

Verbs of essence

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Abstract

The three primary auxiliary verbs of English provide the fundamentals of intended action, and their development tiers feature the most common keywords in planning and management.

1 Introduction

The verbs *to be*, *to have*, and *to do* are the primary ‘auxiliary’ verbs in English, as they are used in forming the tenses, moods, and voices of other verbs. However, this appears to be an underestimate: the concepts they stand for capture the essence of intended action as in planning and management (Figure 1).

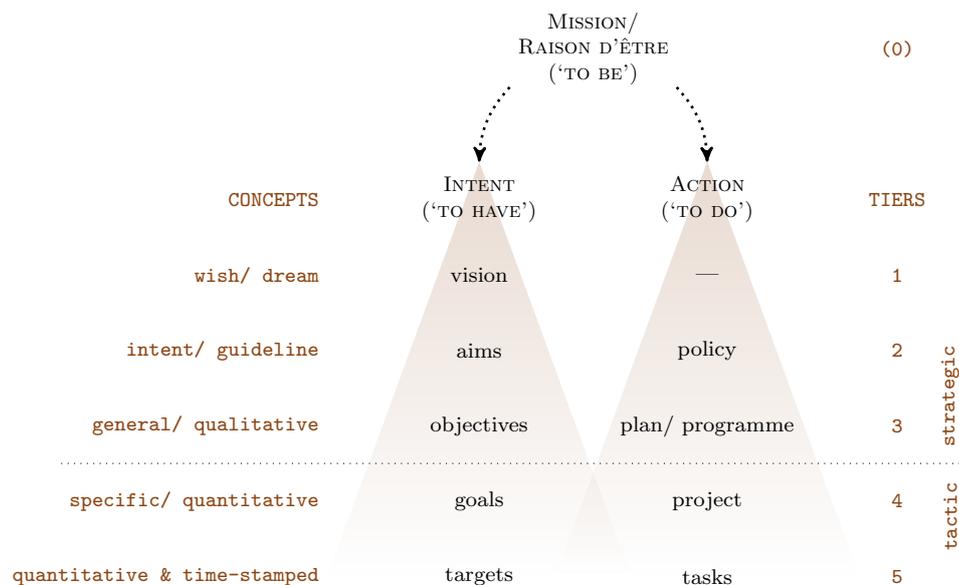


FIGURE 1 Development of the key concepts into tiers; adapted from Perdicóúlis (2011, p.88)

2 ‘XYZ’ view

In reality, *to have* represents not only intent, but also outcomes — and this creates a third stack (Figure 2). The three stacks, plus the top tier of *to be*, can be represented in terms of an ‘XYZ’ formulation of the planning problem (Perdicoulis, 2010, pp.58–66), where the link between *to be* (Y) and *to do* (X) is indirect, through *to have* (Z).

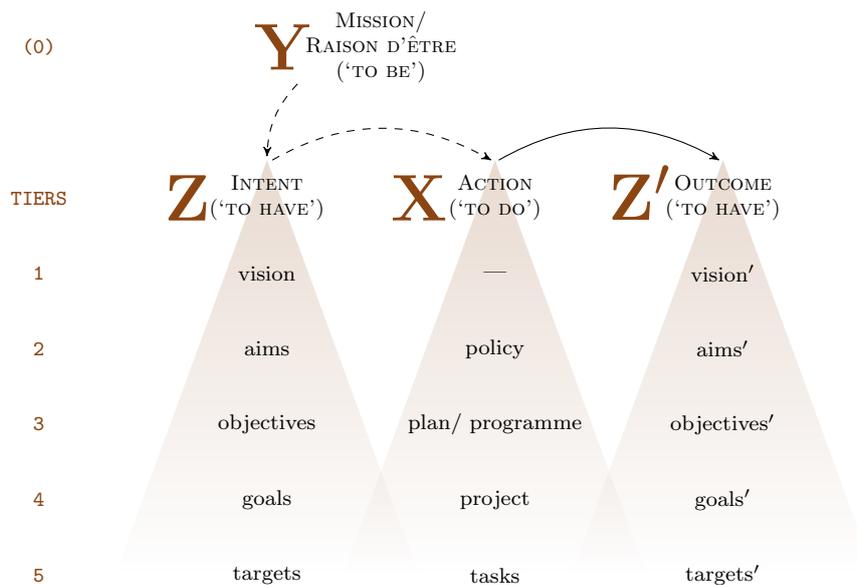


FIGURE 2 An ‘XYZ’ sequence with the conventions of the planning problem (Perdicoulis, 2010)

