

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS OF CONTROL

Imagine you are a child faced with the daunting task of acquiring the grammar of control in your language. You toddle around buoyantly (you should be past 3 by now), occasionally bumping into acoustic signals that miraculously map to “linguistic input”. Some of them sound like this:

- (1) a. Robin, do you want ___ to play with Kittie together?
- b. Come on, let me show you how ___ to feed her.
- c. No Robin, Kittie doesn’t like ___ to be smacked.
- d. Robin, look what you’ve done! Bad boy! Time ___ to go to bed.

From your shelter under the kitchen table, you may draw the following conclusions:
i) Mommy is very mad now; ii) Kittens make rotten toys; iii) My name must be Robin.

Apart from the lesson in parental control, you also ought to learn something about grammatical control. In each of the sentences above, an element is missing (from the underlined position) that is nonetheless “filled-in” by your target grammar. This is what linguists term the “understood subject” of the infinitive. In order to be able to understand such sentences and produce similar ones yourself, you have to figure out the reference of the understood subject in every case. Thus, unless you are after some big trouble with Mommy, you had better conclude that the understood subject is Robin and Mommy in (1a), Robin in (1b), Kittie in (1c) and everyone (especially Robin!) in (1d).

Those referential inferences are neither arbitrary nor fully deterministic; by and large, they are determined by your grammar, which also specifies where and how much room for indeterminacy exists. *Control* is the relation between some antecedent and the understood subject, or, to use current terminology, between the controller and PRO. Mastering the properties of this relation is the task of acquiring the grammar of control.

What does the child need to know about the control relation? Minimally, it seems that the following questions must be answered:

- (2) a. What elements/positions can control?
- b. What elements/positions can be controlled?
- c. What is the typology of control? (how many different types are there?)
- d. Can the typology be deduced from principles of UG?
- e. How is the controlled position (PRO) interpreted?
- f. How is a controller picked up in a given structure?

All these issues must be resolved in order for the child to acquire full competence in the grammar of control. Quite literally, these are also the fundamental challenges the linguist faces in the study of control. Let us consider how this book addresses those challenges.

Question (2a) leads to an investigation of the syntactic underpinnings of control. In a substantial class of cases, the controller must stand in a certain structural relation to PRO (or the containing infinitive). Chapter 3 of this book analyses this relation and shows how it differentiates among various types of control. The issue of implicit arguments qua controllers also falls under this question; it is discussed in chapter 5.

Question (2b) concerns the distribution of PRO, and the answer to it is familiar - most probably, PRO occurs only in the subject position of non-finite clauses. This study has virtually nothing to add to this observation. The history of this problem, from the PRO-theorem (Chomsky 1981) until the null case analysis (Chomsky & Lasnik 1993), has never succeeded in deriving this fact without recourse to special stipulations; perhaps the distribution of PRO is an irreducible fact of UG.

Question (2c) is a major research question and has been at the center of lively debates within various grammatical frameworks. It also forms the methodological backbone of this book. One of my central claims is that the traditional typologies of control must be rethought and revised. Very broadly, the proposal is twofold: i) The category of Obligatory Control (OC) is not homogenous but rather consists of two subtypes - Exhaustive and Partial Control (EC and PC); ii) The line between OC and Non-Obligatory Control (NOC) is not located where previous accounts hold, and the key to the right line is the proper analysis of the Super-Equi construction. Chapters 2 and 3 of this book explore the typology of control in detail, and attempt to deduce it from general properties of syntactic relations (based on *Agree*), the projection of Tense and phi-features, the structure of VP-shells and interface conditions, approaching the goal set in (2d).

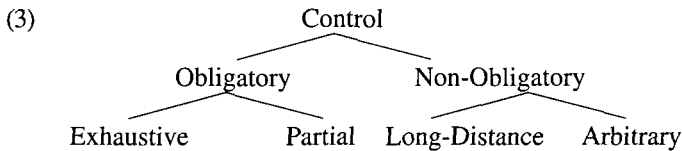
This study provides a partial answer to (2e), in various domains. As discussed in chapter 2, PRO in OC may be interpreted as either identical to or inclusive of the controller, an option related to the interaction of semantic number with control. In chapter 5 we argue that in both cases, OC is *not* interpreted via a predication mechanism, so that PRO does not function as a lambda-variable; and chapter 3 shows that PRO in NOC is interpreted as a logophor.

Finally, controller choice, the subject matter of question (2f), lies at the crossroads of syntax, semantics and pragmatics. As regards OC, syntax delineates the search domain but does not force a particular choice within that domain. Chapter 5 discusses the various semantic and pragmatic considerations affecting the choice (and/or shifting) of the controller, a complex topic with as yet many unsolved problems.

Let us turn now to brief description of the major proposals of this study.

2. A TYPOLOGY OF CONTROL

The general typology I will advance is the following:



The nodes in this diagram are labeled according to standard practice, whereby the referential properties of PRO define the relevant type of control. The terminology itself does not carry any theoretical commitment; however, the partition it represents incorporates a substantial empirical hypothesis. That is, we demonstrate that the empirical data cluster neatly under the nodes in this typology, however one chooses to label them.

