Metadiscourse Constructions with the To-Infinitive Put in American English: A Qualitative and Quantitative Corpus-Based Study

Jarosław Wiliński

DOI: 10.18355/XL.2026.19.02.13

Abstract
Using frame semantics, the concept of communicative frames, a quantitative corpus-based methodology, a usage-based approach to grammar, and data from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the author examines the to put (it) AC construction, a to-infinitive metadiscursive construction with the transitive verb put and an adverbial complement (AC). The study identifies the construction's structural, semantic, distributional, and discourse-functional properties and finds that it is strongly or weakly associated with, and more or less reliant on, specific ACs. In addition, this study reveals that this construction is motivated by a specific conceptual metaphor, performs many functions in discourse, and occurs across different language registers and variants.
Key words: American English, the verb *put*, corpus-based study, metadiscourse, construction, adverbial complement

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, many grammarians and linguists have thoroughly examined metadiscursive expressions, such as *in other words, more precisely, that is to say, in the same way, by the way, generally speaking, frankly, to be honest, admittedly,* or *surprisingly*, along with their semantic classes, pragmatic functions, and syntactic realizations, from various linguistic perspectives (e.g., Leech, 1974; Quirk et al., 1985; Schiffrin, 1987; Sinclair, 1991; Biber et al., 1999; Hunston & Francis, 2000; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Halliday, 2004; Hyland, 1998, 2005; Ädel, 2006, 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Iza Erviti, 2021; Wiliński, 2023). In descriptive grammar, expressions such as *in other words, more precisely, that is to say, in the same way,* or *by the way* were treated as conjuncts (Greenbaum, 1969: 35; Quirk et al., 1985: 634-639), linking adverbials (Biber et al., 1999: 770-890), or connective adjuncts and connectives (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 775-779), while words and phrases such as *frankly, generally speaking, to be honest*, *admittedly*, or *surprisingly* were regarded as disjuncts (Greenbaum, 1969: 93; Quirk et al., 1985: 501, 615-631), speech-act adverbials (Leech, 1974: 356), stance adverbials (Biber et al., 1999: 763), or clause-related adjuncts (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 576).

Quirk et al. (1985: 615) classified disjuncts into two groups: (1) style disjuncts expressing 'manner and modality' (e.g., *seriously, frankly, honestly,* or *simply*) and 'respect' (e.g., *generally, literally, metaphorically,* or *strictly*); (2) content disjuncts indicating 'a degree of truth' (e.g., *formally, undoubtedly, admittedly*, or *hypothetically*) or 'value judgment' (e.g., *amazingly, ironically, correctly*, or *curiously*). Speech-act adverbials are often treated as a subcategory of speaker-oriented sentence adverbials that belong to the class of predicational adverbials (Ernst, 2001; Maienborn & Schäfer, 2019). Stance adverbials "typically express the attitude of the speaker/writer toward the form or content of the message" (Biber et al., 1999: 131). Clause-related adjuncts are classified into five categories: domain (*politically*), modality (*necessarily*), evaluation (*fortunately*), speech-act-related (*frankly*), and connective (*moreover*) (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 576). Basically, all these authors consider disjuncts, speech-act adverbials, or mood-stance adverbials as those that "convey the speaker's evaluation of something in the proposition" (Hasselgård,

2010: 19) or introduce "the speaker's comment on the form he is giving his message" (Hasselgård, 2010: 21).

In Systematic Functional Grammar, Halliday (2004: 123; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 156–157) proposed two similar terms, *conjunctive adjuncts* and *modal adjuncts*. Conjunctive adjuncts are textual: "they set up a contextualizing relationship obtaining between the clause as a message and some other (typically preceding) portion of text" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 157). Modal adjuncts, on the other hand, are interpersonal in function: their meanings relate to mood, modality, and comment (modal assessment).

In metadiscourse studies, researchers (e.g., Hyland, 1998, 2005; Ädel, 2006, 2010) regarded many of these expressions as metadiscourse markers: "the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community" (Hyland, 2005: 37). Ädel (2006, 2010) similarly treats such expressions as part of a broader system of linguistic means organizing discourse in academic writing, emphasizing their role in mediating between the author's formulations and the reader's interpretive process. Hyland (2005: 49, 218-224) divides metadiscourse markers into two classes: interactive and interactional. Interactive markers guide the reader through the text, while interactional markers involve the reader in the text. The first category comprises transitions (*in addition, but, thus, in the same way, similarly, accordingly*), frame markers (*finally, in conclusion, in regard to*), endophoric markers (*as noted above, see Figure 1, in section 2*), evidential markers (*according to X, Z states, as cited*), and code glosses (*namely, e.g., such as, in other words*). Code glosses have a metatextual function: Not only do they help readers understand the writer's intended meaning, but they are also used to rephrase, clarify, define, or explain the sense of a usage, sometimes using parentheses or marking the reformulation as an example, etc. (Vande Kopple, 1985: 84; Hyland, 2005: 38). The second group includes hedges (*roughly, in my view, in general, generally, apparently, from this perspective*), boosters (*in fact, actually, definitely, without doubt*), attitude markers (*admittedly, unfortunately, interestingly, surprisingly*), self-mention (*I, our, the author, the writer's*), and engagement markers (*by the way, incidentally, let us, note*). Many of these words and phrases also belong to the category of evaluative metadiscourse (see, e.g., Thompson & Hunston (2000) on evaluation in discourse and Aijmer (1996; 2013) on evaluative adverbs and parentheticals).

From a discourse-analytic perspective, Gülich and Kotschi (1983, 1987) described such constructions as part of reformulation strategies or actions (*Reformulierungshandlungen*) and as paraphrastic reformulation markers (*les marqueurs de la reformulation*), whereas Rossari (1997, 2000) viewed them as discourse reformulation markers or connectors (*les opérations de reformulation* and *connecteurs*) that perform several pragmatic functions. For example, they may introduce paraphrase, simplification, specification, or stance adjustments. Schiffrin (1987), in turn, considered such expressions as discourse markers: i.e., words and phrases that structure discourse relations and allow speakers and listeners to adjust their language, perspectives, and mental models to create shared understanding.

In phraseology (Sinclair, 1991, 2004) and corpus linguistics (Biber et al., 1999, 2004), many of these and similar expressions were studied as idiomatic phrases: fixed or semi-fixed formulaic expressions. According to Sinclair (1991: 110) and his idiom principle, language users have access to many multi-word expressions, pre-fabricated chunks, or "semi-preconstructed phrases" that "constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analyzable into segments". Such single choices are evident in the use of phrases such as *of course, in other words*, or *in terms of*. Biber et al. (1999: 1024) viewed expressions such as *as a matter of fact* and *in a nutshell* as idiomatic phrases, whereas *in the same way, on the other hand*, or *in the case of* as lexical

bundles (Biber et al., 1999: 999): "the combinations of words that recur most commonly in a given register" (Biber et al., 1999: 992).

From a construction grammar perspective, many metadiscursive expressions were analyzed as conventionalized constructions that pair form and discourse function (e.g., Fillmore, Kay, and O'Connor, 1988; Iza Erviti, 2021; Wiliński, 2023). In particular, Fillmore, Kay, and O'Connor's (1988) work on *let alone* was foundational for later analyses of discourse constructions. Iza Erviti (2021) examined the role of discourse configurations in the construction of meaning, proposed a cognitive classification of discourse constructions, and elucidated the subtleties of meaning among various discourse markers. Wiliński (2023) explained the nature of the *ADV speaking*-construction (which is instantiated by expressions such as *generally speaking, honestly speaking,* or *strictly speaking*): an adverbial quasi-participial construction or a pragmatic discourse marker used in communication to "comment on the style or manner of conveying the message and to express stances, attitudes, positions, intentions, or viewpoints toward the utterance" (Wiliński, 2023: 65).

Likewise, in pattern grammar (Hunston & Francis, 2000), expressions such as *from a different perspective, from my viewpoint, to my surprise, to his delight, in terms of, in respect of, to my mind,* or *to my knowledge* were treated as specific realizations or instantiations of grammatical patterns with prepositions and nouns. For example, the phrases *from a different perspective* and *from my viewpoint* instantiate the *from my/a* (*adjective*) NOUN-pattern, whereas the nouns used in this pattern belong to the 'viewpoint group' (see Francis, Hunston, & Manning, 1998: 279). From this perspective, phrases such as *to put it differently* or *to put this matter simply* can be analyzed as specific instances of the 'V+dO+AC' pattern.

