Competition for Control

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This decade has seen competition between two syntactocentric minimalist theories of control: the Movement Theory of Control, MTC (Hornstein 2000, 2003, Boeckx and Hornstein 2003, 2004, 2007) and the Agree Theory of Control (Landau 2000, 2004, 2006, 2007, Bobaljik and Landau 2007). The aim of this presentation is to show that despite claims made by their most fervent adherents, both theories appear to face empirical and theoretical problems that make it difficult to unconditionally accept/reject either of them. I shall focus on four problem areas in control: A-movement and control into CPs, case transmission and case independence in Polish control, Partial Control and split control. They are typically taken to be problematic for the MTC but in fact turn out either to be pseudo-problems or to resist any elegant explanation for ATC either.

Control can reach into infinitives introduced by lexical CP-material:

(1) a. Piotr pyta jak zrobić ser samemu?
Piotr asks how to-make cheese alone/himself$_{DAT}$
'Piotr asks how to make cheese by himself?'

b. Maria marzyła żeby być piękna/piękną.
Maria dreamed so-that to-be beautiful$_{NOM/INST}$
'Maria dreamed to be beautiful.'

Examples in (1) constitute a challenge to the MTC approach, as A-movement is not expected to cross CP. Landau (2004) argues that A-movement across (weak) Wh-islands is problematic:

(2) a. *There were inquired how to be Malay visitors welcomed.
b. There were likely to be Malay visitors welcomed

The Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC) seems to make the right cut; it blocks a non-local movement of the expletive from the embedded [spec, T] to matrix [spec, T], or Agree from the matrix T, across the CP phase in (2a) but not in (2b), where no CP-introduces the embedded clause.

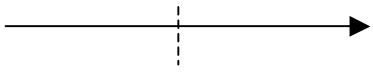
On second thoughts though, examples in (2) show A-movement to a position higher than [spec,v], the typical position of a controller. It appears that a minor alternation in the definition of the (verbal) phase and adherence to the PIC render the CP transparent to the A-movement of the controller:

(3) The complement domain of C (down to v) is accessible to the computation in Narrow Syntax up to the merger of all arguments of the c-commanding VB (forming the next strong phase).

Consider the following example of control across CP:

(4) a. Maria marzy żeby popływać w jeziorze.
Maria dreams so-that to-swim in lake
'Maria dreams of swimming in the lake.'

b. [$_{vP}$ v [$_{VP}$ marzy [$_{CP}$ żeby [$_{TP}$ Maria$_1$ [vP {Maria$_1$} pływać w jeziorze]]]]].



dreams so-that Maria to-swim in lake

Until the merger of the external argument of vP has taken place the CP embedded under VB (the v-V complex) is not subject to PIC and as such is transparent to extraction. By the time T has been merged in, the derivational window has moved forward and CP becomes a (strong) phase, as the verbal projection is now complete and constitutes a dominating (strong) phase, hence (2a) is impossible.

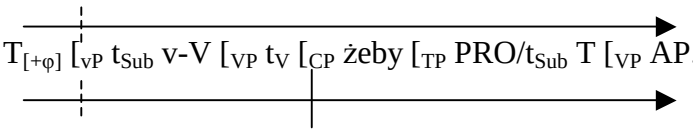
Another apparent problem for MTC, especially in view of Landau (2007) and Bobaljik and Landau (2007), is the case-agreement pattern between the controller and the predicative adjective and *sam/sama* (secondary predicate) in Polish. It seems that PRO occupies a case position within the infinitive and the case is manifested on the adjective or secondary predicate. Yet, upon closer scrutiny it turns out that in Polish there is a close match between case transmission and case independence on the predicative adjective and the secondary predicate. Obligatory Nominative shows up on the adjective *sam/sama* in plain Subject Control; obligatory Instrumental on the adjective and Dative on *sam/sama* show in Object Control, Subject Control into Wh-infinitives and Non-obligatory Control. Either Nominative or Instrumental/Dative can appear in Subject Control into infinitive complements with lexical C, Subject Control across an object and the passive of Object Control. The close match in the distribution of Dative and Instrumental on relevant elements leads to treating them both as default cases and challenges the analysis based on an optional [+DAT] feature in C in Landau (2007). Instead, this distribution pattern is accounted for by two factors: a set of properties of the Comp system (infinitive C can be [+/- phase]) and the [+/-multiple] character of certain probes in Polish (T can be [+multiple], while v not).

