

A-verb-in ' we will go

1. enormous number of uses of English V category 4 (PRP, present participle, PRP/GER, gerund participle, *-ing* form, here Vcat4): one category, or two, or three, or twelve, or twenty?
2. distinct categories **can** have identical phonological realization: English V category 1 (BSE) and default variant of category 2 (PRS), for all verbs except BE. But it's not always clear when this is going on: is the V category in the subordinate clause of *I insist that you be director* a finite category distinct from (an intrinsically non-finite) category 1, or is this a use of category 1 (non-finite merely by default) in a (finite) embedded clause construction?
3. evidence (in Pullum & Zwicky 1999) that (inflectional) Vcat4 is unitary: (a) the *-ing/-in*' alternation (Houston 1991); (b) synthetic compounds of the *bicycle-touring* variety (Kiparsky 1974), which are derived verbs that occur **only** in Vcat4, but occur in verbal, nominal, and adjectival uses of this category: *Let's go bicycle-touring*; *We were bicycle-touring all last month*; *Chris wants to keep on bicycle-touring*; *Your endless bicycle-touring across Europe annoys me*; *The bicycle-touring visitors made noise until nearly dawn*.
4. supposing that Vcat4 is unitary, what distinguishes the many constructions in the "syntactic" section of the accompanying inventory? Possibilities: syntactic category of the Vcat4 item itself (e.g. N vs. V); syntactic category of the larger construction (e.g. NP vs. VP); syntactic function of the larger construction (e.g. Complement vs. Direct Object vs. Adverbial vs. Adjectival); single vs. multiple sets of conditions (as in the "nominal gerund" of *your finishing dinner at noon* - Pullum 1991, Malouf 2000, among many others)
5. single vs. multiple sets of conditions as direct vs. direct + invoked conditions; SOR examples like *I believed Kim to be a spy*, where *Kim* is Direct Object and *to be a spy* is Complement, but *Kim* and *be a spy* must also be licensed as Subject and Predicate (in relation to one another). Similarly, S14b examples like *I saw Daddy kissing Santa Claus*, where *Daddy* is Direct Object (*Daddy was seen kissing Santa Claus*) and *kissing Santa Claus* is Complement, but *Daddy* and *kissing Santa Claus* must also be licensed as Subject and Predicate. Such examples contrast with, e.g., S2c examples like *I hate him kissing Santa Claus*, where *him kissing Santa Claus* makes a (non-finite) clause Direct Object, with *him* as Subject and *kissing Santa Claus* as Predicate
6. the doubl-*ing* constraint (Ross 1972, some earlier items, many later ones) as a test for Complement (and also for VP):

* [VP[Vcat4] V VP[Vcat4]] (Pullum & Zwicky 1999)

(the first V might be any of quite a number of Vcat4 types, but the second V is much more restricted, since it must be head of a Complement VP to the first V)

7. dialectal U.S. *a-V-in'* forms (Wolfram and various collaborators, various dates) as a test for “verbal” constructions; some important background facts:
- a. the prefix picks out (only) Vcat4 words (**a-durin' your lecture*)
 - b. the prefix occurs only with the *-in'* version of Vcat4 (**They a-killed the bear*)
 - c. the prefix is phonologically constrained: V must be consonant-initial (**a-eatin'*) and initially stressed (**a-considerin'*)
 - d. prefixed and unprefixed versions do not differ semantically
 - e. the prefix is never categorically present (though in a few constructions, like S18, it has very high frequency for some speakers)
 - f. use of the prefix is declining in time
 - g. use of the prefix is associated with vernacular speech and vividness/engagement
8. obviously “non-verbal” constructions: action nominals (S1), nominal gerunds with possessive subjects (S2c), prenominal modifiers (S4)
9. Wolfram’s preposition constraint (**We were impressed by a-seein' the Ganges*): really a NP constraint, since VP Complements governed by prepositions (*refrain/keep from* and *take/get to* [S13c], *keep/stop from* and *set to* [S14c]) are quite happy with the prefix: *I can't keep from a-chewin' on this sandwich; Soon they got to a-watchin' the moon; I kept them from a-chewin' on that sandwich; We set Sandy to a-watchin' the moon.*
10. *gonna* (Pullum 1997) is an instance of Vcat4, no matter how little it looks like it; *a-gonna* is an incredibly high-frequency item
11. gigantic number of verbal constructions, including many that at first glance might seem nominal (S21: *There's no a-tellin' what they might do*), adjectival (S5: *Two guys a-wearin' ties came in*), or adverbial (S16: *We went a-lookin' for fun*). Presumably these invoke a VP Complement in some other construction.