Control Theory

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Introduction

- Look at the following sentence
- 1. Sohan claims [that he knows someone in the intelligence department]
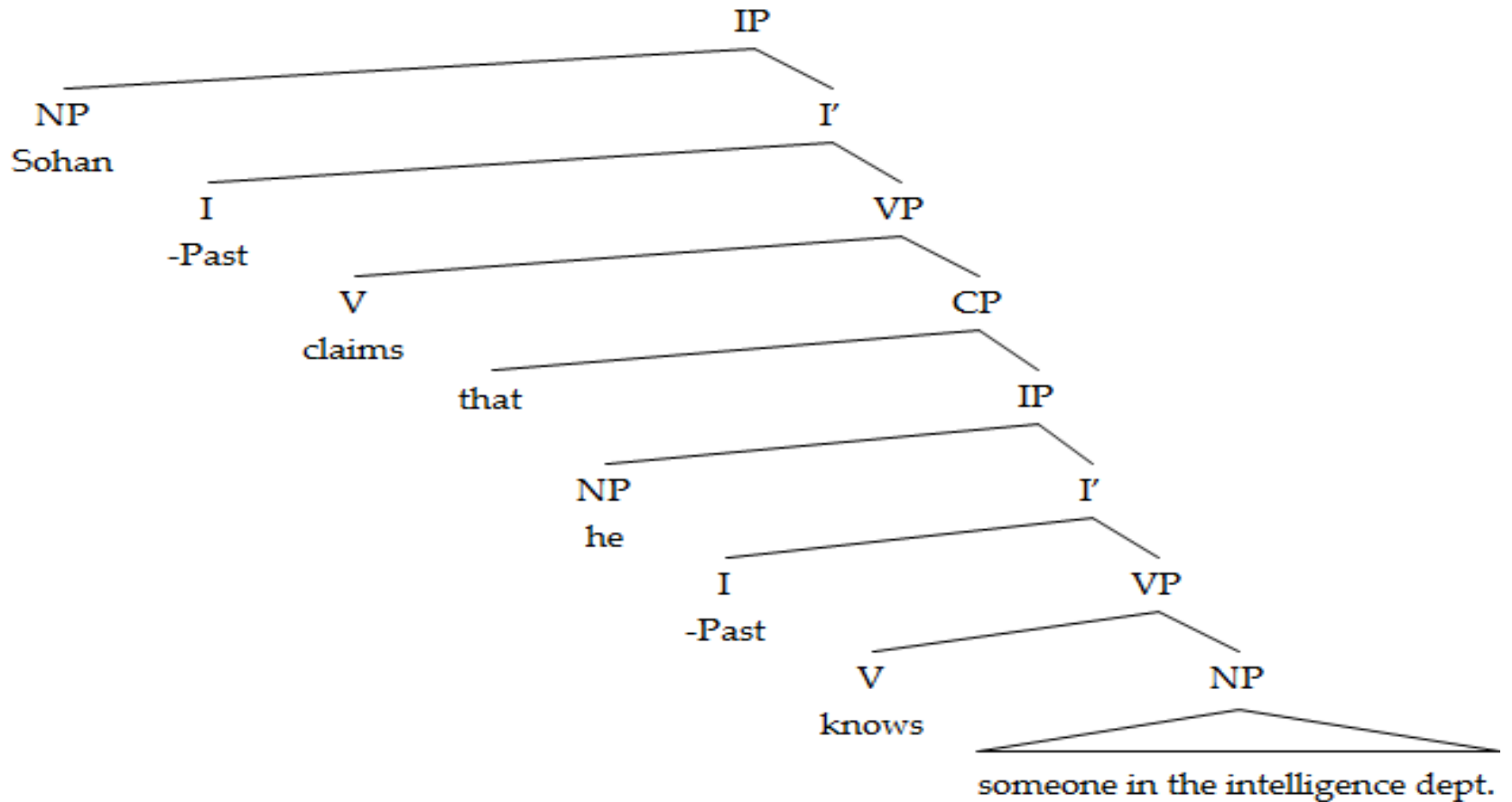- predicates in (1)? **claim** and **know**
- Predictions of Theta Theory:
- Claim: V;

1	2
NP	{ NP CP }

Cont..

