Abstract

Within the framework of Jackendoff’s conceptual semantics, this study investigates the semantic properties that govern the distribution of object control (such as *John persuaded Mary to help Sally*) and exceptional case marking (such as *John wanted Mary to help Sally*) in English. In contrast to Jackendoff’s approach to control, one central idea here is that the *to*-infinitive complements under discussion should receive a uniform semantic analysis, and thus that control behaviour cannot be explained in terms of semantic argument type of the complement clause. In order to arrive at such an analysis of these *to*-infinitival complements, they are taken to constitute Situations in conceptual structure, and clauses (TPs) in syntax.

It is argued here that it is indeed possible to establish the character of the semantic properties that govern the two constructions OC and ECM. Not only does the semantic type of the governing predicate play a role—attitude predicates, as opposed to force dynamic predicates, are exclusively coded as ECM in syntax—but also the realisation of the semantic argument position that corresponds to the Patient/Beneficiary role in conceptual structure. With force dynamic predicates, OC will arise when this argument position is filled with an explicit argument. When it is empty, or left implicit, however, the result will be ECM in syntactic structure.

**Keywords:** object control, exceptional case marking, conceptual structure, force dynamics, attitude predicates, event types, alternation.