

Raising, Control, Null Subject

Ling 322

Read *Syntax*, Ch. 10

Revisiting Raising

(1) Pete is likely [to leave].

- Theta-grid for *likely*

(2) a. It is likely [that Pete left].

b. [That Pete left] is likely.

proposition
i

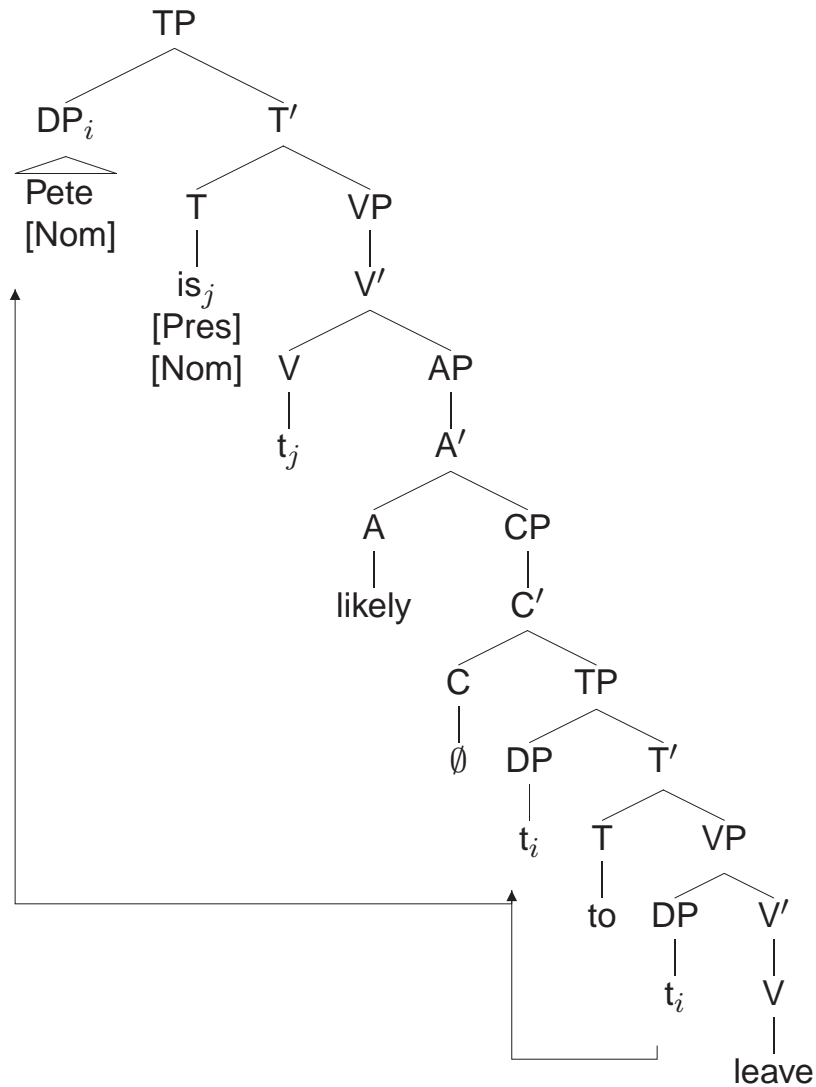
Note: Expletives do not have theta-roles. They do not appear in theta-grids.

- Theta-grid for *leave*

agent
i

Revisiting Raising (cont.)

(3) Pete_i is likely [t_i to leave].



Raising Look-alike: Control

(4) Pete is reluctant to leave.

- Theta-grid of *reluctant*

- (5) a. * It_{expl} is reluctant [that Pete left].
b. * [That Pete left] is reluctant.

experiencer	proposition
i	k

Who is reluctant? *Pete*.

- Theta-grid of *leave*

agent
m

Who is doing the leaving? *Pete*.

Raising Look-alike: Control (cont.)

- Does this mean that *Pete* starts out as a subject of the infinitival clause and then moves to the matrix clause?

(6) $[\text{Pete}]_{i/m}$ is reluctant $[\text{t}_m \text{ to leave}]_k$.

- Then *Pete* gets two theta-roles: agent role from *leave* and experiencer role from *reluctant*.

But what about Theta-criterion?

- The problem is that there are two theta-roles here, but only one DP.
- Solution: There is a second DP, called PRO, which is unpronounced.

(7) $[\text{Pete}]_i$ is reluctant $[\text{PRO}_m \text{ to leave}]_k$.

