Parametrizing Subject and Object Control

Jacek Witkoś (wjacek@amu.edu.pl)
Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland

Subject Control across an Object constructions (hence SCaO) in (1) still await a fully satisfactory syntactic account:

(1) a. John promised Mary PRO to behave at school.
b. DP_{Sub} > DO_{Ob} > [$_{TP}$ …PRO…]
c. [$_{TP}$ T [$_{vP}$ John$_1$ v [$_{VP}$ promised Mary$_2$ [$_{CP}$ PRO$_{1,*2}$ to behave at school]]]]

Chomsky's (1995) Minimal Link Condition (MLC) bans any dependency between the embedded subject position and the matrix subject across a c-commanding object. I argue below that languages have two strategies for meeting MLC in (1): (a) encapsulation of the intervener in a silent PP and (b) smuggling the controller across the intervener within a VP-container. In the context of ex. (1) Landau's (2000) **Agree-based** proposal distrusts syntax proper and allows the semantic/pragmatic component to freely choose from two licit syntactic configurations of control, with T and v as active probes. **Movement-based** proposals attempt to solve the MLC violation issue by either making the indirect object position inaccessible to the derivation at a given step (through PP-encapsulation; Hornstein 2001; Hornstein and Polinsky 2010, H&P, or Late Merge; Ussery 2008) or bringing the embedded subject closer to the controller than the object through base generation (Larson 1991, Bowers 2008). H&P show that the silent PP-hypothesis works for English, as the nominal object of *promise* differs from the nominal object of *persuade* in at least three respects: it resists Wh-movement, extraposition and secondary predication. This leads H&P to propose the that the nominal object of *promise* is encapsulated in a silent PP, which they take to be a property of arguments interpreted as Source/Goal:

(2) a. [$_{VP}$ DP_o [$_{V'}$ $V_{persuade}$ [$_{infinitive}$ PRO…]]] affected/patient
b. [$_{VP}$ [$_{PP}$ P_0 DP_o] [$_{V'}$ $V_{promise}$ [$_{infinitive}$ PRO…]]] source/goal

The syntax/semantics mapping postulate in (2) is also applied to verbs of shifting control. The PP encapsulation of the object solves the MLC problem in (1), as now [$_{PP}$ DP_{Ob}] does not c-command PRO and MLC does not apply. **Variation**: This analysis of the *promise*-class verbs encounters problems when applied to Polish, and other languages where the Source/Goal argument in SCaO constructions is consistently expressed as a bare nominal. The distinctive properties in English do not tease apart the *tell*-class and the *promise*-class verbs in Polish, as both types of control constructions allow for Wh-extraction of their surface indirect objects and Heavy NP Shift, among others:

(3) Komu Maria wielokrotnie obiecała/kazała rzucić palenie?
who-DAT Maria-NOM repeatedly promised/told quit-INF smoking
'Eng.: *?Who did Mary promise/tell to quit smoking?'

(4) Maria wielokrotnie obiecała/kazała rzucić palenie czterem różnym osobom.
Maria-NOM repeatedly promised/told quit-INF smoking four-DAT different-DAT people-DAT
'Eng.: *?Mary repeated promised/told to quit smoking (to) four different people.'

So there is little evidence to posit the silent PP in SCaO. Additionally, the verb *prosić* 'ask' whose nominal object is marked for Accusative, shows **SCaO with its object shifting to Genitive under Negation**:

(5) a. Dzieci$_1$ [$_{vP}$ prosiły [$_{VP}$ trenerkę$_2$ [$_{V'}$ t$_V$ [żeby PRO$_1$ poskakać z wieży]]]]
children-NOM asked coach-ACC so-that jump-INF from tower
'The children asked the coach to jump from the tower.'
b. Dzieci$_1$ [$_{vP}$ nie prosiły [$_{VP}$ trenerki$_2$ [$_{V'}$ t$_V$ [żeby PRO$_1$ poskakać z wieży]]]]
children-NOM not asked coach-GEN so-that jump-INF from tower
'The children didn't ask the coach to jump from the tower.'

The Acc-to-Gen shift in (5b) shows that the object is not placed within any PP because Acc prepositional objects do not shift to Gen under negation:

(6) Tomek nie patrzył na Marię/*Marii.
Tomek-NOM not looked at Maria-ACC/*GEN
'Tom did not look at Maria.'

