit{fer} clauses and English \textit{to} clauses, on the one hand, and between PG bare infinitives and English present participles, on the other (1988:212). These correspondences he then attributes to convergence. However, given the scenario for the changes that led to the current complementation system in PG, these similarities need not be due to convergence, but can rather be explained in terms of similar changes having taken place in the two languages. The path we have described for \textit{fer} from purposive to infinitival marker is similar to that which \textit{to} has followed and hence it is not surprising that their distribution and meaning with respect to another complement form — bare infinitive in PG and -\textit{ing} form in English (the bare infinitive in English has a much more restricted distribution) — are similar.

5.3 The loss of \textit{zu}

As we said in section 2 and 3.3, the earliest sources of PG that we have at our disposal show some loss of \textit{zu} from which we can conclude that it probably had been losing its distinctiveness for a long time. Ben Sauder’s poetry and Alan Buehler’s writing contain many examples of bare infinitives with verbs normally demanding a \textit{zu} infinitive. Buffington and Barba (1965:79) state “The tendency among present-day speakers and writers of PG [here American KEB/KB] is to omit the \textit{zu} more and more frequently”.

Phonological reduction and omission of unstressed material is a striking feature of PG generally. You would expect this of course of a language that is spoken only and has no written form. But the nature of the PG speech community may also be playing a role here. Trudgill (1995), for example, argues that rapid grammaticalization in dialects in East Anglia is related to the greater tolerance for inference in isolated close-knit speech communities. There is much that can be taken for granted in such communities and the kinds of fast-speech phenomena that arise from the reduced need for elaboration produce
the sorts of phonological changes that support the development of new grammatical structures.

Listeners who are operating in a familiar environment in interaction with speakers whose language or dialect they are familiar with, with whom they are well acquainted, with whom they interact frequently and with whom they share a large fund of common knowledge, can made do with less phonetic and semantic information than listeners who are less familiar with the situation, the topic and other interlocutors. (1995:144)

The Pennsylvania German speech community is about as close-knit and integrated a community as you can find — it is also small and isolated. In this community there is no social distance and people are deeply involved with one another. As Enninger (1985:255) describes it; “intra-group interaction is performed in the solidarity network of brethren and sisters which is at the same time a kinship network of close to distant relatives, i.e. die freindschaft”. It is very possible then that the speed of the changes in PG is connected to the greater allowance for inference in this isolated and very close-knit community. We also refer to Burridge (2002, In progress) for a discussion of how the special socio-cultural status and religious beliefs of the Plain Mennonites may contribute to the direction and speed of this particular change and other linguistic developments.

5.4 The current status of fer
So far, we have considered exclusively the changes in the function of fer, we have concluded that the function of fer has taken the typologically common route of going from being a purposive to being a general marker of non-finiteness. The meaning of fer has become more general, it has undergone grammaticalisation. 37 We will turn now to consider whether these functional changes have been accompanied by a structural change.
Many views of grammaticalisation assume that structural changes are part of the grammaticalisation process, in particular, as an element grammaticalises in function, its “syntactic scope” is assumed to become more narrow, i.e. the syntactic unit with which it combines will be smaller after grammaticalisation (see for example Lehmann (1995 [1982]), but for a dissenting voice we refer to Tabor & Traugott (1998)).

At least since Chomsky (1986) it has been common in syntactic theory to assume that a clause is built up around a clausal spine which consists of the VP, which is dominated by an IP, the locus for verbal inflection and related features. IP in turn is dominated by CP, which is associated with features relating to clause type. This gives us a tree like (66), some version of which is now adopted not only in transformational theory, but also in Lexical Functional Grammar (Bresnan 2001) and some versions of Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (Sag and Wasow 1999).

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{CP} \\
\text{C} \\
\text{I} \\
\text{VP}
\end{array}
\]

In these terms, it seems clear that in the original \textit{fer...zu} construction, \textit{fer} occurs in C — it associated with the full clause — and \textit{zu} is found in I — it is associated with the verb phrase or possibly it is part of V. The question then is whether as \textit{fer} has taken over the functions of \textit{zu} it has also taken over its structural position, i.e. has \textit{fer} been “lowered” to the I position or to the actual verbal complex? This would be equivalent to asking whether the syntactic scope of \textit{fer} has been reduced.