However, to the best of the author's knowledge, no study to date has examined the properties of the metadiscourse construction with the verb *put* in detail, quantified adverbial complements (ACs) in this construction, or identified the most frequent patterns of its usage. Some researchers have mentioned only a few instances of this construction in passing or have provided one or two examples of its use (e.g., Quirk et al., 1985; Biber et al., 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Hyland, 2005; Carter & McCarthy, 2006; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). For example, Quirk et al. (1985: 617, 1117-1118) classified *to put it frankly* as a style disjunct. The clauses *to put it briefly* and *to put it another way*, in turn, were treated as examples of comment clauses. Biber et al. (1999: 131, 866) viewed *to put it mildly, to put it bluntly,* and *to put it less charitably* as stance adverbials that "typically express the attitude of the speaker/writer towards the form or content of the message." When stance adverbials occur as non-finite clauses, they are considered style adverbials that indicate how the speaker or writer is communicating (Biber et al., 1999: 866). Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 774) treated *put it bluntly* as a speech act-related manner adjunct. Hyland (2005: 262) classified a similar phrase, *to put it another way,* as a code gloss that falls into the category of interactive metadiscourse. Interactive metadiscourse helps readers comprehend a text by clarifying, orienting, and guiding them through the information (Hyland, 2005: 90). Carter and McCarthy (2006) categorized the infinitive clauses *to put it another way* and *put it mildly/bluntly* as discourse markers (2006: 210) or reformulations (2006: 220-221, 921) that allow speakers to "monitor and manage the ongoing discourse by commenting explicitly on the process of talking itself". Additionally, Carter and McCarthy (2006: 222) identified the phrases *to put it mildly* and *to put it bluntly* as stance markers; they (2006: 262) referred to *put it another way* as a metatextual linking adjunct. The former indicates "the speaker's stance or attitude towards the message", while the latter signals that the following segment of discourse "explains, paraphrases, exemplifies, or relates topically to the previous segment or represents a temporary digression from the previous segment or a shift in topic" (Carter & McCarthy, 2006: 111 and 262, respectively). Halliday and Matthiessen

(2014: 615) classified *to put it another way* as a conjunctive adjunct that serves an elaborating, appositive function. In this type of elaboration, a discourse element is restated or represented by exposition (the 'i.e.' relationship). Finally, even *Collins Cobuild English Grammar* (Hands, 2017: 446, 454), based on the Collins Corpus, has provided only two examples of its usage: *to put it mildly* and *to put it bluntly*, both of which are classified as sentence adverbials. The first is listed among the sentence adverbials that emphasize the truth of a statement or stress the seriousness of the situation being described. The latter is given to show the kind of statement someone is making.

Despite these passing references and the growing body of research on metadiscourse and parenthetical constructions, it remains unclear whether expressions with the verb *put* should be analyzed as structurally peripheral infinitival clauses or as entrenched metadiscursive constructions (i.e., conventionalized pairings of form and function in their own right). Existing studies tend to treat individual instances of the *to put (it) AC* pattern as style adverbials, conjunctive adjuncts, or reformulations, without fully accounting for their lexical preferences, discourse-pragmatic functions, and frequency-based entrenchment. This study addresses this gap by examining the to *put (it) AC* pattern from a corpus-driven, usage-based, and constructionally-oriented perspective, providing an answer to the question of whether its distribution, semantic motivation, and functional specialization confirm its constructional status within the network of metadiscourse parentheticals.

Given the limitations of previous research, this study seeks to achieve two goals: first, to identify the structural, semantic, pragmatic, distributional, and discourse-functional features of the *to put it AC* pattern; and second, to determine which ACs are strongly or weakly attracted to, and more or less reliant upon, this construction. More specifically, based on data retrieved from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the study aims to indicate that the *to put (it) AC* pattern has the status of a construction (a pairing of a partially flexible structure with a specific meaning), occurs in different variants, serves various functions in discourse, is distributed differently across various registers in COCA, and occurs with particular categories of ACs that evoke different semantic-communicative frames.

The rest of the article is divided into three sections. Section 2 discusses the theory and corpus-based methodology, the nature of the data sources, and the tools and procedures employed for their retrieval and evaluation. Section 3 examines the structural, semantic, distributional, and discourse-functional properties of the construction under study. It also presents and interprets the findings of the quantitative investigation of ACs occurring with the verb *put* in this construction. Finally, Section 4 provides concluding remarks.

2. Theory and methodology

This section provides an overview of the theoretical and methodological assumptions underlying this study.

2.1 Theoretical frameworks

This study uses usage-based construction grammar, frame semantics, and the concept of communicative frames to identify the structural, semantic, and discourse-functional features of the construction under examination.

2.1.1 Usage-based construction grammar

Usage-based approaches to grammar (e.g., Barlow & Kemmer, 2000; Tummers, Heylen, & Geeraerts, 2005; Bybee & Beckner, 2010; Perek, 2023) assume that grammatical knowledge is formed by abstracting constructions (i.e., symbolic units) from situated instances of their use. Constructions are form-meaning pairs that exist along a continuum of complexity and schematicity, ranging from simple morphemes

and words through more complex words, fixed phrases, and idioms to the most complex schematic constructions (e.g., argument-structure constructions) and the rules governing their semantic, pragmatic, and discourse-functional interpretation. Thus, for example, the *to put it* AC construction (e.g., *to put it simply*) is a construction because it has a complex form (a non-finite infinitive clause) and a specific function/meaning ('to express a message in a certain manner') that are conventionally associated with each other. All grammatical units can be stored and represented as constructions, provided they are used frequently enough to become deeply ingrained in the mental grammar and firmly entrenched in the speaker's memory (e.g., Schmid, 2016).

2.1.2 Frame semantics

Frame semantics (Fillmore, 1982) is a cognitive-semantic theory that holds that the meanings of words should be understood in terms of *cognitive* and *semantic frames*. Cognitive frames (Andor, 2010: 158; Fillmore, 1982: 117-118; Fillmore, 2008; Fillmore & Baker, 2009) are defined as systems of concepts, bodies of encyclopedic knowledge, or shared background understandings essential for making sense of the world around us. These systems of concepts are connected in such a way that to comprehend any one of them, we need to understand the whole structure in which it fits (Fillmore, 1982: 111). Semantic or linguistic frames (Fillmore, 2008), in turn, are those that are "specifically coded in – or 'evoked by' – lexical units or other features of linguistic form" (Andor, 2010: 158). They are script-like conceptual structures that refer to specific types of situations, objects, or events along with their participants and props, i.e., frame elements that consist of frame roles (core and noncore) and their lexical fillers (Ruppenhofer et al., 2016: 7). *Communicative frames*, in turn, "arise when cognitive frames are encoded in language, art or another medium, causing the cognitive frames to be created or activated in someone else's mind" (Sullivan, 2023: 6). Each communicative frame includes the structure of one or more cognitive frames selected for communication (Sullivan, 2023: 9). For example, the cognitive ENCODING frame evoked by the verbs *express*, *frame*, *phrase*, or *put* contains everything we know about the situation of expressing a message or mental content (linguistic, intellectual, or emotional) in a particular manner, plus the background knowledge related to the concepts associated with this cognitive frame (see https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/frames/Encoding). In contrast, the semantic frame evoked by these verbs consists of the semantic information required by these verbs, which tells us what kinds of words can go into sentences with these verbs (core elements: SPEAKER, MESSAGE, MANNER, or MEDIUM; noncore elements: ADDRESSEE and MEANS). The communicative frame, in turn, contains the relevant structure of the cognitive frame (ENCODING) selected for communication, occasionally the structure of other frames chosen for communication, and all the factors that can be considered in determining whether and how the frame is communicated (cf. Sullivan, 2023: 9).

In this study, the concept of communicative framing is used to define the semantics of the constructions in question and the meanings of the adverbial phrases colligating with them. The author invents the names of all communicative frames and their descriptions. These are based on the ENCODING frame evoked by the verb *put*, which was taken from the FrameNet lexical database (see https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/), and other cognitive frames associated with the ACs that designate the specific manner or style in which the speaker conveys the message. Thus, the communicative frames identified in this study encompass the structure of at least two cognitive frames selected for communication (one frame is evoked by the verb *put*; another is activated by the adverbial phrase denoting the manner in which the message is communicated), the lexical requirements of the verb *put*, and other contextual factors contributing to the construction of meaning.

All communicative frames were identified using a simple semantic test. The verb *put* and a given AC evoke a particular communicative frame when their contextual and co-textual meanings activate background knowledge related to the situation of expressing a message in a specific manner. This test required the author to read the entire context (including preceding and following sentences) in which a particular instance of the *to put it AC* construction is used to obtain a general sense of the information. Then, the author identified the lexical units in the context, established the meaning of each adverbial complement based on its use in this context and co-text, and determined the background knowledge associated with the verb *put* and each AC denoting the manner of communication.

2.2 Methodological frameworks

This subsection explains the quantitative corpus-based methodology, the nature of the data, and the procedures for data retrieval and evaluation.

2.2.1 Method

This study uses the *attraction-reliance measure* (Schmid, 2000) to assess the mutual association between adverbial complements (ACs) and the *to put it AC* construction in its metadiscursive and parenthetical uses. In other words, the method is specifically tailored to identify ACs that are more strongly attracted to the *to put it AC* construction than others, and those that are more heavily reliant on this pattern than on other contexts in the corpus. The measure of attraction is designed to determine the degree to which the construction attracts a particular AC. By contrast, the measure of reliance is intended to assess the degree to which a given AC occurs with the construction under study rather than in other patterns or contexts in the corpus (cf. Schmid, 2000: 54). Although the method is quantitative and statistical, the findings are evaluated qualitatively and subjectively. In other words, adverbial phrases are grouped into semantic and functional categories, and their specific contextual uses with the verb *put* are considered in relation to the communicative frames they invoke.

2.2.2 Corpus data

The primary data sources (illustrative examples and observed frequencies) in this study are the well-balanced Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). This collection spans the years 1990 to 2019 and includes more than one billion words of text. It is composed of eight registers: spoken transcripts (from more than 150 TV and radio programs), fiction (short stories and plays), nearly 100 popular magazines (derived from subject fields such as health, news, religion, finance, fashion, sports, or travel), ten American newspapers (USA Today, San Francisco Chronicle, New York Times, etc.), academic texts (nearly 100 different peer-reviewed journals), TV and movies subtitles (from the American part of the TV and Movies corpora), blogs (from the GloWbE corpus), and other web pages (the general texts from the GloWbE corpus).

