

Infinitival Complementation 1: Control

So far we have looked more or less exclusively at finite clauses. We now turn our attention to infinitival clauses.

We will look at the following three cases:

- (1) a. Control : the subject of the infinitival is a null pronoun called PRO:
David tried [PRO to dance].
[PRO to dance with David] is fun.
- b. ECM : the subject of the infinitival is an overt NP:
I believe [Angela to be innocent]. Minjoo wants [him to stay].
- c. Raising: the subject of the infinitival moves to a higher subject position:
Makoto_i appears [t_i to be happy]. Joey_i seems [t_i to be exhausted].

1 PRO and Control

- (2) a. Dave tried [to write a paper about causatives].
- b. Junko decided [to visit UMass in December].
- c. Bernhard plans [to teach a seminar in the Fall].

- The embedding predicate is a two place predicate - someone who tries/decides/plans something and something that is tried/decided/planned.

- The infinitival clause cannot have an overt subject.

- (3) a. *Dave tried [Dave to write a paper about causatives].
- b. *Junko decided [Junko to visit UMass in December].
- c. *Bernhard plans [Bernhard to teach a seminar in the Fall].

1.1 Some motivation for PRO

Given our assumptions about θ -roles, Case, and the EPP, we need to assume that there is a null subject in the infinitival clauses under discussion:

- (4) a. Junko_i decided [PRO_i to visit UMass in December].
- b. Fred_i promised Alex [PRO_i to finish his paper by Monday].
- c. Fred persuaded Alex_i [PRO_i to finish her paper by Monday].

(The co-indexing indicates what NP controls the PRO. If the proposal that this relationship is essentially a semantic one is correct, then these indices do not need to be represented in the syntax.)

Some null NPs:

- (5) a. NP-trace/copies of NPs that we do not pronounce
- b. pro
- c. PRO

• An important theoretical consideration:

- (6) θ -criterion: An argument NP must receive a θ -role, and may receive only one θ -role.

The only one θ -role requirement rules out movement and hence NP-traces/copies of NPs in the infinitival subject in the infinitival subject position (but see Hornstein (1999), and counterargument in Landau (2003)).

Landau (2003) makes a powerful point that the important consideration is really empirical - the cases we say involve PRO are very different from the cases that we will argue involve NP-trace, and hence we want to keep the two distinct. The θ -criterion is one way of achieving this goal.

pro could be a possibility (see Borer (1989)), but pro as generally conceptualized can only appear in positions where it can get case and where overt NPs may also appear.

This leaves us with a new kind of entity - a null pronoun, called PRO, which can satisfy the EPP requirement, receive θ -role, and which does not need case.

As always, once we postulate a null entity we have to make sure that it appears only where we want it to appear. This will be an important aspect of our discussion.

1.2 Different Kinds of Control

The 'subject' of the infinitival clause can only be interpreted as coreferent with the matrix subject. Actually, the facts are a little more general than this.

1.2.1 Subject vs. Object Control

- (7) Ditransitive control predicates:
 - a. subject control: Fred promised Alex to finish his paper by Monday.
 - b. object control: Fred persuaded Alex to finish her paper by Monday.

There are many object control predicates but very few subject control predicates. This has led some researchers to propose a **Minimal Distance Principle**, which forces object control (cf. Rosenbaum (1967)). Subject control is taken to involve a special structure where the Minimal Distance Principle is in fact respected (cf. Larson (1991)).

But the conclusion that the vast majority of researchers seem to have reached is that while the availability of a control relationship is a property of the syntax, the exact identity of the controller (subject vs. object) follows from the semantics of the embedding predicate (cf. Dowty (1985), Culicover and Jackendoff (2001), Jackendoff and Culicover (2003) among others). The intuition expressed by Dowty is that there could not be a verb that had the same meaning as promise, but which was object control (and vice versa).

1.2.2 Obligatory, Arbitrary, and Optional Control

Most of the cases of control seen so far involve obligatory control i.e. the subject of the infinitival clause can only be interpreted as dependent on an argument of the embedding predicate for its interpretation.

(8) Obligatory Control:

a. Infinitival (non-*wh*)-Complements:

- i. Angela tried [to disinvite him].
- ii. Fred promised Alex [to finish his paper by Monday].
- iii. Fred persuaded Alex [to finish her paper by Monday].

b. Infinitival Adjuncts:

- i. Andre read Rushdie's article about Coetzee [to make a presentation in his class].
- ii. Rumi went to Tromsø [to talk to Sylvia].

Not all instances of control are obligatory - in some cases the PRO seems to lack an obvious controller¹ and takes on a generic/arbitrary interpretation - these cases are referred to as PRO_{arb}. Arbitrary control is diagnosed by its ability to bind oneself and the availability of a paraphrase that involves the pronoun one.