For Standard German, it is plausible to analyse \textit{zu} as being part of the verb, in the same way that morphologically bound verbal inflection is (Bech 1983) and this is plausible also for \textit{ze} in PG. However, it is clear that even if the structural position of \textit{fer}
has changed to a position lower than C, it is not part of the actual verb. The difference
illustrated by the examples in (67) lead us to this conclusion; (67c) is completely
unacceptable ((67b) can only be elicited from older speakers).

(67)  a. Esis hatt fer die sache uffpicke.
    it is difficult for those things pick.up
b. Esis hatt die sache uffzu picke.
    it is difficult those things pick.up
c. * Es is hatt die sache uffer picke.
    ‘It is difficult to pick these things up.’  (elicited)

This still leaves us with two different positions, I and C, as a plausible locu for fer.

At this point we return to compare the WCPG data with the analyses discussed in
section 3.1. The analysis of Ottawa Valley English (Carroll 1983) involved fer sometimes
analysed as a C element and sometimes as a preposition. As we have seen, the differences
in distribution between for in OVE and fer in WCPG are substantial, with the OVE
distribution being much more limited. Hence the analysis Carroll proposes for OVE is not
applicable to WCPG. The analysis proposed by Henry (1992, 1995) for Belfast English
for...to involved for being generated in C, but lowered to cliticise to I in clauses where
there is no overt subject or where the overt subject occurs to the left of for (this happens in
Exceptional Case Marking constructions and with want type verbs, see examples (17) and
(18) and discussion there). We prefer to think of grammatical organisation not in terms of
movement, but rather in terms of parallel correspondences, as in Lexical Functional
Grammar (LFG), and hence we would not consider “lowering”, as such, as a way of
describing the facts. However, if there was similar evidence for WCPG, we could assume
that fer is generated in C in some constructions and in I in others.

Many of the criteria for distinguishing C elements from I elements which are used
in the literature to which we refer in this section are dependent on assumptions internal to
transformational theory in its Government and Binding version. For instance, Subject-to-Subject Raising (SSR), as in *Oscar, seems to like meatballs* is assumed not to be possible across a CP and hence *to* in this sentence must be an I element. As we saw in section 4.3, such constructions in WCPG do take *fer*, but it is one of the environments where older speakers often use *zu*. However, since we do not use a transformational approach, this is not a convincing argument for us to analyse *fer* as an I element. It should also be pointed out here that even though the infinitival marker *att* in Swedish is generally assumed to be a C element (e.g. Beukema & den Dikken and references there), it can occur in SSR constructions, as in (68).

(68) a. Ungdomar nu för tiden *verkar att* vara mycket säkrare, ...
      young people these days seem.fin.inf.mark be much more certain
      ‘Young people these days seem to be much more certain’

b. Tiden *verkar att* gå.
      time.def seem.fin.inf.mark go
      ‘Time seems to pass.’

A more generally applicable criterion relates to word order. Returning to the property described as syntactic scope above, if WCPG *fer* has changed its structural position to occupy the one where *zu* was, i.e. I, then this change ought to be discernible in its linear position relative to other items in the clause. It is interesting here to compare the response to a translation task of an older speaker (69a) with that of a younger speaker (69b).
Judging by these two examples, for speakers who use *fer* instead of *zu*, *fer* does not occur in the same position as *zu* would, but remains in a higher position.

The linear order between the major elements of the clause in non-finite subordinate clause with both *fer* and *zu* was as in (70).

(70)  *fer* SUBJECT NEGATION *zu* VERB

If *fer* has lowered, it ought now to occur to the right of the subject and the negation.

We have seen constructions with *fer* complementation in which the semantic subject of the verb in the lower clause precedes *fer*, as in (39b) and (40b), repeated here as (71a) and (71b), respectively.

(71)  a. Sie ecschpect **dich** ferkumme frie

    she expects you for come early

    ‘She expects you to come early.’

b. Ich hab **ien** als ghalde **fere** bissel arm sei.

