

## Abstract

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This thesis provides an account of control phenomena in Swedish, focusing on the interpretation of PRO in infinitival clauses. The investigation consists of a corpus-based study of approximately 20,000 Swedish infinitives and an Optimality-theoretic analysis of the same data.

The corpus study shows that control depends on a combination of syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic factors. Generally, the interpretation of PRO depends on the syntactic function/position of the infinitive, but the syntactic patterns are overridden if they do not fit with the semantics of the clause. Pragmatic factors are relevant, but crucially so only when syntax and semantics do not suffice to determine the interpretation.

In the Optimality-theoretic analysis, the various empirical results are derived through a single system of interacting violable constraints. The model consists of a hierarchy of constraints, where the optimal (i.e. grammatical) interpretation of any given input is the reading that best satisfies the highest ranking constraints. As indicated by the corpus study, (lexical) semantic constraints are higher ranked than the syntactic constraints, which in turn outrank the pragmatics.

Key words: control; PRO; interpretation; infinitive; non-finite clause; optimality theory; *subjektsregeln*; corpus linguistics

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