Optionality in Spanish clitic positions: Observations from control

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1. Introduction

What is the position of Spanish object clitics in vP?

- o Nevins (2011) and Kramer (2014) propose clitics are tucked-in (following Richards 1997) to an inner specifier, while other accounts assume the clitic to be in an outer specifier (Suñer 2003) or a clitic projection(s) (as in Sportiche 1996, Gónzalez López 2008), among many others.

New data from adjunct control that can add to the discussion.

In Spanish, in addition to subjects, object clitics can also control the PRO subject of a non-finite adjunct. Interestingly, in these control structures there can be ambiguity between interpreting the subject or the clitic as the controller. Observe (1).

(1)   a. ***Yo$_i$ lo   vi$_j$***   *antes de   PRO$_j$ ir-me*   *para España* (Subject control)
          I   him saw.1SG before of PRO   leave.INF-RFL1SG for   Spain.
          'I saw him before (my) leaving for Spain.'

      b. *Yo lo$_i$ vi   antes de PRO$_i$ ir-se   para España*   (Clitic control)
          I   him saw.1SG before of PRO leave.INF-RFL3SG for   Spain
          'I saw him before he left for Spain.'

      Question 1: How can clitic control be accounted for?

I adopt Landau's (2015) two-tiered theory of control, where control is established via movement and predication. The closest c-commanding argument to PRO will be interpreted as the controller.

The data in (1) raise questions regarding the position of the clitic. Landau's account predicts:

- o When the subject controls PRO, the subject would be predicted to be closer than the clitic is to PRO

- o When the clitic controls PRO, the clitic would be predicted to be closer than the subject is to PRO.

      Question 2: How can these (seemingly contradictory) predictions be accounted for?

Proposal: The ambiguity of controller in (1) is a reflection of two possible derivations and positions in vP for clitic movement: a clitic can either tuck-in to an inner specifier of vP or a clitic can move to an outer specifier of vP. When the clitic tucks-in to an inner specifier, it is

closest to PRO and acts as the controller. When the clitic is in an outer specifier, the subject is instead closer to PRO, resulting in subject control.

Roadmap:
1. Introduction
2. Background on adjunct control
3. Clitic control in Spanish
4. An account for the optionality: two clitic positions
5. Conclusion

2. Background on adjunct control

How is the controller of PRO established in control settings?

- o   In complement control (2a-b) both subject and object control are possible.
- o   In temporal adjunct control (2c), only subject control is possible[1,2].

(2)   a. **Mary$_i$** tried PRO$_i$ to go to the party.   (complement control)

         b. Mary$_i$ persuaded **John$_j$** PRO$_{*i/j}$ to go to the party.   (complement control)

         c. **Mary$_i$** greeted John$_j$ [before PRO$_{i/*j}$ leaving the party].   (adjunct control)

Patterns in Spanish adjuncts are different with respect to objects that are clitics. While full DP objects cannot control (3a), preverbal clitics can control into an adjunct (3b).

(3)   a. *Besé [a   mi novia]$_i$ después de PRO$_i$ ponerse   celosa.*
             Kissed DOM my girlfriend after   of PRO become.INF jealous.FEM
             'I kissed my girlfriend after she got jealous'

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[1] There have been exceptions to this generalization proposed in recent literature (see Janke & Bailey 2017, Landau (to appear)). However, as discussed in Landau (to appear) whether these exceptions are true cases of obligatory control remains questionable.

[2] Object and subject purpose adjuncts can display object control, where PRO is controlled by the goal or benefactive, as in (i).

    (i)   a. We bought Mary$_i$ the dog [PRO$_i$ to play with].
             b. She called a detective$_i$ [PRO$_i$ to investigate the affair].   (Landau 2013)

Discussed in detail in Faraci (1974), Chomsky (1980) and Jones (1991), a key difference between purpose and temporal adjuncts in that purpose adjuncts are argued to be attached in a lower position, as VP (internal) adjuncts (see also Green 2019 for a discussion of adjunct height).

b. ***La**$_i$ besé t$_i$ después   de PRO$_i$ ponerse celosa.*
   Her kissed.1SG after   of PRO become.INF-RFL.3S jealous.FEM
   'I kissed her after she got jealous'

I return to discuss these clitic control structures in Section 3.

