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This book deals with the phenomenon of control, which represents a core topic of investigation both in the early generative theories and in modern minimalist approaches. The major interest in this topic is related to the syntactic status of the unpronounced subject of control infinitives, inflected infinitives, subjunctives, and indicatives.

Chronologically speaking, in the framework of government and binding, PRO and its distribution are analyzed on the basis of the binding theory. Accordingly, since PRO is simultaneously an anaphor and a pronoun, further stipulations are needed in order to avoid violations of the binding conditions. One necessary requirement for PRO is that it does not have binding domains and, hence, it should not be governed and Case-marked. This is known in the literature as the PRO theorem, introduced by Chomsky (1981).

A second stage in the investigation of control constructions began with the rise of the minimalist program (see Chomsky 1995 and subsequent work). Chomsky and Lasnik (1993) propose that PRO is the only NP that can bear null Case due to its covert nature. Chomsky and Lasnik (1993) and Chomsky (2001) also argue that null Case is only assigned by a nonfinite T. Landau (2003 and subsequent work) proposes an Agree-based approach to PRO and rejects a null Case approach. The advantage of his approach is that he can account for the crucial contrast between raising and control constructions. This difference is observable in languages with case concord, like Icelandic. When the embedded predicate assigns quirky case to its subject in Icelandic, this case shows up on the matrix subject in raising but not in control constructions. The
matrix controller bears nominative, while PRO bears quirky case, as shown by agreeing elements like floating quantifiers or depictives.

According to Landau, this can be explained only if PRO is case-marked. Another clear benefit of this theory is that it provides a unified Agree-based analysis of both partial and exhaustive control. PRO can be either anaphoric or arbitrary. Landau’s approach, however, still cannot account for a number of empirical data, such as the availability of finite control in Brazilian Portuguese where PRO occurs only with a T specified for tense and agreement (Ferreira 2004, Rodrigues 2004). Finite control can be easily explained by the MOVEMENT THEORY OF CONTROL proposed by Hornstein (1999 and subsequent work), who proposes a novel analysis of control that completely eliminates PRO. From this perspective, control, reflexivization, and raising are the result of A-movement. Crucially, control and raising differ only in theta-theoretic terms: movement to theta positions in control and to nontheta positions in raising.

In this book Reed aims at rehabilitating the standard theory of PRO by providing additional evidence that the modular theory of PRO is superior to other syntactic theories of control that eliminate PRO, including the movement theory of control and the lexicalist approach to control by Montague (1974), Chierchia (1985), Dowty (1985), and Jackendoff (1990), among others. In the first two chapters of the book, R provides a complex overview of the past and current analyses of control—a real state-of-the-art review. Chs. 4–6 focus on the well-known arguments for the PRO hypothesis such as the mapping of argument structure onto syntax, binding and agreement facts, and case assignment in rich case languages such as Icelandic or Russian. As R herself admits, these arguments have a nonsyntactic nature, and such facts can thus be accommodated by alternative semantic and morphological accounts of control. Therefore, her purpose in the book is to provide new syntactic evidence for the PRO hypothesis, namely, to show first that a control clause has a thematic subject (contrary to Montague syntax, which assumes that embedded sentences of control verbs involve ‘subjectless’ or ‘bare’ VPs), and second that the subject remains clause-internal at spell-out without undergoing overt movement into the matrix clause (contrary to the movement theory of control). In Ch. 5 she argues that only PRO can account for the placement of wh-elements in indirect questions and for floating quantifiers, the obligatory use of expletives in control complement clauses, and the clitic placement in control constructions across the Romance languages. These represent convincing arguments that a bare VP approach to control as proposed by Montague syntax cannot explain the contrast in Q-Float between control sentences and other implicit argument constructions, for example, *These points need all emphasizing. In the same vein, the bare VP approach cannot explain the lack of clitic climbing in French, for example, *Je le veux faire, in contrast to Spanish Yo lo quiero hacer ‘I want to do it’ (my own example).

One of R’s main arguments against the movement theory of control is its inability to deal with nonobligatory control and arbitrary control. Since the movement theory of control relies on the existence of pro in English (a non-pro-drop language), it has to answer the question of why pro in this language is licensed only in the subject position of untensed clauses. And unlike German or French, English does not allow expletive pro either.

Relying on the empirical support presented in Chs. 4 and 5, R puts forth her analysis of control in Ch. 6. According to her, the standard theory of control as proposed by Chomsky and Lasnik would gain empirical accuracy if it assumes that (i) PRO should not enter an agreement relationship with the I/T of control clauses in order to be valued for null Case and to check an EPP/D feature of I/T, and that (ii) control verbs do not c-select uniquely for ForceP CP complements. In line with the author, I also assume that this last modification is necessary in order to be able to account for the optional clitic climbing in Spanish Lo quiero ver vs. Quiero verlo ‘I want to see him’ and for the optional scrambling in the case of the German control verb versuchen ‘try’ (see Wurmbrand 2003).