As (4) shows, the optionality of the phasehood of the CP has no impact on the movement of the controller at an early stage of the derivation. It only limits the probing potential of matrix T, which can, (5b), or cannot, (5c), value Nominative on the adjective:

(5) a. Maria marzyła żeby być piękna/piękną
Maria$_{NOM}$ dreamed so-that to-be beautiful$_{NOM/INST}$

b. $[_{TP}\ T_{[+\varphi]}\ [_{vP}\ t_{Sub}$ v-V $[_{VP}\ t_{V}\ [_{CP}$ żeby $[_{TP}$ PRO/t_{Sub} T $[_{VP}$ AP...]]]]]]

c. $[_{TP}\ T_{[+\varphi]}\ [_{vP}\ t_{Sub}$ v-V $[_{VP}\ t_{V}\ [_{CP}$ żeby $[_{TP}$ PRO/t_{Sub} T $[_{VP}$ AP...]]]]]]



In (5b) the infinitive is accessed twice; once by v for the raising of the controller, and by T for case and φ-valuation of the adjective. In (5c) the second access is denied by the CP-phase.

Partial Control has long been taken to be a crucial argument in favour of ATC, as PRO and its controller differ in semantic number, a property unexpected if they are connected via a movement chain:

(6) John$_1$ wants [PRO$_{1+}$ to meet at four]

ATC can capture this fact either through T-to-C movement (Landau 2000) or through a series of Agree relations involving embedded C and T, where C is unspecified for the value of a Mereology feature (Landau 2006). Adherents of MTC either push the Partial Control effect to the realm of semantics/pragmatics (Hornstein 2003, Bowers 2005) or devise structural accounts, where PRO is not the exact copy of the controller (Rodrigues 2007). Rodrigues follows Wurmbrand (2007) and her idea that rather than independent Tense, an infinitive including an eventive predicate has its posterior orientation licensed by a projection of a future oriented modal verb (*woll/will*). Rodrigues shows that in certain contexts even typical EC verbs can license PC readings:

(7) I can try to meet tomorrow, but I can't guarantee that I'll be there.

She claims that Partial Control readings emerge when the controller of PRO has the following underlying structure, where *pro* is an associative pronoun:
(8) $[_{DP}$ pro DP]

In the course of the derivation *pro* is left behind by the controller DP in its base position [spec,v]. The Controller DP moves out of this base adjoined structure into [spec,T] of its own clause and further into a new thematic position in the matrix clause:
(9) $[_{TP}$ DP T $[_{wollP}$ woll $[_{vP}$ $[_{DP}$ pro DP] v $[_{VP}$ ...]]]]

Thus PC readings can be made compatible with MTC.

Another problem besetting control is its split variety (a syntactically plural PRO is bound by two different antecedents). Hornstein (2000, 2003) denies split control the status of an OC construction but Landau (2000, 2004) proposes the following example:
(10) John proposed to Mary to meet each other at six.

Split control is supposed to be a problem for MTC, as a single trace/copy [+plural] cannot be licensed by two distinct [+singular] antecedents. Unfortunately, (10) does not receive any comprehensive treatment in ATC either, as it remains unclear how two Probes (T and v) can access one Goal and turn it from singular into plural. Fuji (2006) proposes an MTC compatible solution to the problem of 'split control' in Japanese exhortative constructions. His proposal can be adopted for the discussion of (10) in the following manner:
(11) $[_{vP}$ John v-proposed $[_{PP}$ to $[t_{John}$ + Mary]][$_{TP}$ [John + Mary] to meet each other at six]]

The subject of the infinitive is a conjunction (John + Mary); the checking of the semantic role of *Mary* forces the movement of the entire conjunction and pied-pipes *John*; next, *John* is extracted independently and moved further to its thematic position in [spec.v]. The idiosyncratic character of this derivation reflects the semantic/pragmatic aspect of the split-control construction.

Competition for Control has fuelled fruitful discussion of properties of non-finite complementation. These properties are so intricate that, for now, they seem to elude a single coherent theoretical account combining both descriptive and explanatory potential.

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