2.1 Landau (2015): Two-tiered theory of control

I adopt Landau (2015), the two-tiered theory of control. In this model, control is established via movement and predication.

A (brief) overview of the framework:

Exhaustive control and partial control are rebranded as predicative and logophoric control, respectively. Predicative control occurs with non-attitude predicates, logophoric control with attitude predicates.
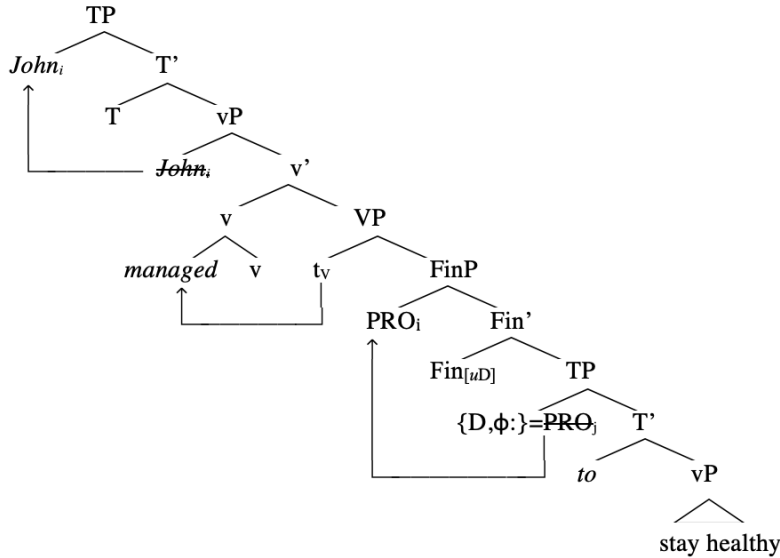
As I will argue for in Section 3.3, the adjunct control structures I am focusing on display predicative, obligatory control. I thus focus here on the derivation of predicative control.

Predicative subject control:

o PRO is a minimal pronoun with a D-feature and unvalued ϕ-features

o A (c-commanding) matrix functional head agrees with PRO in Spec, TP. A copy of PRO is moved to Spec, FinP which turns the FinP projection into a predicate.

o Closest c-commanding DP saturates the predicate, becomes controller

o The ϕ-features of PRO are valued at PF by either agreeing directly with the controller DP or by an indirect Agree between the controller DP and Fin. The features on PRO in Spec,FinP are then shared with the lower copy of PRO via feature sharing, following Pesetsky and Torrego (2007).

(4)   [John$_{[3sg.M]}$ managed-v [$_{FinP}$ PRO$_{[\phi:3sg.M]}$ Fin [$_{TP}$ PRO$_{[\phi:3sg.M]}$ to stay healthy]]]