2.2.3 Data retrieval and its evaluation

The process of obtaining data from the corpus required several steps. First, the module for automatic extraction of collocations, implemented in the COCA search engine, was used to extract the observed frequencies of ACs (adverbs and nouns that colligate with the verb *put* in its parenthetical and metadiscursive uses: i.e., in the *to put it* AC pattern) within a maximum span of six words to the right of the search word *put*. To this end, the verb *put* and the wildcards with the part-of-speech tags (ADV and NOUN) were entered separately into the search engine: e.g., *to put it ADV, to put it NOUN, to put it in NOUN, to put it * ADV, to put it * * ADV, to put it * * * ADV*, etc. The application of such search strings allowed for retrieving both short and relatively

long combinations, such as *put it differently, to put it another way, to put this matter differently, to put it more bluntly, to put this idea another way, to put it in layman's language,* or *to put it a little more colorfully.*
However, before such combinations were identified and their frequencies counted, concordance lines were manually inspected to remove false hits from further analysis. Combinations that were part of finite clauses or did not function alone as parentheticals (disjuncts or conjuncts) were eliminated from the analysis. Thus, for example, any occurrences of adverbial complements, such as *simply, succinctly,* or *bluntly,* with the verb *put* in finite clauses (as in *Let me put it simply, As St. Paul put it succinctly [in II Corinthians 3:6],* or *The Boston Celtics' legendary coach Red Auerbach put it more bluntly*) were excluded from quantitative analysis.

AC	a	x	e	attraction	reliance
mildly	538	2598	4212	20.71%	12.77%

Note: a= The frequency of the AC *mildly* in the *to put it AC* pattern; x= The total frequency of all ACs in this pattern; e= The total frequency of the AC *mildly* in COCA

Table 1. Cooccurrence table for a quantitative analysis

Then, the observed frequencies of occurrence (e.g., a: the frequency of the AC *mildly* in the *to put it* AC construction and x: the total frequency of all ACs in this construction) were calculated manually by examining concordance lines, whereas the total frequencies of ACs in COCA (e.g., e: the total frequency of the AC *mildly*) were computed automatically via COCA's interface. The results of these calculations are presented in Table 1 above.
After the observed frequencies were calculated, the figures (a, x, and e) in Table 1 above were entered into an Excel worksheet to determine the strength of the reciprocal interaction between ACs and the verb *put* in the metadiscourse construction under study. For this purpose, Schmid's measures of attraction and reliance were used. Attraction was calculated by dividing the raw frequency of an adverbial complement in the pattern by the total frequency of all ACs in this construction. By contrast, reliance was estimated by dividing the frequency of occurrence of an adverbial complement in the pattern in question by its frequency of occurrence in COCA (cf. Schmid, 2000: 54). The results of this calculation were expressed as percentages by multiplying the observed frequency of each AC in the pattern by one hundred. These percentages were treated as indices of attraction or reliance: the higher the rate, the stronger the attraction to, and dependence upon, the verb *put* in the pattern under investigation.
A cursory glance at Table 1 reveals that the scores of attraction and reliance for the adverb *mildly* are 20.71% and 12.77%, respectively. This means that the use of this adverb accounts for 20.71% of all occurrences of ACs with the verb *put* in its metadiscursive use: that is, *mildly* is very strongly attracted to the verb *put* in the construction under study. In addition, considering its occurrence in other constructions, only 12.77% of the occurrences of *mildly* are found in the metadiscursive uses of *put*. This means that the adverb depends on the verb *put* in the pattern to a small degree and relies on other constructions in 87.23% of cases. In other words, it appears more frequently in different contexts or grammatical patterns. Lastly, the scores were ranked according to the measure of attraction and then interpreted qualitatively and subjectively.

3. Results and discussion

This section presents the results of qualitative and quantitative research on the *to put it AC*-construction.

3.1 Corpus-driven observations on the to put it AC construction

A substantial body of empirical evidence found in COCA confirms the existence of the *to put it* AC-construction, a partially lexically filled pattern that contains two fixed elements (the infinitive marker *to* and the verb *put*), one less fixed element, and fully flexible slots that can be filled by various adverbial complements. The following examples illustrate the uses of these constructions in COCA:

(1) The problem of how to reconcile theory and practice or, *to put it another way*, the translation of theoretical insights into responsible action [...] (ACAD: The Ecumenical Review).
(2) This is, however, a minority position, *to put it mildly*. (WEB: http://praxeology.net/idea-of-the-university.htm)
(3) *To put the point succinctly*: Nobody knows everything about anything! (ACAD: Journal of Ecumenical Studies)
(4) *To put the matter bluntly*, some existing expenditure programs must be curtailed or eliminated. (MAG: USA Today Magazine)
(5) *To put it in a nutshell*, they basically walked away from it and moved on. (BLOG: tlnt.com)

Even a cursory inspection of these sentences reveals that they can be divided into two main components. The first consists of a non-finite infinitive clause (i.e., the *to put it* AC construction), which can appear at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the sentence (see Frey, 2003, for a discussion of the possible placement of sentence adverbials). The second includes a finite clause, typically placed in the final position, but occasionally intruded by the non-finite clause construction, as in (1). The non-finite clause construction is italicized in the examples above, and the finite clause is non-italicized. The infinitive clauses contain two obligatory elements: the verb *put* and an adverb, noun, or prepositional phrase denoting the manner of communication (*another way*, *mildly*, *bluntly*, *succinctly*, *in a nutshell*). In the *to put it* AC-construction, the verb *put* is preceded by the infinitive marker *to* and followed by the pronoun *it* (an anticipatory object referring to the proposition), both of which are necessary components in speech or writing. The pronoun *it* can be replaced in some contexts by the demonstrative pronouns *this* or *that* and by NPs such as *the matter, the point, the issue, the idea,* and several others. The manner expression occurs as an adverb, noun, or prepositional phrase and functions as an adverbial complement. This component is essential and cannot be omitted in discourse, since the occurrence of *put* with these phrases and their lexical co-selection in a particular context is restricted semantically and pragmatically. For example, the omission of the adverb *accurately* in the following sentence results in the unnatural or unconventional use of the infinitive *put*: *Or to put it more *, I have completely changed my personality* (NEWS: New York Times).

3.1.1 Structural, semantic, and discourse-functional properties

The prototypical features of the construction in question can be represented structurally and schematically as [to *put* it AC, FINITE CLAUSE], as displayed in Table 2 below. In this pattern, the verb *put* is introduced by the infinitive marker *to* and followed by the pronoun *it*, *this*, *that*, or a noun phrase (those elements functioning as direct objects usually refer to a message or idea mentioned earlier in

the discourse) and an adverbial complement (in the form of an adverb phrase, a noun phrase, or a prepositional phrase). These elements form a non-finite clause, which is followed by a comma and a finite clause. The colon is sometimes used instead of the comma: *To put it simply: every subject is the same before the law* (ACAD: disClosure). The comma separates the non-finite clause from the finite clause and signals a pause between the two parts of the sentence. The finite clause usually has a topic-comment structure and denotes situations, such as states or occurrences (activities, accomplishments, or achievements). Its subject introduces given information, while the predicate expresses new information. The non-finite clause in turn functions as a stance adverbial (*to put it gently/mildly/bluntly*) or a reformulative conjunct (*to put it more simply, to put it differently, to put it another way*): i.e., an optional element, a parenthetical, or a metadiscursive expression that can be omitted in discourse because it occurs outside the structural boundaries of the finite clause.

form	the *to put it AC* construction: a non-finite infinitive clause: *to* + *put* + the pronoun *it* (anticipatory object)*/this/that/*NP + adverbial complement (AdvP, NP, or PP)	(,)	finite clause (subject + predicate)
meaning	the ENCODING frame: A Speaker expresses a Message or mental content in a particular Manner. the metaphor: EXPRESSING IS PUTTING	a comma	a message conveyed by verbs denoting states, activities, achievements, or accomplishments
function	a stance adverbial (a style or attitudinal disjunct) or reformulative conjunct	a punctuation mark indicating a slight pause or transition	topic/comment structure; given/new information

Table 2. Features of the *to put it AC* construction

For example, in (2) and (4), the non-finite clause is used as a style or attitudinal disjunct to signal the speaker's position, stance, attitude, or point of view in relation to the message and to comment on the style or form of expression (similar functions of disjuncts are described by Quirk et al., 1985; Biber et al., 1999). Thus, it explains how the speaker/writer conveys the message and how the speaker's upcoming statement should be understood. In other words, it introduces the speaker's later comment and links propositions. In (1), (3), and (5), in turn, non-finite clauses do not express the speaker's stance, attitude, emotion, or evaluation. Instead, they introduce discourse relations (i.e., reformulations or rephrasings). Hence, they should be treated as reformulative conjuncts, because they behave structurally and functionally in the same way as *in other words, that is to say,* or *more precisely*: they link a current sentence or idea (a finite clause) to the previous discourse/sentence and signal that the following clause is a reformulation, clarification, paraphrase, or simplification of it.

Considering the meaning of this construction, its different contextual realizations in (1) to (5) invoke the ENCODING frame, in which a person (a Speaker or Writer) conveys a Message or expresses mental content in a particular Manner. The content may be linguistic, intellectual, or emotional. The verb *put,* in turn, is motivated by the conceptual metaphor EXPRESSING SOMETHING IN WORDS IS PUTTING/PLACING AN OBJECT SOMEWHERE, in which the physical act of placement is mapped onto linguistic formulation. This metaphor is closely related to the classic container and conduit metaphor, which Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 10-12) understand as a cross-domain mapping consisting of the following main correspondences: IDEAS (OR MEANINGS) ARE OBJECTS, LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS ARE CONTAINERS, and COMMUNICATION IS SENDING.