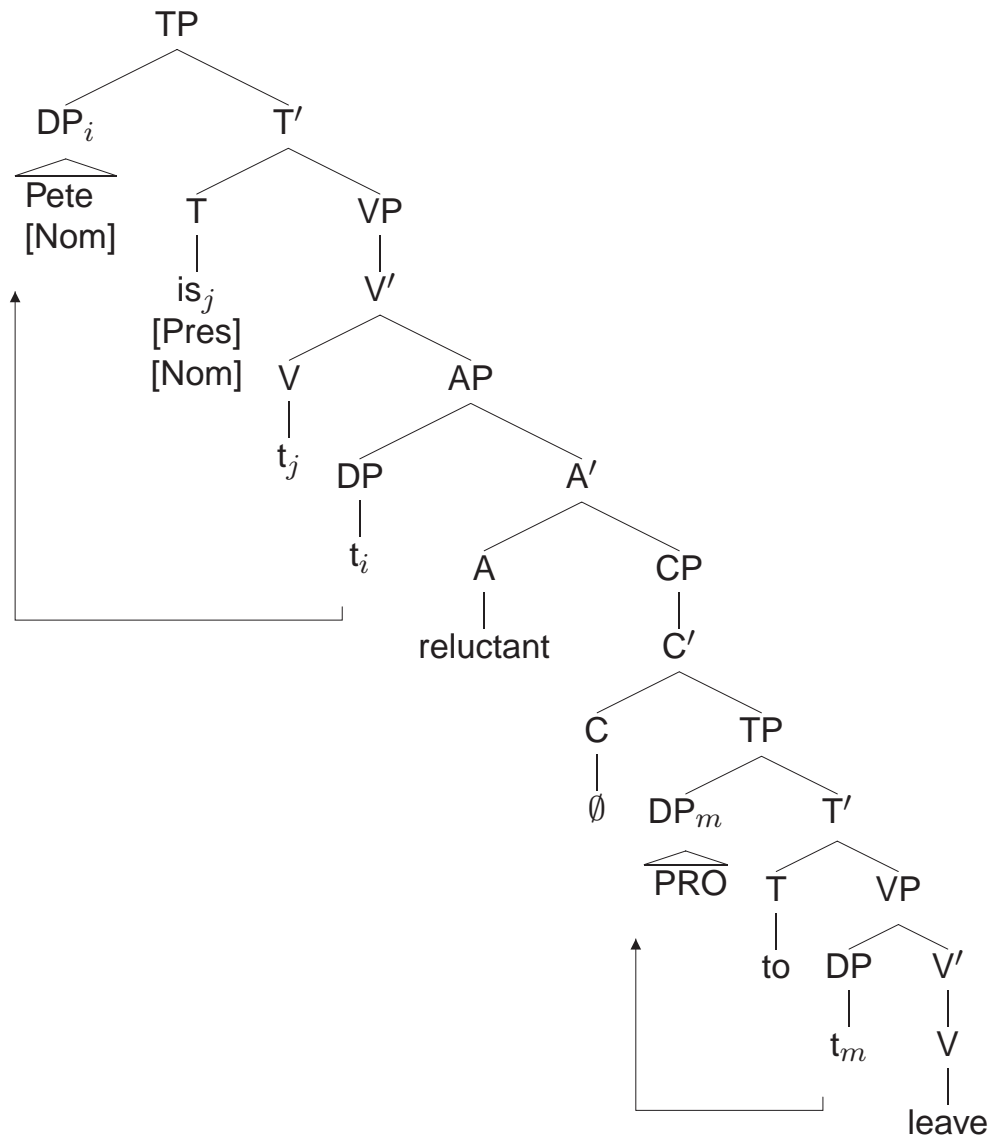
PRO can only appear in the subject position of an infinitival clause.

PRO is not pronounced because it is in a caseless position.

\implies Subject control structure

Subject Control

(8) Pete is reluctant [PRO to leave].



Object Control

(9) Peter persuaded Robert to leave.

- Theta-role of *persuade*

agent	theme	proposition
i	m	k

- Theta-role of *leave*

agent
j

- *Robert* is the theme of *persuade*. But he also did the leaving.

Two theta-roles, but only one DP!

