

Try-Type *To*-Infinitival Complements*

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1. Introduction

A *try*-type verb is an obligatory control verb that selects a null subject (PRO) in its *to*-infinitival complement (*to*-IC) and requires it to be controlled by the matrix subject:

- (1) Tracy_i tried [PRO_i to tell me a lie].

Chomsky (2000:105) assumes that control infinitivals are headed by C selecting nondefective T and Chomsky (2001:8) also assumes that their structures have the selectional relation C-T. This means that *try*-type *to*-ICs are CPs.¹ Further, I follow Chomsky's (2007, 2008) suggestion that C, not T, originally bears a Case feature, and assume that control C is the real probe to value a null Case feature of PRO (i.e., control C carries a (null) Case feature).

Given this, we can rule out examples like (2a, b) by saying that the derivation crashes with the Case features of the control C and the *to*-IC subject left undeleted:

- (2) a. *John tried [Fred to win]. (Culicover and Jackendoff (2001:496))
b. *John tried [Mary to leave]. (Pires (2006:7))

It is worth noting that (nonfinite) control C is always phonetically empty and

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¹ Bošković (1996, 1997b) advances a TP analysis of *try*-type *to*-ICs by virtue of the Minimal Structure Principle. The TP analysis is maintained by Iwakura (2000, 2002), Matsubara (2002, 2005), etc.

cannot license overt subjects (see fn. 7).

By contrast, there are speakers who allow *try*-type verbs to select *for-to*-ICs with overt subjects. Andrew Radford (p.c.) suggests that we hear (American and even British) people saying examples like the following:

- (3) I tried very hard [for my book to get accepted for publication].

In this respect, Noam Chomsky (p.c.) points out that this kind of construction is correct and is pretty normal spoken English. This can receive support from the fact that we can find many examples of this type in *Google*. All informants of mine agree that (4a-c) are acceptable:^{2,3}

- (4) a. You can try [for her to return on a tourist visa] ...
 (Another Tourist Visa Question – VisaPro Immigration Message Boards)
 b. But no matter how hard her parents try [for her to live a normal,
 mainstream life] ... (Salon, *Boys Town*)
 c. ... we will try very hard [for there to be some modest salary increase]
 (*The Senate Record* – February 25, 2003)

I can adduce evidence that the *for-to*-IC in (3) and (4) is the complement of *try*. First, it can be used as a reply to the *wh*-question that focalizes on the object of *try*:

- (5) a. A: What can we try?
 B: We can try [for her to return on a tourist visa].

² I owe the judgments on (4a-c) to Noam Chomsky, Andrew Radford, Peter Skaer, and Darren Lingley. Two other anonymous informants too judge this construction to be acceptable.

Notice that *Google* cites the following *for-to*-IC from the public press:

- (i) We usually would try [for him to be the cover guy on somebody we knew would give us trouble]. (*The Oakland Press* (High School Sports, All-County Football Team), Sunday, November 28, 2004)

It should be noted that *try* in these examples means roughly either “attempt to persuade NP to VP” or “arrange for whoever has control over NP to get NP to VP” (Chomsky (p.c.) and Chomsky and Lasnik (1977:455)).

³ Importantly, examples like those in (3) and (4) are observed in languages like Ozark English (Chomsky and Lasnik (1977), Carroll (1983), Henry (1992)):

- (i) a. I tried for him to go home. (Henry (1992:283))
 b. Who are you going to try [for *t* to go to the church social with you]?
 (Chomsky and Lasnik (1977:455))
 c. Who did you say you were going to try [for *t* to go to the church social with you]?
 (Chomsky and Lasnik (1977:455))

b. A: What are you going to try?

B: I am going to try [for my book to get accepted for publication].

Second, the *for-to*-IC can appear in focus position in pseudo-cleft sentence as an equivalent to the object of *try*.

- (6) a. What I am going to try is [for my book to get accepted for publication].
 b. What he tried was [for her to return on a tourist visa].