    I have him always held for a little stupid be

    ‘I’ve always considered him to be a little bit thick.’ (elicited)
Both these construction types are unusual in that they involve a discrepancy between syntactic position and semantic relation, these are the kind of examples which have been analysed as raising constructions or as Exceptional Case Marking. As we saw in Belfast English, it is exactly this type of construction which behaves differently from other non-finite clauses with subjects. We can assume that the NP which is the semantic subject of the lower verb is represented syntactically in the matrix clause, so that the NP’s position cannot be used to argue for a lowering of *fer*.

Non-finite constructions with the semantic subject in the syntactic subject position of the non-finite verb are not common but we do get them with purposives — even though there is a strong tendency to choose a finite construction instead — and when we do the subject can only follow *fer*, as in (72).

(72)  

\[ \text{Fer} \quad \text{ien} \quad \text{die sache} \quad \text{uffpicke is hatt.} \]

\[ \text{for him those things pick up is difficult} \]

‘For him to pick those things up is difficult.’ (elicited)

A sentence like this then indicates that *fer* has not changed its position.

Similarly, the negation *net* follows *fer* as in the sentences in (73).

(73)  

a. \[ \text{Eswaer} \quad \text{dumm} \quad \text{fer's net} \quad \text{kaafe.} \]

\[ \text{it would be stupid for it not buy} \]

‘It would be stupid not to buy it.’ (elicited)

b. \[ \text{Sie ecschpect ien} \quad \text{fernet} \quad \text{glei do sei.} \]

\[ \text{she expects him for not soon there be} \]

‘She expects him not to get there soon.’ (elicited)
c. Er seemt fer net en guter man sei.  

He seem for not a good man be  

‘He seems not to be a good man.’ (elicited)

Our conclusion on the basis of this data is that even though the function of fer has drastically changed, its position has not. If we followed the strict logic of transformational theory, this is surprising; strictly speaking, any functional shift of an item such as fer would have to be accompanied by a positional shift since the material that was formerly associated with the C head now marks categories that belong to the I head. This logic is indeed in evidence in some of what is said about grammaticalisation by Roberts & Roussou (1991). However, given that the structural changes to fer appear to lag behind the functional changes by quite a bit, an account in terms of a theory in which function is not dependent on structural position then is more appropriate. Using LFG terminology, we can say that the mapping between c(onstituent)-structure and f(unctional)-structure has changed. A representation of the f-structure of the original (subjectless) purposive fer is found in (74a) and that of zu in (74b).

(74) a. fer ↑PRED= ‘fer ↑XCOMP’  

↑TYPE= purposive  

↑ ∈ (↑ADJUNCT)  

b. zu ↑= ↓

Here fer combines with a subjectless clause (XCOMP) to form a constituent that has purposive meaning and belongs to the set of adjuncts that its mother has. This ensures an adjunct function, but allows for further adjuncts to be associated with the mother. The infinitival zu, on the other hand, is a particle which does not add meaning itself, the arrows indicate that functional information from the node is passed up to make it part of the same
f-structure as the mother. This is a similar interpretation of the function of zu to that adopted in Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar of English to as a raising verb without its own semantics (Pollard and Sag 1995:143).

By contrast, the more recently evolved fully desemanticised general function, fer would have the same f-structure as zu in (74b), as in (75). Since it is also used as a purposive, it would retain an alternative f-structure as in (74a).

(75)\[\text{fer} \uparrow = \downarrow\]

The position in the c-structure of fer, on the other hand has not changed, if we assume a C and an I projection, then fer is in the C position in both (74) and (75), as illustrated in (76a) and (76b) and hence the mapping between c-structure and f-structure has changed. Note that the position of the non-finite clause relative to the rest of the sentence is different since one is a purposive adjunct and one is a complement clause. 44

(76) a. \[\begin{array}{c}
\text{VP} \\
\text{VP} \\
\text{CP} \\
\text{C} \\
\text{IP} \\
\text{fer} \\
\text{I} \\
\text{zu} \\
\text{VP} \\
\end{array}\]
The trees in (76) represent the structural properties of *fer* in a generally accepted view of phrase structure, but we would like to indicate another type of solution here. Rather than assign syntactic headship to elements like *fer*, one could treat such purely functional elements in terms of a feature which finds exponence in the clause in much the same way that inflectional elements finds exponence within a word, i.e. *fer* would be a phrasal affix. This would be a solution along the lines suggested by Anderson (1992, 1993, 1996), where rules similar in nature to word formation rules guide the instantiation of such functional elements. Their position within the phrase to which they belong is then guided by Optimality Theoretic alignment constraints, which would state that *fer* aligns with the left edge of the clause, whereas *zu* aligns with the left edge of a smaller verbal unit. Which of the two types of solution one opts for can then become an empirical issue; does *fer* play the role of head in the syntax. Here criteria can be found, for instance like those used in Bresnan (1972), which is often cited as the source of the idea that complementisers head their phrases.