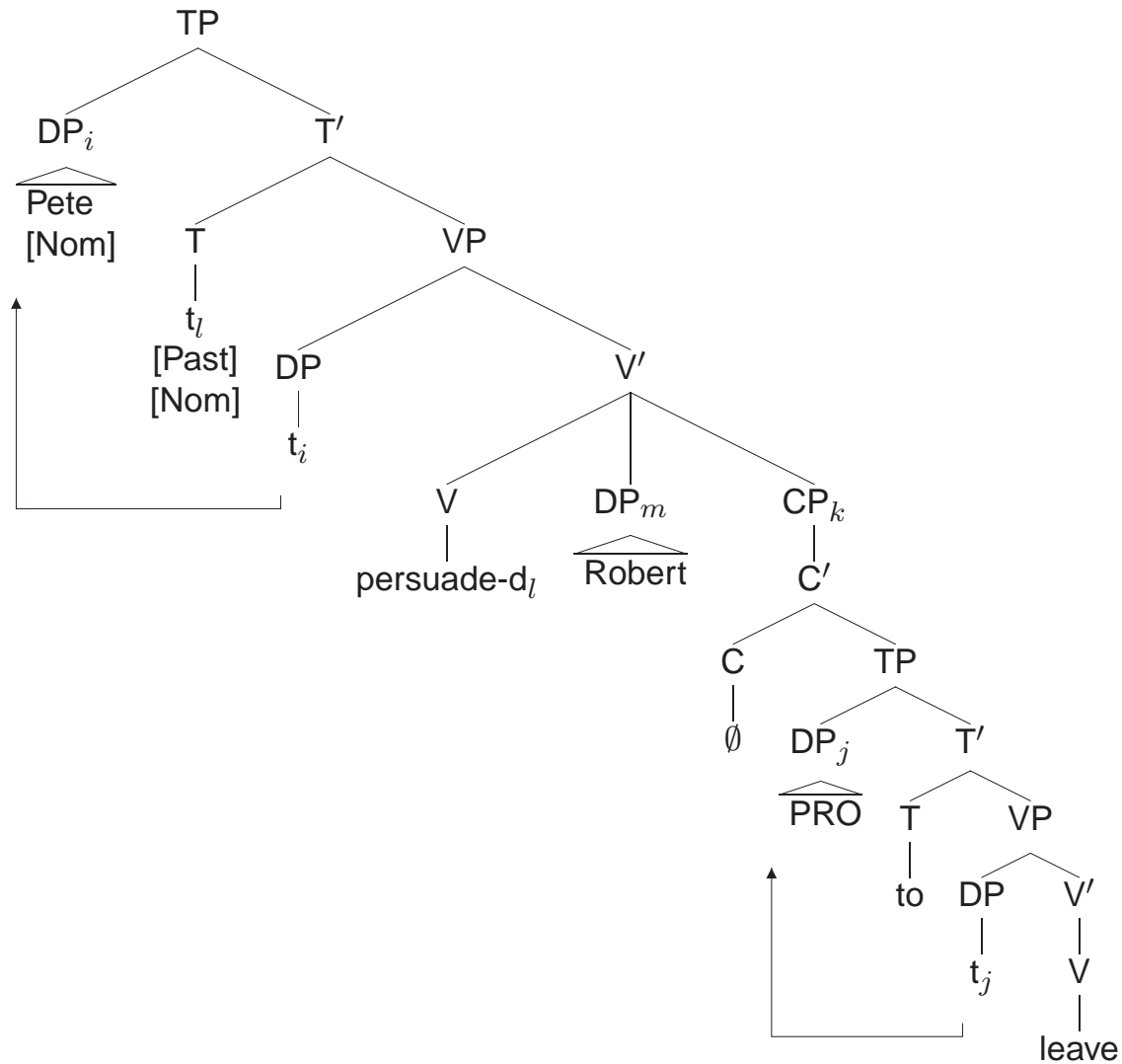
- Solution: PRO as the subject of the infinitival clause.

(10) Pete persuaded Robert [PRO to leave].

⇒ Object control structure

Object Control (cont.)

(11) Pete_i persuaded Robert_m [PRO_j to leave]_k.



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How PRO Fits in with the Theory So Far

- Theta criterion

(12) John wants [PRO to kick Fred].

PRO serves as the slot for the agent theta-role of *kick*.

- EPP: All clauses must have a subject.

PRO serves as the subject of the infinitival clause.

- Locality in binding

(13) a. John_{*i*} wants [PRO_{*i*} to kick himself_{*i*}].

b. The professors_{*i*} persuaded the students_{*j*} [PRO_{*j*} to get along with each other_{*j*}].