Third, the *for-to*-IC can undergo passivization and occur in subject position:⁴

- (7) a. [For her to get accepted into the academy] was tried *t* by her mother.
 b. [For him to get to like learning karate] was tried *t* by the teacher.
 c. [For John to memorize the speech] was tried *t* by the club president.

Further evidence comes from the fact that extraction from the *for-to*-IC is possible, which is characteristic of extraction from complement clauses:

- (8) a. What kind of visa can you try [for him to return on *t*]?
 b. Which class are you going to try [for him to attend *t*]?

Consequently, we can see that *try* in (3) and (4) is no longer a control verb and that the phonetically realized C *for* can license overt subjects by valuing their Case features.

Furthermore, evidence in favor of the CP status of control *to*-ICs as in (1) relates to the fact that they can be coordinated with CP *for-to*-ICs. Both the bracketed strings in (9a, b), according to the traditional assumption that only constituents of the same type can be coordinated (Radford (2004:86)), are of the same syntactic category, i.e. CP:

- (9) a. I tried [PRO to see a specialist] and [for my wife to see one at the same time].
 b. What I will try is [PRO to see a specialist] and [for my wife to see one at the same time].

Here, however, a question arises with regard to Case-assigning properties of *try*-type verbs. Pesetsky (1982, 1992) argues that a verb has a Case-assigning property if it selects a DP complement. If this is correct, it follows that *try*-type

⁴ I am grateful to Peter Skaer for presenting examples (7a-c). I also depend on Chris Wanderer for the judgments on these examples. Note that there is some variation among informants with respect to their acceptability.

verbs should have Case-assigning properties since they select DP complements:

- (10) a. John tried something. (Bošković (1996:276, 1997b:16))
 b. They should try new drugs on rats.

Further, (7a-c) show that these verbs, even when selecting *for-to*-ICs, hold Case features since passivization is the operation that absorbs verbal (accusative) Case. Given that *try*-type verbs serve as Case-assigners, then we have to account for how to deal with the Case feature of *try* in (1), (3), (4), and so forth. If *try* in these examples has its Case feature left intact, the derivation mistakenly crashes.

The purpose of this paper is to resolve this problem and advance a new analysis that enables us to account for the distribution of *try*-type (*for-to*-ICs) in a principled way. This paper is organized as follows. Section 2.1 proposes that C (heading (*for-to*-ICs)) optionally has a Case feature and an interpretable Agree feature (= ϕ -features). Section 2.2 shows how the suggested analysis applies to *try*-type (*for-to*-ICs). Section 3 forms a conclusion.

2. An Alternative Analysis

2.1 Case-Bearing (*For-to*-Infinitival Complements

To settle the problem noted above, i.e., how to delete the Case feature of *try* in (1), (3), (4), etc., I, following Bošković (1995), assume that clauses optionally have Case. Bošković suggests that “although clauses can appear in Caseless position, they need Case when they move to subject position or undergo Topicalization”. In this connection, Stowell (1981) too indicates that clauses in Case positions can undergo Topicalization, whereas those in non-Case positions cannot. Compare (11a, b) with (11c, d):

- (11) a. [CP That Jim lives with his sister], Paul already knows *t*.
 b. [CP That the water is bad], Jenny forgot to mention *t*.
 ((a, b) Stowell (1981:159), in Iwakura (2006:10))
 c. *[CP That the computer will break down], I know that Neil is afraid *t*.
 d. *[CP That his hamburgers were worth buying], Kevin persuaded Roger *t*.
 ((c, d) Stowell (1981:206, 409), in Iwakura (2006:2, 3))

What is worth noting here is that, as pointed out by Iwakura (2002, 2006, 2008), the traces (= copies) left by Topicalization in (11a, b) bear Case. This is confirmed by the following contrast between (12a, b) and (12c, d):

as (16a), forms a structure like (16b) at some stage of derivation:

- (16) a. You can try [for her to return on a tourist visa]
 b. [v^*P v^* -try [VP tV [CP for [TP her to return on a tourist visa]]]]

In (16b) Agree holds between *for* and *her*, thereby deleting their Case features and the AF of *for*. Given (14), C bears a Case feature and an interpretable AF. Then Agree holds between v^* -try and C, so that their Case features and the AF of v^* -try are deleted. This leads the derivation to converge, deriving the acceptable example (16a). The same account holds for (4b).