- Know: V; 1   2

         NP $\begin{Bmatrix} NP \\ CP \end{Bmatrix}$

- 2. Sohan Claims the insurance money
- 3. Sohan knows him
- 4. Sohan knows that he will not rescue him
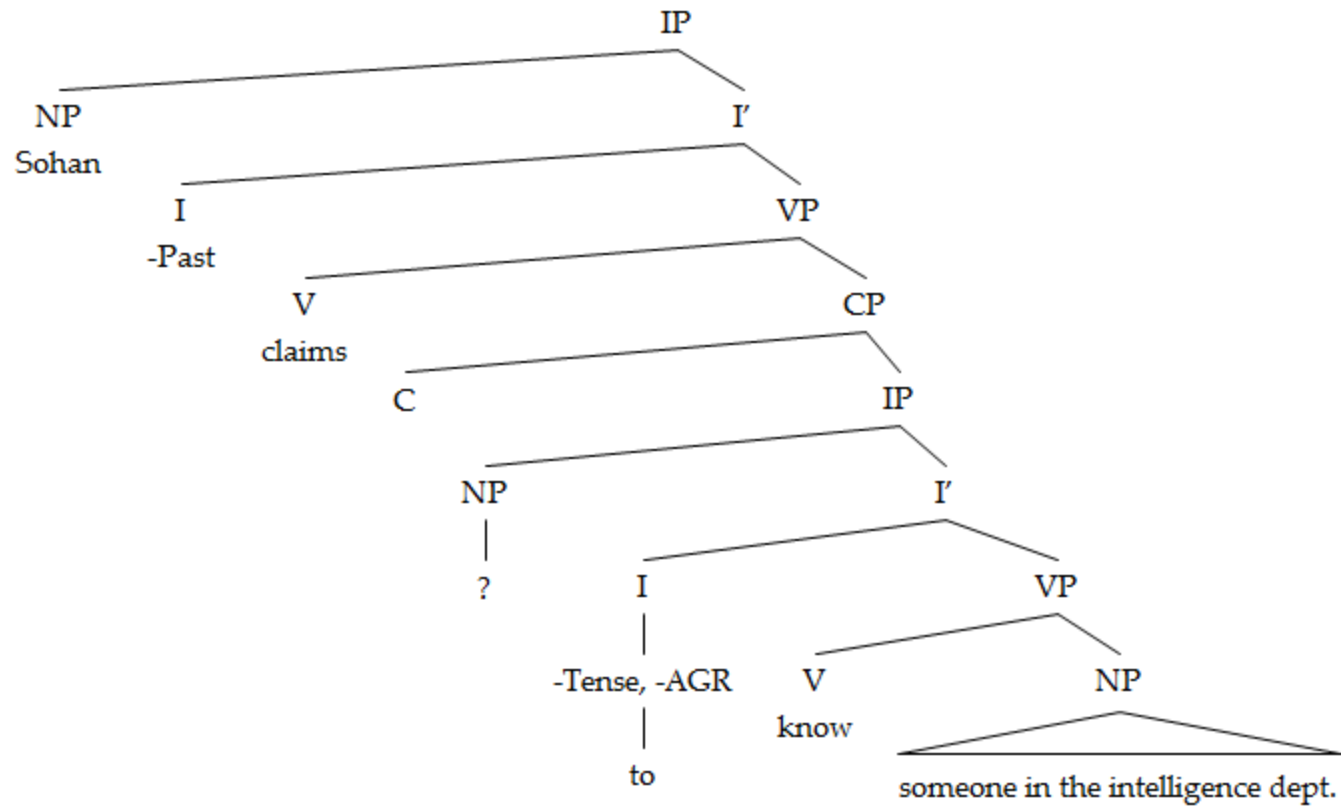- Predicates require their arguments realized in sentences with them.
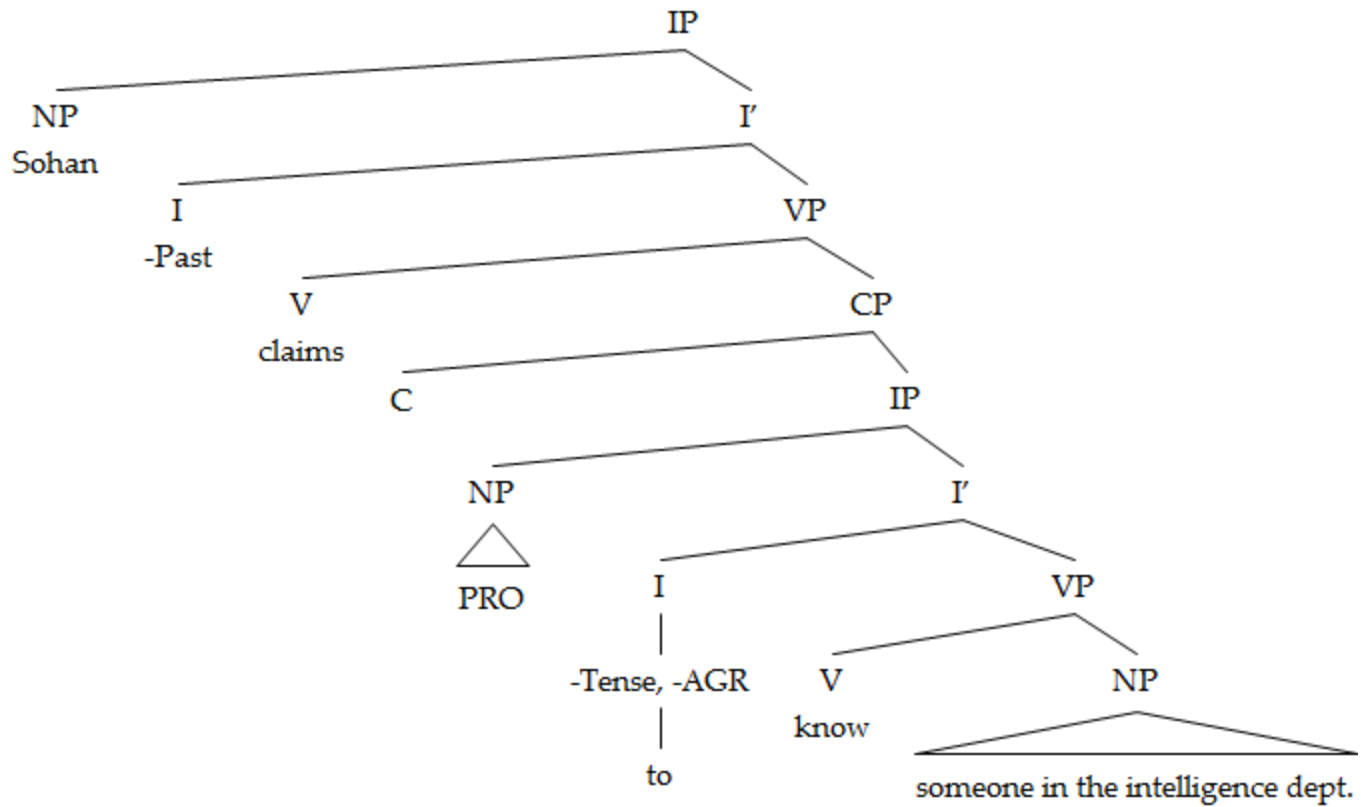
S-Structure

Invisible Subject

- 5. Sohan claims[to know someone in the intelligence dept.]
- 6. [To know someone in the intelligence dept.] is enviable.
- The invisible subject pronoun in infinitives – PRO
- Required to satisfy Theta criterion and also EPP
- It may have specific reference or arbitrary reference
- It is both a pronominal and an anaphor
- When anaphoric, its antecedent is said to be controller and PRO, its controllee

Structural representation

S-structure

IP
- NP — Sohan
- I′
  - I — -Past
  - VP
    - V — claims
    - CP
      - C
      - IP
        - NP — △ PRO
        - I′
          - I — -Tense, -AGR — to
          - VP
            - V — know
            - NP — someone in the intelligence dept.

