

Taking Syncretisms Seriously: A New Argument for Finite Control as Movement

1. Claim. The goal of this talk is to present a reanalysis of control in Chamorro as a case of finite control involving movement. The new analysis is based upon the empirical observation that the verbal morphology of the embedded predicate in control constructions is identical to verbal inflection in the context of wh-extraction. Consequently, I will argue that Chamorro control involves finite control, and that finite control and wh-extraction are derivationally related.

2. Background Assumptions. The new analysis rests upon the Syncretism Principle.

- (1) *Syncretism Principle (Alexiadou and Müller 2005)*: Identity of form implies identity of function (within a certain domain, and unless there is evidence to the contrary).

This yields the null hypothesis that syncretisms in Chamorro are not cases of homophony. Rather, syncretic forms of verbal morphology in two derivations A and B are taken to be evidence that A and B are derivationally related, so that the same marker fits in both contexts.

3. Data. Chamorro displays syntactic contexts in which reference to a zero subject of an embedded clause is determined by an argument of the higher predicate. These syntactic contexts have been analysed as control (Chung 1998). The embedded predicate shows a reduced form of subject-verb agreement: it inflects for number in intransitive contexts only, and shows no person or mood inflection (table 1). On the basis of this observation, the embedded verb has been analysed as an infinitive (Chung 1998). Examples from Topping (1973) and Chung (1998) are given in (2). Furthermore, Chamorro displays a special verbal inflection in wh-dependencies. The inflection is “special” in that under certain conditions the verbs that a wh-expression passes encode the type of verbal argument that is extracted (*wh-agreement*). Wh-agreement thus “overwrites” the forms of subject-verb agreement for which the verb would ordinarily be inflected (Chung 1998). The paradigm for wh_{subj}-extraction is shown in table 2. A striking finding is the apparent syncretism of the marker *-um-* in control and wh_{NOM}-extraction contexts. However, according to Chung (1998:243f.), *-um-* and *man-* in control constructions are merely infinitive markers, and the markers *-um-* in control and wh-extraction contexts are accidental homophones. This conclusion is drawn from the observation that the embedded predicates of control constructions are invariably infinitives, whereas wh-extraction is not limited to non-finite clauses.

4. Reanalysis. I would like to propose a new analysis of the Chamorro data according to which the inflectional markers *-um-* and *man-* in control constructions are not infinitive markers, but subject agreement markers. This view is supported by the observation that in intransitive contexts the embedded verb indeed inflects for the number of its structurally highest argument. Under this assumption, the paradigm of verbal inflection in control contexts turns out to be entirely identical to the inflection paradigm of wh_{NOM}-extraction contexts: If the embedded predicate is transitive, then the agreement marker is the marker expected with subject extraction out of transitive realis predicates (invariably *-um-*). If, on the other hand, the embedded predicate is intransitive, then its agreement morphology must be identical to the pattern expected with subject extraction from intransitive predicates. As can be seen from table 2, no special morphology shows up in this context. The expected pattern is thus the regular inflection of intransitive verbs in contexts without wh-extraction. This is indeed borne out: as can be seen from table 3, the inflectional pattern of intransitive embedded verbs in control constructions is identical to the pattern of realis intransitives. This leads to the conclusion that control and subject extraction yield identical morphological marking on the agreeing verb.

5. Consequences. The special morphology in the context of wh-movement is generally assumed to be the result of successive-cyclic wh-movement: the feature set of a phase head α is modified due to a DP_{wh} being remerged at the edge of α and subsequently being extracted out of α P. If the reasoning is on the right track, then control, too, must involve a constituent that is merged/remerged at the edge of embedded v/I and subsequently extracted out of v/I. In addition, there is evidence for assuming that v has ϕ -features, and I has no EPP feature in Chamorro. This yields the conclusion that finite control is derived by raising the embedded external argument to the matrix clause, remerging it as the external argument of matrix V (which is argued against by Landau 2004), thus violating the Activity Condition (AC; Chomsky 2001; but see alternative accounts of AC-effects without the AC: e.g. Nevins 2004, Obata and Epstein 2008).

- (2) a. Hu chagi [humatsa i lamasa] (tr sg)
 1SG tried [<UM>lift DET table]
 ‘I tried to lift the table’
- b. Tafañ-ä’-ayuda [kumumprendi yan um-asisti i famagu’un siha] (tr pl)
 1PLINCL-RECIPR-help [<UM>understand and <UM>assist DET children 3PL]
 ‘Let us help one another to understand and assist the children’
- c. Malago’ yo’ [lumi’of gi tasi] (intr sg)
 want 1SG [<UM>dive LOC ocean]
 ‘I want to dive in the ocean’
- d. Man-malago’ siha [man-ma’udai] (intr pl)
 PL-want 3PL [MAN-ride]
 ‘They want to ride’

Table 1

Chamorro

*Subject agreement on embedded V
 in control contexts*

	TRANSITIVE	INTRANSITIVE
SG	-um-	-um-/ -
DU	-um-	-um-/ -
PL	-um-	man-

Table 2

Chamorro

Verb morphology under wh_{NOM}-extraction

	TRANSITIVE	INTRANSITIVE
WH _{NOM} , REALIS	-um-	—
WH _{NOM} , IRREALIS	—	—

Table 3

Chamorro

*Subject agreement on intransitive
 verbal predicates*

	REALIS	IRREALIS
1 SG	-um-	(bai) u-
2 SG	-um-	un-
3 SG	-um-	u-
1 INCL DU	-um-	(u) ta-
1 EXCL DU	-um-	(bai) in-
2 DU	-um-	in-
3 DU	-um-	u-
1 INCL PL	man-	(u) ta- fan-
1 EXCL PL	man-	(bai) in- fan-
2 PL	man-	in- fan-
3 PL	man-	u- fan-

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