

Control and inflected infinitives: the case of object control verbs

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The problem:

. Obligatory control is typically associated to non-inflected infinitives in European Portuguese (EP).

. European Portuguese displays inflected infinitives, which are infinitival forms morphologically marked for person and number features. Inflected infinitives are typically non-control contexts, co-occurring with nominative overt subjects or *pro* subjects (Raposo, 1987).

But:

. The existence of controlled inflected infinitives in EP has been noticed in standard dialects in the case of object control (Raposo, 1989, Madeira, 1994, Sheehan 2018 and Modesto 2010, 2018, the latter discussing Brazilian Portuguese).

. Recently, Barbosa (2021) questioned the status of inflected infinitives under object control verbs. She focuses on the cases of attitude verbs such as *convencer* 'convince' and *persuadir* 'persuade' and argues that inflected infinitives under these verbs do not show the behaviour of obligatory control contexts.

- ⇒ Are complements of object control verbs always obligatory control contexts?
- Doesn't agreement block control under object control verbs? If so, why?

Goal:

To broaden the types of verbs under discussion, in order to:

- (i) investigate whether Barbosa's intuitions concerning *convencer* 'convince' can be extended to other object control verbs;
- (ii) investigate differences between object control verbs that may affect the interpretation of inflected infinitives;
- (iii) to (briefly) discuss how the differences between object control verbs can be learned.

Anticipating the main claim of this talk: inflected infinitives under a subclass of object control verbs maintain obligatory control (OC) interpretations. There is a split between what we can call resilient object control verbs and non-resilient object control verbs; this split corresponds to Landau's (2015) divide between verbs inducing predicative and logophoric control and can also be related to the different interpretation of the relevant object control verbs.

1. Background

- Portuguese inflected infinitive
 - Overt inflection marking person and number (with the exception of the 1st and 3rd sg)
 - Licenses lexical or overt / null pronominal subjects

- Inflected infinitives under subject control verbs:

- . Limited (in the standard dialect) – see discussion on their distribution (Raposo, 1987; Gonçalves, Santos & Duarte, 2014)

- . Whereas non-inflected infinitives in complement clauses exhibit the properties of Obligatory Control (OC), as it is the case of the non-inflected infinitival clause in the complement of *lamentar* ‘regret’ in (1a), inflected infinitives generally block control, as is the case of the inflected infinitival clause under the same verb *lamentar* ‘regret’ in (1b).

- (1) a. Os professores lamentam chegar atrasados.
the teachers regret.3.PL arrive.INF late.M.PL
‘The teachers regret arriving late.’
- b. Os professores lamentam *pro* / nós chegarmos / os meninos chegarem atrasados.
the teachers regret.3.PL we arrive.INF.1PL / the children arrive.INF.3PL late.M.PL
‘The teachers regret that we / the children arrive late.’

- . Pseudo-inflected infinitives i.e. “controlled inflected infinitives, which bear morphological inflection but which cannot license nominative” Gonçalves et al. (2014: 161).

- (non-standard)*

- (2) os trabalhadores da indústria querem organizar-se
the workers of.the industry want.3PL organize.INF.3PL-CL
‘industry workers want to organize themselves’
(CRPC, 2.0 2012, extraction using CPQWeb[12/2012])

- Inflected infinitives under object control verbs (in the standard variety):

- . noticed by Raposo (1989) and by Madeira (1994), in general understudied
 - . generally assumed to maintain Obligatory Control (see Raposo, 1989; also Sheehan, 2018; Modesto, 2010, 2018 for Brazilian Portuguese)

- (3) a. [O Gabriel]_i obrigou [os irmãos]_k [a ____{k/*i/*1} saltar o muro].
the Gabriel forced the brothers PREP ___ jump.INF the wall
‘Gabriel forced his brothers to jump the wall.’
- b. [O Gabriel]_i obrigou [os irmãos]_k [a ____{k/*i/*1} saltarem o muro].
the Gabriel forced the brothers PREP ___ jump.INF.3PL the wall
‘Gabriel forced his brothers to jump the wall.’

c. *[O Gabriel]_i obrigou [os irmãos]_k [a eles_i / os primos_i saltarem o muro].
 the Gabriel forced the brothers PREP they / the cousins jump.INF.3PL the wall

. Sheehan (2018: 34): under object control verbs, inflected infinitives are widely accepted with an exhaustive reading (the reference of the controlled subject is exhausted by the controller), in contrast with contexts of subject control.