We are also in a position to provide a ready account for how to derive examples (3) and (4c). (3), duplicated here as (17a), is assigned a structure like (17b), in which *very hard* is a v^*P -adjoined adjunct and the *for-to-IC* adjoins from its base position to v^*P :⁵

- (17) a. I tried very hard [for my book to get accepted for publication].
 b. [v^*P [v^*P [v^*P v^* -tried [VP tV tCP]]]very hard] [CP for [TP my book to get accepted for publication]]]

In (17b) Agree holds between *for* and *book*, thus deleting their relevant features. As noted in section 2.1, since adjunction of the *for-to-IC* to v^*P creates an A'-chain (CP , tCP), tCP is assumed to have a Case feature and an AF. (14) enables tCP to bear these features. This allows Agree to hold between v^* -tried and tCP , thereby deleting their relevant features. Since tCP has its Case feature deleted, then the C head of the v^*P -adjoined *for-to-IC* also has its Case feature deleted. Accordingly, the derivation results in convergence, generating the acceptable example (17a). The same account applies to (4c).

Likewise, we can derive examples like (18a, b) in the same fashion as (17a):

- (18) a. I tried two days ago [PRO to leave]. (Bošković (1996:281))
 b. She tried very hard [PRO to remember his name].

In (18a, b) *two days ago/very hard* is v^*P -adjoined and the *to-IC* undergoes

⁵ I follow Iwakura (2004, 2008), who denies the possibility that AdvPs like *very much*, *sincerely*, *in those days*, etc., are VP-adjoined adjuncts and that *to-ICs* adjoin to VP. Iwakura claims that adjunction of the AdvPs to v^*P , not VP, is consolidated by the fact that *very much* in (ib) has the same function as *very much* in (ia) with respect to the verb:

- (i) a. I wanted/dislike it very much.
 b. I very much wanted/dislike it.

adjunction from its original position to *v**P, just as in (17b). Thus, (18a) reaches the following derivational stage:

- (19) [*v**P [*v**P [*v**P *v**-tried [*v*P *t*VP *t*CP]]] two days ago] [CP C [TP PRO to leave]]]

In (19) Agree holds between the control C and PRO, hence deleting their relevant features. Notice that *t*CP, being the tail of the A'-chain, possesses a Case feature and an AF as a result of (14). Then *v**-tried is allowed to enter into an Agree relation with *t*CP, under which their relevant features are deleted. Simultaneously, this Agree makes the Case feature of the C head of the *v**P-adjoined *to*-IC deleted. In consequence, the derivation converges, giving birth to the grammatical example (18a). The same account is true of (18b).

The present analysis can also apply to pseudo-cleft examples (20a, b) ((20b) = (6b)). The structures underlying (20a, b) are schematically illustrated in (21a, b):

- (20) a. What John tried was to hijack an airplane. (Bošković (1996:276))
 b. What he tried was [for her to return on a tourist visa].

- (21) a. [CP what [TP John *v**-tried *t*]] was [CP C [TP PRO to hijack an airplane]]
 b. [CP what [TP he *v**-tried *t*]] was [CP for [TP her to return on ...]]

As argued by Bošković (1997a:250-254), if *what* in (21a, b) is a surface anaphor in the sense of Hankamer and Sag (1976) and does not need Case,⁶ then it is replaced by its antecedent, i.e. the (*for*-)*to*-IC, at some stage of derivation. This enables us to take *t* to be connected with the (*for*-)*to*-IC. Given this, Agree holding between *v**-tried and *t* deletes the relevant features of *v**-tried and C, which allows the derivation to converge, yielding the grammatical examples (20a, b). The same account holds for (6a).