Naturally, it may well be that *fer* is still changing as far as its structural position goes, maybe in a few decades, *fer* will show more of the properties which we associate with I elements like *zu*. In fact, even though speakers will not produce sentences like (77), where the negation precedes *fer*, especially younger speakers say that they sound acceptable.
(77) Net ferien geh waer dumm.
not for ien geh would be stupid
‘For him not to go would be stupid.’

The fact that *fer* is a C element may, in fact provide an explanation for the construction type where *zu* seems to be most persistent; *wh* constructions. Assuming then that *fer* is a C-element, we may be able to explain the reluctance of older speakers to accept *fer* in *wh*-constructions like (78) (cf example (45) in section 4.4).

(78) Erhat net gwisst was zu duh.
he has not known what for do
‘He didn’t know what to do.’

This could be associated with that which was dubbed the “Doubly filled COMP filter” by Chomsky and Lasnik (1977). This refers to the restriction on some languages that a CP which contains a *wh*-phrase in its specifier position may not also contain an overt C element. Compare Swedish, which does not have this restriction, with German, which does have it as in (79).

(79) a. Han undrade vem som lånade stolen. Swedish
he wondered who comp borrowed chair.def
b. Erfragte, wer (*dass) den Stuhl gelielen hat. Standard German
he asked who comp the chair borrowed have
‘He asked who borrowed the chair.’
c. Er hot g’frogt wer (*as) de stuhl g’lehnt het. WCPG
he had asked who comp the chair borrowed have
‘He asked who borrowed the chair.’
As (79c) shows, the data in PG is parallel to the Standard German and hence we can assume that the restriction which is expressed as the ‘Doubly filled Comp’ filter applies in PG (though it is not obvious that a “filter” is the best way of capturing this restriction). If fer is a C element, we would not expect to find it co-occurring with a wh phrase. The fact that younger speakers do use fer in sentences like (78) could then be seen as a sign that the syntactic status of fer is changing.

There is a further factor which may influence possible change in status of fer. The normally verb final nature of PG subordinate clauses does mean that clause initial fer remains separated from the clause final verbal complex — it would be unexpected in a Germanic language to have something associated with verbal inflection isolated in this way. However, word order changes in PG are seeing violations of the so-called the verbal brace (or Satzrahmen). Increasingly elements like arguments of the verb and adjuncts are appearing after the verb(s) and thereby bringing discontinuous verbal constituents closer together. The relaxing of verb final order in this way means that fer often now appears adjacent to the verb, as in example (80). This may well also speed up a structural change which associates fer more closely with the verb.

(80)  Awwer er saagt imblatz fersaage “oh yes”
      but he says in place for say oh yes
      no saagt er immer “oh ei”.
      then says he always oh ei
      ‘But he says in place of saying ‘oh yes’, he always says ‘oh ei’.

6 Concluding remarks
The data we have provided in this paper show that fer in (WC)PG, which was originally used exclusively in purposive constructions, has undergone a functional change, or maybe better, a functional split, since the original purposive function remains. We have shown
that fer is now also a general marker that occurs in all non-finite environments except as complement of modal verbs. This radical change has been facilitated by the simultaneous almost complete loss of zu as an infinitival marker. There is evidence from the earliest sources that these changes started as soon as the different dialects spoken by the anabaptist settlers blended into one language. However, there is also evidence that into the 1970s, zu was still in productive use and given that zu is now completely lost in the language of younger speakers, this change has been remarkably rapid.