(Landau 2015, p.26)

```
                    TP
         John_i          T'
                   T          vP
              └──────  John_i      v'
                      managed  v    VP
                      └────── t_v        FinP
                                    PRO_i      Fin'
                                         Fin_[uD]    TP
                                    {D,φ:}=PRO_j    T'
                                         └──────  to      vP
                                                        stay healthy
```
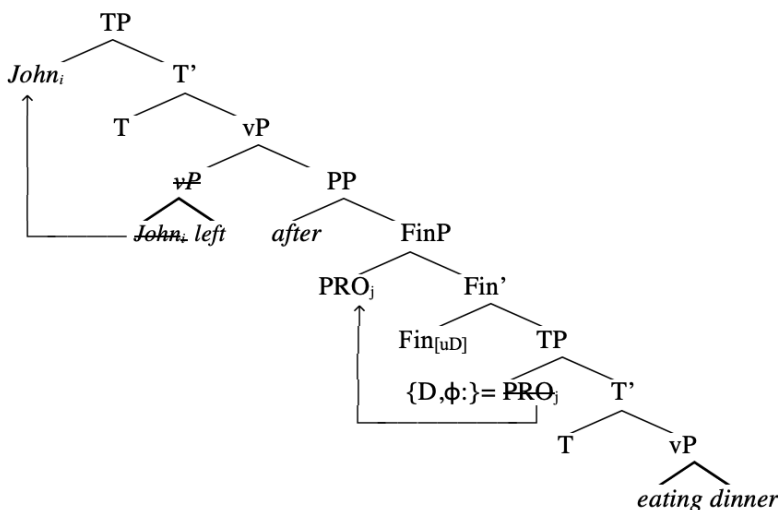
Predicative object control:

- o In object control structures, the object is said to be positioned in a small clause, where it intervenes between the matrix subject and PRO. Closest c-commanding DP is the object, thus it is the controller.

Predicative adjunct control:

- o Adjuncts can display both OC and NOC and predicative and logophoric control.

- o For predicative control into adjuncts, I follow the discussions in Landau (2015, 2017). Similar to complement control, control is expected to occur via predication between the matrix subject and the moved copy of PRO in Spec, FinP.

(5)

```
              TP
    John_i          T'
              T          vP
                   vP          PP
              John_i left   after      FinP
                                  PRO_j      Fin'
                                       Fin_[uD]    TP
                                  {D,φ:}= PRO_j    T'
                                              T      vP
                                                  eating dinner
```

→Why is object control into adjuncts is ungrammatical?

While not explicitly discussed, presumably, it is because an internal argument in the matrix would not be able to c-command the adjunct and thus no predication relationship can be established.

3. Clitic control data

3.1 Examples of grammatical and ungrammatical object (adjunct) control in Spanish.

o   When can an object control? → preverbal 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person clitics.

(6)   a. ***Me_i** la envió antes   de PRO_i irme   para Lima.*
             Me it sent   before of PRO leave.INF-RFL1SG for   Lima
             'He sent it to me before I left for Lima.'

         b. *¿Tu   novio   no   **te_i** vio   antes   de PRO_i irte   para la boda?*
             Your boyfriend didn't you see.3SG before of PRO leave.INF-RFL.2S for   the wedding
             'Your boyfriend didn't see you before you left for the wedding?'

         c. ***La_i**   besé   después de PRO_i poner-se   celosa.*
             Her kissed.1SG after   of PRO become.INF-RFL.3S jealous.FEM
             'I kissed her after she got jealous'

o   When can an object not control? → in-situ clitics, in-situ full DPs, and wh-moved objects cannot control into an adjunct.

(7)   a. **Quiero   besar-la_i   antes de PRO_i ponerse   celosa.*
              Want.1SG kiss.INF-her before of PRO become.INF jealous.FEM
              'I want to kiss her before she gets jealous'

         b. **Besé [a   mi novia]_i   antes   de PRO_i ponerse   celosa.*
             Kissed DOM my girlfriend before of PRO become.INF jealous.FEM
             'I kissed my girlfriend before she got jealous'

         c. **¿A   quién_i viste t_i antes   de PRO_i irse   para España?*
              DOM who   see.2s before of PRO leave.3s for Spain?
             'Who did you see before he left for Spain?'

Note that with unaccusative (8a) and passive (8b) structures, a lower, postverbal argument appears to establish control into an adjunct.

(8)   a. *Se hundió **el   titanic_i** después de PRO_i chocar contra un iceberg.*
             SE sank   the Titanic after   of PRO hit   against an iceberg
             'The Titanic sank after hitting an iceberg.'

b. *Fue vista **la cantante**ᵢ sin   PROᵢ saludar a   sus fans.*
  Was seen the singer   without PRO greet   DOM her fans.
  'The singer was seen without greeting her fans.'