The analysis of (5-6) above implies that the extension of the silent PP-hypothesis to languages that typically show indirect objects as nominals is not straightforward. **Proposal**: Let me follow a different approach based on smuggling (Collins 2005a-b), and assume that the verb as a lexical item is spread across a number of syntactic heads (c.f. Cinque 1999, Ramchand 2007, Starke 2001) and the internal structure of the control verb is more articulate, where X is the head of Aspect Phrase (Asp):

(7) v < Y < Appl < X < V$_{[+EF/EPP]}$ < {*obiecać* 'promise'; Subject Control}

Now consider example (8) with *promise* and a late step in its derivation, after the subject has been raised to [spec,V] (forced by [+EF/EPP] on V) and the infinitive has been raised to [spec,X] as part of an extraposition operation. (8b) shows the key VP smuggling step:

(8) a. Piotr obiecał jej zjeść rybę.
Piotr.NOM promise.past her.DAT eat.inf fish.ACC
'Piotr promised her to eat the fish.'
b. [$_{vP}$ Piotr [$_{v'}$ v [$_{YP}$ [$_{VP}$ ~~Piotr~~ [$_{V'}$ promise.past ~~CP~~]] [$_{Y'}$ Y [$_{ApplP}$ her.DAT Appl [$_{XP}$ [$_{CP}$ ~~Piotr~~ eat.inf fish.ACC] [$_{X'}$ X ~~VP~~]]]]]]

The controller is moved around the indirect object in [spec, Appl] within the 'VP container' and placed in a position from which it is attracted to [spec,v] for another thematic role, in line with MLC. Within this scenario it is tempting to suggest that the sole difference between Subject/Object Control verbs at the lexical level is the [+EF/EPP] property on the V head:

(9) a. v < Y < Appl < X < V < {*kazać* 'tell, order'; Object Control}
b. Piotr kazał jej zjeść rybę.
Piotr.NOM told her.DAT eat.to fish.ACC
'Piotr told her to eat fish.'
c. [$_{vP}$ Piotr v [$_{YP}$ [$_{VP}$ tell.past ~~CP~~] Y [$_{ApplP}$ her.DAT Appl [$_{XP}$ [$_{CP}$ ~~her~~.DAT eat.inf fish.ACC] X ~~VP~~]]]]

Without the [+EF/EPP] feature on V, the subject of the infinitive cannot board the VP smuggling vessel, so MLC forces local OC; thus the difference between Subject/Object Control is reduced to the presence of a single formal feature, the [EF/EPP] property of the V head of the control verb. **Conclusion**: The 'smuggling' derivation fares well when compared to the silent PP hypothesis, Bowers' (2008) proposal and Ussery's (2008) Late Merge: it uses an independently attested mechanism, it does not compromise on Least Tampering, the Extension Principle, and UTAH, nor does it require the mapping postulate in (2). It complements the silent PP-hypothesis for languages with nominal indirect objects and lax word order discipline.

References: Baker, M. 1997. Thematic roles and syntactic structure. In *Elements of grammar: Handbook in generative syntax*. L. Haegeman (ed), Dordrecht: Kluwer: 73-137.; Bowers, J. 2008. On reducing Obligatory Control to movement. *Syntax* 11: 125-143.; Chomsky, N. 1995. *The Minimalist Program*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.; Cinque, G. 1999. *Adverbs and functional heads: a crosslinguistic perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Collins, C. 2005a. A smuggling approach to the passive in English. *Syntax* 8: 81-120.; Collins, C. 2005b. A smuggling approach to raising in English. *Linguistic Inquiry* 36: 289-298.; Hornstein, N. 2001. *Move! A minimalist theory of construal*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell.; Hornstein, N. and M. Polinsky. 2010. Control as movement. In N. Hornstein and M. Polinsky (eds.) *Movement theory of control*. 1-41. John Benjamins Publishing Company: Amsterdam.;
Landau, I. 2000. *Elements of control. Structure and meaning in infinitival constructions*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.; Larson, R. 1991. *Promise* and the Theory of Control. *Linguistic Inquiry* 22: 103-139.; Ramchand, G. 2008. *Verb meaning and the lexicon: a first phase syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Richards, N. 1998. The Principle of Minimal Compliance. *Linguistic Inquiry* 29: 599-629.; Starke, M. 2001.Move dissolves into Merge. Doctoral dissertation. University of Geneva.; Ussery, C. 2008. What it means to Agree: The behavior of case and phi features in Icelandic Control. *Proceedings of the 26th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*: 480-488.