

Different routes to partial control: German/English = French + Icelandic

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[part based on joint work with Marcel Pitteroff, Universität Stuttgart]

1. The phenomenon Obligatory control (OC) is typically characterized by referential identity between the infinitival subject and its controller (Landau's 2000 Exhaustive Control (EC); (1a)). Landau (2000) identifies another type of OC, however: partial control (PC; (1b)), which is characterized by an apparent non-identity between controller and PRO, whereby the latter includes, but is not exhaustively determined by the former (indicated by the subscript 'i+').

(1) a. Peter_i tried [PRO_{i+/*i+} to win the game]. (EC)

b. Peter_i hopes [PRO_{i+/*i} to meet again soon]. (PC)

PC is crucial to our understanding of obligatory control in posing a severe challenge for the Movement Theory of Control (see Landau 2003).

2. Main empirical claims. We argue that two different ways to derive a PC reading must be recognized. One of these relies on a genuine mismatch between the features of PRO and its controller (*true PC*). The other, *fake PC*, involves referential identity between controller and PRO (i.e. exhaustive control), where additional event participants are introduced via a covert comitative (see Boeckx, Hornstein & Nunes 2010 for the original formulation of this idea). We show experimentally that French has only *fake PC* whereas German and English make available both mechanisms (see also Pitteroff et al. 2017). Icelandic and Russian appear to have only *true PC* (though this has not been tested experimentally) as do Greek and Romanian (in a very restricted sense). Here, we provide a number of new experimentally tested arguments in favor of the existence of *fake PC*, and respond to the arguments in Landau (2016) against its existence.

3. Sensitivity to embedded predicate In French, the availability of PC is strongly conditioned by the embedded predicate. We tested embedded comitative and non-comitative reciprocal verbs with very similar semantic values, and only the former were judged acceptable (2); *se disputer* 'to argue' undergoes the comitative alternation, *se crier dessus* 'to shout' does not).

(2) Mais cette fois-ci, Pierre ne veut plus se disputer/*se crier dessus
but this time-here Pierre NEG wants more SE=argue/ SE=shout above
'But this time, Pierre does not want to argue with each other.' (item means: 6.16/0.82)

In Icelandic, on the other hand, there is no such sensitivity.

4. Sensitivity to matrix predicate Landau (2000) observed that *true PC* is only available with a certain class of matrix predicates in many languages (attitude predicates in Pearson 2013, 2015 and Landau 2015; e.g. *espérer* 'hope', *préférer* 'prefer', *penser* 'think', *vouloir* 'want'). Our results show, however, that in French, PC is also possible (though slightly marked) with predicates that in other languages permit only exhaustive control (Landau's EC/non-attitude predicates; e.g., *essayer* 'try', *avoir pu* 'manage', *arrêter* 'stop'; (3)).

(3) Mais cette fois-ci, Pierre va arrêter de ?se disputer/*se crier dessus [EC; +/-COM]
but this time-here Pierre goes stop of SE=argue SE=shout above
'But this time, Pierre is going to stop arguing with each other.' (item means: 4.03/0.47)

Combined with (2), cases like (3) make a strong argument in favor of the existence of *fake PC* in French.

In German, Pitteroff et al. 2017 show that PC is sensitive to both the matrix and embedded predicate. PC is possible in the same contexts as in French, i.e., wherever the embedded predicate is comitative but also with non-comitative embedded predicates, as long as the matrix predicate is of the attitude-type. We take this as evidence that German has both *true PC* and *fake PC*. Surprisingly, we replicated this experiment for English and got results parallel to those for German (n=71):

Context: Sue and her boyfriend have been arguing a lot recently.

- (4) a. *Sue decides that, despite their differences, she will try not to drift apart. [EC, -COM] (3.30)
b. ?Sue decides that, despite their differences, she will try to make up. [EC, +COM] (4.55)
c. Sue decides that, despite their differences, she does not want to drift apart. [PC -COM] (5.62)
d. Sue decides that, despite their differences, she wants to make up. [PC, +COM] (5.81)

In German and English then, there are two kinds of PC. We show that in instances of *true PC*, PRO is semantically and/or syntactically plural whereas in *fake PC* it is syntactically and semantically singular.

