

Event control

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Many languages, including German, employ non-finite clauses (besides finite clauses) as propositional adjuncts, for instance infinitival, participial, and small clause adjuncts. The subject of these adjunct clauses is left unexpressed and must usually be interpreted co-referentially with the subject or object of the matrix clause (subject or object control). There is, however, another possible control relation that, to our knowledge, has been overlooked or at best marginalized in the recent control debate, namely event control, see (1) and (2).

(1) [Unknown to Mr. Mori], the other big trading houses were also putting together a consortium.
(cf. Kortmann 1995: 207)

(2) [Als letzten Arbeitsgang] hat Peter den Boden gebohnt.
as last process has Peter the floor waxed
'As a last step, Peter waxed the floor.'
(cf. Pütz 1988: 199)

- (3) a. The other big trading houses were also putting together a consortium. *This* was unknown to Mr. Mori.
b. The other big trading houses were also putting together a consortium, *which* was unknown to Mr. Mori.
c. *this/which* = the other big trading houses were also putting together a consortium
- (4) a. Peter hat den Boden gebohnt. *Das* war der letzte Arbeitsgang.
b. ?Peter hat den Boden gebohnt, *was* der letzte Arbeitsgang war.
c. *das/was* = den Boden bohnen

These adjuncts can be paraphrased using a relative clause or an independent finite clause (see (3a/b) and (4a/b)). This reveals two things: (i) the adjuncts above are clause-like (involving PRO as empty subject); (ii) the subject, which must be expressed overtly in the paraphrases (as *this/which* in English and *das/was* in German), refers to the event expressed in the main clause.

In the literature, this topic seems to have faded out of the debate since the dispute on control into rationale clauses (RCs) in the 80s and 90s with one camp arguing for the implicit agent as the controller of PRO in RCs adjoined to a passive or impersonal copula matrix clause, and another one arguing for the matrix event as controller of PRO.

The goal of this talk is twofold: on the one hand, we aim to clarify the empirical picture and want to provide insight into German, Norwegian, and English data involving event control in different kinds of non-finite propositional adjunct clauses. Second, we aim to capture these data theoretically by drawing on ideas in Whelpton (1995, 2002), Lohndal (2014), Fischer (2018), and Høyem (2018). We argue that event control is obligatory control (OC) (applying OC diagnostics as described by Landau 2013) that is syntactically licensed under Agree between PRO and a Davidsonian event argument in the matrix clause, which functions as antecedent.

Selected references: Fischer, S. 2018. Locality, control, and non-adjoined islands. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 3(1): 82. 1-40, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.182> • Høyem, I. 2018. Adjunktkontrolle im Deutschen. *Linguistische Berichte* 255: 347-395 • Lohndal, T. 2014. *Phrase structure and argument structure*. Oxford: OUP. • Whelpton, M. 2002. Locality and control with infinitives of result. *NLS* 10: 167-210.