Through its frequent use, the metaphorical meaning of this verb has undergone semantic bleaching and grammaticalization; hence, it currently functions as a metalinguistic and discourse-structuring marker. The adverbial complement indicates the manner or style of conveying the message about a specific topic, while the finite clause (both the subject and the predicate, which denote a topic and a comment, respectively) and the pronoun *it* express the message itself. The pronoun *it* usually pertains to something mentioned in the previous sentence, while the finite clause refers to the message that follows (new information about the previous comment). The addressee is not explicitly stated in the sentence but is implicitly assumed. These characteristic properties of the constructions are summarized in Table 2 above.

3.1.2 Variant forms

The corpus evidence reveals that the infinitive construction occurs in several variants. Each variant tends to be used with specific types of direct objects that refer to the specific message conveyed in the previous sentence. Table 3 below lists these variants. The left column shows different direct objects colligating with the verb *put*, while the right column indicates the instances and their frequencies.

Direct object	**Examples and their frequencies**
it	to put it mildly (538), to put it another way (477), to put it simply (291), to put it bluntly (269), to put it differently (82), to put it politely (67), to put it kindly (45), to put it plainly (42), to put it nicely (35), to put it gently (34), to put it crudely (34), to put it lightly (26), to put it briefly (24), to put it charitably (23), to put it succinctly (23), to put it delicately (18), to put it in another way (15), to put it in a nutshell (13), to put it that way (12), to put it clearly (10), to put it in terms (that) (10), to put it frankly (9), to put it in simple terms (8), to put it in terms of (8), to put it shortly (7), to put it directly (7), to put it better (6), to put it simplistically (6) to put it diplomatically (6), to put it starkly (6), etc.
this	to put this another way (31), to put this slightly differently (3), to put this in plain language (2), to put this differently (1), to put this as bluntly as possible (1), to put this all more simply (1), to put this as succinctly as possible (1), to put this apocalyptically (1), to put this all another way (1), to put this in one way (1), to put this in historiographical terms (1), to put this in Niebuhrian terms (1), to put this in our language (1)
matter	to put the matter bluntly (8), to put the matter simply (5), to put this matter differently (1), to put the matter differently (1), to put the matter slightly differently (1), to put the matter less kindly (1), to put the matter more plainly (1), to put the matter gently (1), to put the matter more charitably (1), to put the matter less charitably (1), to put the matter more succinctly (1), to put the matter baldly (1), to put the matter starkly (1), to put the matter pungently (1), to put the matter graphically (1), to put the matter concretely (1), to put the matter another way (1), to put the matter a slightly different way (1), to put the matter in its starkest form (1), to put the matter in social terms (1), to put the matter in the starkest terms (1), to put the matter in legal terms (1), to put the matter in more precise philosophical language (1), to put the matter into existential terms (1)
point	to put the point another way (7), to put the point slightly differently (3), to put the point more generally (2), to put the point bluntly (2), to put the point differently (2), to put the point conversely (2), to put

	the point more politely (1), to put the point succinctly (1), to put the point theoretically (1), to put the point in a slightly different and more general way (1), to put the point a different way (1), to put this point in Santayana's terms (1), to put the point the way I did in my book (1), to put the same point another way (1), to put the point in technical language (1), to put the point in a different way (1), to put the point in its strongest form (1), to put the point in more straightforward terms (1)
question	to put the question another way (4), to put the question somewhat differently (2), to put the question more generally (1)
issue	to put the issue simply (1), to put the issue bluntly (1)
assertion	to put this assertion simply (1), to put this assertion simply and pointedly (1)
idea	to put this idea differently (1), to put this idea another way (1)
problem	to put the problem in military terms (1)
that	to put that in gun terms (1), to put that in easy-to-digest terms (1)
this last bit	to put this last bit plainly (1)
things	to put things lightly (1)
conclusion	to put this conclusion pithily (1)
offer	to put our offer simply (1)
differences	to put the differences as simply as possible (1)
topic	to put this complex topic another way (1)

Table 3. Variants with different direct objects, the examples, and their frequencies

As shown in Table 3, the most frequent variants are those in which the object slot is filled by the pronouns *it* and *this* and by the nouns *matter, point,* and *question.* Apart from the basic form with the pronoun *it* (the most common pattern), the most frequent combinations are *to put this another way* (31 occurrences), *to put the matter bluntly* (8 occurrences), *to put the point another way* (7 occurrences), *to put the matter simply* (5 occurrences), *to put the question another way* (4 occurrences), and *to put the point slightly differently* (3 occurrences). Other variants occur with the pronoun *that* and nouns such as *issue, idea, assertion, problem, this last bit, things, conclusion, offer, differences,* and *topic.* Such forms are relatively infrequent in the corpus.

3.1.3 Distributional properties

As for the distributional properties of the construction in question, Table 4 shows the frequency distribution of the 29 most important ACs occurring with the verb *put* in the eight registers of COCA. It should be noted that these frequencies correspond to both the basic pattern with the pronoun *it* and its variants listed in Table 3. A closer examination of these frequencies indicates that the *to put (it) AC* construction is not evenly distributed across different registers. It prevails in registers such as blogs and websites, occurs very frequently in magazines and academic discourse, is relatively common in the spoken section of COCA, appears less frequently in newspapers and fiction, and is very rarely used in television and film subtitles (in informal speech).

to put (it) AC	ALL	BLOG	WEB	TV/M	SPOK	FIC	MAG	NEWS	ACAD
mildly	538	114	78	22	91	47	102	49	35
another way	524	128	111	10	16	39	83	28	109
simply	301	89	60	21	28	15	24	22	42
bluntly	281	63	66	8	37	17	45	19	26
differently	97	17	17	1	2	5	8	1	46
politely	68	20	10	2	14	2	8	9	3
kindly	46	6	7	2	10	4	7	8	2
plainly	44	12	8	4	5	7	1	6	1
nicely	35	11	8	2	6	1	2	5	-
gently	35	6	5	-	9	1	10	-	4
crudely	34	5	7	-	6	2	4	2	8
lightly	27	9	8	2	5	-	3	-	-
succinctly	26	7	3	1	1	2	4	1	7
charitably	25	2	2	-	4	2	7	5	3
briefly	24	3	5	-	2	3	3	1	7
delicately	18	2	2	2	3	3	1	4	1
in another way	15	6	1	-	1	-	1	-	6
in a nutshell	13	4	1	1	2	-	2	1	2
that way	12	6	1	1	1	-	2	1	-
accurately	12	2	2	-	-	2	1	2	3
precisely	11	-	1	1	-	3	3	2	1
clearly	10	-	7	-	-	-	2	-	1
in terms (that)	10	1	5	-	1	-	3	-	-
frankly	9	-	5	-	1	1	1	1	-
in simple terms	8	2	2	-	3	-	-	-	1
in terms of	8	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	5
shortly	7	1	3	-	2	-	1	-	-
directly	7	2	-	-	1	-	2	1	1
starkly	7	2	2	-	-	-	1	-	2

Table 4. Distribution of the construction across the eight registers of COCA

The construction is most common in blogs and on websites. These registers are dominated by ACs such as *mildly*, *another way*, *simply*, *bluntly*, *differently*, *politely*, *nicely*, and *lightly*. This reflects the interactive nature of these contexts, in which writers often monitor how their messages may be received and clearly signal their stance toward their statements. In these registers, the construction often functions as facework (i.e., as a communicative strategy for making polite statements, softening a speaker's tone, and intensifying language) and as a reformulative conjunct that writers use to adjust and rephrase what they say, as illustrated in (2) and (5) above. Particularly in blogs and online texts, it supports an explanatory, reader-oriented style, allowing authors to reformulate ideas in a way that seems conversational and easily accessible to readers.

In magazines, not only are reformulative phrases (with ACs such as *another way*, *simply*, *differently*, *succinctly*, and *precisely*) common, but combinations with evaluative ACs such as *mildly*, *bluntly*, *kindly*, *politely*, and *charitably* also occur relatively frequently. In this register, the *to put (it) AC* construction functions as a marker of a controlled, refined style of expression: it allows authors to express judgment while maintaining editorial authority. For example, although the phrases *to*

put it mildly and *to put it politely* introduce evaluation, they help writers achieve the right balance between personal judgment and institutional credibility. They signal restraint and professionalism and indicate that writers are aware of their tone, readers' expectations, and institutional norms, as in *Though some budget computers clearly look a bit more elegant than others, most have designs that trend toward the utilitarian, to put it politely* (MAG: PC World).

In academic texts, the use of this construction is highly selective and functionally specialized. ACs, such as *another way, differently, succinctly, briefly, in another way*, or *accurately*, occur very frequently in this construction; hence, they are disproportionately represented in this register. In academic discourse, the construction is less frequently used for interpersonal purposes; instead, it functions as a metadiscursive (or metatextual) tool for clarifying key issues and points, reformulating previous thoughts and ideas, or summarizing results, points, arguments, and conclusions, as shown in (1) and (3) above. The absence or rarity of adverbs (such as *kindly, nicely, lightly, delicately*, or *frankly*) that carry an emotional load reflects the nature of academic discourse: i.e., speakers' and writers' tendency to minimize affectively loaded language and emotional stance. When this construction appears in the academic register with ACs such as *another way, differently, succinctly, briefly, in another way, precisely, in a nutshell, accurately*, or *in terms of*, it more often signals a writer's epistemic control over reasoning (i.e., their knowledge of how to manage, reformulate, and reframe information deliberately and intentionally) and analytical precision (the fact that the reformulation is motivated by clarity, exactness, or methodological rigor) rather than their attitude (personal feelings or evaluation).