In many of the accounts of linguistic changes in Pennsylvania German that can be found in the literature, contact with English is assumed to be the major factor. Only rarely is the change put in a wider typological perspective. Naturally, we agree that English does have an influence on PG, as one would expect, and there is quite extensive borrowing of words from English in PG, as will have become clear in many of the examples used here. However, when the change that has taken place in PG is one which is in evidence in a broad typological sample of languages, which have not found themselves in a similar contact situation, then one has to be cautious with positing contact explanations. It seems clear to us that the development of fer from a purposive marker to a general infinitival marker is exactly such a case. This change is what Haspelmath (1989) describes as a ‘universal path of grammaticalization’ and he shows that it has happened in languages which are completely unrelated to PG and which are not under contact influence from English. Indeed, it is the same change that zu has undergone in the history of German. The loss of ze in PG can be seen as the last step in this grammaticalisation.

However, even in the case of a cross-linguistically common change, it is possible that in one particular language it happens under the influence from another language. One thing we have done in this paper then is to look carefully at the circumstances of this change. We have considered the later developments of dialects which can be assumed to have been part of the input to the variety which became PG, we have considered for...to constructions in other varieties of Germanic and, most importantly, we have looked at the
historical sources of PG that are available to us and at recordings of Waterloo County PG from the late 1980s to the present day.

Looking then at the more local environment, we have shown that it is common in Germanic to use the *for* preposition to strengthen the purposive meaning when an older purposive marker has lost its force (section 2). The fact that *fer* — and not *um* — is the purposive marker is not surprising and the suggestion that this was due originally to French influence on varieties spoken near French speaking areas (e.g. Lockwood 1968; Ebert 1978:31) needs to examined more closely. Again, it is common cross-linguistically for the benefactive preposition to be used to strengthen a weakened purposive marker (Haspelmath 1989).

The only variety of Germanic which we could find described in the literature which has undergone a spread of the *fer...zu* construction is Luxemburgish. We saw that as far as the descriptions go, the development appears to be very similar to that in PG, with the exception of the loss of *ze*, which has not taken place in Luxemburgish. These changes must have taken place without the influence of English, since the contact between English and Luxemburgish has not been strong, until possibly recently (Newton 1996; Hoffmann 1996).

The strongest arguments against this PG change as a contact induced phenomenon come from the facts of the change itself. As we have shown, claims that PG (translation) borrowed *fer* as a complementiser in non-finite complement from English (Reed 1948, Costello 1978) are unsubstantiated; at the time when *fer* started to appear in complementiser clauses, PG already had *fer* as a complementiser in non-finite purposives. Furthermore, whereas *for* as a complementiser has been losing ground in English, it is gaining ground in PG. Finally, as we showed in section 5.2, the timing is also wrong; at the time when *fer* started to spread to complement clauses, influence from English was weak or non-existent. The evidence all appears to point in one direction, the appearance of *fer* as the general marker of non-finiteness; the spread of *fer(...zu)* and the loss of *zu*, is not a contact induced change. Instead the developments of these elements follow common
paths of linguistic change; a purposive marker develops into a general marker of infinitival complements and eventually disappears. As the former purely purposive marker generalises, a new purposive marker is introduced into the system. A striking fact about WCPG is that even though *fer* has spread to almost all infinitival contexts, no new purposive marker has been introduced.

The change that has taken place can be seen as an instance of grammaticalisation. An interesting aspect of this particular change is that the generalisation in function — from purposive marker to general non-finiteness — which has taken place over the last 300 years or so, has not been paralleled by structural changes. The evidence is that *fer* is still an element associated with the clause level; it is a C element. In terms of formal analysis, this points in the direction of a framework within which structure and function can be represented in separate dimensions. Indeed, we sketched a description of the change in terms of Lexical-Functional Grammar. In the language of the youngest speakers we have recorded, we do, however, find initial signs of structural changes to *fer* and to non-finite clause structure. Given the speed of change that has been observable in WCPG, for example in the loss of *zu*, it will be interesting to reconsider the distribution of *fer* in, say, 25 years’ time.
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Footnotes

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1 In discussing these constructions, we will sometimes use *for...zu* as a cover term for the Germanic ones, even though the pronunciation and spelling varies greatly and even though the *zu* element may sometimes be missing. Similarly, we will use *for...to* to refer more generally to the construction type. This means that the terminology is in principle ambiguous between any purposive construction with *fürfer* (as opposed to *um*) and an actual *fer...zu* construction (as opposed to a *fer* construction, for instance), but we hope that it is always clear which meaning is intended.