5. First and second person reflexives: Many of the embedded predicates that license a PC-reading in French are marked by reciprocal SE. Based on the assumption that the ϕ -features of SE are valued by the infinitival subject, the form of SE reflects the feature composition of PRO. In French, a first or second person singular controller in a PC-context requires an agreeing embedded SE, indicating that PRO has the same feature composition as the controller:

- (5) Je veux absolument me/*nous/ *se réconcilier. (item mean : 5.36/2.22/0)
 I want absolutely SE.1SG/ SE.1PL/SE.3.SG/ make.up.INF

In German, a parallel experiment shows that in fake PC contexts, PRO is singular, as in French, whereas, in true PC contexts, PRO is plural:

- (6) a. Ich hoffe, **du** hast jetzt aufgehört, **dich/ euch** zu verabreden.
 I hope **you.2SG** have now stopped **SE.2SG/ SE.2PL** to make.a.date
 ‘I hope you have stopped making dates (with her).’ (item mean: 6.31/1.91)
- b. Er hat **dir** empfohlen, **dich/euch** wenigstens zu begrüßen.
 He has **you.2SG** recommended **SE.2SG/SE.2PL** at.least to greet
 ‘He gave you the recommendation to at least greet (your colleague).’ (item mean: 2.11/4.88)

We show, moreover, that German permits 1st/2nd plural reciprocal markers *only* in true PC contexts.

6. Subject-oriented adjunct-clauses/adverbs. Another diagnostic we used in our investigation concerns the scope of subject-oriented adverbs. The vast majority of the French, English and German participants who accepted examples like (7b) in the context of (7a) picked (from a set of possibilities) the interpretation in (7c). Once the matrix controller was changed into a collective singular noun, speakers picked the reading where a semantically plural entity controls PRO in the adjunct clause.

- (7) a. Context: Peter and his girlfriend often argue with each other. Typically, Peter gets so upset, that the discussion gets totally out of control.
- b. Deshalb versucht Peter dieses Mal, sich zu streiten, ohne allzu wütend zu werden.
 therefore tries Peter this time se to argue without too angry to become
- c. This time, Peter attempts to argue (with his girlfriend) without him getting too angry.

If PRO had to be semantically plural to produce the PC-reading, speakers should disfavor reading (9c) in favor of one where (the plurality of) Peter and his girlfriend controls the adjunct clause. None of our participants interpreted (9b) in this way. Note that we ensured that the adjunct is not interpreted as modifying the matrix event. Again, this result is unexpected under a *true PC* account, and testifies to the existence of *fake PC* in French, German and English.

7. Potential Counterarguments: Landau (2016) provides three counterarguments to the existence of *fake PC* in French, all relying on the observation that the infinitival subject does not behave as if it was semantically singular. We review his arguments and show that they are all problematic. For example, Landau argues that PRO in instances of partial control cannot bind a singular reflexive ((8a), which is unexpected if PRO itself is singular as predicted by a *fake PC* analysis.

- (8) a. Jean a dit à Marie qu’il préférerait ne pas se réconcilier (*lui-même) ce soir.
 John has said to Mary that-he preferred NEG NEG SE reconcile.INF himself this evening
 ‘John said to Mary that he preferred not to reconcile (*himself) tonight.’ (Landau 2016:577, (17b))
- b.*/?? Jean a dit à Marie qu’il préférerait ne pas se réconcilier lui-même avec elle ce soir.
 John has said to Mary that he preferred NEG NEG SE make.up himself with her this ev.
 ‘John has said to Mary that he preferred not to reconcile (*/??himself) with her tonight.’

(8b) shows that, however, that the corresponding sentence including an overt comitative phrase is also bad. The problem seems to be that the presence of the reflexive implies that John has control over the event of making-up, which is not the case. (8a) therefore is not evidence against *fake PC*.

8. Sketch of the analysis. I claim that all languages under discussion have movement-derived control and in languages with only fake PC, this is, in fact, the only kind of obligatory control. This follows if non-finite CPs are phases but we adopt Chomsky’s (2001) PIC2, combined with the idea that progP is the v-related phase head (Harwood 2013). This means that A-movement from spec TP will be possible into the matrix thematic domain but not to the T-domain, accounting for the contrast raised by Landau (2003) (taking passive vP to be a phase, following Legate 2003):

- (9) a. *John_i was hoped/tried [_{CP} t_i to leave].
 b. John_i tried [_{CP} t_i to leave]

By the time matrix T probes, the embedded TP will have been spelled out, but the same does not apply to matrix thematic heads, which are below Prog. In some languages (Icelandic, Russian, European Portuguese), non-finite CPs bear case/phi features, however, and thus function as interveners for movement. A matrix thematic probe can, however, agree with an embedded subject, as long as it occupies spec CP. This is the second route to OC and it is this that gives rise to the possibility of true PC as the only requirement is that the argument externally merged with a given thematic head is non-distinct from the argument it has agreed with. A remaining issue is why covert comitatives are limited to non-finite clauses. We propose that there are, in fact, no covert comitatives, but that predicates undergoing the alternation are lexically specified to permit either a SG or PL subject, and this what gives rise to fake PC.