

# Controlling Overt Subjects in Mandarin

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**Topic:** Control construction with an overt controlee in Mandarin Chinese:

- (1) Lisi dasuan xia ke    yihou ta yao qu kan-kan.  
Lisi plan    end class after he will go look-look  
'Lisi plans to go take a look after class.'

- Overt controlees have been observed in different languages (e.g. Yang 1985, Burzio 1986, Hu et al. 2001, Szabolcsi 2009).
- Previous proposals diverge in whether to analyze them as lexicalized PROs (Madigan 2006, Landau 2013, 2015, Zhang 2016) or not (Lee 2009).
- We present new evidence from Mandarin for **non-PRO** overt controlees in **finite** control.

- We also provide new perspectives for theories of partial control (e.g. Hornstein 2003, Madigan 2008, Pearson 2016):
  - There is a structural difference between **exhaustive** control (EC) and **partial** control (PC) (e.g. Landau 2000, 2013, 2015).
  - The partial reading in PC arises from an **associative morpheme** (AM).

- ① Background for the construction
- ② Evidence that the construction is obligatory control (OC)
- ③ A detour: Evidence for a structural difference between PC and EC
- ④ Evidence against a PRO analysis of overt controlees in Mandarin
- ⑤ Implications and Conclusion

# Background: Control Verbs

	Subject control	Object control
PC	<i>dasuan</i> 'plan'	<i>quan</i> 'urge'
EC	<i>shefa</i> 'try'	<i>rang</i> 'ask'

Table: Types of control verbs in Mandarin

## Subject control:

- (2) a. Lisi dasuan liu dian chufa / jihe.  
Lisi plan six o'clock set-off / gather  
'Lisi plans to set off / gather at six.' (PC)
- b. Lisi shefa liu dian chufa / \*jihe.  
Lisi try six o'clock set-off / gather  
'Lisi tries to set off / \*gather at six.' (EC)

## Object control:

- (3) a. Lisi quan Zhangsan liu dian chufa / jihe.  
Lisi urge Zhangsan six o'clock set-off / gather  
'Lisi urges Zhangsan to set off / gather at six.' (PC)
- b. Lisi rang Zhangsan liu dian chufa / \*jihe.  
Lisi ask Zhangsan six o'clock set-off / gather  
'Lisi asks Zhangsan to set off / \*gather at six.' (EC)



Previous literature (Hu et al. 2001, Zhang 2016):

- All types of control verbs in Mandarin can control overt controlees
- including pronouns, *ziji* 'self', reflexives (pronoun + *ziji*), and complemented pronouns (CPro, pronoun + numeral)
- The overt controlees are lexicalized PROs

- (4) Lisi dasuan ta / ziji / ta-ziji / ta-yi-ge-ren      qu kan-kan.  
Lisi plan    he / self / he-self / he-one-CL-person go look-look  
'Lisi plans to go take a look.'

Today we will argue:

- only PC verbs allow overt controlees
- overt controlees are not lexicalized PROs

- ① Background for the construction
- ② **Evidence that the construction is obligatory control (OC)**
- ③ A detour: Evidence for a structural difference between PC and EC
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- ⑤ Implications and Conclusion

**Argument:** The overt embedded subject under a PC verb is obligatorily controlled.

**Test one:** sloppy vs. strict reading

Background: OC only allows a sloppy reading in VP-ellipsis (e.g. Hornstein 1999).

# OC Status: Sloppy vs. Strict Reading

- A pronoun allows both a sloppy reading and a strict reading:
  - (5) Mary promised that **she** would behave. Her father did, too.
    - ✓ Sloppy: Her father promised that he would behave.
    - ✓ Strict: Her father promised that Mary would behave.
- A PRO in OC only allows a sloppy reading:
  - (6) Mary promised **PRO** to behave. Her father did, too.
    - ✓ Sloppy: Her father promised that he would behave.
    - X Strict: Her father promised that Mary would behave.