As a point of departure, I will assume the following definitions:

- (4)
- a. *Obligatory Control* (OC): The controller and the infinitive must be clausemates.
 - b. *Exhaustive Control* (EC): PRO must be identical to the controller.
 - c. *Partial Control* (PC): PRO must include the controller.
 - d. *Split Control*: Two matrix arguments jointly control (a plural) PRO.
 - e. *Non-Obligatory Control* (NOC): The infinitive need not have a clausemate controller.
 - f. *LD-control*: The controller and the infinitive are not clausemates.
 - g. *Arbitrary Control*: PRO has no argumental controller.
 - h. *Implicit Control*: The controller is not syntactically expressed.

Notice that the above terms apply to *types* of constructions, not to *tokens*, and there are some overlaps. In PC PRO must include the controller, but need not properly include it; thus some tokens of PC show identity between PRO and the controller, just like all tokens of EC do. Similarly, some tokens of NOC show local control, just like all tokens of OC do; and finally, in some tokens of OC or NOC the controller may be implicit.

The next question to ask is what constructions actually fall under each type; that is, how does the typology in (3) cut the pie of control constructions. Here real empirical issues arise; the boundary between OC and NOC, for example, is a topic of much controversy, and classificatory choices often depend on which grammatical properties are taken to be criterial and which peripheral. We will first take a look at this question in the domain of OC, and then proceed to NOC constructions.

3. EC and PC (CHAPTER 2)

It is a common observation that not all complement infinitivals are alike as far as control is concerned. The classical view, in fact, holds that cases like (5a) are fundamentally different from cases like (5b,c):

- (5) a. John tried (*for Mary) to win the game.
- b. John wanted (for Mary) to win the game.
- c. John wondered how to win the game.

According to the classical view, (5a) is an instance of OC whereas (5b,c) are instances of NOC (Williams 1980, Chomsky 1981, Bresnan 1982, Manzini 1983, Bouchard 1984, Koster 1984, Martin 1996, Manzini & Roussou 1998, Wurmbrand 1998b, Hornstein 1999).¹ The basis for this distinction is the possibility of a *for*-complement in (5b) and the apparent arbitrary control in (5c), both of which are impossible in (5a).

There are good reasons to reject the classical view. Both (5b,c) display all the core properties of OC - barring LD-control, strict reading of PRO under ellipsis and *de re* interpretations (see discussion in chapter 2, section 3.2). As for the *for*-complement criterion, Manzini (1983) already observed that it does not reliably correlate with any other NOC property; selection for *for*-complement is governed by subtle lexical factors, not fully systematic, related to *emotivity* (see Kiparsky & Kiparsky 1970).

The notion that interrogative infinitival complements, as in (5c), license arbitrary control, also does not survive closer scrutiny. Notice that truly arbitrary PRO need not be linked to any grammatical antecedent:

- (6) a. John_i thought that it was wrong [PRO_{arb} to introduce him_i to the dean].
- b. Sue_i said that [PRO_{arb} to buy her_i nothing in Rome] would be unacceptable.

¹ Not all of these authors treat (5b) and (5c) on a par, but they all classify at least one of them under NOC.

In contrast, PRO in a complement interrogative clause must always include a matrix controller; hence, the examples in (7) violate Condition B:²

- (7) a. * John_i wondered [who PRO_{i+} to introduce him_i to].
 b. * Sue_i asked [what PRO_{i+} to buy her_i in Rome].

Our first conclusion, then, is that both (5b,c) belong to the OC category. More generally: *All* complement infinitives fall under OC. Why that must be so is taken up in chapter 3.

Nevertheless, there is something to the classical intuition that control in (5b,c) is somewhat more flexible than in (5a). This intuition is reconstructed in the present study through the distinction between EC and PC. Interrogative and *want*-type complements fall under PC, hence do not impose strict identity between the controller and PRO.

3.1. Properties of PC

Chapter 2 studies the EC/PC distinction across the whole range of infinitival complements, and reaches some non-trivial generalizations, possibly universal, about the distribution of each type. Before we state those generalizations, consider a few representative cases:

(8) *Exhaustive Control*

- a. The chair_i managed [PRO_i to gather the committee at 6].
 b. * The chair_i managed [PRO_{i+} to gather at 6].
 c. Mary knew that John_i began [PRO_i to work (*together) on the project].

(9) *Partial Control*

- a. The chair_i preferred [PRO_{i+} to gather at 6].
 b. * The chair_i preferred [PRO_{i+} to gather without him_i].
 c. Mary_i thought that John₂ didn't know [where PRO_{i+2} to go together].

Manage and *begin* are EC verbs, while *prefer* and *know* are PC verbs. Consider the minimal pair in (8a-b): The transitive *gather* is a distributive verb compatible with a singular subject, whereas the intransitive *gather* is a collective verb requiring a plural subject. Since *manage* is an EC verb, and the controller of PRO is singular, (8b) is ruled out. By contrast, the PC verb *prefer* can appear in exactly the same

² I use the notation [DP₁... [PRO_{i+} ...]] to indicate partial control.

Elements of Control

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