# Controlling for Movement: Reply to Wood 2012[*]

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### Abstract

In a recent squib, Wood 2012 provides an argument against the Movement Theory of Control, which treats Control as A-movement, similar to Raising. His argument is based on Control configurations in Icelandic object-extraposition constructions for which no movement derivation can be plausibly assumed. I contest Wood's claim that Control in such cases furnishes an argument against the MTC and show that a proper analysis of 'object extraposition' does not support this argument.

## 1 Introduction

In a recent squib, Wood 2012 provides an argument against the Movement Theory of Control (MTC; see Boeckx et al. 2010 and references therein), which treats Control as A-movement, similar to Raising. His argument is based on Control configurations in Icelandic for which no movement derivation can be plausibly assumed. Wood focuses on 'object extraposition' (O-Ex, (1a)), first extensively discussed by Thráinsson (1979, 211), which precludes extraction from the 'extraposed' clause in the presence of the pronoun *það* (1b).

(1)    a.    Þeir      ákváðu (það)   að $PRO$ heimsækja Ólaf.
           they:NOM decided it:ACC to       visit      Olaf.ACC
           'They decided to visit Olaf.'

     b.    *Ólaf$_i$      ákváðu þeir      það    að $PRO$ heimsækja $t_i$.
           Olaf:ACC decided they:NOM it:ACC to       visit
           'Olaf, they decided to visit.'

Wood shows that neither A- nor A-bar movement from 'extraposed' clauses of this kind is possible, and that the relevant construal is not one of Non-obligatory Control (in which case it would fall outside the scope of the MTC). I take both of these facts to be established by

Wood and will not dispute them here. What I contest is Wood's claim that Control in O-Ex furnishes an argument against the MTC. For him, the impossibility of extraction witnessed in (1b) entails the impossibility of Raising of *þeir* in (1a). I will show that a proper analysis of 'object extraposition' does not support this argument.

## 2    What is 'object extraposition'?

The problem for Wood's claim comes with the proper analysis of O-Ex as in (1a). O-Ex differs from regular extraposition in that what would otherwise be the clause-internal $\theta$-position of the 'extraposed' clause is occupied by a pronoun.

Wood notes that *það* in O-Ex shows rather clear-cut indications of being thematic and referential rather than expletive, hence an argument (cf. Vikner 1995, 224ff., Thráinsson 2007, 365ff.; also Bennis 1986, ch. 2 for parallel arguments based on Dutch). One such indication is that it receives $\theta$-dependent quirky case.

(2)    Þeir      frestuðu  (því)  að $PRO$ hálshöggva fangana.
       they:NOM postponed  it:DAT to      execute    the prisoners:ACC
       'They postponed executing the prisoners.'

If object *það* is thematic, it receives the verb's $\theta$-role, and additional assignment of the same $\theta$-role to the 'extraposed' clause would occur in violation of the Theta Criterion (Chomsky 1981).[1] This in turn suggests that whenever thematic *það* is present, an associated object clause clause is in fact extra-sentential; that is, it is right-dislocated, not extraposed.[2] This is illustrated in the following, where HC stands for 'host clause' and CP is *það*'s extra-sentential associate.

(3)     [$_{\text{HC}}$ … *það$_i$* … ] CP$_i$

On this view, to be refined below, HC and CP are paratactically arranged clauses linked by cataphoric *það*, now taken to be a free pronoun.

One indication that this is indeed the correct analysis is the fact that the 'extraposed' clause in O-Ex can (but need not be) separated from the host clause by a prosodic break. This optional intonational isolation, corresponding to the clause boundary in (3), is typical for Right-dislocation (cf. Ott and de Vries 2013).

Furthermore, two key facts cited by Wood follow straightforwardly from this analysis. If the 'extraposed' clause is paratactically separated from the host clause as per (3), no move-

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[1]What is at issue here is the prohibition against assignment of one $\theta$-role to several XPs. The MTC denies the validity of the other part of the Theta Criterion, which prohibits assignment of multiple $\theta$-roles to a single XP. The two clauses of the Theta Criterion are logically unrelated.

