

(Anti-)Control and Coreference: an experimental study on German

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Linguistik Kolloquium, Universität Bielefeld, Nov 10, 2021

In this talk we look at a specific class of clause-selecting verbs such as *anordnen*, *gutheißen*, which have been labeled anti-control (=AC) verbs (Wöllstein 2015, Brandt et al. 2016). These verbs are special as they do allow infinitival complements, but very rarely occur with them in corpora. Additionally, they disallow co-reference of matrix and embedded subject (=anti-control). From a theoretical point of view, the question is whether this anti-control property is due to the verb semantics (inherent control), argument structure (implicit object control) or a property of the complement (similar to Polish *żeby*, which induces similar restrictions, see Brandt et al. 2016). In order to broaden the empirical basis for these analyses, we conducted a study in which participants provided acceptability ratings and possible interpretations both for finite and infinitival clauses. The results show: (i) these AC-Verbs are slightly more acceptable with infinitival than with finite complements contrary to what would have been expected on the basis of the corpus data. (ii) While there is a dispreference for the control reading, co-reference of the matrix and embedded subject is possible, which is unexpected in the analyses provided. We'll discuss potential avenues how to interpret these findings in relation to the analyses of AC-verbs.

References

- Brandt, Patrick, Beata Trawiński & Angelika Wöllstein. 2016. (Anti-)Control in German: evidence from comparative, corpus- and psycholinguistic studies. In Ingo Reich & Augustin Speyer (eds.), *Co- and subordination in German and other languages* Linguistische Berichte, Sonderheft 21, 77–98. Hamburg: Buske.
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