

SYNTACTIC VS. SEMANTIC CONTROL

Synopsis This paper argues that obligatory control (OC) and non-obligatory control (NOC) are two fundamentally different mechanisms of grammar: OC involves *semantic* control, NOC involves *syntactic* control. Our basic claim is that only NOC infinitives project a syntactic (PRO/*pro*) subject, whereas A-movement, binding, and case considerations strongly suggest that OC infinitives do not involve a syntactic (PRO/*pro*) subject.

Analysis We propose that the distinction between OC and NOC is determined semantically: OC verbs specify a fixed reference for the subject of the infinitival complement, irrespective of the context or syntactic configuration, whereas NOC infinitives allow variable subjects in appropriate contexts. Following Chierchia (1984), we argue that in OC infinitives, the interpretation of the understood subject is determined as part of the meaning of the infinitive-taking verb and that a syntactic (PRO/*pro*) subject does not have to be projected. NOC infinitives, on the other hand, involve a syntactic PRO/*pro* argument which is either logophorically licensed (such as in arbitrary or long-distance control) or syntactically (partially) identified via AGREE with an argument of the higher predicate such as in split or partial control (cf. Borer 1989, Landau 1999).

Arguments First, we show that OC infinitives correlate with restructuring infinitives (RIs)—i.e., mono-clausal structures which are transparent for movement, binding, and scope. One of the crucial properties of RIs is that they do not exhibit blocking effects for A-movement of the embedded object out of the infinitive (cf. the "Long" Passive in (1)a). Following Wurmbrand (1998), we argue that this follows straightforwardly if RIs (in contrast to non-restructuring infinitives [NRIs] such as the one in (1)b) lack a syntactic subject and structural case.

Second, we argue that the binding properties in infinitives provide evidence against a syntactic subject in RIs but for a syntactic subject in NRIs. The main observation is that anaphors are licensed in NRIs independently of the argument structure of the higher predicate, whereas anaphors in RIs are only licit if they can be bound by an argument of the higher predicate. As is illustrated in (2)a, anaphors are possible in NRIs even when the matrix predicate is passivized. This suggests that the anaphors in (2) are licensed by a PRO subject in the infinitive. RIs, on the other hand, allow anaphors only when they can be bound by the matrix subject. If the matrix subject is suppressed as in passive (cf. (2)b) anaphors become illicit. The impossibility of anaphors in the absence of a matrix binder thus argues strongly against a PRO subject in RIs.

The final argument for a syntactic subject in NOC infinitives and against a syntactic subject in OCs is an asymmetry found with respect to the interpretation of *it* or *that*-anaphors replacing infinitives (cf. Chierchia 1984). *It*-anaphors that are complements to NOC verbs allow a strict or a sloppy interpretation as is illustrated in (3). However, *it*-anaphors that are complements to OC verbs can only receive a sloppy interpretation (cf. (4)). Under the assumption that the obligatory control relation is built into the semantics of an infinitive-selecting verb, it follows that the reference of the understood subject of an OC infinitive which replaces the *it*-anaphor at the level of interpretation is always determined locally by the OC verb (hence resulting in the sloppy interpretation). NOC, on the other hand, involves a syntactic PRO subject which can be licensed locally (resulting in the sloppy interpretation) or logophorically (resulting in the strict interpretation).

Examples:

- (1) a. weil [der Lastwagen und der Traktor] zu reparieren versucht wurden/*wurde
 since [the truck and the tractor]-NOM to repair tried were/*was
 'since somebody tried to repair the truck and the tractor'
- b. *weil [der Lastwagen und der Traktor] [PRO zu reparieren] ~~gibt~~
 wurden/wurde
 since [the truck and the tractor] ~~PRO to repair~~ planned were/was

‘since somebody planned to repair the truck and the tractor’

- (2) a. Es wurde beschlossen [PRO_i sich_i den Fisch mit Streifen vorzustellen]
It wasdecided[PROSELFthe fish with stripesto-imagine]
‘People decided to imagine what the fish would look like with stripes’
Es wurde beschlossen [PRO_i sich_i einen Turm zu bauen]
It wasdecided[PROSELFa towerto build]
‘People decided to build themselves a tower’
- b. *weil {sich} der Fisch {sich} vorzustellen versucht wurde
since {SELF}the fish-NOM{SELF}to-imaginetriedwas
‘since somebody tried to recall the image of the fish’
weil {*sich} ein Turm {*sich} zu bauen versucht wurde
since {*SELF}a tower-NOM{*SELF}to-buildtriedwas
‘since somebody tried to build himself a tower’
- (3) a. Hans kündigte an [PRO zu heiraten] [nachdem seine Eltern es beschlossen hatten]
John announced [to get-married] [after his parents it decided had]
‘John announced that he would get married after his parents had decided to get married’
or ‘John announced that he would get married after his parents had decided that John would get married’
- b. Hans wagte [zu heiraten] [nachdem seine Eltern es beschlossen hatten]
John dared [to get-married] [after his parents it decided had]
‘John dared to get married after his parents had decided to get married’
or ‘John dared to get married after his parents had decided that John would get married’
- (4) a. Hans versuchte [zu heiraten] [nachdem Peter es gewagt hatte]
John tried [to get-married] [after Peter it dared had]
‘John tried to get married after Peter had dared to get married’
- b. Hans beschloß [PRO zu heiraten] [nachdem Peter es versucht hatte]
John decided [PRO to get-married] [after Peter it tried had]
‘John decided to get married after Peter had tried to get married’