

Control in Danish and English¹

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ABSTRACT

The computation of control relations is a special kind of interpretation and depends, as such, on information from semantic properties of signals constrained by syntax under the influence of context. Among the semantic properties are the representational instructions of verbs that are here captured in terms of a novel classification of constituents, comprising four types: COMPLEMENTS, ARGUMENTS, SATELLITES, and PARASITES. This has consequences for obligatory, or bound, control in three respects. Firstly, controlled structures may be COMPLEMENTS, SATELLITES, or PARASITES. Secondly, COMPLEMENTS are generally preferred over ARGUMENTS as controllers. Thirdly, in Danish, control into a COMPLEMENT is unmarked whereas control into SATELLITES and PARASITES is marked by prepositions, with *til* ('to') as the typical marker of PARASITES, *for* ('in order to') a typical marker of SATELLITES.

1. THE NOTION OF CONTROL

Standard cases of the sort of data that the grammatical theory of control is supposed to describe and explain is given in (1):

- 1 a. Jamie loves **to dance**
- b. **Dancing** with Jamie is a relief for sore feet
- c. Jim allowed Bill **to dance** with Jamie just once
- d. Jim thinks that **dancing** with Jamie is heaven
- e. The party was given just **to dance** with Jamie all night

Common to these is the fact that they contain one or more non-finite verb forms – infinitives in (a, c,e), gerunds in (b,d); and further that it is not explicitly stated who – apart from Jamie herself – does the dancing in each case. Here are a couple of informal characterizations to show how the notion of control has been presented through the past 15 years:

The notion of control is invoked whenever the interpretation of a constituent involves an 'understood (or missing) subject' whose reference is determined by a NP which is not in the subject position of the constituent in question. [Farkas, 1988:27]

The classical province of the theory of control lies within what might be grouped together as the phenomena of *understood reference for an argument position of a head*, where a reference to a thing *x* is said to be *understood* with respect to a given position of a given head if there is no expression in that position referring to *x*, but one takes it that the position is appropriately related to *x*, either through another independent argument or position in the sentence or discourse in question, or as pragmatically supplied. [Higginbotham, 1992:79]

The control problem concerns how to determine the understood subject of infinitival and gerundive VPs that lack an overt local subject. [Jackendoff & Culicover 2003:517]

There is liberal reference to constituents, hidden subjects, subject positions, understood reference, hidden arguments, heads, infinitives and gerunds with understood subjects; and even to the pragmatic determination of some of this. Control, it seems, is the meeting place of matters syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic.

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2. OUTLINE OF APPROACHES

There are two general approaches to dealing with control phenomena, syntactic and semantic. The now classic syntactic approach is that of *Government & Binding* (Chomsky 1981), which codifies various issues dating back to Postal (1970). Somewhat surprisingly its basic assumption is semantic. Its defining characteristics are given in (3):

- 2 a. Semantically, the embedded structure is propositional
 - Therefore it has a subject argument
- b. Since the embedded structure is propositional it must be syntactically clausal (CP)
 - Therefore – by the *Projection Principle* – it has a syntactic subject
- c. Referentially, the syntactic subject may be either anaphoric or pronominal
 - Therefore – by the *PRO-theorem* – it must be ungoverned
- d. Theory therefore demands a lexical, but empty, element, PRO, which is *controlled* either explicitly by a matrix constituent or implicitly by a situational constituent
- e. The controller is identified through co-indexation with PRO

This gives rise to general structures like

- 3 NP₁ V (NP₃) NP₂ [CP PRO_{1/2/3} to INF/GER]

The semantic tradition begins with Montague and is extended by Bach, Partee, and – most thoroughly – by Dowty (1985) and Chierchia (1984; 1989). Equally surprisingly, its basis assumption is syntactic. Its defining characteristics are given in (4):