In spoken discourse, ACs such as *mildly, politely, simply, bluntly, kindly, nicely, gently*, and *crudely* dominate because they are particularly well suited to the interactional, interpersonal, and real-time nature of face-to-face communication. They help speakers soften, intensify, or legitimize potentially face-threatening statements during the conversation. Thus, ACs such as *mildly, gently, politely, nicely*, or *kindly* are commonly used to indicate to the listener that the speaker intends to be careful, considerate, or restrained in what they say, as in *She has had an uneasy relationship with the anti-war left, to put it gently* (SPOK: Fox_Hume). By contrast, *crudely* may signal to the listener that the speaker intends to depart from norms of refinement, politeness, precision, or diplomatic language, deliberately framing the following information in a simplified, blunt, and non-euphemistic way, as in *Well, because, to put it crudely, it's the first test of George Bush's new world order, and, of course, it's occurring in a terribly fraught part of the world* (SPOK: ABC_Nightline).

In newspapers, the *to put (it) AC* construction tends to occur with relatively neutral or conventionalized ACs such as *mildly, another way, simply, bluntly, politely, kindly, plainly, nicely, charitably,* or *delicately.* In journalistic texts, this construction is often used to introduce an evaluation indirectly: it allows authors to signal a reformulation, soften the language, or sharpen the point of view while maintaining the appearance of objectivity. For example, *to put it bluntly* can function as a discourse marker that indicates that the message that follows is evaluative and potentially face-threatening (e.g., critical, harsh, or negative), as in *To put it bluntly, they're broke, they're in a jam and everybody hates them* (NEWS: San Francisco Chronicle). Thus, it distances the journalist from the personal evaluation, often attributing it implicitly to common sense or reported discourse.

In fiction and TV/movie subtitles, the *to put (it) AC* construction appears less regularly but occupies an important stylistic role in structuring discourse. When used with ACs such as *mildly, bluntly, gently, plainly, lightly*, or *delicately,* it contributes to a character's voice (i.e., their unique tone, style, and manner of speaking) and adds more realism to dialogues. The choice of ACs in phrases such as *'to put it gently,' 'to put it nicely,' 'to put it bluntly,' or 'to put it mildly'* indicates how a character typically

manages social relationships, whether they are tactful, harsh, cautious, or diplomatic. This enhances the realism of movies and reflects how real interlocutors handle politeness, tension, and honesty in everyday conversations. In these registers, the construction is rarely used for analytical reasoning and explanation (as in academic texts). However, a few examples can be found in the corpus, such as *'another way,' 'succinctly,' and 'precisely.'* Instead, the construction contributes to character presentation by clearly showing their attitudes, politeness strategies, and interpersonal positioning. For example, *putting it delicately may signal that the character is aware of potential emotional consequences, as in, "It's time we had a brother-to-brother talk." Or to put it delicately, a talk about the birds and the bees* (MOV: ATL). *To put it bluntly*, in turn, may prepare the reader or hearer for a socially risky statement, as in: "To put it bluntly, Morino was his pimp" (TV: Law & Order).

3.2 Quantitative results and their qualitative evaluation

The observed frequencies of adverbial phrases extracted from the corpus included 239 unique adverbial complements, of which 148 occurred only once in the construction. However, because it is impossible to evaluate the quantitative results for all adverbs and adverbial phrases in the space available here, this section will focus solely on interpreting the findings for the 60 most strongly attracted ACs of the construction. Occasionally, however, some less frequent ACs will be mentioned in passing when discussing the findings. The remaining ACs, along with their observed frequencies, are listed in Table 6 in Appendix 1.

Table 5 provides the scores of attraction and reliance for the 60 most strongly attracted ACs, including their raw frequency in the construction, the total frequency of all ACs in the construction, and the total frequency of these adverbial phrases in the whole corpus. The results are sorted according to the measure of attraction. They point to the presence of ACs that are strongly associated with the construction. The top of the table displays relatively frequent ACs, such as *mildly, another way, simply,* and *bluntly.* The primary reason these ACs hold the top positions in the ranking list is that their high frequencies in the construction influence their strength of attraction to the construction. For example, *mildly* (attraction score 20.71%) and *another way* (attraction score 20.17%) obtained much higher results for attraction than *politely* (attraction score 2.62%) and *kindly* (attraction score 1.77%), because they occurred much more frequently in the construction, as shown in Table 5.

By contrast, the ranking list for reliance displays much higher scores for ACs colligating with the construction, such as *mildly* (reliance score 12.77%), *bluntly* (reliance score 13.16%), *charitably* (reliance score 8.28%), and *crudely* (reliance score 4.21%). This is because the statistical formula used to calculate the reliance score considers the total frequency of each adverb in the corpus, which is lower than that of highly frequent words such as *simply, differently, clearly,* or *better*. In other words, although *simply, differently, clearly,* or *better* occur much more frequently in the construction than *mildly, bluntly, charitably,* and *crudely,* the latter yield much higher results for reliance because their total frequencies of occurrence in COCA are much lower (4212, 2135, 302, and 808 occurrences, respectively). Thus, the degree of reliance on the construction is greater for the adverbs *mildly, bluntly, charitably,* and *crudely* (12.77%, 13.16%, 8.28%, and 4.21%). This, in turn, means that these adverbs are used in other contexts in COCA in proportions of 87.23%, 86.84%, 91.72%, and 95.79%, respectively.

rank	AC	a	x	e	attraction	reliance
1.	mildly	538	2598	4212	20.71%	12.77%
2.	another way	524	2598	10359	20.17%	5.06%
3.	simply	301	2598	166560	11.59%	0.18%
4.	bluntly	281	2598	2135	10.82%	13.16%
5.	differently	97	2598	24324	3.73%	0.40%
6.	politely	68	2598	5101	2.62%	1.33%
7.	kindly	46	2598	4066	1.77%	1.13%
8.	plainly	44	2598	3799	1.69%	1.16%
9.	nicely	35	2598	9835	1.35%	0.36%
10.	gently	35	2598	20981	1.35%	0.17%
11.	crudely	34	2598	808	1.31%	4.21%
12.	lightly	27	2598	15472	1.04%	0.17%
13.	succinctly	26	2598	1319	1.00%	1.97%
14.	charitably	25	2598	302	0.96%	8.28%
15.	briefly	24	2598	19355	0.92%	0.12%
16.	delicately	18	2598	2196	0.69%	0.82%
17.	in another way	15	2598	703	0.58%	2.13%
18.	in a nutshell	13	2598	1728	0.50%	0.75%
19.	that way	12	2598	56485	0.46%	0.02%
20.	accurately	12	2598	12052	0.46%	0.10%
21.	precisely	11	2598	26540	0.42%	0.04%
22.	in terms that	10	2598	416	0.38%	2.40%
23.	clearly	10	2598	105967	0.38%	0.01%
24.	frankly	9	2598	22564	0.35%	0.04%
25.	in terms of	8	2598	65448	0.31%	0.01%
26.	in simple terms	8	2598	308	0.31%	2.60%
27.	starkly	7	2598	1064	0.27%	0.66%
28.	directly	7	2598	79122	0.27%	0.01%
29.	shortly	7	2598	23986	0.27%	0.03%
30.	better	6	2598	241834	0.23%	0.002%
31.	in the terms of	6	2598	235	0.23%	2.55%
32.	the other way	6	2598	15184	0.23%	0.04%
33.	generally	6	2598	74682	0.23%	0.01%
34.	simplistically	6	2598	179	0.23%	3.35%
35.	diplomatically	6	2598	847	0.23%	0.71%
36.	this way	5	2598	46378	0.19%	0.01%
37.	broadly	5	2598	8099	0.19%	0.06%
38.	positively	5	2598	10579	0.19%	0.05%
39.	technically	5	2598	12830	0.19%	0.04%
40.	in the vernacular	5	2598	382	0.19%	1.31%
41.	in other words	5	2598	30975	0.19%	0.02%
42.	in the words of	5	2598	3493	0.19%	0.14%
43.	a different way	4	2598	4549	0.15%	0.09%
44.	baldly	4	2598	200	0.15%	2.00%
45.	in layman's terms	4	2598	206	0.15%	1.94%
46.	in (the/its) simplest terms	4	2598	145	0.15%	2.76%
47.	in economic terms	4	2598	248	0.15%	1.61%
48.	colloquially	4	2598	267	0.15%	1.50%

49.	in his words	4	2598	885	0.15%	0.45%
50.	generously	4	2598	2673	0.15%	0.15%
51.	otherwise	3	2598	69226	0.12%	0.004%
52.	in a/the language of	3	2598	981	0.12%	0.31%
53.	in other terms	3	2598	79	0.12%	3.80%
54.	exactly	3	2598	162668	0.12%	0.002%
55.	(more) concretely	3	2598	520	0.12%	0.58%
56.	in (much) simpler terms	3	2598	312	0.12%	0.96%
57.	one way	3	2598	21088	0.12%	0.01%
58.	squarely	3	2598	3130	0.12%	0.10%
59.	figuratively	3	2598	1399	0.12%	0.21%
60.	harshly	3	2598	2226	0.12%	0.13%

Table 5. The 60 most strongly attracted ACs of the *to put (it) AC* construction

The adverbs and adverbial phrases in Table 5 can be grouped into several semantic-functional categories. These categories have fuzzy boundaries and overlap. Below is a grouping of the ACs that occur with the verb *put*, organized by the communicative frames they invoke. Each frame is named, defined, and illustrated with ACs from Tables 5 and 6 and with several usage examples from the corpus. The frames are not mutually exclusive, but each grouping reflects a dominant pragmatic function. Note that some ACs can be assigned to more than one semantic-functional group because they can convey more than one meaning and serve different pragmatic functions.