2 In fact, the example which Huffines (1990:103) provides to show that the construction is obsolete in English sounds old-fashioned exactly because it lacks a subject: *I’m going to Louisiana for to see my Suziana.*
3 In all the Scandinavian languages which have a *for to* construction, there are alternative ways of expressing purpose; for instance Swedish *så att* (and cognates in Norwegian and Danish) and Faroese *til (tess) at*.

4 In all glossed examples, we provide glossing representing functional features like tense, case or number only when this is the focus of the discussion, hence there is a feature `FIN` in the gloss for *skulle* and *skall* here and `INF` occurs in the gloss for *kunna* in (c), but no corresponding `INF` on for instance *bli* in (a).

5 Interestingly, according to Henn (1978:52), this construction is rarely used with a negation.

6 As Martin Durrell (pc) has pointed out to us, Transylvanian Saxon dialects, Wolgadeutsche and other dispersed groups originate in roughly this area and it is not inconceivable that these dialects also use *fer...zu*, but clear information is thin on the ground.

7 In some literature in English, the language is referred to by its name in the language itself; Lëtzebuergesch, but we have chosen to use the English name here. We are grateful to Cecile Somers for her help with the Luxemburgish examples. If there are errors in the data or the glossing they are ours.

8 The finite construction is mentioned by Russ (1996), Bruch (1973) and Christophory (1974), whereas the non-finite construction is not mentioned in Russ’ brief description.

9 LW refers to *Luxemburger Wörterbuch*.

10 We are grateful to Henk van Riemsdijk for pointing us to the reference for Swiss German.

11 USPG is spoken in many states of the United States (according to the *Ethnologue* (www.ethnologue.com) USPG is spoken in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma, Virginia, West Virginia, and Florida) and it is likely that differences exist between these varieties of PG, so that it is a simplification to talk about USPG (see the discussion of Costello’s (1978) attempt at defining variation in section 5.2). However, the early descriptions often give no indication as to the area on which it is based, though one can assume that this is most likely to mean that it is Pennsylvania. Also in the few more recent descriptions which exist
of this phenomenon, there is no evidence of differences in the use of the purposive. Hence we will use the description USPG in this paper, but we will use it with caution.

12 We have a copy of the third edition of this work, which was published in 1905. The first edition was published in 1875 and the second edition in 1895. The preface to the second edition indicates that no essential changes have been made and the preface to the third edition only refers to ‘many additional illustrative features’ (Horne 1905:6).

13 Note, PG spelling is not standardized and there is wild variation. We have retained the original spelling in all examples throughout this paper. In our examples we adopt a system roughly based on that of Standard German (and found, for example, in books like Buffington & Barba 1965).

14 The zu which follows the first instance of fer is not part of the fer...zu construction, but forms part of a PP zu eme nochbar blatz.

15 A comment on terminology is in order here. In a sentence like the following; I want to leave, there is no overt subject in the lower, non-finite, clause. There are many different analyses of this type of phenomena and with them much different terminology. The construction as such is standardly referred to as a control construction, but terminology relating to the lower subject position varies greatly. We can say that the clause is subjectless since it lacks an overt subject, but in transformational analyses, there is, however, assumed to be a non-overt subject there, namely an unpronounced pronoun PRO (though see recent proposals by Hornstein (1999) that it may be a different kind of zero element). In non-transformational analyses, like those proposed with Lexical-Functional Grammar (Bresnan 2001) or Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (Pollard & Sag 1995), the syntactic structure is indeed assumed to be subjectless, though at a different level, functional structure or argument structure, there is a subject. Even though our sympathies are with the latter type of approach, we shall use terms such as ‘subjectless’ and ‘PRO subject’ in the discussion of other analyses and the data since these terms are widely known and used.
In constructions with verbs like *believe*, the semantic subject of the infinitival clause has some object properties and could hence be considered the syntactic object of the matrix verb. This type of construction is known by a number of different names which mirror the development of the analyses in transformational grammar: Subject-to-Object Raising (SOR), S-bar deletion or Exceptional Case Marking (ECM). We will mainly use the traditional term SOR here, but with this term, we do not mean to make any statement about theoretical analysis.