- 4 a. Syntactically, embedded structures are non-finite VPs
- b. Embedded non-finite VPs are nominalizations, hence arguments
- c. Semantically, VP-arguments are either properties or propositions
- d. Control is a matter of lexical entailment
- e. The controller is identified by theta-role and by ‘functional adjacency’

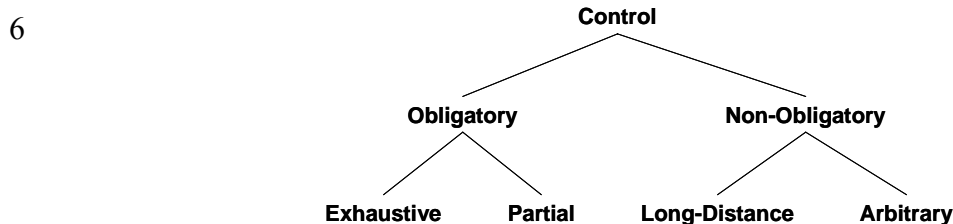
The general structure associated with this approach is

- 5 V ([to INF/GER]_{ARG1}, NP_{ARG2}, NP_{ARG3})

The approach I’ll be taking here is basically syntactic, but with heavy semantic bias. It will *not*, however, be cast in standard generative terms, rather reorient itself in relation to classical structuralist constituency grammar.

3. TYPES OF CONTROL

The major distinction throughout has been between obligatory control on the one hand and various degrees and forms of non-obligatory control on the other (Bresnan 1982). Within this overall distinction various taxonomies have been suggested, one of which is due to Landau (1999):



Otherwise, obligatory control is traditionally divided into subject, object, and ‘dative’ control, depending on which matrix argument is controller:

- 7 a. John_i hopes PRO_i to win a fortune (subject control)
 b. John_i wants Jim_j PRO*_{i/j} to win a fortune (object control)
 c. John_i gave Jim_j a book_k PRO*_{i/j/*k} to read (dative control)

There is a number of subtypes of non-obligatory control, as shown in (8):

- 8 a. John_i hopes that PRO_{i/j} winning a fortune will save you_j (longdistance/backwards control)
 b. John_i talked about PRO_{i/arb} winning a fortune (free control)
 c. How about PRO_{speaker/hearer} going for a swim? (speaker and/or hearer control)

In accord with the majority of control studies, I shall be concerned mainly with obligatory control. For reasons to be explained I’ll regard these as *bound*. Only in passing will I have something to say on non-obligatory – or *free* – control.

A further distinction of relevance to my approach concerns the syntactic function of the embedded structure – in Chierchia’s terms whether it is an argument or a modifier; in syntactic terms, whether it is a complement of the matrix verb or an adjunct to it. It can be illustrated with reference to a clause like (9):

- 9 Jamie left Jim to fire Harry

It has two readings, one with the interpretation of (10a), one with the interpretation of (10b):

- 10 a. Jamie_i left Jim_j [_{ADJ} in order PRO_{i/*j/*k} to fire Harry_k] (subject control into an adjunct)
 b. Jamie_i left it_i to Jim_j [_{COMPL} PRO*_{i/j/*k} to fire Harry_k]_i (dative control into a (extraposed)
 complement)

Although I have left out a number of issues, I hope this survey has served its intended three purposes. First to give a general outline of the notion of control itself – second to show the control situation in English – and third to suggest that this situation is somewhat elusive. Before I turn to control in Danish, however, I need to outline a few basic assumptions about constituency and argument structure.

4. CONSTITUENCY AND ARGUMENT STRUCTURE

In accordance with the mechanical deletion procedure for the determination of constituency advocated by the structuralist tradition, the (non-verbal) constituents of a clause like (11) will fall into two types, obligatory and optional, as shown in

- 11 John turned that radio on by a touch of a button

- 12 *Obligatory*: [John], [that radio]
 Optional: [by a touch of a button]

This division gives preference to a lexico-morphological solution to the problem posed by [on] over a syntactic one, so the lexical verb is [put on]. According to the syntactico-semantic solution preferred here, however, [on] will be – not an obligatory, but – a *necessary* constituent, because it helps discriminate the *situation type* created by (11) from that created by (13):