Let us now consider how to block the derivation of examples (22a, b) ((22a) = (2a)). (22a, b) are assigned structures like (23a, b), respectively:

- (22) a. *John tried [Fred to win].
 b. *Who did John try [*t* to leave]? ((b) Bošković (1996:276, 1997b:15))

⁶ Bošković's (1997a) claim that *what* in pseudo-clefts does not have to be Case-checked is based on the fact that [-accusative] verbs such as *hope*, *inquire*, etc., can appear in *wh*-clauses:

(i) a. What they hope is that Mary will arrive tomorrow.

(Cf. *They hope Mary's arrival/it.)

b. What John inquired was what the time was.

(Cf. *John inquired the time.)

((a, b) Bošković (1997a:253))

- (23) a. [v^*P v^* -tried [VP tV [CP C [TP Fred to win]]]]
 b. [CP who ... [v^*P v^* -try [VP tV [CP t' C [TP t to leave]]]]]]

Regardless of whether Agree holds between v^* -tried and C as a result of (14), the derivation crashes with the Case feature of the *to*-IC subject left intact. Importantly, v^* -tried cannot assign Case to the subject, due to the CP boundary. Assuming that the CP *to*-IC is a phase, the Phase-Impenetrability Condition (PIC) (Chomsky (2000, 2001, 2004)) bars v^* -tried from probing the subject inside the phase's complement. Further, since the null C in (23a, b) is the control C (section 1), its Case feature remains undeleted, which is also crucial for the derivation.⁷ The same account is applicable to (2b).

By the same token, the analysis here can eliminate examples like (24a, b):

- (24) a. *I tried two days ago [him to leave]. (Cf. (18a, b))
 b. *What he tried was [her to return on a tourist visa]. (Cf. (20a, b))

(24a, b) reach the following derivational stages:

⁷ Bošković (1996, 1997b) analyzes *want*-type *to*-ICs like (i) as CP s headed by a null counterpart of *for*, which is generated under T and raises to C . In his analysis, the null *for* in T assigns an accusative Case to *him* in (i):

- (i) I want [CP C [TP him to leave]] (adapted from Bošković (1997b:17))

One may point out that in my analysis the nonfinite C in (i), being null, should be the control C , which only values a null Case feature of PRO , which seems problematic for my analysis.

However, this is not problematic since I adopt a TP analysis of this *want*-type *to*-IC without resorting to the null *for*. The TP analysis is supported by the fact that *to*-ICs of (i)-type cannot be perfectly coordinated with *for*-*to*-ICs ((ii), b) are judged by Andrew Radford and Kevin Gregg) (cf. (9a, b)):

- (ii) a. ??*I want [you to study English] and [for her to study French].
 b. ??*I didn't want [you to hurt him] or [for him to hurt you].

Further, if *him* in (i) has its Case deleted by the null *for*, we predict that it does not undergo object shift (i.e. ECM-raising, to use Chomsky's (2008:154) term) to a matrix position. However, this prediction is incorrect since *to*-IC subjects of (i)-type yield Superiority effects in the same way as *to*-IC subjects of *believe*-type, as illustrated in (ii) and (iii), where *when* is a modifier to the matrix clause:

- (ii) a. Who did John want to fix the radio when?
 b. ?When did John want who to fix the radio?
 (iii) a. Who did John prove to be guilty when?
 b. ?When did John prove who to be guilty?

(iia) and (iiia) indicate that *who* is higher than *when* as a result of ECM-raising into the matrix clause, satisfying the Superiority Condition. This justifies the TP analysis of the *want*-type *to*-ICs. For further arguments for the TP analysis, see Iwakura (2000, 2002, 2004, 2008) and Matsubara (2002, 2005, 2007, 2008).