. Modesto (2010) for Brazilian Portuguese: the inflected infinitive under object control verbs (as in other contexts in BP) is required to signal a partial control reading (but partial and split readings are not distinguished):

(4) O Pedro₁ convenceu / instruiu / instigou / induziu a Dani₂
 the Pedro convinced / instructed / enticed / induced the Dani
 a PRO_{1+2/2+/*1+/*3} viajarem amanhã.
 PREP travel.INF.3PL tomorrow
 ‘Pedro convinced / instructed / enticed / induced Dani that they should travel tomorrow.’

Modesto (2010: 86)

Vs.

. Barbosa (2021): inflected infinitive subjects in complements of *convencer* ‘convince’ and *persuadir* ‘persuade’, the verbs that Modesto (2010, 2018) and Sheehan (2018) use to discuss this type of context, are not controlled.

If it is proven that there are controlled inflected infinitives under object control verbs, these would be the only case of pseudo-inflected infinitives in control structures (controlled inflected infinitives) in the standard variety of European Portuguese. It would therefore be interesting to understand why agreement would not block obligatory control in this precise context.

2. Testing control readings with different object control verbs

convencer ‘convince’ vs. *obrigar* / *forçar* ‘force’

- Possibility of a long-distance controller

The example in (5) shows a contrast between an inflected and a non-inflected infinitive under *convencer* ‘convince’ (in agreement with Barbosa (2021)’s description).

- (5) a. As crianças_i disseram que o Pedro_w **convenceu** a Maria_k / as primas_k
 the children said that the Pedro convinced the Maria the cousins
 a ____{k/*i/*w} ir para a cama cedo.
 PREP go.INF to the bed early
 ‘Children said that Pedro convinced Maria to go to bed early.’
 b. As crianças_i disseram que o Pedro_w **convenceu** a Maria_k

the children said that the Pedro convinced the Maria
 a ____{i/k+i/k+w} irem para a cama cedo.
 PREP go.INF.3PL to the bed early
 ‘Children said that Pedro convinced Maria to let them go to bed early.’

But it contrasts with what happens with *obrigar / forçar* ‘force’.

- (7) a. As crianças_i disseram que o Pedro_w **obrigou / forçou** a Maria_k
 the children said that the Pedro forced / forced the Maria
 a ____{k/*i/*w} ir para a cama cedo.
 PREP go.INF to the bed early
 ‘The children said that Pedro forced Maria to go to bed early.’
- b. As crianças_i disseram que o Pedro_w **obrigou / forçou** a Maria_k
 the children said that the Pedro forced / forced the Maria
 a ____{*i/*k/*k+i/k+w} irem para a cama cedo.
 PREP go.INF.3PL to the bed early
 ‘The children said that Pedro forced Maria to go to bed early with him.’
- (8) a. As crianças_i disseram que o Pedro_w **obrigou / forçou** as sobrinhas_k
 the children said that the Pedro forced / forced the nieces
 a ____{k/*i/*w} ir para a cama cedo.
 PREP go.INF to the bed early
- b. As crianças_i disseram que o Pedro_w **obrigou / forçou** as sobrinhas_k
 the children said that the Pedro forced / forced the nieces
 a ____{k/*i/*w} irem para a cama cedo.
 PREP go.INF.3PL to the bed early
 ‘The children said that Pedro forced his nieces to go to bed early.’
- Antecedent of the subject of an inflected infinitive in a non-c-commanding position:
- (9) a. O médico_w **convenceu** [a ama d[as crianças]_i]_k
 the doctor convinced the nanny of.the children
 a ____{k/*i} ir para a cama cedo.
 PREP go.INF to the bed early
 ‘The doctor convinced the children’s nanny to go to bed early.’
- b. O médico_w **convenceu** [a ama d[as crianças]_i]_k
 the doctor convinced the nanny of.the children
 a ____{i/k+...} irem para a cama cedo.
 PREP go.INF.3PL to the bed early
 ‘The doctor convinced the children’s nanny to go to bed early with someone else /
 convinced the nanny to make children go to bed early.’