3.2.1 ACs fulfilling face-protection or mitigation functions

The first semantic-functional group consists of ACs that evoke the POLITENESS or MITIGATION frame, in which a speaker expresses a message in a polite, gentle tone, as shown in *Caplan is, to put it gently, not a fan of our current political system* (BLOG: freakonomics.com). *Mildly* is the most prototypical example of this group. It is followed by *politely, kindly, nicely, gently, lightly, charitably, delicately, diplomatically,* and *generously* in ranks 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 35, and 50, respectively. *Mildly* accounts for 20.71% of the occurrences of the construction in COCA, and it relies on this construction in a proportion of 12.77%, considering all its uses in the corpus. By comparison, the nine other ACs are much less relevant slot fillers for the construction (attraction scores: 2.62%, 1.77%, 1.35%, 1.35%, 1.04%, 0.96%, 0.69%, and 0.23%) and depend upon this pattern to a lesser degree (reliance scores: 1.33%, 1.13%, 0.36%, 0.17%, 0.17%, 8.28%, 0.82%, 0.71%, and 0.15%.

In this communicative frame, a speaker is aware of the face-threatening potential of the message and actively adjusts it before delivering it. This adjustment can be made by using the *to put (it) AC* construction with ACs that express politeness, tact, and diplomacy (*politely, nicely, delicately, diplomatically*), soften the severity of the assessment (*mildly, lightly, gently*), and convey ethical kindness or benevolence (*charitably, generously, kindly*). These ACs do not question the truth, accuracy, or validity of the proposition. Instead, they indicate how the proposition should be socially interpreted. Speakers and writers use the construction with these ACs to manage the social consequences of the proposition, soften the tone of the message, or ethically reframe potentially negative, critical, or sensitive content. Thus, the construction can be treated as a modal adjunct (Halliday, 2004: 123), and its primary communicative function is to protect the hearer's positive face (enabling them to interpret criticism as measured rather than contemptuous), signal restraint and prudence, modulate the expected impact of the message on interpersonal relations, and reduce the severity of the criticism expressed. Table 6 lists other adverbial

phrases that serve this primary interpersonal metafunction: these include *modestly, temperately, tactfully, euphemistically, in kinder terms, in the kindest way possible*, and *neutrally*.

3.2.2 ACs introducing reformulation or rephrasing

The second category is constituted by ACs that refer to the REFORMULATION or REPHRASING frame, a communicative frame in which a speaker reformulates, restates, or rephrases the same message in a different way, as in *To put it differently, cities need to be dynamic in their conception, scalable in their design, efficient in their operational functioning, and* […] (ACAD: City, Territory and Architecture). *Another way*, ranked second, is the most frequent and prototypical AC in this category. It is attracted to the pattern in a proportion of 20.17% and relies on the pattern in a proportion of 5.06%. It is accompanied by a range of ACs introducing an alternative message, such as *in another way, differently, that way, this way, the other way, a different way, one way, otherwise, in other words*, and *in other terms*. ACs, provided in Table 6, such as *in a different way, in a way (that), in ways, in one way, in different words, in simple words, in a simple way, preferable way, a better way, a more realistic way, in an old-fashioned way, in a more general way*, and *the way I did in my book* also fall into this category. In this context, the *to put (it) AC* construction indicates that the speaker is about to reformulate the same propositional content using a different linguistic form. Importantly, the construction with these ACs does not introduce new information or change the speaker's position on the content. Rather, it signals that the information that follows is semantically equivalent to the previous statement, but has been expressed differently for clarity, accessibility, emphasis, or a change of perspective. Thus, in Halliday and Matthiessen's terms (2014: 157), the construction here is a conjunctive adjunct and fulfils a textual metafunction: i.e., writers and speakers use it to manage information flow, create cohesion between discourse segments, and signal reformulation.

3.2.3 ACs introducing simplifications

The third semantic set includes ACs that activate the SIMPLIFICATION frame. In this communicative frame, a speaker expresses a message in a simpler, shorter, less technical, or more cognitively accessible way, as in the following sentence: *To put it simply, the poorest people almost always have the worst health* (NEWS: San Francisco Chronicle). *Simply*, ranked third, is the most significant AC in this functional category. Further ACs listed in Table 5 are *briefly, shortly, succinctly, simplistically, in a nutshell, in simple terms, in (much) simpler terms*, and *in (the/its) simplest terms*. Table 6 also includes ACs such as *reductively, pithily, in a word, in shorthand, in one sentence, in simplified terms, in simplistic terms*, and *in easy-to-digest terms*. Note that, reductively, simplistically, and in simplistic terms, often carry negative evaluative prosody (oversimplification), while *in a word* signals that the content of the following information will be maximally reduced. In this context, when these ACs are used in the *to put (it) AC* construction, they signal the speaker's intention to reduce the reader's cognitive effort by presenting the proposition that follows in a less complex, more accessible, or more concise way, adapted to the addressee's information processing capabilities, background knowledge, and attentional constraints. In this case, the construction thus serves a textual and cognitive metafunction: rather than merely reformulating the content, it signals a reduction in conceptual or linguistic complexity.

3.2.4 ACs indicating frankness and a degree of directness

The fourth category comprises ACs that refer to the FRANKNESS or DEGREE OF DIRECTNESS frame, a communicative frame in which the speaker conveys a message in an open, direct, and unvarnished manner, as in *To put it bluntly, I think he's going to try and rape Susanna* (FIC: Michigan Quarterly Review). The most significant member of this category is *bluntly*, ranked fourth. It is followed by *crudely* in rank 11, *frankly* in rank 24, *starkly* in rank 27, *directly* in rank 28, *baldly* in rank 44, and *harshly* in rank 60. Other ACs, listed in Table 6, are *crassly, brutally, vulgarly, callously, coldly, in crudest terms, in (more) blunt terms, in blunter, more colloquial terms, in a hard manner,* and *in merciless Hollywood-math terms,* the use of which correlates strongly with negative evaluation contexts. These ACs are often used preemptively to introduce harsh judgments. In this communicative frame, the *to put (it) AC* construction indicates the degree to which the speaker intends to express the message or proposition in an open, unsoftened way, without mitigating the harshness of their tone. Unlike the POLITENESS or MITIGATION frame, this frame foregrounds communicative impact rather than mitigation. It does not eliminate a face-threatening act; instead, it acknowledges or legitimizes face-threatening content in advance as intentional, necessary, inevitable, or justified. In contexts where criticism, evaluation, or bad news is expected, writers and speakers use this construction to signal that the message that follows will be conveyed openly, directly, assertively, or without softening. Hence, in Halliday and Matthiessen's terms (2014: 157), the construction with these ACs functions as a modal adjunct and serves an interpersonal metafunction: it comments on the manner of expression and indicates an interpersonal stance (the speaker's or writer's commitment or attitude toward a person or proposition).

3.2.5 ACs emphasizing accuracy, technical correctness, or semantic precision

The fifth semantic-functional category includes ACs whose use in the construction can be relativized to the PRECISION and/or CLARITY frame, in which the speaker clearly signals their intention to present the information that follows in a maximally accurate, precise, transparent, and semantically consistent way, as exemplified in the following sentences: *Or to put it more accurately, I have completely changed my personality* (NEWS: New York Times) and *My topic here, to put it clearly, is what some of the classic modernists in art have observed upon religious matters* (MAG: America). Rather than adding an emotional tone to comments, mitigating or intensifying face-threatening acts, or highlighting alternative ways of expressing the same idea, this communicative frame narrows the range of acceptable interpretations by foregrounding technical correctness, linguistic specificity, and semantic clarity: i.e., by presenting the information that follows as the most accurate, precise, or semantically adequate representation of the intended meaning. This frame is evoked by the following ACs in the ranking list: *plainly, accurately, precisely, clearly, directly, exactly, concretely*, and *squarely. Clearly*, *directly*, and *squarely* are also associated with greater directness and simplification. In Table 6, other ACs that seem to invoke this communicative frame can be found: *roughly, pointedly*, and *in more straightforward terms. Roughly* denotes low precision, while *pointedly* means 'in a very clear, direct, and obvious way that is intended to signal what you mean or to express criticism.' In Halliday's (Halliday, 2004) terms, in this context, the *to put (it) AC* construction primarily functions as an epistemic stance marker and serves the interpersonal metafunction, since it encodes a speaker's epistemic stance, expertise (their familiarity with facts, definitions, or theoretical frameworks), and control over how the content should be understood, while only secondarily contributing to the textual metafunction by signaling reformulation.

3.2.6 ACs encoding a speaker's moral, emotional, or ideological stance

The sixth category covers *positively, better, charitably,* and *generously.* Table 6 also lists *sadly, poorly, naively, cynically, painfully, negatively, uncharitably, grandiosely, glibly, tritely, snarkily,* or *playfully.* These ACs activate the EVALUATIVE or ATTITUDINAL STANCE frame. In this communicative frame, the *to put (it) AC* construction and evaluative ACs are used to express opinions, feelings, or judgments on a given topic; thus, they shape the tone of the message and persuade readers or listeners to the speaker's position by appealing to shared values or by creating social and emotional distance. In contrast to communicative frames in which the speaker structures discourse or manages cognitive load, in this frame the speaker explicitly encodes the attitudinal stance, directing the hearer or listener toward a preferred evaluative interpretation, as illustrated in the following sentence: *To put it painfully, too much liberal religion today lacks faith and, like its conservative counterpart, is preoccupied with worldly power* (NEWS: Christian Science Monitor). Thus, the construction should be regarded as a stance adjunct that serves an interpersonal function: it presents information in accordance with a particular evaluative stance. It signals that the content should be interpreted in moral, emotional, or ideological terms.