13 John turned that radio by a touch of a button

At the same time, [on] is a kind of constituent that does not have argumental potential. Taking [\pm ARGUMENTAL] and [\pm NECESSARY] as two semantic binary features that define constituent types, we get a four-fold classification as in (14):

14

<i>Constituent types</i>	[+NECESSARY]	[-NECESSARY]
[+ARGUMENTAL]	COMPLEMENT	ARGUMENT
[-ARGUMENTAL]	PARASITE	SATELLITE

Given this typology, the constituents of (11) now fall into the pattern of (15):²

15 COMPLEMENTS: [that radio]
ARGUMENTS: [John]
PARASITES: [on]
SATELLITES: [by a touch of a button]

[John] is an ARGUMENT. It is argumental, but deleting it does not change the situation type created by (11) from that created by (16):

16 That radio turned on by a touch of a button

[that radio] is a COMPLEMENT. It is argumental, but deleting it will create a different situation type from that created by (11). The same holds for the deletion of [on], but as [on] is non-argumental, it is a PARASITE. Finally, [by a touch of a button] is a SATELLITE because it is not argumental and deletes without change in the situation type created after deletion.

A lexical verb is said to *select* its necessary constituents – COMPLEMENTS and PARASITES – with which it forms a V' and defines a semantic type, Σ (= situation type). A V' is said to *pick* non-necessary constituents – ARGUMENTS and SATELLITES – with which it forms a VP and defines a semantic type, Π (= proposition). The notions of selection and picking sum up the instructions that particular verbs carry for the creation of situational representations. The structure emerging from this is only hierarchically, not linearly, organized:

² I'll follow the convention of writing the names of these four constituent types in small capitals, but write ordinary romans when using them as standard (syntactic) terms. This is mostly relevant for the terms 'argument' and 'complement', of course.

Instead, Danish uses *at*-infinitives which formally correlate with the English *to*-infinitive. One important consequence of this is that prepositions can govern *at*-infinitives in Danish, as opposed to English where they require a gerund. As is clear from (19), this does not affect the possibility of a direct Danish version of (b), but it interferes with a direct Danish version of (d) because of a pile-up of *at*'s.³ Here a clefted version of the embedded clause is required. Of greater interest for my purposes, however, is the fact that we cannot omit the *for* in the Danish version of (1e), which makes it explicitly a purpose clause. I suppose its grammatical status in Danish – with *for* – is neither better nor worse than the English version.

A second major difference is the lack of a non-finite complementizer in Danish corresponding to English *for* in cases like (20):

20 We prefer *for* Jim to dance with Jamie

But apart from these differences, Danish and English are remarkably similar in terms of the types of control they allow. What is interesting is the different grammatical means that the two languages exploit in order to *signal* various kinds of control. This meshes nicely with the theses in (18).

5.1. Control is a syntactico-semantic phenomenon

If anything, the recent bias of studies in control has been away from syntax and towards semantics (see Anderson 2001, Cormack & Smith 2003, Jackendoff & Culicover 2003, Polinsky & Potsdam 2002, Wurmbrand 2002), a bias largely due to the uncertain status attributed by Minimalism to such traditional syntactic notions as government and binding, and to the concomitant uncertainty of phonetically null lexical items like PRO (Hornstein 1999; 2003 – both of which nevertheless still favour a syntactic account). Even so, I consider control to be a clear interface phenomenon, with syntactic constraints on interpretation. Indeed, Danish offers *perceptual* evidence for the presence of a syntactic element like PRO.