← partial control available

However, an interesting contrast is obtained when we compare (9b) with (10b), with the matrix verb *obrigar* ‘force’.

(10) a. O médico_w **obrigou** [a ama d[as crianças]_i]_k
 the doctor forced the nanny of.the children
 a ____{*i/k} ir para a cama cedo.
 PREP go.INF to the bed early
 ‘The doctor forced / helped the children’s nanny to go to bed early.’

b. O médico_w **obrigou** [a ama d[as crianças]_i]_k
 the doctor forced the nanny of.the children
 a ____{*i/k+w} irem para a cama cedo.
 PREP go.INF.3PL to the bed early
 ‘The doctor forced / helped the children’s nanny to go to bed early with him.’

(11) A Sofia_w **obrigou** [o primo d[o Pedro]_i]_k
 the Sofia forced the cousin of.the Pedro
 a ____{k+w/*k+i/*k+...} irem para a cama cedo.
 PREP go.INF.3PL to the bed early
 ‘Sofia forced Pedro’s cousin to go to bed early with her.’

← Only split control available

If the controller is plural ([as primas das amigas]), the interpretation of the inflected and the non-inflected infinitive can be the same and the direct object controller exhausts the reference of the controlled subject – in this case, a split control reading is not excluded but also not made necessary.

(12) O Pedro_j **obrigou** [as primas d[as amigas]_i]_k
 the Pedro forced the cousins of.the friends
 a ____{*i/k} ir / ____{*i/k} irem para a cama cedo.
 PREP go.INF go.INF.3PL to the bed early

- The subject of an inflected infinitive under *convencer* ‘convince’ can be disjoint in reference from any DP in the clause, contrary to what happens when the matrix verb is *obrigar* ‘force’ - possibility of a discourse antecedent.

(13) O diretor_i **convenceu** o professor_j
 the director convinced the teacher
 a ____k entregarmos os projetos finais só no fim do período.
 PREP deliver.INF.1PL the projects final only at.the end of.the term
 ‘The director convinced the teacher to let us deliver the final projects only at the end of the term.’

(14) ??/*O diretor_i **obrigou** o professor_j
 the director forced the teacher
 a ____k entregarmos os projetos finais só no fim do período.
 PREP deliver.INF.1PL the projects final only at.the end of.the term

(15) Speaker A: E os enfermeiros_k?

and the nurses

‘What about the nurses?’

Speaker B: O diretor_i **convenceu** o médico_j a ____k irem ao congresso.

the director convinced the doctor PREP go.INF.3PL to.the congress

‘The director convinced the doctor that they (the nurses) should go to the congress.’

Vs.

Speaker B: O diretor_i **obrigou** o médico_j a ____{*k/j+i} irem ao congresso.

the director forced the doctor PREP go.INF.3PL to.the congress

‘The director convinced the doctor that they (the doctor and the director) should go to the congress.’

- o Alternation with an overt pronoun or a DP

(16) O diretor_i **convenceu** o médico_j

the director convinced the doctor

a irem eles_k / os enfermeiros ao congresso.

PREP go.INF.3PL them / the nurses to.the congress

‘The director convinced the doctor to let them / the nurses go to the congress (and not anyone else).’

(17) *O diretor_i **obrigou** o médico_j

the director forced the doctor

a irem eles_k / os enfermeiros ao congresso.

PREP go.INF.3PL them / the nurses to.the congress

The only possibility of having an overt pronoun in the subject position of the inflected infinitive under *obrigar* is a case in which it is interpreted as controlled, as shown in (18). “In obligatory control complements, if the subject of the infinitival is explicit, it must be anaphoric.” (Barbosa, 2009: 120).

(18) O diretor_i obrigou os médicos_j a irem eles_{j/*k} ao congresso.

the director forced the doctor PREP go.INF.3PL them to.the congress

‘The director forced the doctors to go to the congress themselves.’

