

## MOVING FORWARD WITH ROMANIAN BACKWARD CONTROL AND RAISING\*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter investigates various licensing constraints imposed on shared subject arguments in Romanian obligatory control constructions and argues for an analysis of obligatory control (OC) in this language analogous to that of raising predicates. On the one hand, the discussion contributes to the current debate with respect to whether OC can and should be construed as raising or not (i.e. the Hornstein–Landau debate<sup>1</sup>), and on the other hand, the analysis provides an account of seemingly optional subject dislocation that is intimately tied to the Theme–Rheme sentence partitioning in Romanian and, consequently, independent of the control phenomenon per se. With respect to the first point, I propose that movement out of controlled clauses is a parametrized option made available by UG and governed by well-defined conditions. Specifically, it is available in languages where complements to control verbs lack phasal status, or can void phasehood, a proviso that guarantees an active subject goal available to both thematic and non-thematic checking operations with matrix probes. Regarding the second point, I show that dislocation of the subject DP, which may but need not occur, is *not* incumbent on morpho-syntactic featural requirements related to OC (such as Case or theta-role valuation), but determined by well-defined semantico-pragmatic constraints, such as topic and focus movement, construable as OCC features (Chomsky 2001b) on the various probing heads. This analysis has the merit of limiting the amount of movement required by reductionist approaches to OC, accounting for optionality in a systematic manner, and providing adequate empirical coverage of the phenomena under discussion.

The chapter is organized as follows. Section 2 familiarizes the reader with recent minimalist formalizations of reductionist and non-reductionist approaches to OC. Section 3 focuses on Romanian subject control constructions and argues for a reductionist solution as the only formalization capable of doing justice to the data. Section 4 investigates the relationship between phases, movement, and Case and provides evidence for the non-phasal status of OC complements and their inability to value Case. Section 5 discusses the information packaging properties available to Romanian and analyzes the various triggers for PF copy preference. Section 6 is a conclusion.

## 2. PRO, OBLIGATORY CONTROL, AND MINIMALISM

It is well known that crosslinguistically aspectual, implicative, and modal matrix verbs select a sentential complement whose external argument has to be coreferential to the matrix clause subject DP, as exemplified in (1).

- (1) a. Erica<sub>i</sub> just started [PRO<sub>i</sub> to take syntax]  
 b. Philippa<sub>i</sub> tried [PRO<sub>i</sub> to read the new Chomsky]

Given the one-to-one mapping between theta-roles and arguments assumed in the generative grammar of the 1980s (see theta-criterion of Chomsky 1981), PRO in (1) is construed as both a semantic and a syntactic subject. Specifically, the subject theta-position is filled structurally with some brand of null nominal element 'PRO' distinct from any matrix clause DP or trace thereof. In (1), PRO is constrained to an exhaustive identity with a matrix clause controller, where coindexation is subject to some c-commanding version of the Minimal Distance Principle of Rosenbaum (1967). The inherent non-overt nature of PRO is linked to its compulsory association with Caseless T domains (i.e. infinitival T) – and, later, null Case (as in Chomsky and Lasnik 1993). The properties of PRO, however, are known to surpass those seen in (1). For example, PRO also surfaces with a Partial Control interpretation, as in (2a), or an arbitrary interpretation, as in (2b).

- (2) a. Mrs. Dalloway<sub>i</sub> wanted [PRO<sub>i+</sub> to meet at 9] (but it was too early)  
 b. It can be very rewarding [PRO<sub>arb</sub> to do syntax]

PRO then has two arguments working against it: on the one hand, an undesirable theory-internal flavor, and on the other hand, an unwelcome oscillatory nature. No wonder it keeps making linguists uncomfortable.

With the advent of minimalism in the 1990s, which sees the collapse of government and the elimination of D-structure and S-structure as separate levels of representation (Chomsky 1995, 2000, 2001a, b, 2005), the availability of PRO in control has been questioned by a number of authors, most notably, Boeckx and Hornstein (2003, 2004), Hornstein (1999, 2000, 2001, 2003), Manzini and Roussou (1999), and O'Neil (1997). Crucially, these authors also assume that movement out of controlled clauses is legitimate, which in effect, points toward a synonymous construal of raising and control, theta-roles notwithstanding. The reductionist view of control is not only legitimate theoretically but has the added bonus of providing better empirical coverage than the standard view, given that it can also handle backward control languages (see discussion in Polinsky and Potsdam 2002). While not everybody agrees on eliminating PRO (see, especially Landau 1999, 2003, 2004a) and while there may be conceptual and empirical reasons to maintain PRO in certain cases and for certain languages, a movement analysis of OC cannot be universally dismissed prior to a careful crosslinguistic investigation. However, before pursuing such an investigation, let us first discuss relevant current formalizations of OC.

Recent, minimalist, formalizations of OC pursue either a reductionist (i.e. without PRO) or a non-reductionist (i.e. with PRO) approach. Approaches eliminating