[2]I use the term 'right-dislocated' here in the sense of Ott and de Vries 2013, 2014 (see below), which covers more than just what is sometimes refered to as 'backgrounding;' see footnote 4.

ment dependency could straddle the two clauses.[3] This was illustrated in (1b) above (see also Thráinsson 2007, 367); Ott and de Vries 2013, 2014 show that right-dislocated constituents of any category are strong islands for extraction. By contrast, as shown by Wood, regular extraposition without *það* does not bleed extraction in this way:

(4)  Ólaf$_i$   ákváðu þeir    að $PRO$ heimsækja $t_i$.
     Olaf:ACC decided they:NOM to      visit
     'Olaf, they decided to visit.'

The same asymmetry obtains in Dutch and German (Bennis 1986; Webelhuth 1992) and follows straightforwardly from an analysis that takes the right-peripheral object clause in (1b) to be an extra-sentential associate rather than an argument of the host-internal predicate, unlike the extraposed object clause in (4).

It also follows straightforwardly from the analysis in (3) that *það* cannot occur with raising/'aspectual' infinitives, as noted by Wood:

(5)  a.  Hún$_i$   virðist   (*það)   $t_i$ elska Svein.
         she:NOM appeared   it:ACC   love Sveinn:ACC
         'She appeared to love Sveinn.'

     b.  Haraldur   byrjaði (*það)   að senda henni    bréf.
         Harold:NOM began     it:ACC to send   her:DAT letters:ACC
         'Harold began to send her letters.'

If, as I propose, the 'extraposed' clause is extra-sentential in the presence of *það*, the unacceptability of the examples in (5) simply reflects the fact (illustrated in (6)) that the host clause in each case is not a well-formed clause by itself.

(6)  a.  *Hún$_i$   virðist það.
         she:NOM appeared it:ACC

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[3]A skeptic of the Right-dislocation analysis of O-Ex might object that this result follows equally from an approach that takes *það* and the object clause to form a constituent in the base, either as a D–CP combination (a possibility mentioned by Wood) or some kind of N–modifier construction (as argued by Thráinsson 1979, 222). The island status of this base constituent would then fall under the Complex-NP Constraint. It is not clear that such an approach is plausible, however: given that *það* cataphorically links to the 'extraposed' clause, the relation between the two elements is quite different from that between a noun and an uncontroversial complement or modifying adjunct clause. On the other hand, Thráinsson (1979, 219f.) does provide some evidence that *það* and its associated clause form a constituent (the *það*–CP combination can enter into various movement relations). Two remarks are in order here.

First, given that the relation between *það* and its clausal associate is unlikely to be one of complementation or modification, it is most plausibly taken to be one of apposition, in which case the appositive clause may be derived in the way suggested below but interpolated linearly into the host clause; see Ott 2014 for a parallel analysis of right-dislocated and appositive XPs in these terms (*modulo* linear position).

Second, note that the existence of *það*–CP base constituents, even if feasible, would not rule out that the cases under discussion here are derivationally ambiguous (cf. Thráinsson 1979, 217, 222); the argument given below holds as long as the Right-dislocation parse is available. That it indeed is available is brought out by the parallel fragment responses mentioned below, where the relation between *það* and CP must plainly be discourse-anaphoric.

b. *Haraldur    byrjaði það.
   Harold:NOM began   it:ACC

# 3   What is Right-dislocation?

If O-Ex is a case of Right-dislocation (RD), we need to ask what the proper analysis of RD is. It turns out that the simple representation in (3) is insufficient to account for cases like the following:

(7)   a.   Allir$_i$    ákváðu það að heimsækja föður sinn$_i$.
          everyone decided it   to visit      father his
          'Everyone$_i$ decided it, to visit his$_i$ father.'

     b.   *Hann$_i$ ákvað   það að heimsækja föður Jóns$_i$.
          he     decided it   to visit      John's father
          'He$_i$ decided it, to visit John's$_i$ father.'