Interim conclusion:

- *Obrigar* ‘force’ is a consistent (resilient) object control verb which maintains an Obligatory Control interpretation of its infinitival complement, either non-inflected or inflected, whereas *convencer* ‘convince’ does not show the same resilience.
- Plural inflected infinitives under *obrigar* with a singular controller induce split control readings, but not partial control readings.

3. Other object control verbs, control shift and the behaviour of inflected infinitives

. *dizer* (*dizer para* 'tell to') - indirect object control

(19) a. A Ana_i disse aos amigos_j para ____j/*i/*k correr.
the Ana told to.the friends COMP run.INF
'Ana told her friends to run.'

b. A Ana_i disse aos amigos_j para ____j correrem.
the Ana told to.the friends C run.INF.3PL
'Ana told her friends to run.'

(20) Speaker A: E as crianças_k?
and the children
'What about the children?'

Speaker B: O médico_i disse à mãe_j para ____k levarem a vacina.
the doctor told to.the mother C take.INF.3PL the vaccine
'The doctor told the mother that the children should take the vaccine.'

(21) O médico disse à mãe para as crianças / elas levarem a vacina.
the doctor told to.the mother C the children they take.INF.3PL the vaccine
'The doctor told the mother that they / the children should take the vaccine.'

→ *dizer para* (the directive *dizer*) is not a consistent object control verb, similarly to *convencer* 'convince'. In this case, OC is not maintained with inflected infinitives.

Control-shift: another dimension in which *convencer* does not show a consistent behaviour as an object control verb: given a relevant context, its interpretation can be coerced into a subject control interpretation, i.e. it allows control shift:

(22) Os meninos_i convenceram a mãe_k a ____i ir para cama tarde.
the children convinced the mother PREP go.INF to bed late
'The children convinced their mother to let them go to bed late.'

Another ditransitive verb which is recognized as easily allowing control shift is *pedir* 'ask', also a verb which does not consistently behave as an object control verb in the relevant contexts.

(23) A Ana_j pediu aos irmãos_i para ____i/_j correr.
the Ana asked to.the brothers C run.INF
'Ana asked her brothers to run.'

(24) A Ana_j pediu aos irmãos_i para ____i correrem.
the Ana asked to.the brothers C run.INF.3PL
'Ana asked her brothers to run.'

(25) Speaker A: E as crianças_k?

and the children

‘What about the children?’

Speaker B: O médico_i pediu à mãe_j para ____k levarem a vacina.

the doctor asked to.the mother C take.INF.3PL the vaccine

‘The doctor asked their mother that they take the vaccine.’

(26) O médico disse à mãe para as crianças / elas levarem a vacina.

the doctor asked to.the mother C the children they take.INF.3PL the vaccine

‘The doctor asked the mother to vaccinate the children / that they take the vaccine.’

Two subclasses: verbs that generate a “resilient” object control environment and verbs which create less resilient contexts - *convencer* ‘convince’ (as well as *dizer para* ‘tell to’) belongs to the latter subgroup. At least a subset of the non-resilient object control verbs allows control shift.

4 . Inflected infinitives under object control verbs, the theory of Control and a causative continuum

4.1. Two types of control verbs: Landau’s (2015) split between predicative and logophoric control

Landau (2015)

Force (see *obrigar, forçar* in Portuguese) – predicative control

. verbs described as implicative and causative, and non-attitude

Convince, persuade, tell, ask (*convencer, persuadir, dizer (para), pedir* in Portuguese) – logophoric control

. verbs described as attitude

Contrast in the effects of inflection on the two types of control (Landau’s *OC-NC Generalization*): predicative control, which is found in non-attitude complements, holds in the presence of inflection, whereas logophoric control, found in attitude complements, only holds when [+Agr] is absent.

⇒ the split found in EP data concerning the interpretation of inflected infinitives under the two paradigmatic verbs *obrigar* ‘force’ and *convencer* ‘convince’ is expected given the predictions of Landau (2015).

According to Landau, the *OC-NC generalization* is a formal constraint of grammar and there is no semantic explanation for these facts, the explanation for the different effects of

agreement in the different subsets of verbs is syntactic and comes from the different derivations of predicative vs. logophoric control.

