

Transitive Subject Control

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The talk features transitive subject control in English ($Mary_i$ promised/?threatened us PRO_i to inform the police.) as well as contrastively in German (Maria versprach/drohte uns die Polizei zu informieren). Transitive subject control constructions challenge common syntactic assumptions about locality, argument structure and control mechanisms. Neither pure structural principles nor classical theta role assignments adequately explain why in certain ditransitive contexts the subject and not the closer object takes control of PRO. Moreover, the differences between German and English wrt acceptability and frequency of use of transitive subject are difficult to capture. The paper will first outline the theoretical problem and then present a planned empirical study that aims to provide an empirically broader foundation for theoretical models of control and to contribute to a better understanding of the language-specific licensing conditions of transitive subject control.