# OC Status: Sloppy vs. Strict Reading

- In Mandarin, an overt subject under the non-control predicate *xiwang* ‘hope’ allows both a sloppy reading and a strict reading:

(7) wo xiwang wo / ziji yihou qu zhe suo xuexiao shangxue. wo  
I hope I / self after go this CL school study I  
jiejie ye shi.  
sister also be

‘I hope I will go study in this school in the future. So does my sister.’

✓ Sloppy: ‘My sister also hopes **she** will go study in this school in the future.’

✓ Strict: ‘My sister also hopes **I** will go study in this school in the future.’

- In contrast, an overt subject under the control predicate *dasuan* 'plan' only allows a sloppy reading:

(8) wo dasuan wo / ziji yihou qu zhe suo xuexiao shangxue. wo  
I plan I / self after go this CL school study I  
jiejie ye shi.  
sister also be

'I plan to go study in this school in the future. So does my sister.'

✓ Sloppy: 'My sister also plans **PRO** to go study in this school in the future.'

X Strict: 'My sister also plans for **me** to go study in this school in the future.'

# OC Status: Sloppy vs. Strict Reading

- The same holds for object control. The non-control verb *gaosu* 'tell' allows both readings:

(9) wo gaosu Lisi ruguo xiayu ta jiu bu yao qu le. wo ye  
I tell Lisi if rain he then no will go ASP I also  
zheme gaosu ta-de fuqin le.  
so tell his father ASP

'I tell Lisi that he does not need to go if it rains. I also tell his father so.'

✓ Sloppy: 'I tell Lisi's father that **Lisi's father** does not need to go if it rains.'

✓ Strict: 'I tell Lisi's father that **Lisi** does not need to go if it rains.'



- The control verb *quan* 'urge' **only allows a sloppy reading**:

- (10) wo quan Lisi ruguo xiayu ta jiu bu yao qu le. wo ye  
I urge Lisi if rain he then no will go ASP I also  
zheme quan ta-de fuqin le.  
so urge his father ASP  
'I urge Lisi not to go if it rains. I also urge his father so.'  
✓ Sloppy: 'I urge Lisi's father **PRO** not to go if it rains.'  
X Strict: 'I urge Lisi's father not to have **Lisi** go if it rains.'

**Test two:** *de se* vs. *de re* reading

Background: A pronoun allows both a *de se* and a *de re* reading; a PRO only allows a *de se* reading:

**Scenario:** John is a candidate. He is watching himself giving a talk on TV, but he is too drunk to recognize himself, and he thinks the man on TV is a terrible candidate.

- (11) a. John hopes that **he** will win.  
True (*de se*)
- b. John hopes that **he** will be defeated.  
True (*de re*)
- (12) a. John hopes **PRO** to win.  
True (*de se*)
- b. John hopes **PRO** to be defeated.  
False (no *de re*)

- In Mandarin, the overt subject under the non-control predicate *xiwang* ‘hope’ allows both a *de se* and a *de re* reading:

**Scenario:** Lisi is too drunk to recognize himself in a photo and thinks that’s his son, and he hopes and plans for his son but not for himself to go to college.

- (13) a. Lisi *xiwang* ta bu yao qu shang daxue.  
Lisi hope he not will go attend college  
‘Lisi does not hope he will go to college.’  
True (*de se*)
- b. Lisi *xiwang* ta yao qu shang daxue.  
Lisi hope he will go attend college  
‘Lisi hopes he will go to college.’  
True (*de re*)

- The overt subject under the control predicate *dasuan* ‘plan’ **only allows a *de se* reading** in the same scenario:

- (14) a. Lisi *dasuan* ta bu yao qu shang daxue.  
Lisi plan he not will go attend college  
‘Lisi does not plan to go to college.’  
True (*de se*)
- b. Lisi *dasuan* ta yao qu shang daxue.  
Lisi plan he will go attend college  
‘Lisi plans to go to college.’  
False (no *de re*)

- The same holds for object control. The non-control verb *gaosu* 'tell' allows both readings in the same scenario:

- (15) a. Lisi gaosu erzi ta yinggai shang daxue.  
Lisi tell son he should attend college  
'Lisi tells his son that he should go to college.'  
True (*de se*)
- b. Lisi gaosu erzi ta bu yinggai shang daxue.  
Lisi tell son he not should attend college  
'Lisi tells his son that he should not go to college.'  
True (*de re*)