Such cases are at variance with the extra-sentential status of 'extraposed' object clauses assumed in (3): in (7a) the host-internal QP can bind the pronoun inside the right-dislocated clause; in (7b), coreference of the host's pronominal subject and the R-expression within the right-peripheral clause incurs a Condition C effect. If we simply take the peripheral clause in O-Ex to be a 'free-floating' supplement, such connectivity effects remain mysterious. If, on the other hand, we postulate a host-internal base position for the 'extraposed' clause, we sacrifice the straightforward explanations of basic properties of O-Ex pointed out in section 2.

As extensively shown by Ott and de Vries (2013, 2014), this tension is found with RD in general. Right-dislocated constituents are extra-sentential 'add-ons' that consistently show connectivity into their host clause. To resolve this paradox, Ott and de Vries (2013, 2014) argue that RD[4] is generally biclausal, the right-dislocated XP a remnant of deletion under identity with the host clause. The analysis is illustrated below (example from Thráinsson 2007, 367).

(8)   a.   Ég þekki hana    ekkert, Maríu.
          I   know her:ACC nothing Mary:ACC
          'I don't know her at all, Mary (that is).'

     b.   [$_{CP_1}$ ég þekki hana$_i$ ekkert] [$_{CP_2}$ *Maríu$_i$* [~~þekki ég~~ *t* ~~ekkert~~]]

The core intuition of the analysis is that right-dislocated constituents are surface fragments of an underlying 'reformulation' of the host clause. This parallelism of the two clauses, required by identity conditions on clausal ellipsis (see Merchant 2001, 2004, a.o.), is what explains clause-internal properties of the clause-external 'dislocated' XP (such as accusative case of *Maríu* in (8a); compare Thráinsson 1979, 71). See Ott and de Vries 2013, 2014 for a detailed defense of

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[4]Ott and de Vries take RD to be a cover term for both 'backgrounding' and 'afterthought' varieties of RD, in which the right-peripheral XP is given and focused, respectively. They show that despite information-structural differences, the constructions share core syntactic properties.

this approach.

The analysis extends straightforwardly to right-dislocated clauses as in (1a), as in fact argued by Ott and de Vries. Adopting their approach, the underlying representation of (1a) is given in simplified form in (9a); PF-deletion in $CP_2$ (fed by fronting of the object clause, as per Merchant 2004[5]) yields the surface O-Ex pattern (9b).

(9)    a.    $[_{CP_1}$ þeir ákváðu það] $[_{CP_2}$ [að heimsækja Ólaf]$_i$ [þeir ákváðu $t_i$]]]
            they decided it      to visit    Olaf   they decided

    b.    $[_{CP_1}$ þeir ákváðu það] $[_{CP_2}$ [að heimsækja Ólaf]$_i$ [þeir ákváðu $t_i$]]]
            they decided it      to visit    Olaf

On this approach, then, *það* can be straightforwardly analyzed as a full thematic argument, in full compliance with the Theta Criterion: each *það* and the right-dislocated object clause are $\theta$-marked 'in parallel' within their respective clauses; the relation between the two, like in (3), is discursive (coreference). Both the possibility of a prosodic break between the two clauses and the strict opacity for extraction of the right-dislocated object clause follow straightforwardly, as before. Independent unacceptability of either host or fragment clause confers unacceptability to the entire construction; this was shown above to explain the deviance of the examples in (5).

While the analysis may seem somewhat cumbersome at first glance, it is important to note that its 'component structures' are independently given. The derivation of the right-dislocated clause in (9b) is exactly analogous to that of A's rejoinder in the following dialogue, assuming Merchant's (2004) PF-deletion analysis of fragments.

(10)    A:    Þeir ákváðu það.
             they decided it
             'They decided it.'

        B:    *What (did they decide)?*

        A:    Að heimsækja Ólaf (= $[_{CP}$ [að heimsækja Ólaf]$_i$ [þeir ákváðu $t_i$]])
             to visit    Olaf
             'To visit Olaf.'

Given this independent justification, there is no reason to assume that O-Ex could not be assigned a structural description as shown above.

Importantly now, amending the representation of RD as first approximated in (3) in the way proposed by Ott and de Vries allows us to capture the *prima facie* problematic examples in (7) as well. To see this, consider the underlying representation of (7a), repeated in (11), before (12a) and after deletion (12b).