PRO serves as the antecedent of an anaphor.

Subject Control vs. Subject-to-Subject Raising

- Unlike raising verbs, control verbs impose selectional restrictions on their subjects, assigning theta-roles to them.

- (14) a. The caterpillar hoped [PRO to become a butterfly].
b. # A week hoped [PRO to have elapsed].

- Control predicates cannot have expletive subjects because they assign theta role to the subject.

- (15) a. * There tried [PRO to be a problem].
b. * It tried [that there is a problem].

- Subjects of idiom chunks cannot be intervened by control predicates.

- (16) a. The cat tried [PRO to be out of the bag]. (only literal meaning)
b. The pot tried [PRO to call the kettle black]. (only literal meaning)

Object Control vs. Subject-to-Object Raising

- In object control structure, the control verb assigns theta-role to the object.

In subject-to-object raising structure, the raised object gets theta-role from the lower predicate.

- (17) a. Pete persuaded Robert [PRO to leave].
b. Pete wants Robert_{*i*} [t_{*i*} to leave].

- While subject-to-object raising structure allows idiomatic readings, object control structure doesn't.

- (18) a. Pete wants [the cat]_{*i*} [t_{*i*} to be out of the bag].
b. Pete persuaded the cat [PRO to be out of the bag].

Control vs. Raising

- QUESTION: Explain why the following derivations are illegal in terms of the theta-criterion.

- (19) a. * Mary seems [PRO to enjoy syntax].
b. * Mary_i tries [t_i to enjoy syntax].

- QUESTION: Determine whether the underlined predicates are subject-to-subject raising, subject-to-object raising, subject control or object control predicates.

1. Tom tends to enjoy syntax.
2. Tom is ready to leave.
3. Tom advised Mary to leave.
4. Tom intended to leave.
5. Tom imagined Mary to have left.

PRO without a Controller: PRO_{Arb}

- PRO without any explicit controller within the same sentence is called arbitrary PRO (PRO_{Arb}). It gets generic impersonal reference, similar to pronoun *one*.
- (20)
- a. [PRO_{Arb} To walk alone late at night] is not wise.
 - b. [PRO_{Arb} To smoke too much] is bad for health.
 - c. John thinks that it is important [PRO_{Arb} to behave oneself in public].

Little *pro*

- Many languages allow subjects to be unpronounced.

(21) Italian

- a. Gianni ha parlato.
Gianni has spoken
- b. Lei ha parlato.
he has-3sg spoken
- c. *e* ha parlato.
has-3sg spoken
'He has spoken.'
- d. Gianni ha detto [*CP* che [*TP* *e* ha parlato]].
Gianni has said that has-3sg spoken
'Gianni has said that he has spoken.'

- If EPP is correct, then subjectless clauses must have an unpronounced subject: null subject.

Little *pro* (cont.)

(22) Italian

a. *e* ha parlato.

has-3sg spoken
'He has spoken.'

b. Gianni ha detto [_{CP} che [_{TP} *e* ha parlato]].

Gianni has said that has-3sg spoken
'Gianni has said that he has spoken.'

- Is this null subject PRO? No. It has case.
- DP-trace?

No. There is no antecedent for it in (22a).

In (22b), the null subject can be coreferential with *Gianni*, but it can also refer to something else in the discourse context.

Gianni and the null subject cannot form a movement chain. If they did, theta-criterion and case theory would be violated.

Little *pro* (cont.)

- The null subjects in (22a) and (22b) are base-generated covert pronominal elements: *pro* (also called little *pro*).
- Little *pro* has a case and a theta-role.
- Little *pro* has a definite reference. Like a pronoun, it may refer to an entity in the discourse context, or it may be coindexed with an element in the same clause.

Cross-linguistic variation in *pro*-drop

- Null Subject Parameter: Some languages allow *pro* and some do not. Why?
- A correlation between richness of agreement inflection and *pro*

person/number	English	Italian
1sg	speak	parl-o
2sg	speak	parl-i
3sg	speak-s	parl-a
1pl	speak	parl-iamo
2pl	speak	parl-ate
3pl	speak	parl-ano

⇒ Little *pro* is licensed if it can be identified by agreement inflection.

- But what about East Asian languages like Korean, Japanese, and Chinese? None of these languages have person/number inflections, but *pro* is allowed.

James Huang (1984) proposes that *pro* is possible either in languages with rich agreement or no agreement at all.