

Extending Control to Semantics and Metaphor

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What is control?

- Generally: co-identification of arguments of syntactically-related predicates
- Often considered to be primarily a syntactic phenomenon
- Some dissent: Jackendoff and Culicover (2002, 2005)
- This talk: refines description of the lower predicate's argument
- Control can be not just semantically, but metaphorically-mediated.

Outline

- Introduction to control
- Simple semantic control
- Complex semantic control
- Metaphorically-mediated control
- Conclusions

- I_i **promised** him to come right back.
- I_i **want** to come back.
- He **persuaded** me_i to come back.
- It **took** me_i an hour to find one.
- They **waved** at me_i to come back in.
- You can **depend** on it_i to rain at BLS.
- My_i **attempt** to teach was laughable.
- I **said** to go! (Addressee_i)
- She_i **stopped** coming to meetings.
- Kim_i **enjoyed** dancing with you.
- Discussing it **gives** me_i **a charge**.
- Nothing can **prevent** her_i from coming.

- Subject control
 - I_i **promised** him_i to come right back.
- Object control
 - I **persuaded** you_i to come back.
- Oblique
 - They **waved** at me_i to come back in.
- Possessive
 - My_i **attempt** to entertain was laughable.
- Syntactically null, semantically present
 - I **said** to go! (*Addressee_i*)

Control demystified

- Control is semantic co-identification
- Governed lexically specifically by the upper pred
 - Lower predicate is an argument of the upper
 - Filler is arbitrary semantic argument of the upper predicate
 - Subject of the lower predicate (usually an Actor)
- But there is no *a priori* reason to separate these patterns from co-identifications with other arguments of the upper predicate.
- In particular, we might anticipate cases where the argument is *semantically* selected.

Semantic Control

- Controlling the Patient
 - *He*_i **underwent** an ordeal.
 - *Chuck*_i **underwent** an operation last week.
 - *Sandy*_i will **undergo** retraining.
- Controlling the Agent
 - *Zarathushtra*_i **performed** the operation.
 - He sat up when *they*_i **began** the operation.
- More specific roles with support verbs
 - *Zarathushtra*_i **took** a nap.
 - *They*_i **feel** a deep sorrow.

Merit

- *She*_i **merits** _i a promotion. (Patient)
- *Ebenezer*_i **merits** _i another look. (Stimulus)
- *Kaffiyya*_i **merits** _i consideration. (Topic)
- What is controlled?
 - The argument roles seem quite diverse
 - Possibly an abstract Proto-patient?
 - Syntactic control after all?

Need

- I **need** a backrub.
- I **need** attention
- I **need** help
- I **need** a look at the data
- *You* **need** a slap in the face
- I **need** a walk
- *The data* **needs** reexamination
- I **may need** another try

Need

- *I*_i **need** a backrub. (Patient)
- *I*_i **need** attention (Experiencer?)
- *I*_i **need** help (Beneficiary)
- *I*_i **need** a look at the data (Agent/Experiencer)
- *You*_i **need** a slap in the face (Patient)
- *I*_i **need** a walk (Agent/Theme)
- *The data*_i **needs** reexamination (Stimulus)
- *I*_i **may need** another try (Agent)

???

- Even more diverse roles
- Multiple interpretations for same sentence:
 - “/_i **need** an operation”.
 - Patient when spoken by the gun-shot-ee
 - Agent when spoken by the insolvent surgeon
- Is any role permissible?
 - */_i **need** avoidance when I’m like this.
- vs.: /_i **need** to be avoided.