Similarly, there are constructions with verbs like *seem* in which the semantic subject of the lower verb functions as the syntactic subject of the matrix verb, these we will refer to as Subject-to-Subject Raising (SSR) verbs, again without implying a movement based analysis.

Of course in a more recent version of transformational grammar, the Minimalist Program, it is a question of Case checking, rather than Case assignment.

There are recent analyses which propose that PRO is assigned a Case, namely ‘null Case’ (Chomsky & Lasnik 1993), in fact this idea has been taken further by Martin (2001) who assumes that even some overt noun phrases can be assigned null Case. The notion of null Case has, however, been criticised by for instance Hornstein (1999), Manzini & Roussou (2000) and Miller (2002), and in our opinion rightly so.

It is actually remarkable how little data from Ozark appears to be available, given the role it plays in the debate. Later discussions, like Chomsky (1981) and Koster & May (1982) refer only to Chomsky & Lasnik (1977) for data, as does Carroll (1983) in her explicit comparison of OVE and Ozark. Still, Chomsky & Lasnik give fewer than ten example sentences from Ozark (1977:454, 500-1).

The quote comes from the home page of the *Linguistic Survey of the Ottawa Valley*, a project at Carleton University, Ottawa: http://www.carleton.ca/slals/research/ling_surv_ott_valley.html.

The text on the project home page claims that of the varieties that can be said to constitute Ottawa Valley English, several “were influenced by languages other than English spoken by early settlers: one [was] influenced by North-Eastern varieties of German as it was spoken in
the nineteenth century” (http://www.carleton.ca/slals/research/ling_surv_ott_valley.html). It is then not even clear that these varities would have had a fer...zu construction.

Carroll (1983:424-5) also gives examples of purposives and show that they can occur with for. All examples of purposives given lack a subject and no indication is given of whether or not the for is optional.

In actual fact, in both cases, there is a preposition for which takes an NP complement which expands as a clause (S'); in the case of subjectless infinitivals, the complementiser slot is empty, but the S' boundary stops for from governing the subject position. Where there is a subject in the infinitival, there is a preposition for and a complementiser for, but only the latter of these appears in surface structure. The structures are as given in (i) and (ii):

(i) \[
\begin{align*}
\text{want } [ & \text{ for } [ [ ]_{\text{COMP}} [\text{PRO to leave}]_{S'} ]_{\text{pp}} ]_{\text{VP}}
\end{align*}
\]
(ii) \[
\begin{align*}
\text{want } [ & \text{ fer } [ [ \text{ for } ]_{\text{COMP}} [\text{you to leave}]_{S'} ]_{\text{pp}} ]_{\text{VP}}
\end{align*}
\]

The overt NP is really the subject of the non-finite clause and does not belong in the higher clause, as indicated by the fact that subject pronoun there can occur in this position: I want there for to be some peace and quiet sometime (Henry 1992:285).

As can be plausibly argued for older forms of English (e.g. Fischer 1995, Miller 2002:191 and references there).

The sentence comes from page 1 of the Luxemburgish translation of R. Goscinny & A. Uderzo’s L’Odyssée d’Astérix.

Costello does recognise, following Buffington and Barba (1965), that StdPG has a purposive construction with fer(...zu), but he explicitly says that StdPG does not have a fer complementiser.

There is a third group of Plain Mennonites which is separate from the other two, namely, the so-called Dave Martins. We have not included them here for two reasons; firstly, their variety of PG differs from that of the Old Orders and the Markham Mennonites. Secondly, the group is isolationist and sets itself apart from other Mennonites as well as from strangers. They are
therefore difficult to approach and our recordings with members of this group are too limited to form the basis for a proper comparison.

28 This whereas they will say that they can distinguish the PG spoken by Dave Martins.

29 Note that there is evidence here of the uncertainty about how to write WCPG, in (29a) we have *die aerwet* and in (29b), we find *die Erwat*. Also in (29b), there is main clause V2 word order here even though the clause is introduced by a subordinator.

30 In one of these interviews there is a surprise appearance of an *um...zu* purposive clause (*um sel zu finne* ‘in order to find it’), suggesting that the speakers might well have been accommodating to the German interviewers in these recordings.