Landau's assertions concern the full set of control verbs, namely, subject and object control verbs, and here we are zooming in on the restricted set of object control verbs, which share relevant semantic features.



Next section's goal: to establish a correlation between the two subsets of object control verbs, their semantics, and the availability of non-controlled inflected infinitives under these verbs.

4.2. Object control verbs as causatives

- ⇒ "causation, at least as it is encoded in language, cannot be captured by a single type of dependency relationship, but instead reflects an umbrella notion, comprising a set of contrasting 'bringing-about' relations" (Nadathur & Lauer, 2020: 30).

Shibatani & Pardeshi (2002)

- . idea of a causative continuum
- . "direct causation as a situation involving an agentive causer and a patientive causee" and "indirect causation as one involving two agentive participants, one an agentive causer and the other an agentive causee" (Shibatani & Pardeshi, 2002: 140)
- . treat *persuade* and *force* as causatives

Obrigar / *forçar* 'force' as a causative:

- (27) a. O Rui forçou / obrigou a Ana a comer a feijoada.
the Rui forced / forced the Ana PREP eat.INF the bean stew
'Rui forced Ana to eat the bean stew.'
- b. O vento forçou / obrigou a bicicleta a encostar.
the wind forced / forced the bike PREP pull.INF over
'The wind forced the bike to pull over.'

. similarities between the interpretation of *obrigar* and certain properties of the English causative *make*, as defined by Nadathur & Lauer (2020):

- (i) coercive implication associated with the meaning of *obrigar*: the causee did not make a free decision when bringing about the event in the embedded proposition;
- (ii) direct relation between the coercive implication and an interpretation of causal sufficiency: sentences with *obrigar*, such as (27) denote a causal dependence which can be defined as causal sufficiency, i.e. given the occurrence of the cause, the occurrence of the effect was guaranteed.

Obrigar 'force' is a *one-way implicative* (see Karttunen, 1971: 357, 2012): only a sufficient condition determining whether the event described in the complement took place is presupposed (not a necessary condition) - *obrigar* entails the truth of its complement under positive polarity.

- (28) a. O Rui forçou / obrigou a Ana a comer a feijoada
 the Rui forced / forced the Ana PREP eat.INF the bean stew
 (*mas ela não comeu, porque desmaiou antes).
 but she NEG eat because fainted before
 'Rui forced Ana to eat the bean stew (*but she did not eat it, because she fainted before that).'
- b. O Rui não forçou / obrigou a Ana a comer a feijoada
 the Rui NEG forced / forced the Ana PREP eat.INF the bean stew
 (mas ela comeu, porque adora).
 but she ate because loves
 'Rui didn't force Ana to eat the bean stew (but she ate it, because she loves it).'

Convencer 'convince' or *persuadir* 'persuade' - a notion of causal influence is maintained, but the causal link between Rui's action in (29) and the event of Ana eating the bean stew is more indirect: no causal sufficiency relation is expressed in sentences with *convencer* or *persuade*.

- (29) a. O Rui convenceu / persuadiu a Ana a comer a feijoada
 the Rui convinced / persuaded the Ana PREP eat.INF the bean stew
 (mas ela não comeu, porque desmaiou antes).
 but she NEG eat because fainted before
 'Rui convinced / persuaded Ana to eat the bean stew (but she did not eat it, because she fainted before that).'
- b. O Rui não convenceu / persuadiu a Ana a comer a feijoada
 the Rui NEG convinced / persuaded the Ana PREP eat.INF the bean stew
 (mas ela acabou por comê-la, porque teve fome antes de ir para a cama).
 but she ended PREP eat it because was hungry before PREP go to the bed
 'Rui did not convinced / persuaded Ana to eat the bean stew, but she ended up eating eat, because she was hungry before going to bed.'

⇒ as a result of Rui's action, Ana at some point made the decision of eating the bean stew, but this does not entail that Ana did eat the bean stew. The inference that the embedded proposition is true under positive polarity seems to be a Gricean implicature, which can be cancelled; no entailment is found also under negative polarity.