Following Ortega-Santos's (2006) analysis of postverbal subjects, I assume that a postverbal subject is the result of a pronunciation of a lower copy, following the copy theory of movement (Chomsky 1995). This allows the higher copy to serve as the controller of adjunct PRO.

As mentioned in the introduction, these structures can show ambiguity in the choice of controller. Subject control is also an option in these adjuncts.

(9)   a. **Yo**ᵢ *lo   vi*ⱼ   *antes de   PRO*ⱼ *ir-me   para España.*
          I   him saw.1SG before of PRO   leave.INF-RFL1SG for   Spain
          'I saw him before (my) leaving for Spain.'

        b. *Yo **lo**ᵢ   vi   antes de PRO*ᵢ *ir-se   para España.*
           I   him saw.1SG before of PRO leave.INF-RFL3SG for   Spain
           'I saw him before he left for Spain.'

This optionality in control structures with clitics also needs to be accounted for.

➔Conclusion: Only moved, clause-mate, pre-verbal clitics are potential object controllers of the subject of non-finite adjuncts in Spanish.

3.2   Clitic position

I assume the clitics are originally merged in the internal argument position before moving into their preverbal position (Kayne 1975, 1991, Rizzi 1986, among others).

Following phase theory (Chomsky 2000, 2001) and phase-based approaches to cliticization (Gallego 2016) I assume that the clitic is first moved through the edge of the vP phase, before moving to its final position.

 I follow Nevins (2011), Kramer (2014) in saying the clitics are moved and tucked-in (following Richards 1997) to an inner specifier of vP (however, stay tuned for an update to this analysis in Section 4).

(10)   [TP *yo* [TP lo vi [vP ~~yo~~ ~~lo~~ *v* [VP ~~vi~~ ~~lo~~]]

3.3   Clitic control is OC, not NOC

It is important to establish whether or not the clitic control structures display obligatory control (OC), in which the controller is determined and restricted by the syntax, or non-obligatory control (NOC), which can be controlled by a discourse controller, a long-distance controller, or an arbitrary referent.

(11)   The OC signature

In a control construction […X_i …[s PRO_i …]…], where X controls the PRO subject of the clause S:
a.   The controller(s) must be (a) codependent(s) of S.[3]
b.   PRO (or part of it) must be interpreted as a bound variable.

(12)   The NOC signature

In a control construction […[s PRO_i …]…]:
a.   The controller need not be a grammatical element or a co-dependent of S.
b.   PRO need not be interpreted as a bound variable (i.e., it may be a free variable)
c.   PRO is [+human].

(Landau 2013)

Adjuncts can display both OC and NOC (Landau 2017, Green 2018, 2019)

(13)   The $pool_i$ was the perfect temperature after $PRO_{i/j}$ being in the hot sun all day.

(Green 2018)

→   If these structures display NOC, the consequences of accounting for the optionality between subject and clitic control as are lessened, since in NOC, the referent of PRO is not determined by a strict syntactic dependency. However, this possibility is not tenable. The clitic control structures do display the characteristics of OC structures.

o   Arguments against (6) as NOC:

I: The clitic controller in examples like (6) is a co-dependent of S, satisfying that requirement of the OC signature. However, while in NOC the controller is not obligatorily a co-dependent but may be a co-dependent of S, being a co-dependent of S does not rule out (6) being NOC.

II: Non-human antecedents (for the clitic) appear to be possible. In NOC, controllers must be [+human].

(14)   a. ***La_i tiré***   *después de PRO_i estar   en la mesa por dos semanas.*
           It threw away after   of PRO be.INF on the table for two weeks.
          'I threw it away after it was on the table for two weeks.'

b. ***Lo_i cosechó   antes   de PRO_i florecer.***
           It   harvested before of PRO flower.INF
          'He/She harvested it before it flowered.'