(9) Arbitrary Control:

a. - unique argument of embedding predicate:

- i. [PRO_{arb} to walk along Paradise Pond in the Fall] is fun.
- ii. [PRO_{arb} to behave oneself in public] is important.
- iii. It is not allowed [PRO_{arb} to perjure oneself].

b. - part of a *wh*-CP:

- i. Minjoo knows [how PRO_{arb} to behave oneself in public].
- ii. Tim wonders [how PRO_{arb} to protect oneself from creditors].

In some cases, such as when the infinitival clause is embedded in a *wh*-CP, arbitrary control is not the only option:

(10) optional control:

- a. Minjoo_i knows [how PRO_i to behave herself in public].
- b. Tim_i wonders [how PRO_i to protect himself from creditors].

For obvious reasons, these cases are referred to as involving optional control.

Landau (2000)/Landau (2003) makes a further distinction noting that the PRO subject of initial adjuncts can be interpreted as non-arbitrary and yet not controlled by the matrix subject.

(11) Non-Obligatory Control (NOC)

- a. Mary_i was baffled. [Even after PRO_i revealing her innermost feelings], John remained untouched.

¹But see Epstein (1984) and Bhatt and Izvorski (1997) who argue that even in these cases, there is an implicit controller.

- b. Mary_i lost track of John_j, because, [PRO_{i,j} having been angry at each other_{i,j}], he had gone one way and she another.
- c. [Having PRO_i just arrived in town], the main hotel seemed to Bill_i to be the best place to stay.

He argues that the *wh*-infinitival cases of arbitrary control are really special cases of partial control and should not be mixed with cases of NOC like the above.

1.2.3 Partial vs. Exhaustive Control

There is also a class of cases where the matrix predicate provides only part of the reference of the subject of the infinitival clause (see Landau (2000) for details).

- (12) Partial Control:
We thought that
- a. He_i wanted [PRO_{i+} to meet in the lobby/do the dishes together].
 - b. The chair_i preferred [PRO_{i+} to gather at 6].
 - c. Bill_i regretted [PRO_{i+} meeting without a concrete agenda].
 - d. Mary_i wondered [whether PRO_{i+} to apply together

Other predicates do not allow partial control.

- (13) a. *Bev_i began [PRO_{i+} to do the dishes together].
b. *The chair_i managed [PRO_{i+} to gather at 6].

1.2.4 Implicit Control

The controller of PRO can be an implicit argument - i.e. an argument that does not seem to be syntactically projected. Languages differ in the extent to which they allow for implicit arguments to control a PRO.

- (14) Unaccusative vs. Passives
- a. No implicit argument, No Control:
* The ship_i sank [PRO_i to collect the insurance].
 - b. Implicit agent, Control:
The ship_i was sunk [PRO_i to collect the insurance].
- (15) Implicit accusatives vs. Implicit datives:
- a. Implicit Accusatives:
This leads *(one_i) [PRO_i to draw the following conclusion].
 - b. Implicit Datives:
John said/shouted (to the visitors_i) [PRO_i to return later].
- (Unlike English, both are good in Italian. See Rizzi (1986).)

1.3 Some Properties of Control Constructions

(Setting aside cases of NOC. For that see Landau (2001))

- The controller can never be an expletive.

- (16) a. *There_i tried [PRO_i to annoy David].
b. *It_i hopes [PRO_i to win]. (with expletive *it*)

This is a definitional property of control.

- The PRO is always a subject.

- (17) a. He_i tried [PRO_i to annoy David].
b. *He_i tried [David to annoy PRO_i].
c. He_i tried [PRO_i to be annoyed at David].

- The controller of PRO needs to be an argument of the predicate to which the infinitival clause is attached.

- (18) a. He_i thinks [that I_j tried [PRO_{*i/j} to annoy David]].
b. He_i thinks [that I_j persuaded Mildred_k [PRO_{*i/*j/k} to leave]].
- (19) c-command (follows from argument requirement and the fact that the clausal complement is the innermost argument)
- a. [His_i parents]_j tried [PRO_{*i/j} to annoy David].
b. I_i persuaded [Mildred_j's mother]_k [PRO_{*i/*j/k} to leave].

- PRO cannot be a real expletive.

- (20) a. [For Mary to dance] would be fun.
b. [PRO to dance] is fun.
c. [For there to be a party tonight] would be fun.
d. *[PRO_{expl} to be a party tonight] would be fun.
e. [For it to seem that Mary is a non-smoker], she will have to get new rugs.
f. *[PRO_{expl} to seem that Mary is a non-smoker], she will have to get new rugs.

- (21) (from Lasnik (1992):244)
- a. [*(There) having been a robbery], there was an investigation.
b. There was a crime without [*(there) being a victim].
c. [PRO_i having witnessed the robbery], John_i aided the investigators.
d. Harry_i was a witness without [PRO_i being a victim].

But PRO can function as weather/pseudo-ambient *it*:

- (22) a. It can hail [without it snowing].
b. It can hail [without PRO_{it} snowing].

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