- The control verb *quan* 'urge' **only allows a *de se* reading** in the same scenario:

- (16) a. Lisi quan erzi ta yinggai shang daxue.  
Lisi urge son he should attend college  
'Lisi urges his son to go to college.'  
True (*de se*)
- b. Lisi quan erzi ta bu yinggai shang daxue.  
Lisi urge son he not should attend college  
'Lisi urges his son not to go to college.'  
False (no *de re*)

## **Test three:** long distance control

Background: OC does not allow long distance control (e.g. Landau 2013).

- Non-control:

(17) John<sub>i</sub> knows that Bill<sub>j</sub> said he<sub>i/j</sub> will come.

- OC:

(18) John<sub>i</sub> knows that Bill<sub>j</sub> promised PRO\*<sub>i/j</sub> to come.

- In Mandarin, the non-control predicate *shuo* 'say' allows long distance co-reference:

(19) Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> zhidao Lisi<sub>j</sub> shuo ta<sub>i/j</sub> yao qu lüyou.  
Zhangsan know Lisi say he will go travel  
'Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> knows that Lisi<sub>j</sub> said that he<sub>i/j</sub> will go travel.'

- The control predicate *dasuan* 'plan' does not:

(20) Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> zhidao Lisi<sub>j</sub> dasuan ta<sub>\*i/j</sub> yao qu lüyou.  
Zhangsan know Lisi plan he will go travel  
'Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> knows that Lisi<sub>j</sub> plans PRO<sub>\*i/j</sub> to go travel.'



# OC Status: Long Distance Control

- The same holds for object control. The non-control predicate *gaosu* 'tell' allows long distance co-reference:

(21) Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> zhidao Lisi<sub>j</sub> gaosu Wangwu<sub>k</sub> wulun ruhe ta<sub>i/j/k</sub>  
Zhangsan know Lisi tell Wangwu no-matter what he  
dou yao lai.  
all will come  
'Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> knows that Lisi<sub>j</sub> told Wangwu<sub>k</sub> he<sub>i/j/k</sub> is coming anyway.'

- The control predicate *quan* 'urge' does not:

(22) Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> zhidao Lisi<sub>j</sub> quan Wangwu<sub>k</sub> wulun ruhe ta<sup>\*i/\*j/k</sup>  
Zhangsan know Lisi urge Wangwu no-matter what he  
dou yao lai.  
all will come  
'Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> knows that Lisi<sub>j</sub> urged Wangwu<sub>k</sub> PRO<sup>\*i/\*j/k</sup> to come  
anyway.'

## Conclusions:

- Overt subjects embedded under control verbs are obligatorily controlled
- unlike overt subjects embedded under non-control verbs

- ① Background for the construction
- ② Evidence that the construction is obligatory control (OC)
- ③ **A detour: Evidence for a structural difference between PC and EC**
- ④ Evidence against a PRO analysis of overt controlees in Mandarin
- ⑤ Implications and Conclusion

**Argument:** There is a structural difference between the complements of PC and EC verbs.

## Observation 1

Only PC verbs allow overt controlees.

Although previous work reported overt controlees for EC verbs as well (e.g. Hu et al. 2001, Zhang 2016), we show those are actually adverbs, as *ziji*, reflexives and CPros have both a pronominal use and an adverbial use (meaning 'by oneself').

**Test one:** focus markers *lian...dou...* ('even...also...')

Background: The focus markers can be used to stress an argument, but not an adverb:

- (23) a. *lian* Lili *dou* qu le      duchang.  
 even Lili also go ASP casino  
 'Even Lili went to a casino.'
- b. \*Lili *lian* ta-yi-ge-ren      / ziji *dou* qu le      duchang.  
 Lili even she-one-CL-person / self also go ASP casino  
 (Zhang 2016: 6)

- In control, the focus markers can be used with CPros, reflexives and *ziji* under PC verbs:

(24) Baba he Mama dasuan wanshang **lian** tamen-liang-ge /  
 Dad and Mom plan evening even they-two-CL /  
 (tamen-)ziji **dou** qu duchang.  
 (they-)self also go casino  
 'Dad and Mom planned that even they two would go to a casino  
 this evening.' (Zhang 2016: 11)

- But they cannot be used under EC verbs:

(25) \*Baba he Mama shefa wanshang **lian** tamen-liang-ge /  
 Dad and Mom try evening even they-two-CL /  
 (tamen-)ziji **dou** qu duchang.  
 (they-)self also go casino

Intended: 'Dad and Mom made the attempt that even they two would go to a casino this evening.'

