ABSTRACT
Nature of Non Finite Complementation in Assamese
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This thesis investigates the nature of non finite complementation in Assamese. Assuming non finiteness as a clausal category it looks into the semantics and syntactic structure of a non finite complement in Assamese. In the second chapter it examines the formal properties of a non finite clause and finds that non finite is marked by the absence of Agreement features in the verb, allowing a tense morpheme to be present in the morphology of the verb. In this atudy we demonstrate that the null subject in a non finite clause displays duality in its nature corresponding to its control relation with the matrix subject: sometimes it shares absolute identity with the matrix subject and sometime do not do so. We argue that in cases where it shows absolute identity with the matrix subject, movement theory of control (MTC) holds; but when the null subject and the matrix subject are different in terms of case of φ-features, PRO theory holds. Thus we bifurcate ‘control’ into PRO-control and Movement Derived Control which closely corresponds to Landau’s Distinction between Partial Control and Exhaustive Control. In fact, we argue that Control is ‘Partial Control’, where the matrix subject and the null subject (i.e.,PRO) are two distinct entities. The apparent cases of ‘exhaustive control’ are instances of bi-clausal ‘movement’; the null subject is an instance of dislocation and control here is only a descriptive label. Backward Control is not even movement because it is simply an instance of mono-clausal restructuring, at par with the modals and aspectuals. We assume this has implication for learnability because it reduces the burden on the acquisition of ‘control’.

Finally, regarding the size of the non finite complements, this thesis argues that the non finite complements do not have the same syntactic architecture above the VP. We show that in partial control constructions, since in such constructions PRO derives its interpretation through C mediation, the size of the complement is CP. In exhaustive control constructions, where we have a complementizer material, we have a CP clause, otherwise it is a TP. In restructuring configuration, the size of a lexical restructuring infinitive is vP, while functional restructuring infinitives are bare VP.