Consequence of this weaker causal relation expressed in sentences with *convencer*: in this case, and contrary to what happens with *obrigar* ‘force’ (or with the permissive *deixar* ‘let’) **more than two participants may be involved.**



This is exactly what we can express with non-controlled inflected infinitives under *convencer* ‘convince’:

(30) Speaker A: E os enfermeiros_k?
and the nurses
‘What about the nurses?’

Speaker B: O diretor_i convenceu o médico_j a ____k irem ao congresso.
the director convinced the doctor PREP go.INF.3PL to.the congress
‘The director convinced the doctor to let them (the nurses) go to the congress.’

⇒ The interpretation of this causal dependence still implies the existence of a chain of causation linking the matrix subject, the causee (the direct object) and the embedded subject. In this circumstance, the causal relation is extremely indirect and it is impossible again to guarantee an effect – the free decision of two participants is involved.

Vs.

obrigar ‘force’: a third participant (associated to the interpretation of non-controlled inflected infinitives) is incompatible with the coercive implication associated to the interpretation of this verb and, especially, with the interpretation of the verb as a one-way implicative.

⇒ Semantic explanation for the resilience of obligatory control in inflected infinitives under *obrigar* ‘force’, which is not itself incompatible with the subclasses of control verbs defined by Landau (2015).

A related effect: *Control shift*

The control shift interpretation seems to result from the same interpretation that allows non-controlled inflected infinitives: some action of the children leads their mother to take a decision; this decision is a decision to allow the children to take some action (permissive causation).

(31) Os meninos_i convenceram a mãe_k a ____i ir para cama tarde.
the children convinced the mother PREP go.INF to bed late
‘The children convinced their mother to let them go to bed late.’

5. The argument structure of object control verbs – evidence from finite complements

Convencer ‘convince’ occurs with a subjunctive finite complement which may take a null subject or an overt subject. The null subject has a free interpretation.

- (32) a. O Jorge_i convenceu a mãe_k a que ___k vendesse os quadros ao museu.
 the Jorge convinced the mother PREP COMP sell.SUBJ.3SG the paintings to.the museum
 ‘Jorge convinced his mother to sell the paintings.’
- b. O Jorge convenceu a mãe a que os avós
 the Jorge convinced the mother PREP COMP the grandparents
 vendessem os quadros ao museu.
 sell.SUBJ.3SG the paintings to.the museum
 ‘Jorge convinced his mother to let the grandparents sell the paintings to the museum.’
- a. E os avôs_w? O Jorge_i convenceu a mãe_k
 and the grandparents the Jorge convinced the mother
 a que ___w vendessem os quadros ao museu.
 PREP COMP sell.SUBJ.3SG the paintings to.the museum
 ‘What about grandparents? Jorge convinced his mother to let his grandparents sell the paintings to the museum.’

Vs. *obrigar* ‘force’

- (33) a. *O diretor obrigou o subdiretor a que o funcionário
 the director forced the subdirector PREP COMP the worker
 declarasse os rendimentos.
 declare.SUBJ.3SG the income
- b. ??O diretor_i obrigou o funcionário_k a que ___{??k/*w} declarasse
 the director forced the worker PREP COMP declare.SUBJ.PST.3SG
 os rendimentos.
 the income
 ‘The director forced the worker to declare his income.’
- c. ??A lei obriga os cidadãos_k a que ___{??k/*w} declarem os rendimentos.
 the law forces the citizens PREP COMP declare.SUBJ.PRS.3PL the income
 ‘The law compels the citizens to declare their income.’
- d. A lei obriga a que os cidadãos declarem os rendimentos.
 the law forces PREP COMP the citizens declare.SUBJ.3PL the income
 ‘The law compels the citizens to declare their income.’
- e. Novo Banco obriga a que todas as propostas
 Novo Banco [a bank] forces PREP COMP all the proposals
 de compra da Comporta sejam votadas.
 of acquisition of.the Comporta be.SUBJ.3SG voted
 ‘Novo Banco requires all the proposals concerning the acquisition of Comporta to be voted.’ *Jornal de Negócios, 9/7/2018*
- f. A lei obriga a que __ declarem os rendimentos.
 the law forces PREP COMP declare.SUBJ.3PL the income

'The law compels people to declare their income.'