- (25) a. [v^*T [v^*P [v^*P v^* -tried [vP tV tCP]] two days ago] [CP C [TP him to leave]]]
 b. [CP what [TP he v^* -tried t]] was [CP C [TP her to return on ...]]

Irrespective of whether (14) allows Agree to hold between v^* -tried and tCP/t (or C) in (25a, b), the derivation crashes with the Case feature of *him/her* left undeleted. As noted above, the PIC prevents v^* -tried from probing *him/her* inside the phase's complement. Besides, the null C in (25a, b), being the control C , has its Case feature left intact.

The present analysis can also account for the deviance of examples like (26a, b). (26a) builds a structure like (27) at some stage of derivation:

- (26) a. *John was tried [t to leave]. (Bošković (1996:276, 1997b:15))
 b. *She will be tried [t to see a specialist].
 (27) [TP was [vP v -tried [vP tV [CP C [TP John to leave]]]]]

In order to derive (26a), *John* in (27) has to raise to the matrix Spec- T . However, the PIC makes *John* inaccessible to this raising since *John* is inside the CP phase's complement. This causes the derivation to crash with the Case feature and AF of the matrix T and the Case feature of *John* left intact. In addition, the null C , i.e. the control C , has its Case feature left intact. The same account is true of (26b).

Suppose now that Agree holds between the matrix T and C in (27) as a result of (14). Then the CP *to*-IC raises to the matrix Spec- T , as shown in (28a). Despite this, *John* still has its Case feature intact, which brings about a derivation crash:

- (28) a. *[John to leave] was tried t .
 b. *[Mary to see a specialist] will be tried t .

The same account holds for (28b). Hence, we can filter out examples like (28a, b).

This leads us to predict that if the Case feature of *John/Mary* in (28a, b) is deleted, then the derivation results in convergence. This prediction is correct, as is evident from the acceptability of examples like (7a-c), repeated here as (29a-c):

- (29) a. [For her to get accepted into the academy] was tried t by her mother.
 b. [For him to get to like learning karate] was tried t by the teacher.
 c. [For John to memorize the speech] was tried t by the club president.

In (29a-c) Agree holding between *for* and *her/him/John* deletes their relevant features.

Let us consider structures (30a, b) underlying (29a, b), where the *by*-phrase is

omitted for convenience sake:

- (30) a. [TP was [_{VP} v-tried [_{VP} tV [CP for [TP her to get accepted ...]]]]]
 b. [TP was [_{VP} v-tried [_{VP} tV [CP for [TP him to get to like ...]]]]]

As mentioned above, in order to derive (29a, b), C in (30a, b) has to have a Case feature and an AF to enter into an Agree relation with the matrix T. On the other hand, if C lacks such features and the expletive *it* is inserted into Spec-T, then Agree holds between T and *it*, thereby deleting their relevant features. This allows the derivation to converge, deriving the well-formed examples (31a, b).⁸

- (31) a. It was tried [for her to get accepted into the academy].
 b. It was tried [for him to get to like learning karate].

Therefore, deriving (29a-c) and (31a, b) requires us to propose that C optionally has a Case feature and an interpretable AF, i.e. (14).

3. Conclusion

In this paper, I have illustrated data that show that *try*-type verbs select CP *for-to*-ICs with overt subjects, which my informants judge as acceptable. This makes it worth exploring what syntactic principles or conditions are concerned in their judgments. Then I have attempted to advance a new account of the distribution of *try*-type (*for-to*)-ICs within Chomsky's (2000, 2001, 2004) Agree-based framework. Specifically I have claimed that these verbs have Case-assigning properties, that they have their Case features deleted under Agree with their (*for-to*)-ICs, and that C optionally bears a Case feature and an AF. The suggested analysis has enabled us to account for the relevant data in a principled way.

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⁸ I am thankful to Peter Skaer for providing examples (31a, b). Actually they involve some judgment variation among informants.

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