Get

- *I*_i **got** *a backrub*. (Patient)
- *I*_i **got** *attention* (Experiencer)
- *I*_i **got** *help* (Beneficiary)
- *I*_i **got** *a look at the data* (Experiencer)
- *You*_i **got** *a slap in the face* (Patient)
- *I*_i **got** *a walk* (Theme/Agent)
- *The data*_i **received** *reexamination* (Stimulus)
- *I*_i may **get** *another try* (Agent)

Soluton: metaphor

- Metaphor in syntax? Sure!
 - Goldberg (1995) made crucial use of metaphoric links between the cause-motion and resultative constructions.
 - She also noted that events understood as metaphorical motion could be expressed with the cause-motion construction

Solution: Metaphor

- All of the subjects are metaphorical Possessors of the lower predicate
- Non-metaphorical *need* asserts a modalized (deontic) Possession relation between the subject and object
 - I_i **need** a beer
 - I_i **need** a new car
 - I_i **need** a new hole in my head

- Several different metaphorical mappings are involved, so several corresponding roles in the Target domain of the metaphor
- Undergoing is Receiving (UiR)
 - Possessor maps to the Patient
- Benefitting is Receiving (BiR)
 - Possessor maps to the Beneficiary
 - (Several further bindings from the Beneficiary mapping, as Agent, Patient, Stimulus...)

Metaphorical Get

- *I*_i **got** a backrub. (BiR; Beneficiary = Patient)
- *I*_i **got** attention (BiR; Beneficiary = Stimulus)
- *I*_i **got** help (BiR; Beneficiary)
- *I*_i **got** a look at the data (BiR; Beneficiary = Agent)
- *You*_i **got** a slap in the face (UiR; Patient)
- *I*_i **got** a walk (BiR; Beneficiary = Theme)
- *The data*_i **received** reexamination (UiR; Patient?)
- *I*_i **got** another try (BiR: Beneficiary = Agent)

One example in detail

Metaphor: Benefitting is conceived of as receiving

I_i got_i a backrub. (BiR; Benef = Patient)

1. I received a backrub.
2. [by BiR] I benefitted from a backrub
3. [genl knowledge] Patients of backrubs benefit from them
4. [by 2 and 3] I was the patient of a backrub event

Metaphorical Need

- *I*_i **need** a backrub. (BiR; Beneficiary = Patient)
- *I*_i **need** attention (BiR; Beneficiary = Stimulus)
- *I*_i **need** help (BiR; Beneficiary)
- *I*_i **need** a look at the data (BiR; Beneficiary = Agent)
- *You*_i **need** a slap in the face (UiR; Patient)
- *I*_i **need** a walk (BiR; Beneficiary = Theme)
- *The data*_i **need** reexamination (UiR; Patient?)
- *I*_i **need** another try (BiR: Beneficiary = Agent)

Merit?

- *Merit* is still not the same as *need*
 - I need another look (Agent/Patient?)
 - I merit another look (Patient/Agent?)
- There is very little evidence of literally possessed objects with *merit*, so what is there for the event object cases to be a productive metaphorization of?
- Semantic prosody: 300 attention, 72 comm, 66 judgment collocates
- We still need Proto-patient???

Morphology, too

- Employ-ee, induct-ee, promot-ee
 - These nouns denote some participant in the event evoked by the verbal stem.
- Asyl-ee, handshak-ee, debt-ee
 - Even with non-verbal stems, a role is picked out.
- Crucially, this is mediated entirely semantically (Barker, 1998)

Conclusions

- The traditional limitation of Control to identifying a particular syntactic role of a subordinate predicate is unnecessary
- Entirely comparable semantic phenomena
- *Pace* J&C, specification of *which* role must be syntactically and semantically regulated
- Since metaphor operates on semantic structure, it should be expected to interact with semantic control and does so
- Ambiguity of metaphorical mappings gives rise to apparent diversity of controlled roles

Thanks!

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Semantics vs. Syntax

- J&C hold that all control is mediated semantically
- Contra Jackendoff & Culicover, not equivalent to control of object/subject
 - **The topic* will **undergo** skirting.
 - (Cf. *The topic* **was** skirted.)
 - Not clear what an “Object” of *ordeal* would be
 - No explanation given of the difference between noun-complement and verb-complement
 - I need a sale.
 - I need to sell/I need someone to sell (me).
 - I need a slap.
 - I need to be slapped./??I need to slap someone.
- Semantic control predicts flexibility

FN/ECG Bindings

- NP/Ext/Desirer <-> VPto/Desire.Ext
- (NP/Ext/)Undergoer <->
(NP/Obj/)Event.Patient
- (NP/Ext/)Needer <->
(NP/Obj/)Possession.Possessor