**Test two:** modal *yao* 'will'

Background: a subject appears before the modal; an adverb appears after it:

- (26) a. Zhangsan *yao* ta-yi-ge-ren / (ta-)ziji qu.  
 Zhangsan will he-one-CL-person / (he-)self go  
 'Zhangsan will go by himself.'
- b. \*Zhangsan ta-yi-ge-ren / (ta-)ziji *yao* qu.  
 Zhangsan he-one-CL-person / (he-)self will go  
 Intended meaning: 'Zhangsan will go by himself.'



- PC verbs: overt embedded subjects can appear before the modal

(27) Lisi dasuan (ta-yi-ge-ren / ziji) yao zaodian wancheng  
 Lisi plan he-one-CL-person / self will early finish  
 baogao.  
 report  
 'Lisi plans to finish the report early.'

- EC verbs: overt embedded subjects cannot appear before the modal

(28) Lisi shefa (\*ta-yi-ge-ren / \*ziji) yao zaodian wancheng  
 Lisi try he-one-CL-person / self will early finish  
 baogao.  
 report  
 'Lisi tries to finish the report early.'

- The same holds for object control: Only the PC verb allows an overt embedded subject before the modal:

- (29) Zhangsan quan Lisi he Wangwu wulu ruhe  
 Zhangsan urge Lisi and Wangwu no-matter what  
 (ta-men-liang-ge) dou yao lai.  
 he-PL-two-CL all will come  
 'Zhangsan urges Lisi and Wangwu to come anyway.'
- (30) Zhangsan rang Lisi he Wangwu wulu ruhe  
 Zhangsan ask Lisi and Wangwu no-matter what  
 (\*ta-men-liang-ge) dou yao lai.  
 he-PL-two-CL all will come  
 'Zhangsan asks Lisi and Wangwu to come anyway.'

**Test three:** high adverbs

Background: A class of high adverbs appears after the subject, and before a modal and adverbs (if any): e.g. *ye* 'also'

- (31) Zhangsan yao ziji / ta-yi-ge-ren          qu faguo   lüyou. Lisi  
 Zhangsan will self / he-one-CL-person go France travel Lisi  
 (ye) yao ziji / ta-yi-ge-ren          (\*ye) qu.  
 also will self / he-one-CL-person also go  
 'Zhangsan is going to travel to France by himself. Lisi is also going by himself.'

- PC verbs: overt embedded subjects can appear before high adverbs

(32) Zhangsan qu faguo lüyou le. Lisi dasuan (ziji) ye qu.  
 Zhangsan go France travel ASP Lisi plan self also go  
 'Zhangsan has gone to travel to France. Lisi also plans to go.'

- EC verbs: overt embedded subjects cannot appear before high adverbs.

(33) Zhangsan qu faguo lüyou le. Lisi shefa (\*ziji) ye qu.  
 Zhangsan go France travel ASP Lisi try self also go  
 'Zhangsan has gone to travel to France. Lisi also tries to go.'

- The same holds for object control: Only the PC verb allows an overt embedded subject before high adverbs:

(34) Zhangsan quan Lisi he Wangwu (ta-men-liang-ge) ye qu  
 Zhangsan urge Lisi and Wangwu he-PL-two-CL also go  
 lüyou.  
 travel  
 'Zhangsan urges Lisi and Wangwu to go travel as well.'

(35) Zhangsan rang Lisi he Wangwu (\*ta-men-liang-ge) ye qu  
 Zhangsan ask Lisi and Wangwu he-PL-two-CL also go  
 lüyou.  
 travel  
 'Zhangsan asks Lisi and Wangwu to go travel as well.'

