Landau 2013: Chapter 3

Empirical arguments for PRO

p. 69:

"Suppose we establish a generalization G that refers to lexical (i.e. overt) subjects. Suppose further that we show G to be truly syntactic, i.e., irreducible to ulterior concepts (e.g., thematic prominence, semantic recoverability, discourse salience etc.). Now we turn to control infinitives and check whether G holds in them. If it does, we have produced a pretty solid argument for the existence of PRO."

Two types of evidence:

-evidence for a clausal analysis of infinitives

-evidence directly pertaining to the presence of PRO

Infinitives are clausal (hence, contain a subject) (Landau's 3.1)

-Infinitives can be introduced by elements in the CP area: WH, complemetizers:

1.

    a. Mary asked **which way** to go

    b. John probeerde [**om** het boek te lezen].   *Dutch*
       John tried   COMP the book to read
       'John tried to read the book.'

    c. Gil nimna **me**-le'ašen   sigaryot.   *Hebrew*
       Gil refrain from-to.smoke cigarettes
       'Gil refrains from smoking cigarettes.'

¥ ˙7Ua Vf]X[Y˙I b]j Yfg]hm˙DfYgg"˙5``f][\hg˙fYgYfj YX"˙H\]g˙Wtbh˙Ybh˙]g˙Yl Wl XYX˙Zca ˙ci f˙7fYUh]j Y
7ca a cbg˙]WˢbgY"˙: cf˙a cfY˙]bZˢcfa Uh]cbž˙gYY˙\Hhd.##cWk "a]h�™YXi #\Y˙d#ZˢUe!ZˢU]f!i gY#"

-Control Infinitives can be conjoined with clauses. On the assumption that only likes conjoin, we conclude that control infinitives are clauses:

2.

   a. To write a novel and for the world to give it critical acclaim is John's dream.

   b. John expected to write a novel but that it would be a critical disaster.

¥ ˙7Ua Vf]X[Y˙I b]j Yfg]hṁDfYgg"˙5``˙f][\hg˙fYgYfj YX"˙H\]g˙Ẇb́hŸbh˙]g˙YI V̇i XYX˙ Z̊fca ˙ci f˙7fYUh]j Y
7ca a cbg˙`]Ẁ bgY"˙: cf˙a cfY˙]b̊z̊cfa Uh]cb̊z̊gYY˙\h́nd.##cV̇k "a ]h"YXi #\Y`d#Ẑ Ue!Z̊ U]f!i gY#"

Do we have support for such an assumption?

-VP ellipsis strands items in Iº. Projections of I⁰ are clauses. VP-ellipsis in infinitives strands *to,* which can/should be seen as an element of (infinitival) Iº, hence the infinitive is clausal:

3.

    a. She didn't hope that Brian would recover soon, but we did __.
    b. She didn't hope to recover soon, but we hoped to __.

¥ ˙7Ua Vf]X[Y˙I b]j Yfg]hm˙DfYgg"˙5``˙f][\hg˙fYgYfj YX"˙H\]g˙Wcbh˙Ybh˙]g˙YI Vi XYX˙Zfca ˙ci f˙7fYUh]j Y
7ca a cbg˙]W'bgY"˙: cf˙a cfY˙]bZcfa Uh]cbž˙gYY˙\hhd.##cWk "a]h'YXi #\Y˙d#ZUe!ZU]f!i gY#"

Syntactic evidence for PRO (Landau's 3.2)

-secondary predicates require a DP:

4. a.   John ate (the meat).
   b.   John ate *(the meat) raw.
   c.   He served dinner angry at the guests.
   d. *Dinner was served angry at the guests.

Hence there must be a PRO present to "carry" the secondary predicate in (5):

5. a. The meat was too chewy [PRO to be eaten raw]
   b. [PRO to serve dinner angry at the guests] is bad bad manners

-Floated quantifiers require the syntactic presence of a DP

6a.   They have all gained something.

  b. * Something has all been gained.
          Hence there must be a PRO present in (6c, d):

  c.   They wanted [PRO to all gain something].

  d.   [PRO to all gain something], they knew, would
             be a miracle.