31 This verb originally meant ‘to resemble/be like’; the meaning extension is clearly influenced by the similarity in English of *be like* and *like*. It can now only mean ‘to like, enjoy’.

32 See Miller (2002: Ch2) for a discussion of infinitives and *-ing* forms in the history of English. As he points out, bare infinitivals in Old English tended to have a progressive aspectual meaning.

33 See Wierzbicka (1988:113-18) on the “other-orientation” of *for to* in English. Wierbicka (1988:120) points out that the special meaning of *for* in English is also apparent when you compare the complements of non-confident verbs like *ask for* and *long for* with confident verbs like *demand* and *order* that never allow *for* (*demand for / order for*). Again the English patterns coincide with the PG patterns. Compare the patterns in the first column with the second column below. The semantic nature of the main verbs here determines the complement — each of the versions with *fer* clearly expresses less confidence in the outcome:

*Sie will ebbes* ‘She wants something’ / *Sie wott fer ebbes* ‘She wishes for something’

*Sie ekspekt en brief* ‘She expects a letter’ / *Sie hofft fer en brief* ‘She hopes for a letter’

*Sie verwart en brief* ‘She expects a letter’ / *Sie wart (guckt) fer en brief* ‘She waits for a letter’

*Sie foddert sel* ‘She demands that’ / *Sie froogt fer sel* ‘She asks for that’

*Sie bestellt sel* ‘She orders that’ / *Sie beddelt fer sel* ‘She begs for that’

34 The *zu* here is a preposition which introduces the PP *zu leit*. 
The constituency of *for...to* constructions in English is not absolutely clear. In recent transformational accounts, *for* is assumed to be a complementiser, heading its clause, but still able to assign Case to the subject of the subject of that clause (cf. Koster & May 1982). However, there are also arguments for assuming that *for* still forms a syntactic unit with the following noun phrase, this line of argument goes back to Emonds (1976:191–200).

Horne’s 1875 manual also has a number of examples showing a surprising absence of any infinitive marking.

Er was ready ahead geh mit der bisness.
he was ready ahead go with the business

‘He was ready to go ahead with the business’ (Horne 1910/1875:202)

We use the term descriptively here, and ignore the whole issue of whether or not grammaticalisation is an independent phenomenon (but see papers like Haspelmath 1999 as opposed to Newmeyer 2001 and others in *Language Sciences* 23).

Recent developments within this framework have seen extensive ‘splitting’ of both C (Rizzi 1997) and I (Cinque 1999). We maintain the C and I view here both for ease of exposition and because we have serious reservations about the current proliferation of functional heads.

Many versions of HPSG still assume that the clause is a VP, in particular a saturated VP, and that complementisers belong to a type called MARKER, which has some properties associated with heads, but which is actually not the syntactic head of the clause (Pollard and Sag 1994:44–46). Sag & Wasow (1999) recognise CP, but do not use IP.

For Standard German, most analyses assume that *zu* is either part of I or V (Bech 1983, Beukema & den Dikken 1989, Giusti 1991 and Kiss 1994), the one dissenting voice is Wilder (1988), but to our mind, his arguments are weak. *Um* is assumed to be a complementiser by some (van Riemsdijk 1984), whereas others have argued that is a preposition (Tappe 1984; Koster & May 1982; Giusti 1991).

There are many reasons to assume that *to* is not in C and this has been the prevalent opinion in the literature (e.g. Pullum 1981; Beukema & den Dikken 1989), however, recently some
linguists have argued that it is a C element (Sag & Wasow 1999, Falk 2001). We do not find
the arguments used to support the C analysis convincing.

Both examples are from the PAROLE corpus which is part of Språkbanken at the University of
Gothenburg (http://sprakbanken.gu.se/lb/parole/). In both cases the example would be
grammatical also without att.

This speaker is 10 years old and the use of seemt instead of scheint is typical of the more
extensive use of words borrowed from English that we find in younger speakers.

How one represents the I and the IP projection in (76b) depends on ones theoretical
assumptions, the crucial point here is that it does not contain any overt material.

In the analyses current in 1977, both elements were assumed to be in C, hence the name.
However, now wh elements are assumed to be phrasal and hence found in the specifier rather
than the head position in the tree.