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 promised him to come right back.
- I want to come back.
- He persuaded me to come back.
- It took me an hour to find one.
- They waved at me to come back in.
- You can depend on it to rain at BLS.
- My attempt to teach was laughable.
- I said to go! (Addressee)
- She stopped coming to meetings.
- Kim enjoyed dancing with you.
- Discussing it gives me a charge.
- Nothing can prevent her from coming.
• Subject control
  – I promised him to come right back.

• Object control
  – I persuaded you to come back.

• Oblique
  – They waved at me to come back in.

• Possessive
  – My attempt to entertain was laughable.

• Syntactically null, semantically present
  – I said to go! (Addressee)
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 \textit{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 \textit{semantically} selected.
Semantic Control

• Controlling the Patient
  – *He* underwent *an ordeal.*
  – *Chuck* underwent *an operation* last week.
  – *Sandy* will undergo *retraining.*

• Controlling the Agent
  – *Zarathushtra* performed *the operation.*
  – He sat up when *they* began *the operation.*

• More specific roles with support verbs
  – *Zarathushtra* took *a nap.*
  – *They* feel *a deep sorrow.*
Merit

– *She* merits *a promotion*. (Patient)
– *Ebenezer* merits *another look*. (Stimulus)
– *Kaffiyaa* merits *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 need a backrub. (Patient)
- I need attention (Experiencer?)
- I need help (Beneficiary)
- I need a look at the data (Agent/Experiencer)
- You need a slap in the face (Patient)
- I need a walk (Agent/Theme)
- The data needs reexamination (Stimulus)
- 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 got a backrub. (Patient)
- I got attention (Experiencer)
- I got help (Beneficiary)
- I got a look at the data (Experiencer)
- You got a slap in the face (Patient)
- I got a walk (Theme/Agent)
- The data received reexamination (Stimulus)
- I may get another try (Agent)
Solution: metaphor

• Metaphor in syntax? Sure!
  – 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
  – $I \text{ need } a \text{ beer}$
  – $I \text{ need } a \text{ new car}$
  – $I \text{ need } a \text{ new hole in my head}$
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 got a backrub. (BiR; Beneficiary = Patient)
– I got attention (BiR; Beneficiary = Stimulus)
– I got help (BiR; Beneficiary)
– I got a look at the data (BiR; Beneficiary = Agent)
– You got a slap in the face (UiR; Patient)
– I got a walk (BiR; Beneficiary = Theme)
– The data received reexamination (UiR; Patient?)
– I got another try (BiR: Beneficiary = Agent)
One example in detail

Metaphor: Benefitting is conceived of as receiving

\[ I \text{ got } a \text{ backrub.} \ (\text{BiR; Benef = Patient}) \]

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 need a backrub. (BiR; Beneficiary = Patient)
- I need attention (BiR; Beneficiary = Stimulus)
- I need help (BiR; Beneficiary)
- I need a look at the data (BiR; Beneficiary = Agent)
- You need a slap in the face (UiR; Patient)
- I need a walk (BiR; Beneficiary = Theme)
- The data need reexamination (UiR; Patient?)
- 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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And it goes without saying that the organizers of this conference also merit our appreciation.
J&C hold that all control is mediated semantically.

Contra Jackendoff & Cullicover, 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