Arguments motivating PRO

- PRO Subject has syntactic presence in the sentence playing a role to explain several facts.
- **Binding of Anaphors**
- 7. John claims[PRO to have saved himself from a situation].
- **Distribution of *together***
- 8 a. They claimed [PRO to have reached the station together]
-     b. *John claimed [PRO to have reached the station together]

Control Theory

- The module of grammar dealing with the distribution and interpretation of PRO is known as control theory

Distribution of PRO

- 9. *Sohan$_i$ wondered [whether [PRO$_i$ to read PRO before his examination]

- 10. *Sohan wondered [whether[PRO must read the prescribed textbooks before his examination

- 11. *John believed [PRO to be honest]

- Replacing ungrammatical instances of PRO with an overt NP makes sentences (6-8) grammatical

PRO must be ungoverned

- Legitimate instances of PRO cannot be substituted with an overt NP.

- Positions where overt NPs occur are Governed and assigned case

- Positions where PRO occur overt NPs are excluded.

- So the assumption: PRO is found in ungoverned positions. And hence not assigned with case.

PRO Theorem

- PRO, a pronominal anaphor
- Hence its feature matrix $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{Pronominal} \\ +\text{Anaphor} \end{bmatrix}$
- Binding Conditions A and B require quite contradictory requirements on its governing category
- Binding conditions on PRO cannot be met with
- Hence PRO satisfies Binding conditions vacuously: i.e without being governed at all

Types of Control

- **Obligatory and optional**
- **Optional:**
- 12. John told us that it was important [PRO to behave oneself/ourselves]
- 13. John wondered [how [PRO to behave oneself/himself]]
- **Only obligatory**
- 14. John tried [PRO to behave *oneself/himself]
- 15 John was reluctant [PRO to behave *oneself/himself]   (from Haegeman, 1994)

Contd…

- 16. John promised [PRO to behave *oneself/himself]

- 17. John persuaded Bill [PRO to behave *oneself/himself]

- 18. John arrived [PRO pleased with *oneself/himself]

- Types of Obligatory Control:

- Subject & Object Control: Matrix verbs decide

S-structural representation
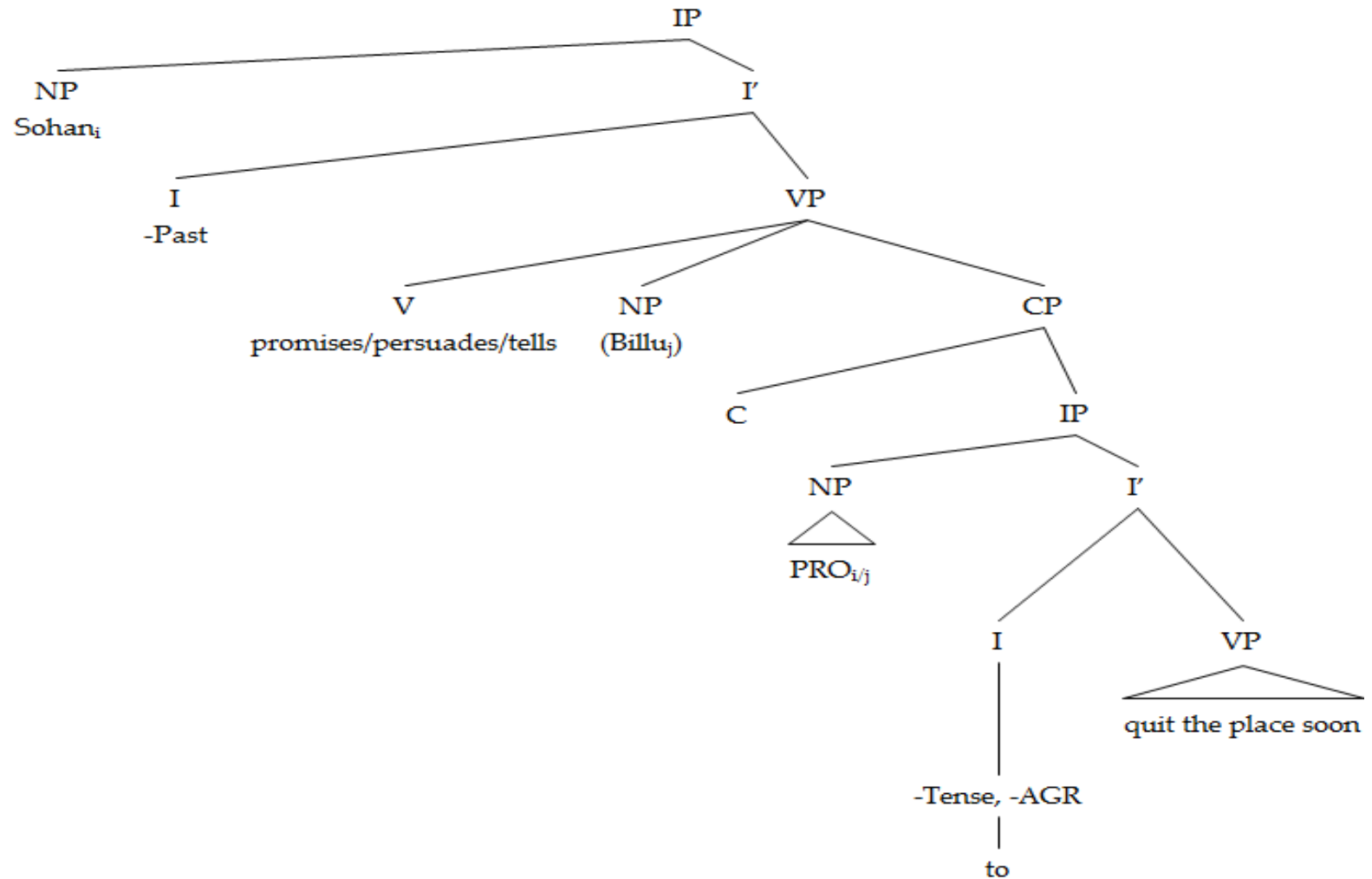
C-Command and Control

- **Obligatory Control**: Controller must C-command its controllee

- Optional Control: C-Command not necessary

- 19 a. [PRO not to behave myself /himself/ oneself] would be wrong.

-    b. [PRO to behave myself] would be my pleasure

Only arguments can be Controllers

- **Non-arguments cannot be controllers**
- 20. There occurred three accidents [without there being any medical help around]
- 21. *There$_i$ occurred three accidents [without PRO$_i$ being any medical help around]
- **Implicit arguments can control PRO but not omitted arguments(cf. 22 and 24)**
- 22. Certain allowances for employees were withdrawn [PRO to tackle the COVID crisis](Controller: Implicit Agent)
- 23. COVID-19 crisis led people$_i$[PRO$_i$ to lose hope in the almighty]
- 24* COVID-19 crisis led [PRO to lose hope in the govt.](Controller: Omitted argument)

References

Carnie, Andrew. 2006. *Syntax: A Generative Introduction* (2nd Ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.

Chomsky, N. A. 1981. *Lectures on Government and Binding*. Dordrecht: Foris.

Haegeman, L. 1994. *Introduction to Government and Binding theory* (2nd Ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.