- ⇒ The restriction at stake here seems to be a restriction on the number of participants in the situation, which is derivable from the lexical semantics of the verb, as we have argued.
- ⇒ Landau (2015) assumes that the complement of *force* is a small clause projected by a predicative head. In this case, the controller and the infinitival clause are respectively the subject and the predicate of a small clause and the control relation occurs within the small clause – possibly the controller DP is generated within the small clause, but moved to a higher position, a hypothesis developed in work in progress (with Anabela Gonçalves). I.e. *obrigar* 'force' is probably not inherently ditransitive.

6. How can the differences between the two types of object control verbs be acquired?

. The type of frame in which an object control verb occurs is not unambiguously ditransitive:

Verb DP a INF

Prepositional Infinitival Construction (PIC) (analysed as a control structure within a small clause - Raposo, 1989, Barbosa & Cochofel, 2005):

(34) O João viu [o bebé / os meninos [a __ dormir(em)]].
the J. saw the baby the children ASP __sleep.INF(.3PL)
'João saw the baby / the children sleeping.'

Causative structures:

(35) O João / o cansaço deixou o bebé a dormir.
the João / the fatigue left the baby PREP sleep.INF
'João / The fatigue made the baby sleep.'

. Children are biased to link nouns in sentences to participant-roles in events (Gleitman, 1990; Fisher, Jin & Scott, 2020) (syntactic bootstrapping)

. Possible positive evidence: sentences which describe situations with three participants (available only in the case of *convencer* 'convince')

- **Hypothesis:** The default interpretation of an object control verb may fall into the *obrigar* 'force' category until positive evidence forces this interpretation to be revised.



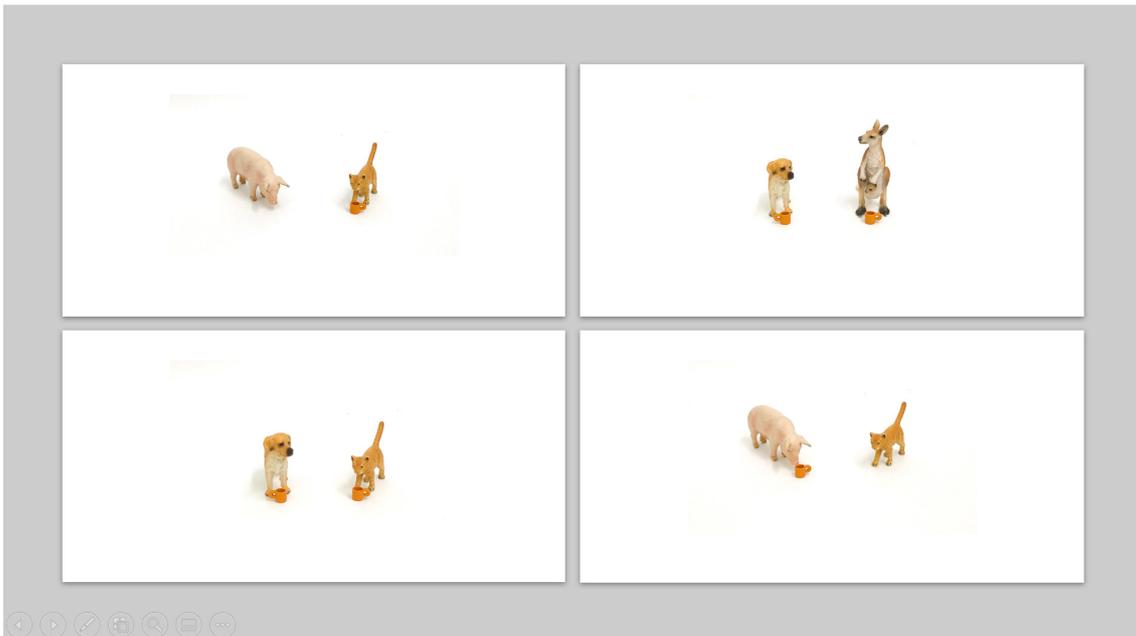
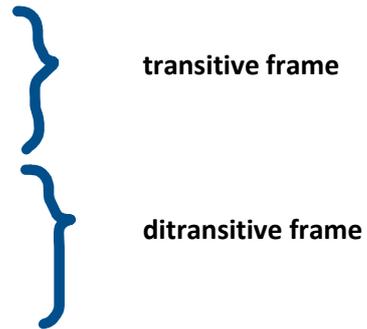
✕ Experiment on the comprehension of novel verbs in subject and object control frames (preliminary results):