**Test four:** Pronouns

Background: A pronoun does not have an adverbial use.

They can be embedded under a PC verb, but not an EC verb:

- Subject control:

- (36) a. Lisi dasuan mingnian xiatian (ta) qu lüyou.  
 Lisi plan next-year summer he go travel  
 'Lisi plans to go travel next summer.'
- b. Lisi shefa mingnian xiatian (\*ta) qu lüyou.  
 Lisi try next-year summer he go travel  
 'Lisi tries to go travel next summer.'

- The same holds for object control:

- (37) a. Zhangsan quan Lisi wulun ruhe (ta) dou yao lai.  
 Zhangsan urge Lisi no-matter what he all will come  
 'Zhangsan urges Lisi to come anyway.'
- b. Zhangsan rang Lisi wulun ruhe (\*ta) dou yao lai.  
 Zhangsan ask Lisi no-matter what he all will come  
 'Zhangsan asks Lisi to come anyway.'

## Summary:

- *ziji*, reflexives and CPros behave as an adverb under EC verbs, but can behave as a DP under PC verbs.
- Only PC verbs allow overt controlees.



## Observation 2

The future morpheme *jiang* only appears under PC verbs.

*jiang*, usually glossed as 'will', has been treated as a syntactic future morpheme in T (e.g. Huang 2015):

- marks future time
- structurally high (before auxiliaries)
- not an auxiliary (\*A-not-A, \*ellipsis)
- not an adverb
- not irrealis mood

*jiang* can appear under a PC verb, not under an EC verb:

- (38) Lisi dasuan (ta) (jiang) zai jintian wancheng baogao.  
 Lisi plan he will be today finish report  
 'Lisi plans to finish the report today.'
- (39) Lisi shefa (\*jiang) zai jintian wancheng baogao.  
 Lisi try will be today finish report  
 'Lisi tries to finish the report today.'

Can the inhibition of *jiang* under EC verbs be due to a lack of TP projection under EC verbs (e.g. Grano 2012, 2015)?

No: The following tests demonstrate that EC verbs allow sentential complements.

**Test one:** Embedded CP: *shuo*, a morpheme appearing at the left periphery of an embedded clause (e.g. Huang 2015):

- (40) Lisi zhidao shuo zhe-ben-shu Zhangsan kan guo.  
 Lisi know SHUO this-CL-book Zhangsan read ASP  
 'Lisi knows that this book, Zhangsan has read.'

- *shuo* can appear under EC verbs:

(41) Lisi **shefa** **shuo** ye qu faguo lüyou.  
Lisi try SHUO also go France travel  
'Lisi tries to also travel to France.'

**Test two:** Ex-situ focus in CP (e.g. Rizzi 1997, Cheng and Giannakidou 2013).

- Focus can appear under EC verbs:

(42) Lisi shefa sheme-shi dou ziji jiejue t.  
 Lisi try what-matter all self handle  
 'Lisi tries to handle everything by himself.'

### Summary:

- EC verbs take sentential complements.
- So *jiang* is inhibited under EC verbs for other reasons.
- Finiteness: The complement of EC verbs is non-finite, while *jiang* is a finite morpheme in T.

## Conclusions:

- There is a finiteness distinction between PC and EC complements:
- only PC verbs can take a finite complement and thus allow overt controlees.

- ① Background for the construction
- ② Evidence that the construction is obligatory control (OC)
- ③ A detour: Evidence for a structural difference between PC and EC
- ④ **Evidence against a PRO analysis of overt controlees in Mandarin**
- ⑤ Implications and Conclusion

**Argument:** Overt controllees in Mandarin are not lexicalized PROs.

## Observation 1

Overt controllees only appear under PC verbs.

A PRO analysis of overt controllees in Mandarin does not predict the lexicalization of PROs with PC verbs only, as discussed above.



## Observation 2

Overt controlees retain their own syntactic and semantic properties.

Except for the bound reading enforced by control, overt controlees retain their own syntactic and semantic properties, such as exhaustive/partial reading and logophoricity.