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[3] Landau defines a codependent as: "A 'dependent' of S is either an argument or an adjunct of S, thus (a) subsumes both complement OC, where the controller and S are co-arguments and adjunct OC."

III: If the structures in (6) were instances of NOC, a c-command relationship between controller and controlee would be unnecessary. If the dependency were not local, and c-command were not a requirement, why would only preverbal (and not postverbal) clitics be able to control?

→ Conclusion: Clitic control is OC.

4. An account for the optionality: two clitic positions

4.1 Accounting for clitic control

The problem with object control (in English), lack of c-command, is not observed in clitic control constructions.

Spanish clitics are located in a higher position from which they can c-command, saturate the predicate (PRO). Predication relationship between the clitic and PRO, thus is interpreted as the controller.

In this derivation, the clitic, having tucked-in to an inner specifier, would be the closest c-commanding DP to PRO and would thus saturate the predicate in the adjunct and establish control.

(15) *Derivation of clitic control following the TTC[4]*
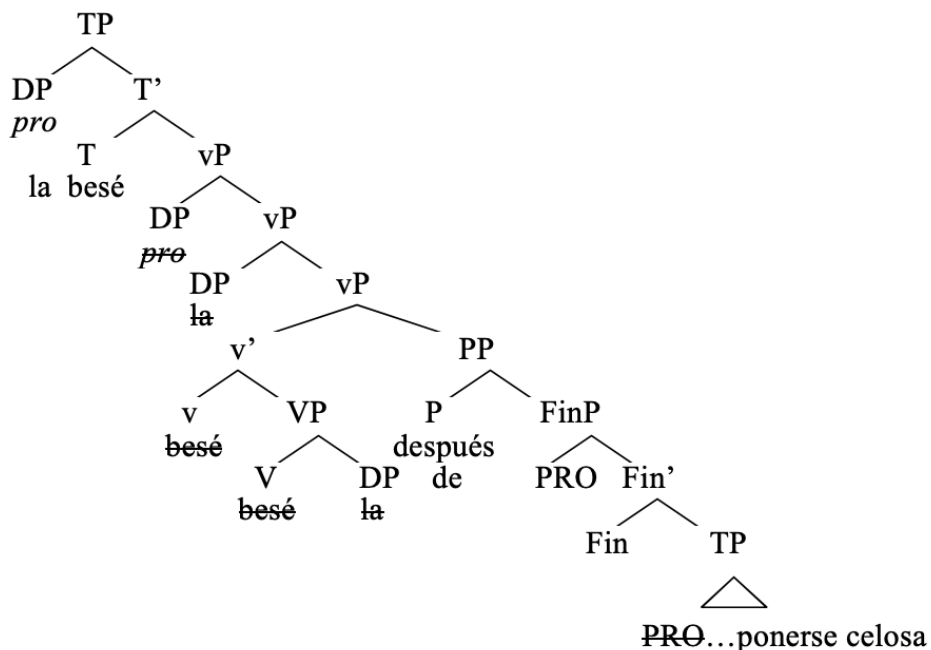
The TTC also accounts for the ungrammatical examples of in-situ clitics and in-situ DP objects being unable to control PRO in the adjunct (7). Like objects in English, they do not c-command the adjunct and are not expected to be controllers.

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[4] Thanks to Idan Landau his input on this structure.

4.2 Accounting for both clitic and subject control

Recall the pair in (16), showing that clitic control does not rule out subject control.

(16)   a. **Yo_j lo**   *vi*   *antes de PRO_j ir-me*   *para España*
               I him saw.1SG before of PRO   leave.INF-RFL1SG for   Spain.
            'I saw him before (my) leaving for Spain.'

        b. *Yo **lo_i**   vi   antes de PRO_i ir-se   para España*
            I   him saw.1SG before of PRO leave.INF-RFL3SG for   Spain
   'I saw him before he left for Spain.'