3 Assessment view

Often associated with *being*, *having*, and *doing* are various assessments about the *efficiency* of the planning operation, three of which are displayed in Figure 3.

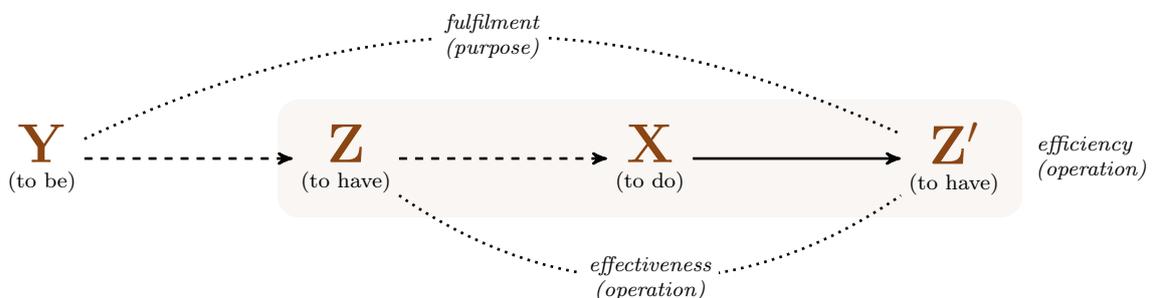


FIGURE 3 Three common assessments (in italics) associated with the verbs of essence, selected from a wider set of options (Perdicoulis, 2013)

4 Discussion

The nature of *being* may be considered as permanent, such as a *raison d'être*, or transitory such as a mission, a cause¹, or even a concern. In any case, the hierarchical position of *to be* is above the other two verbs, shaping one (Figure 2) or both of them (Figure 1). In the opposite direction, feedback from *to have* and/ or *to do* could influence an original mission or *raison d'être* — with due caution when attempting such a profound change.

To have can be distinguished into ‘realistic’ categories such as intents and outcomes (Figure 2), or classified as ‘potential’, which would serve ways of thinking beyond the ‘XYZ’ paradigm — for instance, speculation. The difference between intents and outcomes is often referred to as a ‘gap’, and gives an account of the effectiveness of an operation (Figure 3).

The fulfilment of *being* such as a mission or a concern is suggested in Figure 3 as being judged with reference to *having* in the sense of outcomes or achievement (Z'). An alternative reference could be *doing*, which could be then used to assess one’s *conduct*. Sometimes or for some people — for instance in social settings, sports, or art — the effort, the intent, or just the way of doing things is more important than the outcome.

Efficiency is the most popular of the three assessments, and often referred to as ‘performance’ in competitive environments — for instance, either (a) against other contenders or (b) against ‘state-of-the art’ references such as *benchmarks*. While performance tends to employ reductive models of assessment, such as indicator sets (Perdicoulis and Glasson, 2011), efficiency is open to aggregate or holistic models considering quality, elegance, and/ or simplicity (Perdicoulis, 2014).

5 Conclusion

Besides ‘auxiliary’, the three verbs *to be*, *to have*, and *to do* are also ‘essential’. In fact, they (a) define the main elements of the planning problem formulation, such as ‘XYZ’, (b) are associated to common keywords in planning and management, such as objectives, projects, and vision, and (c) are involved in common assessments, such as efficiency or performance.

References

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¹ i.e. a principle, aim, or movement worth one’s commitment, dedication, and/ or support (Stevenson, 2010).