Picture choice task, implemented in E-prime

Two factors were manipulated:

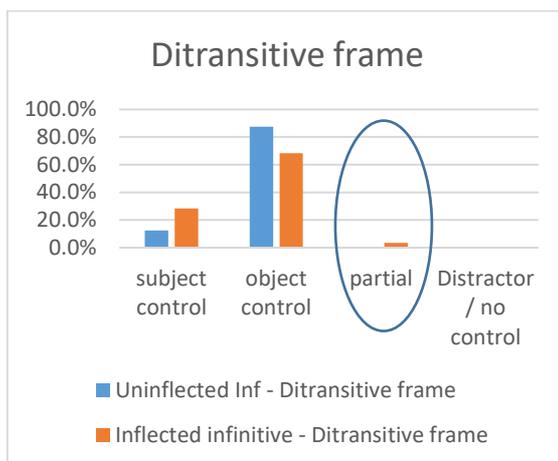
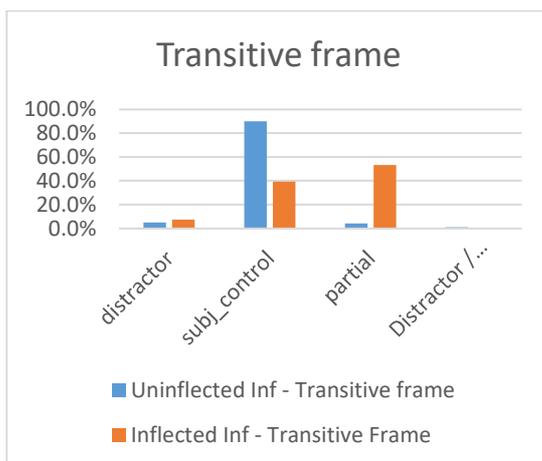
- . transitive vs. ditransitive frame (ditransitive frame with the structure typical of object control verbs, with the preposition *a*)
- . inflected vs. non-inflected infinitives

- a. O gato *pecatou* beber.
the cat verb drink.INF
- b. O gato *pecatou* beberem.
the cat verb drink.INF.3PL
- c. O porco *paritou* o gato a beber.
the pig verb the cat *a* drink.INF
- d. O porco *paritou* o gato a beberem.
the pig verb the cat *a* drink.INF.3PL



Results:

Adults



- Adults did not give partial control answers, even though this would be the only possible reading available in the context in the case of the plural inflected infinitive. This interpretation suggests that the default interpretation of the verb in this frame is similar to the interpretation of *obrigar* ‘force’ and not similar to *convencer* ‘convince’.

O porco paritou o gato a beberem.
 the pig verb the cat a drink.INF.3PL

Conclusions:

- (i) Not all object control verbs behave similarly with respect to the interpretation of inflected infinitives - *obrigar* ‘force’ and *convencer* ‘convince’ are paradigmatic of what we can call “resilient” obligatory control verbs (the former) and non-resilient obligatory control verbs (the latter);
- (ii) In the resilient class, obligatory control is maintained even in the case of inflected infinitives and a plural inflected infinitive with a singular controller can only be interpreted with a split reading, but not a partial reading;
- (iii) In the non-resilient class, inflected infinitives block Obligatory Control and both non-controlled and partial control readings are available;
- (iv) The two object control verbs not only belong to the two different classes of control verbs defined by Landau (verbs inducing predicative control vs. logophoric control) but also correspond to different forms of causation, from which we can derive semantic restrictions that would by itself justify different possibilities of interpretation of inflected infinitives (and different argumental structures – issue under discussion).

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