-Plural agreement requires a plural DP:

7a. * John hoped that his uncle would be partners.
 b. * This group is/are partners.

     Hence there must be a PRO present in (8):

8.   John$_i$ proposed to his uncle$_j$ [PRO$_{i+j}$ to be partners].

-Case Concord: In many languages, NP and AP predicates require Case. This Case is the same as that of the subject of the predicate (by some mechanism of concord with the subject).

With infinitives, the Case on the predicate does not have to be the same as that of the Controller. Hence the predicate gets its Case from *some* subject DP:

8.
    a. *Russian*
      Ona   poprosila ego   ne ezdit' tuda odnomu   zavtra.
      she.ɴᴏᴍ asked   him.ᴀᴄᴄ not to-go there alone.ᴅᴀᴛ tomorrow
      'She asked him not to go there alone tomorrow.'

    b. *Icelandic*
      Ólaf   hafði ekki gaman   af að vanta einan   í veisluna.
      Olaf.ɴᴏᴍ had   not   pleasure of to lack   alone.ᴀᴄᴄ to party.the
      'Olaf didn't find it pleasurable to be absent alone from the party.'

-Binding tests argue for the existence of PRO by making it easier to explain Binding Condition A and B phenomena:

9a. Mary$_i$ planned [PRO$_i$ to buy herself$_{i/*j}$ a new coat].
   b. Vivian convinced him$_{i/*j}$ [PRO$_i$ to forgive John's$_j$ cousin].

10a. [PRO$_i$ behaving oneself$_i$ in restaurants] would be necessary.
   b. Mary$_i$ realized that it would be useless [PRO$_i$ to nominate herself$_i$ for the job].

A similar argument can be found in languages whose (possessive) anaphors are only subject-oriented but can be bound in infinitives by apparent non-subjects. Of course they are bound by PRO:

11. a. John ubedil Mary$_i$ [PRO$_i$ navestit svoju$_i$ sestru].   *Russian*
    John persuaded Mary   to.visit SELF's sister
    'John persuaded Mary to visit her own sister.'

 b. Sie hat dem Hans$_i$ erlaubt [PRO$_i$ sich$_i$ den Fisch *German*
    She has the.DAT John allowed   SELF the.ACC fish

    mit Streifen vorzustellen].
    with stripes to.imagine
    'She allowed John to imagine what the fish would look like with stripes.'

Reciprocals do not take split antecedents, as is seen in (12a). What is going on in (12b) then? There must be a PRO present that binds the reciprocal.

12.
a. * John talked with Mary about each other.
b.   John$_i$ proposed to Mary$_j$ [PRO$_{i+j}$ to help each other$_{i+j}$].

13a. [__ realizing that Oscar$_i$ was unpopular] didn't disturb him.

   b. John$_i$ reminded us that [___to push him$_i$ any further] would be useless.

   c. [__ realizing that he was unpopular] didn't disturb him.

   d. [__ realizing that he was unpopular] didn't disturb Oscar.

What are the possible interpretations of the empty subject and why?

There is a syntactically active (yet unpronounced) DP in the subject position!

-Partial Control

14a. *The organizer met
   b. *Mary kissed

15a. The organizer decided [PRO to meet right before the parade].

   b. John felt sorry that Mary regretted [PRO kissing the night before].

-Expletive constructions: there is no PRO_{expl}:

16a. It is obvious that Bill is lying

   b. It is required that we wear helmets in class

17a. *[PRO to be obvious that Bill is lying] would
     be a shame.
  b. *It is illegal [PRO to be required that we wear
    helmets in class].

Can you run the same test for expletive *there*?

Can you formulate this restriction without recourse to PRO?

Landau: no.

When you have a phonetically non-overt syntactic category, two issues arise

-licensing

-interpretation/identification

What can we say about licensing so far?

What can we say about interpretation/identification?

References

Landau, Idan. "Control in Generative Grammar: A Research Companion." Cambridge University Press, 2013.

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