R assumes that a revisited standard theory of control would be superior to other theories of control. First, it would have the advantage of explaining the placement of wh-elements in indirect questions since control verbs must not c-select ForceP complements only: Larry told them which outfit to buy for themselves. Second, it would offer a clear contrast between Q-Float in
control sentences—in I urged my students to all take that course and *These points need all emphasizing—by assuming that control verbs can c-select different types of complements and PRO does not need to move until Spec of the I/T. Last but not least, it would account for the ungrammaticality of expletives in control complement clauses of the type *It is desirable to become known that he is dishonest. According to R, this example is illicit not only because PRO cannot receive its theta-role from a nonthematic verb but also because control adjectives like desirable must select for a ForceP headed by a covert or an overt complementizer for associated with non-null Case. In addition, it explains the dichotomous realization of expletives with French verbs falloir ‘to be necessary’ and devoir ‘must’ by assuming that they have different selectional restrictions: the former selects a nondefective vP/PrP that can value PRO for null Case, while the latter selects a defective vP/PrP with no Case value for PRO (262). R shows (263), however, that the distribution of NPs in French gerunds still cannot be explained by such a revisited standard analysis of control, as shown in 1.

(1) Les villageois/PRO/*Ils/*Eux étant pauvres, ils n’avaient pas les moyens d’engager un expert.

‘The villagers/PRO/*They/*Them being poor, they didn’t have the financial resources needed to hire an expert.’

On the basis of the unacceptability of pronouns in gerundive clauses, the author reaches a radical conclusion regarding the Case and phi-features of PRO, namely, that in English- and French-type languages, PRO has no Case or phi-feature because the noninflected (also gerundive) I/T is phi-incomplete and cannot value for Case. The derivation converges with nonpronominal nouns since they are also Caseless, but it crashes with pronouns due to their full Case and phi-features. If this is true, then the unmarked T/T is phi-incomplete and cannot value Case, and that is why only PRO can be licensed in its specifier position. This seems an appealing explanation for the puzzling example in 1, but the question is now whether the gerundive I/T is different from other noninflected I/T in French and English such as the infinitive control, since, for instance, the former accepts both nonpronominal nouns and PRO in its Spec while the latter accepts only PRO or floating quantifiers.

(2) The committee wanted/decided to *some members/PRO/all meet today.

In addition, Greek and some Romance languages like Romanian and Spanish pose a substantial problem for the proposed analysis. R discusses some Balkan languages that allow control with inflected I/Ts in the embedded domain. The embedded subjunctives of control verbs in the languages under discussion are ‘indirectly anchored to speech time’ (370), so, according to the author, they are phi-incomplete and should be able to license only PRO but not lexical NPs. Contrary to her hypothesis, these languages allow the controller to be realized in the embedded domain as well (see Alexiadou et al. 2010).

(3) Greek

a. PROi emathe (o Janis) na pezi (o Janis) kithara (o Janis)
   PRO learned.3sg John.NOM subj play.3sg John.NOM guitar John.NOM
b. (o Janis) emathe PROi na pezi (o Janis) kithara (o Janis)
   John.NOM learned.3sg PRO subj play.3sg John.NOM guitar John.NOM
c. (o Janis) emathe (o Janis) na pezi PROi kithara (o Janis)
   John.NOM learned.3sg John.NOM subj play.3sg PRO guitar John.NOM

‘John learned to play the guitar.’

A PRO theory of control as proposed by R would have to explain why examples like 3 do not represent cases of principle C violations in 3a, how the controller (o Janis ‘John’) receives Case from a nonfinite verb in 3a, and how PRO receives Case in the matrix clause in 3b. In other words, it would have to explain how PRO realized in the matrix clause can bind and control an embedded DP in the embedded domain without violating binding principle C, according to which referential expressions must always be free. Moreover, the complementary distribution between
PRO and the overtly realized copy clearly shows that, at least for languages like Greek and Romanian, PRO must have Case and this cannot be null—otherwise one cannot explain how the embedded subject can receive nominative case from the embedded T. The phenomenon of backward control, for example, where the controller is realized in the place of PRO in the embedded domain, has been investigated in several languages such as Japanese (Kuroda 1978), Tsez (Polinsky & Potsdam 2002), Greek, Romanian, and Spanish (Alexiadou et al. 2010 and subsequent work), Brazilian Portuguese (Farrell 1995), and Korean (Monahan 2003). These empirical data present the main argument in favor of the movement theory of control (Hornstein 1999). The analysis proposed in this book would have gained more insight if the phenomenon of backward control as well as the literature on this topic had been considered. Nevertheless, the book represents a great contribution to the theory of control by providing a thorough analysis of complementation in control at the syntax-semantics interface. Unlike other theories of control, R’s approach offers a semantic solution to the distinction between noncontrol/non-ECM/non-small clause verbs and simple control verbs. In Ch. 8 she convincingly shows that noncontrol verbs semantically select for different types of complements such as those denoting a possible fact, an eventuality, or a proposition. Their indeterminacy with respect to truth entails an independent anchoring of their tense to speech time that is syntactically ‘translated’ into complete phi-features, Case, and tense. In other words, R assumes that fully inflected I/Ts have a direct anchoring to speech time and this makes them to be intrinsically phi-complete and to fail PRO licensing.

All in all, this book enriches the ongoing debate about the validity of PRO in the syntax in contrast to other syntactic and nonsyntactic approaches to control. The great merits of this book are the vast review of literature on control that the author provides in the first chapters, and her attempt to provide an analysis of control at the syntax-semantics interface where lexical semantic information such as truth (in)determinacy and temporal (in)dependence are mapping with syntactic effects such as phi-feature and Case valuation.

REFERENCES

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