5.2. The control domain is syntactically VP

This evidence takes the form of an emphatic particle, *selv*⁴, which may be inserted at various positions in a clause like (21), to yield the versions in (22):

21 Jamie elsker at danse
Jamie loves to dance

22 a. Selv Jamie elsker at danse
Even Jamie loves to dance

b'. Jamie selv elsker at danse
Jamie self loves to dance (e.g. in contrast to the rest of her family)

b''. Selv elsker Jamie at danse
Self loves Jamie to dance (same as b', only rhetorically topicalized; cf Thrane 2003)

c. Jamie elsker selv at danse
Jamie loves self/even to dance (e.g. (a) in contrast to Doris; or (b) Jamie loves even to dance)⁵

³ Danish *synes* (etymologically the reflexivo-passive of *syne*, 'to sight') corresponds to English *think* and *seem*. In the latter sense it may display the same raising potential as *seem*, so *John synes at danse med Jamie* would mean *John seems to be dancing with Jamie*. As it has its *think*-sense in (19d) it needs the complementizer *at* to prevent it from generating a garden-path sentence. But as the *think*-sense is already signalled by the cleft in (19d'), the complementizer *at* can be omitted!

⁴ I'll refrain from giving a general English equivalent for it. It may be a noun (= Eng. *self*), it may be roughly equivalent to the *-self* part of English reflexives, it may be an emphatic adverb roughly paraphrasable as *even*, etc. I'll provide glosses that illustrate particular readings of it under examples.

- c. Jamie siges at måtte danse om morgenen
Jamie say-PASSIVE to may-INF dance in morning-the

This is not an issue in English, of course, as English modals don't have non-finite forms.

5.4. *Bound control is control from [+ARG]-constituents – with COMPLEMENTS taking precedence over ARGUMENTS as controllers*

I won't here have much to say about free control, except that the inclusion of an explicit agent in a sentence like

- 26 Festen blev holdt af Jims forældre for at danse med Jamie
Party-the became given by Jim's parents for to dance with Jamie

will turn neither [af Jims forældre] nor [Jim] into a plausible controller, even if it so happens that Jim was the one bent on dancing with Jamie. Free 'control', in other words, is control without a controller. The salient point, however, is that (26) provides evidence that the matrix controller in cases of bound control must be a [+ARG]-constituent – which [af Jims forældre] is not.

The second point – COMPLEMENTS taking precedence over ARGUMENTS – deserves rather more discussion which will foreshadow issues to be more fully discussed in the next section.

One of the classical minimal pairs quoted in control studies involves the verbs *promise* and *persuade*, such that *promise* prompts subject control, *persuade* object control, as in (27):

- 27 a. Jamie promised Jim to fire Harry
 b. Jamie persuaded Jim to fire Harry

By (14), the argument structures of these will have [Jamie] as a COMPLEMENT and [Jim] as an ARGUMENT, notated as [C,A], in (a), [Jamie] as an ARGUMENT and [Jim] as a COMPLEMENT in (b), notated [A,C]. This emerges from deletion tests, including passivization, which is here regarded as a process to reduce [+ARG] to [-ARG] constituents:

- 28 a. Jamie promised ~~Jim~~ to fire Harry
 b. *Jamie persuaded ~~Jim~~ to fire Harry
- 29 a. *Jim was promised to fire Harry (by Jamie)
 b. Jim was persuaded to fire Harry (by Jamie)

So, given that the COMPLEMENT in (27a) is selected as subject whereas, in (b), it is selected as object, the classical distinction between subject and object control in this case can be reinterpreted as COMPLEMENTS taking precedence over ARGUMENTS as controllers.

This claim may need modification but hardly rejection in view of the fact that *promise* does not necessarily prompt subject control, as is clear when a further constituent is inserted; consider

- 30 Jamie promised Jim a day off to fire Harry

This has radical consequences for argument structure. [Jamie] is here an ARGUMENT, while both [Jim] and [a day off] are COMPLEMENTS, as is evident from passivization:

- 31 a. Jim was promised a day off to fire Harry (by Jamie)
 b. A day off was promised Jim to fire Harry (by Jamie)

(30) is potentially ambiguous, and standard tests might partly attribute this to a difference in immediate constituency, yielding the two structures in (32):

- 32 a. Jamie promised [VP[VP [NP Jim][NP a day off]] [CP to fire Harry]]
 b. Jamie promised [VP [NP Jim][NP a day off] [CP to fire Harry]]

The ambiguity is lexically resolved by substituting *to* in (32a) by *in order to*, which would preserve subject control. Standard tests (fronting) makes it a clear case of control into a SATELLITE.