Proposal: The optionality in subject/clitic control arises from the position of the clitic. Two derivations are possible: one results in clitic control (as shown in (15)) and one results in subject control.
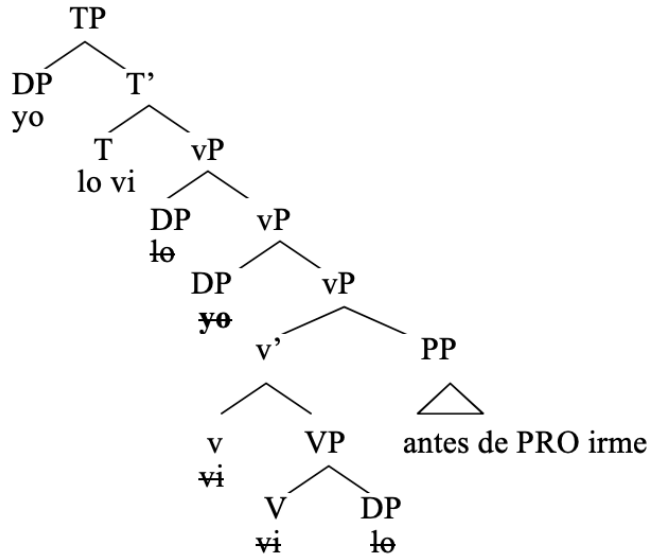
The two different semantic interpretations (subject control vs object clitic control), leads to the natural suggestion of there being two distinct derivations for these structures.

o   **Clitic control derivation**: Clitic tucks-in to an **inner specifier of vP**. The clitic is closest to PRO and establishes control.

o   **Subject control derivation**: Clitic moves to an **outer specifier of vP**. Here the subject would instead be the closer DP to PRO and would thus serve as the controller.

Observe these derivations in (17).

(17)   a. *Clitic control- tucking-in derivation*
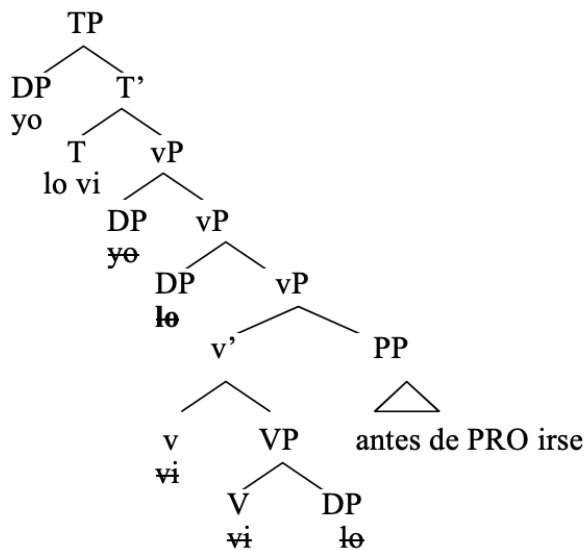
b. *Subject control- movement to outer spec derivation*

```
                TP
              /    \
           DP       T'
           yo      /   \
                 T       vP
                lo vi   /   \
                     DP       vP
                     l̶o̶     /    \
                         DP       vP
                         y̶o̶     /    \
                               v'      PP
                              /  \     /\
                             v    VP  antes de PRO irme
                            v̶i̶  /  \
                               V    DP
                              v̶i̶   l̶o̶
```

Following Richards (1997), both of these derivations (tucking-in to an inner specifier or moving to an outer specifier) in principle should be possible, and both respect notions of cyclicity as outlined in Chomsky (1995).

Given that neither derivation seems to be less economical than the other, there should be no theoretical motivation to exclude the possibility of there being two positions for clitics in vP.

The possibility of optionality in the derivation also seems to conform to Chomsky's (2001 p.34) notion that optionality is allowed if it leads to a different outcome, i.e. a difference in the interpretation (subject vs object control).

o   Is optionality between a clitic and subject observed elsewhere, outside of the adjunct control examples?