3.2.7. ACs marking changes in registers or domains

A further important category consists of ACs, such as *technically, colloquially, in technical terms, in economic terms, in the vernacular, in layman's terms,* or *in (a/the) language of (e.g., physics, physical acoustics, or the militant African-American movement).* These ACs evoke a communicative frame of A CHANGE IN REGISTER, DOMAIN, or DISCIPLINE. This frame signals that the speaker intends to re-express or reformulate propositional content using linguistic and stylistic conventions characteristic of a specific field, domain, register, sociolect, or speech community, as in *To put it in the vernacular of today's youth, 'You rock, girl!'* (NEWS: Denver Post). Other ACs in Table 6 that activate this frame can be divided into the following subcategories: those suggesting a shift toward general registers (*in plain language, in plain English, all into plain English, in layman's language*); those indicating the level of formality (*informally, formally*); those related to academic disciplines or theoretical frameworks (*theoretically, in legal terms, in theological terms, in technical terms, in technical language, in historiographical terms, in philosophical language, in more precise philosophical language*); those related to branches of human activities or occupational and professional disciplines (*in basketball terms, in military terms, in gun terms, in business terms, in actuarial terms, in computer lingo, in Internet parlance, in sports terms, in advertising terms*); and those referring to cultural contexts or stylistic aspects of usage (*literally, biblically, in Biblical terms, in evangelical terms, in Biblical language, in a Biblical manner, in Christian terms, in Chicago parlance, in cinematic terms, in cartoon form, in bumper-sticker parlance, in science fiction terms*). In this case, the construction fulfills an ideational and textual metafunction.

3.2.8 ACs attributing a proposition to someone else's words or another source

The next semantic-functional set encompasses ACs such as *in his words, in the terms of* (e.g., *Saint Thomas Aquinas*), and *in the words of* (e.g., *the Galatoire's waiter, Chinatown*, or *Josh Lyman*). Table 6 also contains phrases such as *in Kantian terms, in Niebuhrian terms, in Zunshine's terms, in Obama's terms, in Hegelian terms, in Santayana's terms, in Heideggerian terms, in Vattimo's words, in Tillich's terms, in Feffer's terms, in Alex's words, in Fortes's terms,* and *in Foucault terms*. These ACs evoke the ATTRIBUTION frame. In this communicative frame, instead of presenting the information as their own, the speaker openly attributes propositional content to another speaker, thinker, authority, or textual source to provide an evidential basis for

the proposition or distance themselves from full responsibility for the wording or stance, as shown in the sentence *To put it in the terms of Saint Thomas Aquinas, an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law* (WEB: usccb.org). In this way, the construction, in this context, performs an interpersonal and evidential metafunction: it signals a shift in perspective and responsibility to another speaker or source, and integrates the information that follows with the reported discourse.

3.2.9 ACs defining the conceptual scope of a proposition

Another functional category covers ACs that define the conceptual scope or descriptive parameters adopted for interpreting the proposition. Thus, ACs such as *in these terms, in their terms, in those terms, in terms that (…), in broader terms, in entirely numerical terms, into terms (that …), in a terminology (that…), in language (that…), in a formulation I borrow (…), in bleaker terms, in more intuitive terms, in less analogical terms, in more physical terms,* and *in terms of* (e.g., *per-capita productivity gains*, *Hampton's theory of expressive punishment,* or *the post-Heideggerian difference between politics and the political*) evoke the METALINGUISTIC FORMULATION or RESTRICTIVE SCOPING frame. In this communicative frame, the speaker uses the *to put (it) AC* construction to limit the scope of their interpretation to a specific conceptual or descriptive framework, as in the sentence: *Or to put it in terms that matter in the pages of The Chronicle: Should lawmakers be people who have seen the inside of a college classroom?* (WEB: chronicle.com). Hence, the construction performs a metapragmatic textual function: it narrows the interpretative scope by specifying the conceptual frameworks or descriptive parameters under which a given proposition is valid or relevant.

3.2.10 Other ACs

Finally, in Table 5, among the most significant ACs in the ranking list, there are also *'generally', 'broadly', and 'figuratively'*. The first two evoke the GENERALIZATION frame, while the third activates the NON-LITERAL CONSTRUAL frame. In the first frame, a speaker expresses a message in general or broad terms, as in: "To put it more generally, only man appears to be destructive beyond the aim of defense or of attaining what he needs" (MOV: Metaphysia 2012). Therefore, the construction can be treated as an epistemic stance marker that encodes generalization. In the second frame, a speaker signals imagery and a non-literal, figurative, or imaginal construal of the following message, as in *To put it figuratively in biblical language, we've broken loose from the Egypt of slavery and we have moved through the wilderness of legal segregation and now we stand on the border of the promised land of integration* (WEB: http://www.wmich.edu/~ulib/archives/mlk/excerpts.html). Note that *generally* and *broadly* are also associated with the EVALUATIVE and ATTITUDINAL frame: although they do not encode moral evaluation directly, they present the stance as measured, cautious, and reasonable, and indicate that a speaker is aware of the generality of their evaluative stance. Other ACs that evoke this frame are *metaphorically, idiomatically, pungently, graphically, apocalyptically, anthropomorphically,* and *in the sports analogy*. Thus, the construction primarily fulfills an ideational metafunction: it signals that the message should be interpreted non-literally, figuratively, or imaginally.

4. Concluding remarks

This study has sought to identify the properties of the *to put (it) AC* construction and ACs that are strongly or weakly associated with, or more or less dependent on, this construction. The results reveal that the construction invokes the ENCODING frame, is motivated by the metaphor: EXPRESSING IS PUTTING, and functions as a stance adverbial or a reformulative conjunct: i.e., a metadiscursive parenthetical construction

that belongs to a family of form-function pairings that encode a speaker's position, stance, evaluation, or explanation. In addition, the corpus-based analysis indicates that the construction occurs relatively more frequently in registers such as blogs, websites, magazines, academic discourse, and spoken English than in newspapers, fiction, TV, or movie subtitles (in very informal speech). Most importantly, the study reveals a strong tendency for this construction to occur with specific categories of ACs evoking the following communicative frames: POLITENESS or MITIGATION, REFORMULATION or REPHRASING, SIMPLIFICATION, FRANKNESS or DEGREE OF DIRECTNESS, PRECISION or CLARITY, EVALUATIVE or ATTITUDINAL STANCE, A CHANGE IN REGISTER, DOMAIN, or DISCIPLINE, ATTRIBUTION, METALINGUISTIC FORMULATION or RESTRICTIVE SCOPING, GENERALIZATION, and NON-LITERAL CONSTRUAL.

The qualitative analysis shows that speakers and writers use this construction to manage the flow of information in written and spoken discourse. They do so by signaling their attitudes toward the content of the message or its form of expression, by taking a specific epistemic or evaluative stance towards a proposition, or by helping readers or hearers interpret what is said in a specific manner. Hence, the main pragmatic function of this construction is to comment directly on how a message is conveyed, either by rephrasing it, simplifying it, or assessing the way it will be expressed.

The communicative function of this construction results from the combination of its specific syntactic form (the verb *put* with a direct object (*it, this, that,* or a NP) and an adverbial complement) with the meaning conveyed by individual adverbial phrases and the verb *put* in discourse. Its partially fixed nature, coupled with its specific pragmatic uses, its occurrence with 239 different types of ACs, and the high token frequencies of specific prototypical constructs (such as *mildly, another way, simply*, and *bluntly*: 538, 524, 301, and 281 occurrences, respectively) support the argument that the *to put (it) AC* pattern should be treated not as an ordinary non-finite infinitive clause but as a distinct metadiscourse construction in its own right. The high frequencies of ACs such as *mildly, another way, simply, bluntly,* or *differently* in the pattern reinforce and affect the semantics and discourse-functional attributes of the pattern, leading to its entrenchment as a *to put (it) AC*-schema and to the constructional status of this pattern. The frequent use of individual instances of this schema (e.g., *to put it simply, to put it another way, to put it mildly, to put it bluntly*, or *to put it differently*) also results in their conventionalization, entrenchment, and idiomatization as specific constructions (pairings of form and function in their own right).

These results have several far-reaching implications for linguistic theory. First, they provide strong evidence that many metatextual commentaries are not merely parentheticals, pragmatic additions, or optional elements of the sentence. They also exhibit specific formal, semantic, pragmatic, and discourse-functional properties that support treating them as separate linguistic units. Thus, the to *put (it) AC* pattern should not be considered a free infinitival clause but rather an independent metadiscursive construction (a pairing of form and function with its own constructional status). Secondly, they indicate that metatextual commentaries, parentheticals, or metadiscursive expressions may acquire their own constructional status through partial schematicity, the entrenchment of specific instances, established links between form and function (i.e., entrenched form-function associations), and high token frequency of prototypical constructs (i.e., their specific instances or realizations). Thirdly, they demonstrate that the communicative function of such constructions results from the interaction between syntactic structure and discourse-pragmatic aspects of usage. Thus, these results reinforce the thesis that there is an inseparable link between syntactic form and discursive function. This insight is important for the theory of the syntax-pragmatics interface and supports integrated

approaches to syntax and pragmatics. Finally, they challenge the assumption of unlimited productivity of *to*-infinitive clause-constructions (in this case, infinitival parentheticals) by revealing strong lexical preferences for adverbial complements referring to specific communicative frames. This finding contradicts the thesis of their full productivity and suggests the existence of partially lexicalized patterns of usage. In addition, they confirm that these constructions serve a systematic function in managing the flow of information and interpersonal relationships in discourse, which highlights the need to incorporate them into interactive and discursive models of language.

AI Tools Declaration

The work is the result of my own intellectual effort. It is based on empirical data from COCA and on its thorough quantitative and qualitative interpretation. AI tools did not independently generate any part of the submitted content without human oversight or critical input. However, I used *Grammarly* during the writing, editing, or research process to improve clarity and grammar, check punctuation, correct potential errors, find alternative words, and replace words and expressions.