Although this runs counter to the claim that COMPLEMENTS precede ARGUMENTS as controllers, informants agree that the immediate interpretive response to (30) is the one here associated with the structure given as (32b), which has [to fire Harry] as a syntactic complement of [a day off]. It is for [Jim] to control [to fire Harry] (dative control), an interpretation that might appear to be at odds with the proposed syntactic structure (Chierchia's principle of 'functional adjacency'). But compare (32b) to

- 33 Jamie promised [VP [NP Jim][NP a cat [CP to catch mice]]]

Here syntactic structure and control seem to go hand in hand. What such pairs suggest is that control structure is not homomorphic with syntactic structure (or that the proposed syntactic structure is wrong, of course).

On present hypothesis, however, such vacillation is accounted for by the claim that COMPLEMENTS precede ARGUMENTS as controllers. In (32) and (33), [Jamie] is an ARGUMENT (by (31)), whereas both [Jim] and [a day off/a cat] are COMPLEMENTS. So, either is preferred as controller. Which of these is selected is a matter of semantics.

This is borne out by the Danish data directly comparable to the English data with *promise* in (27)-(33), only here further formal evidence is available. The Danish versions of relevant examples are given in

- 34 a. Jamie lovede Jim at fyre Harry
Jamie promised Jim to fire Harry
 b. *Jamie lovede Jim en fridag at fyre Harry
Jamie promised Jim a day off to fire Harry
 c. Jamie lovede Jim en fridag {til|for|mod} at fyre Harry
Jamie promised Jim a day off {to|for|against} to fire Harry
 d. Jamie lovede Jim en kat {til|for|mod} at fange mus
Jamie promised Jim a cat {to|for|against} to catch mice

The significance of the obligatory presence of a preposition in (c,d) will be discussed in the next section. Here we note that [Jamie] is the only possible controller in (a), and that control relations in (c,d) are partly determined by choice of preposition:

Til ('to') induces control by [Jim] in (c) and [en kat] in (d) for semantic reasons (cf. discussion of (32b) and (33)); lexical disambiguation of *for* ('for') determines control by [Jamie] if *for* = *in order to*, or by [Jim] if *for* = *in exchange for*; and *mod* ('against', 'in exchange for') induces control by

[Jim] in both (c) and (d), making (d) the creator of a somewhat peculiar situation type. There is no doubt, then, that computation of control relations relies on information from choice of preposition, at least partly. But not all controlled structures are headed by prepositions.

5.5. *In Danish, control into [-ARG]-constituents is marked by prepositions while control into COMPLEMENTS typically is unmarked*

From the point of view of constituent types, bound control structures are either COMPLEMENTS, PARASITES or SATELLITES. Here Danish differs from English in a rather significant fashion, in that COMPLEMENTS are typically unmarked, while the two[-ARG]-types are marked by prepositions; cf.

- 35 a. Jamie planlagde [at fyre Harry]_{COMPLEMENT}
Jamie planlaid to fire Harry
 ‘Jamie planned to fire Harry’
- b. Jamie lagde en plan [**til** at fyre Harry]_{PARASITE}
Jamie laid a plan to to fire Harry
 ‘Jamie formed a plan to fire Harry’
- c. Jamie lagde planer [**for** at fyre Harry]_{SATELLITE}
Jamie laid plans for to fire Harry
 ‘Jamie schemed (in order) to fire Harry’

As suggested already by (35), it is usually different prepositions that mark SATELLITES and PARASITES, the latter being typically marked by *til* ‘to’. These claims may need some justification.