→Yes. One such situation is observed with reflexive binding, where both the clitic and subject are able to serve as the antecedent to the reflexive pronoun (18).

(18)   a. *Le hablé   de mí-mismo.*
              3SG spoke.1SG of REFL.1MASC
              'I talked to him about myself.'

         b. *Le hablé   de sí-mismo.*
              3SG spoke.1SG of REFL.3MASC
              'I talked to him about himself.'

c. *Hablé   a Juan de sí-mismo.*
   Spoke.1SG to Juan of REFL.2MASC
   'I talked to Juan about himself.'

5. Conclusion

Two main questions to answer:

1. How can an object clitic control adjunct PRO?

    o   Accounted for under TTC as long as the clitic moves to a preverbal position. There, if the clitic is closer to PRO than the subject is, it is expected to control.

2. How can the optionality in clitic vs subject control be accounted for?

    o   There are two possible positions for object clitics in vP. When the clitic is in a lower specifier, it controls. When the clitic is higher than the subject, the subject controls.

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Appendix: Why I've adopted the Two-Tiered Theory of Control

An opposing theory of control is the Movement Theory of Control (MTC): Hornstein (1999, 2001) and Boeckx, Hornstein, and Nunes (2010)

> Goal is to eliminate PRO as a primitive of the grammar and treat the null subject of the non-finite clause as a deleted copy of the controller.

o   In the MTC, adjunct control is derived through sideward movement

> Sideward movement becomes available when there are no elements in the numeration remaining that can be merged with the matrix verb to receive its external θ-role.

> The adjunct subject which cannot check case within the non-finite verb, is thus still active for A-movement. This DP copies, and sideward moves to merge in the external argument position of the matrix verb.

> The PP then joins to the VP and the rest of the structure is built up.

o   Object control excluded because of principles of economy, Merge over Move.

> Controller (matrix object) would have to start in adjunct subject position. Sideward movement, to the matrix object position, from the adjunct is more costly than merging an element from the numeration.

> The same argument would predict that clitic control be ungrammatical, too.

(19)   a. *Yo lo vi antes de irse para España.*

b. *Applications of select, merge, and copy*
Num= { Yo_1, $T^{\phi+}_1$, vi_0, lo_0, $antes_0$, $T^{\phi-}_0$, de_0, $irse_o$, $para_o$, $España_o$ }
PP= [antes de lo $T^{\phi-}$ irse para España]
VP= [vi]

c. *Copy and merger of 'lo' and selection and merger of V
PP= [antes de lo $T^{\phi-}$ irse para España]
VP= [vi lo]

d. *Selection and merger of 'Yo'*
PP= [antes de lo $T^{\phi-}$ irse para España]
VP= [yo lo vi]
e. *Merger of PP and VP*
 [$_{VP}$ [yo lo vi] [$_{PP}$ antes de lo $T^{\phi-}$ irse para España]]

f. *Selection and merger of $T^{\phi+}$*
TP=[$T^{\phi+}$ [$_{VP}$ [yo lo vi] [$_{PP}$ antes de lo $T^{\phi-}$ irse para España]]]

g. *Copying and merger of 'yo'*
[TP yo [T$^{\phi+}$ [VP [yo lo vi] [PP antes de lo T$^{\phi-}$ irse para España]]]]

h. *Deletion in the phonological component*
[TP yo [T$^{\phi+}$ [VP [~~yo~~ lo vi] [PP antes de ~~lo~~ T$^{\phi-}$ irse para España]]]]

(based on Boeckx, Hornstein, and Nunes 2010)

In step c, according to the MTC, it would be less costly to merge the DP remaining in the derivation 'yo' rather than sideward moving 'lo' to obtain object control.

In the MTC, clitic control would be collapsed under full DP object control, and the contrast between preverbal clitics being controllers but not in-situ full DPs/clitics is left unaccounted for.

→ Unlike Landau's TTC, the movement theory of control appears to be unable to fully capture the data in (19) without stipulations.