Bibliographic references

Ädel, A. (2006). Metadiscourse in L1 and L2 English. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Ädel, A. (2010). Just to give you kind of a map of where we are going: A taxonomy of metadiscourse in spoken and written academic English. Nordic Journal of English Studies, 9(2), 69-97.

Aijmer, K. (1996). Conversational Routines in English: Convention and Creativity. London, New York: Longman.

Aijmer, K. (2013). Understanding Pragmatic Markers: A Variational Pragmatic Approach. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Andor, J. (2010). Discussing frame semantics: The state of the art. An interview with Charles J. Fillmore. Review of Cognitive Linguistics, 8(1), 157-176.

Barlow, M., S. Kemmer (eds.). (2000). Usage-Based Models of Language. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., Finegan, E. (1999). Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Biber, D., Conrad, S., Cortes, V. (2004). If you look at .: Lexical bundles in university teaching and textbooks. Applied Linguistics, 25, 371-405.

Bybee, J., Beckner, C. (2010). Usage-based theory. In B. Heine & H. Narrog (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Analysis, 827-855. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Carter, R., McCarthy, M. (2006). Cambridge Grammar of English: A Comprehensive Guide: Spoken and Written English Grammar and Usage. Cambridge, UK: CUP.

Ernst, T. (2001). The Syntax of Adjuncts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fillmore, C. J. (1982). Frame semantics. Linguistics in the Morning Calm. The Linguistic Society of Korea (ed.), 111-137. Hanshin Publishing Company. Seoul.

Fillmore, C. J. (2008). The merging of “frames”. In R. Rossini Favretti (ed.), Frames, Corpora, and Knowledge Representation, 1-12. Bononia University Press.

Fillmore, C. J., Baker, C. (2009). A frames approach to semantic analysis. In B. Heine & H. Narrog (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Analysis, 313-340. Oxford University Press.

Fillmore, C. J., Kay, P., & O’Connor, M. C. (1988). Regularity and idiomaticity in grammatical constructions: The case of let alone. Language, 64, 501-538.

Francis, G., Hunston, S., Manning, E. (1998). Collins COBUILD Grammar Patterns 2: Nouns and Adjectives. London: HarperCollins.

Frey, W. (2003). Syntactic conditions on adjunct classes. In E. Lang, C. Maienborn, & C. Fabricius-Hansen (eds.), Modifying Adjuncts, 163-209. Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton.

Gülich E., Kotschi T. (1983). Les marqueurs de la reformulation paraphrastique. Cahiers de linguistique française 5, 305-351.
Gülich, E., Kotschi, T. (1987). Reformulierungshandlungen als Mittel der Textkonstitution. Untersuchungen zu französischen Texten aus mündlicher Kommunikation. In W. Motsch (Hg.), Satz, Text, sprachliche Handlung, 199-261. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.
Greenbaum, S. (1969). Studies in English Adverbial Usage. London: Longman.
Halliday, M. A. K. (2004). An Introduction to Functional Grammar (3rd ed.), revised by Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen. London: Edward Arnold.
Halliday, M. A. K., Matthiessen, C. (2014). Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar (4th ed.). Oxon: Routledge.
Hands, P. (ed.) (2017). Collins Cobuild English Grammar. Glasgow: HarperCollins.
Hasselgård, H. (2010). Adjunct Adverbials in English. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Huddleston, R., Pullum, G. K. (2002). The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Hunston, S., Francis, G. (2000). Pattern Grammar: A Corpus-Driven Approach to the Lexical Grammar of English. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
Hyland, K. (1998). Hedging in Scientific Research Articles. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
Hyland, K. (2005). Metadiscourse: Exploring Interaction in Writing. London: Continuum.
Iza Erviti, A. (2021). Discourse Constructions in English: Meaning, Form, and Hierarchies. Cham: Springer.
Lakoff, G., Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors We Live By. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Leech, G. (1974). Semantics: The Study of Meaning. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
Maienborn, C., Schäfer, M. (2019). Adverbs and adverbials. In C. Maienborn, K. Heusinger, P. Portner (eds), Semantics: Lexical Structures, and Adjectives, 477–514. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.
Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., Svartvik, J. (1985). A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language. New York and London: Longman.
Perek, F. (2023). Construction grammar and usage-based theory. In M. Díaz-Campos and S. Balasch (eds.), The Handbook of Usage-Based Linguistics, 561-579. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
Rossari, C. (1997). Les opérations de reformulation. Analyse du processus et des marques dans une perspective contrastive français-italien. Berlin: Peter Lang.
Rossari, C. (2000). Connecteurs et relations de discours: des liens entre cognition et signification. Nancy: Presses universitaires de Nancy.
Ruppenhofer, J., Ellsworth, M., Petruck, M. R. L., Johnson, C. R., Scheffczyk, J. (2016). FrameNet II: Extended Theory and Practice. https://framenet2.icsi.berkeley.edu/docs/r1.5/book.pdf
Schiffrin, D. (1987). Discourse Markers. Cambridge University Press.
Schmid, H.-J. (2000). English Abstract Nouns as Conceptual Shells. From Corpus to Cognition. Berlin and New York: De Gruyter Mouton.
Schmid, H.-J. (2016). Entrenchment and the Psychology of Language Learning: How We Reorganize and Adapt Linguistic Knowledge. Berlin and Boston: Mouton De Gruyter.
Sinclair, J. M. (1991). Corpus, Concordance, Collocation. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Sinclair, J. M. (2004). Trust the Text: Language, Corpus, and Discourse. London: Routledge.

Sullivan, K. (2023). Three levels of framing. Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science, 14(5), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1002/wcs.1651.
Thompson, G., Hunston, S. (2000). Evaluation: An introduction. In S. Hunston, G. Thompson (eds.), Evaluation in Text, 1-27. Oxford University Press.
Tummers, J., Heylen, K., Geeraerts, D. (2005). Usage-based approaches in cognitive linguistics: A technical state of the art. Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory, 1(2), 225-261.
Vande Kopple, W. (2002), Metadiscourse, discourse, and issues in composition and rhetoric. In E. Barton and G. Stygall (eds.), Discourse Studies in Composition, 91-113. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
Wiliński, J. (2023). The ADV speaking-construction in American English: A quantitative corpus-based investigation. Topics in Linguistics, 24(2), 51-68.

Online sources

The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Available from https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/
The FrameNet Lexical Database. Available from https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/

Words: 13642
Characters: 88 130 (49 standard pages)

Dr Jarosław Wiliński
University of Siedlce,
Faculty of Humanities,
Żytnia 39, 08-100 Siedlce
Poland
jaroslaw.wilinski@uws.edu.pl
ORCID: 0000-0002-3136-6529

Appendix 1

Other ACs occurring three times: *cynically, naively, in a different way, in a word;* **ACs occurring twice:** *crassly, roughly, sharply, pointedly, colorfully, best, straight, sadly, brutally, neutrally, grandiosely, conversely, into terms that-clause, in (more) contemporary terms, in (slightly/somewhat) different terms, in a way that…, in a terminology that, in human terms, in language (that), in basketball terms, in Kantian terms, in blunt terms, in simplistic terms, in plain language, in plain English, in the form of a crude question, in Biblical language*; **ACs occurring once**: *eloquently, negatively, right, forcefully, poorly, boldly, formally, tactfully, modestly, literally, conservatively, playfully, informally, metaphorically, euphemistically, biologically, glibly, graphically, truthfully, grandly, callously, biblically, coldly, metaphysically, idiomatically, polemically, rhetorically, reductively, professorily, snarkily, uncharitably, tritely, theologically, temperately, vulgarly, apocalyptically, pilthily, painfully, pungently, theoretically, a better way, preferable way, in stark terms, in Internet parlance, in those terms, in broader terms, in business terms, in these terms, in a simple way, in actuarial terms, in Aesop's terms, in advertising terms, in American terms, in less analogical terms, in analogous terms, in anthropomorphic terms, in bleaker terms, in less capitalistic terms, in cinematic terms, in crudest terms, in evangelical terms, into existential terms, in Feffer's terms, in Foucault terms, in gun terms, in Hegelian terms, in Heidegger's terms, in kinder terms, in historiographical terms, in more intuitive terms, in military terms, in millennial terms, in nautical terms, in Niebuhrian terms, in numerical terms, in Obama's terms, in older terms, in physical terms, in pretty terms, in reductionist terms, in science fiction terms, in simplified terms, in Simpsons terms, in social terms, in more solid terms, in sparest terms, in spiritual terms, in starker terms, in theological terms, in Tokyo terms, in Tillich's terms, in basic terms, in Biblical terms, in Christian terms, in musical terms, in the starkest terms, in their terms, in technical terms, in easy-to-digest terms, in the best terms, in legal terms, in short sentences, in one sentence, in computer lingo, the best way possible, the point the way I did, in a positive way, a more realistic way, in the kindest way possible, in my non-scientific brain's language, in today's terms, in Alex's words, in Obama's terms, in merciless Hollywood-math terms, in blunter, in more colloquial terms, into familiar community terms, in the sports analogy, in a better manner, all into plain English, in linguistic form, in Vattimo's words, in layman's language, in Zunshine's terms, in a formulation i borrow (…), in an old-fashioned way, in Fortes's terms, in her errant way, in the Biblical manner, in cartoon form, in another medium's terms, in different words, in simple words, in Chicago parlance, in a general way, in a hard manner, in more straightforward terms, in one way, in its starkest form, in more precise philosophical language, in Santayana's terms, in its strongest form, in technical language, in our language, in shorthand, as a provocation, in bumper-sticker parlance, in ways*

Table 6. The rest of the ACs occurring in the *to put (it) AC* construction