**Exhaustive vs. partial reading:** In non-control constructions, pronouns and reflexives but not *ziji* allow a partial reading by attaching the morpheme *-men*:

- (43) a. wo kanjian wo-men(-ziji) le.  
I see I-PL-self ASP  
'I saw ourselves.'
- b. wo kanjian ziji(-\*men) le.  
I see ziji(-PL) ASP  
'I saw myself (/ \*ourselves).'

- *-men* is an associative plural marker: mapping a kind to a salient group (Jiang 2017).

- These properties are retained under control:

(44) Lisi<sub>i</sub> dasuan  $\emptyset_{i/i+}$  / tai / ta-men(-ziji)<sub>i+</sub> / ziji(-\*men)<sub>i/\*i+</sub> yao  
Lisi plan  $\emptyset$  / he / he-PL-self / self-PL will  
qu lüyou.  
go travel  
'Lisi plans to go travel.'

- Madigan's (2008) AM approach to PC:  $[[AM]]^c = \lambda x.$  the plural entity that includes  $x$  and those associated with  $x$  in the context  $c$

**Logophoricity:** In non-control constructions, *ziji* is a logophor, which can only be bound to an object that is set as the logophoric center (e.g. Huang & Liu 2001, Charnavel 2020):

- (45) a. Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> gaosu Lisi<sub>j</sub> Wangwu<sub>k</sub> piping le ta-ziji<sub>i/j/k</sub> /  
Zhangsan tell Lisi Wangwu criticize ASP him-self /  
ziji<sub>i/\*j/k</sub>.  
self

'Zhangsan told Lisi that Wangwu criticized himself.'

- b. you jian-shi shi Lisi<sub>j</sub> hen nanguo: Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> gaosu  
exist CL-thing make Lisi very sad Zhangsan tell  
ta<sub>j</sub> Wangwu<sub>k</sub> piping le (ta-)ziji<sub>i/j/k</sub>.  
him Wangwu criticize ASP him-self

'There's something that made Lisi<sub>j</sub> sad: Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> told him<sub>j</sub> that Wangwu<sub>k</sub> criticized himself<sub>i/j/k</sub>'

- This is retained in control: *ziji* cannot serve as the overt controlee in object control, unless the object has been set as the logophoric center.

- (46) a. Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> quan Lisi<sub>j</sub> ruguo bieren dou bu qu, ta-ziji<sup>\*<sub>i/j</sub></sup> /  
Zhangsan urge Lisi if others all not go he-self /  
*\*ziji<sup>\*<sub>i/j</sub></sup>* ye bu yao qu.  
self also not will go  
'Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> urged Lisi<sub>j</sub> PRO<sup>\*<sub>i/j</sub></sup> not to go if nobody else goes.'
- b. you jian-shi shi Lisi<sub>j</sub> hen nanguo: Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> quan  
exist CL-thing make Lisi very sad Zhangsan urge  
ta<sub>j</sub> ruguo bieren dou bu qu, (ta-)ziji<sup>\*<sub>i/j</sub></sup> ye bu yao qu.  
him if others all not go he-self also not will go  
'There's something that made Lisi<sub>j</sub> sad: Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> urged him;  
PRO<sup>\*<sub>i/j</sub></sup> not to go if nobody else goes.'

## Conclusions:

- Overt controlees keep their own syntactic and semantic properties when controlled, except for the bound reading enforced by control.
- Overt controlees in Mandarin are non-PRO elements only licensed in the finite complement of PC verbs.

- ① Background for the construction
- ② Evidence that the construction is obligatory control (OC)
- ③ A detour: Evidence for a structural difference between PC and EC
- ④ Evidence against a PRO analysis of overt controlees in Mandarin
- ⑤ **Implications and Conclusion**

- Only PC verbs can take finite complements and thus license overt controlees.
- Overt controlees in Mandarin are not overt forms of PRO.
- The partial reading arises from an AM.



- Extending OC theories beyond PROs.
- Supporting a structural difference between PC and EC (e.g. Landau 2000, 2013, 2015).
- Providing independent evidence for Madigan's (2008) AM approach to PC, while arguing against a purely comitative approach to PC (Hornstein 2003, Boeckx et al. 2010).

Thank you!

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