(11)    Allir$_i$    ákváðu það að heimsækja föður sinn$_i$.
        everyone decided it   to visit      father his

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[5]This is, in fact, not a necessary ingredient of the analysis, but one I adopt here for convenience. If deletion, like deaccenting, can target non-constituents, movement may not be necessary (but see Merchant 2004 for various arguments in favor of movement feeding deletion).

'Everyone$_i$ decided it, to visit his$_i$ father.'

(12)    a.    [$_{\text{CP}_1}$ allir$_i$ ákváðu það] [$_{\text{CP}_2}$ [að heimsækja föður sinn$_i$]$_k$ [allir$_i$ ákváðu $t_k$]]
              all   decided it     to visit    father his    all   decided

        b.    [$_{\text{CP}_1}$ allir$_i$ ákváðu það] [$_{\text{CP}_2}$ [að heimsækja föður sinn$_i$]$_k$ [~~allir$_i$ ákváðu $t_k$~~]]
              all   decided it     to visit    father his

CP$_2$ being underlyingly parallel to CP$_1$, the possessive pronoun *sinn* is bound by the universal subject in the same clause, 'swallowed' by deletion under identity. *Mutatis mutandis* for (7b), where the underlying representation of CP$_2$ contains the 'offending' coindexed R-expression, yielding the Condition C effect without actual reconstruction of the right-dislocated clause into the host clause.

Again, and crucially, for each case there is a corresponding discourse fragment: A's rejoinder in (13)/(14) is derivationally equivalent to CP$_2$ in (12b)/(7b).

(13)    A:   Allir$_i$     ákváðu það.
              everyone decided it
       B:   *What (did everyone decide)?*
       A:   Að heimsækja föður sinn$_i$.
              to visit     his   father

(14)    A:   Hann$_i$ ákvað   það.
              he    decided it
       B:   *What (did he decide)?*
       A:   *Að heimsækja föður Jóns$_i$.
              to visit     father John's

As before, this shows that the expressions used to compose the O-Ex surface pattern are generated independently.

# 4   MTC and O-Ex—*quo vadis*?

The deletion analysis of RD accounts for the core properties of O-Ex in a principled fashion. It does so by taking seriously Thráinsson's (1979) arguments for *það*'s argumental status and analyzing the 'extraposed' clause as the surface fragment of an elliptical 'reformulation' of the host clause (akin to a fragment response).

Crucially, this conclusion undermines Wood's argument against the MTC: representations such as (9b) and (12b) are compatible with either analysis of Control (construal or movement). To illustrate, the RD analysis of the baseline case in (1a) permits both representations in (15) and (16), respectively identifying the covert subject of the elliptical CP$_2$ as $PRO$ or as the trace of the overt subject raised into the elided domain of the clause.[6]

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[6]The only way to block (16) would be to rule out remnant movement *in toto*, but this would be a rather extreme response requiring substantial empirical and/or conceptual justification. Furthermore, as pointed out in footnote 5, movement of the remnant prior to deletion is not an essential ingredient of the analysis.

(15)  $[_{CP_1}$ þeir ákváðu það$_j$] $[_{CP_2}$ $[_{CP}$ að $PRO_k$ heimsækja Ólaf]$_i$ [~~ákváðu þeir$_k$ $t_i$~~]]$_j$
they decided it          to       visit      Olaf

(16)  $[_{CP_1}$ þeir ákváðu það$_j$] $[_{CP_2}$ $[_{CP}$ að $t_k$ heimsækja Ólaf]$_i$ [~~ákváðu þeir$_k$ $t_i$~~]]$_j$
they decided it          to    visit      Olaf

In short, Wood's argument is invalidated by a proper analysis of O-Ex. O-Ex being an instance of RD, the 'extraposed' clause is not in fact part of the sentential domain of the *það*-clause but a fragment of an underlyingly parallel clause. This reintroduces the possibility of a movement derivation, making O-Ex compatible with the MTC. Note that none of this provides any empirical support *for* the MTC; all I have shown here is that O-Ex, just like clausal fragments in cases like (10), is impartial to the proper analysis of Control.

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