The status assigned to the embedded phrases in (35) as, respectively, COMPLEMENT, SATELLITE, and PARASITE, is based on a mixture of criteria involving deletion, type of expletive in passivizations, and topicalization/clefting properties.

- 36 a. *Jamie planlagde
Jamie planlaid
- b. Jamie lagde en plan
Jamie laid a plan
- c. Jamie lagde planer
Jamie laid plans

Planlægge (‘plan’) is transitive and requires a syntactic complement. However, it is a compound formed from *lægge* (‘lay’) + the noun stem *plan* (‘plan’). This is not the proper place to argue the point, so I’ll just claim that the nominal element of this kind of compounding derives from a PARASITE constituent.

- 37 a. {*Der | **Det**} blev planlagt [at fyre Harry]
There / It was planlaid to fire Harry
- b. {**Der** | *Det} blev lagt en plan [**til** at fyre Harry]
*There / *It was laid a plan to to fire Harry*
- c. {**Der** | *Det} blev lagt planer [**for** at fyre Harry]
*There / *It were laid plans for to fire Harry*

Der (‘there’) is expletive and *det* (‘it’) is the ‘excrement anchorage’ for a semantic type, in this case Π – cf. Thrane (2003: 341, fn 17 and 369). Only the latter is argumental.

- 38 a. Det var [at fyre Harry] (**at**) Jamie planlagde
It was to fire Harry (that) Jamie planlaid

- b. *Det var [til at fyre Harry] (at) Jamie lagde en plan
It was to to fire Harry (at) Jamie laid a plan
- c. Det var [for at fyre Harry] (at) Jamie lagde planer
It was for to fire Harry (that) Jamie laid plans

The possibility of inserting so-called ‘pleonastic *at*’ in Danish is one of the indications for what I’ve called a Topic Phrase, as opposed to CP (the main subject of Thrane 2003). The fact that (b) doesn’t allow it is an indication that it differs in basic structural properties from both (a) and (c).

These various properties constitute the justification for the proposed distinctions. Given these, the members of triplets like (39) – and (35) – differ on the COMPLEMENT/PARASITE axis for (a) vs. (b), on the PARASITE/SATELLITE axis for (b) vs. (c).

- 39 a. Jamie lærte Jim at snyde (object control)
Jamie taught Jim to cheat
- b. Jamie oplærte Jim til at snyde (object control)
Jamie up-taught Jim to to cheat
 ‘Jamie trained Jim to cheat’
- c. Jamie oplærte Jim for at snyde (subject control)
Jamie up-taught Jim for to cheat
 ‘Jamie trained Jim in order to cheat’

These would be the default control relations computed from *lære* (‘teach’, ‘learn’) and *oplære* (‘train’) in these contexts. But control may be affected by idiomaticity (cf. (39a) with (40)):

- 40 Jamie lærte Jim at kende (subject control)
Jamie learned Jim to know
 ‘Jamie got to know Jim’

The very possibility of this interpretation – given the validity of the claim that COMPLEMENTS precede ARGUMENTS as controllers – suggests that the argument structure of (39a) is [C, C, C]. The idiomaticity of (40) then resides in the exploitation of this structure to interpret [Jim] as the object of [kende] – an option not open to (39a) which can never be interpreted as ‘Jamie learned to cheat Jim’.

CONCLUSION

The main point of this paper has been to show that the interpretive instructions that verbs carry for the construction of situational representations can be captured in terms of the types of constituents they select, based on two semantic binary features [\pm ARGUMENTAL] and [\pm NECESSARY], and that this typology plays a role for the computation of bound control relations. It is argued that Danish offers formal evidence, not only of a syntactic element corresponding to the PRO of GB, but more importantly of the constituent types proposed. In particular, control into Infinitive Phrases that semantically are COMPLEMENTS, is unmarked, whereas control into SATELLITES and PARASITES is marked by prepositions. While the overall picture seems fairly clear, many issues remain unresolved, and it must be conceded that control is a syntactico-semantic area which defies absolute generalization.

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