

**Abstract: The syntax and semantics of the German present participial construction**

In my master's thesis (to be submitted in May 2016), I have conducted a syntactic-semantic study of the German participial construction with the present participle (PC1) based on a corpus of 400 constructions of this type, as in (1):

- (1) Schon die ganze Woche kränkelnd, musste er am Samstag aufgeben.  
*Already DEF entire week be sickly.P1 must.PAST he on.DEF Saturday give up.INF*  
'Having been sickly all week, he had to give up on Saturday.'

In my oral/poster presentation, I would like to present the main findings of my study regarding the interpretation, distribution and internal syntax of these constructions. Interestingly, most of these findings do not seem to be specific for the German PC1, but correlate with results of similar studies in other languages, for instance Kortmann's (1991) study of English free adjuncts.

I have found that the PC1 can have a variety of adverbial readings. In accordance with Ernst's (2001) and Pittner's (1999) classification of adverbial adjuncts, the PC1 can be interpreted as event-internal or process-related (instrumental and manner) adverbials, event-related (causal, temporal and "accessory", cf. Kortmann 1991) adverbials, different types of sentence adverbials and speech-act adverbials. The sentence and speech-act adverbial PC1 represent a particularly interesting finding because these interpretations have not been thoroughly addressed in previous studies of the PC1 in German (cf. Rath 1971, Bungarten 1976, Filipović 1977) and English (Kortmann 1991).

Similarly to Thurén (2008) and Fabricius-Hansen and Haug (2012), I analyse the PC1 as verbal Small Clauses as these constructions do not contain an explicit subject or a finite verb, but nevertheless include a predication. I argue that the PC1 have an even more complex internal structure than what is proposed in Thurén (2008) and Fabricius-Hansen and Haug (2012): German CP1 appear to have a full CP-TP-vP-VP structure because they may include a subjunction, sentence negation, adverbials and complements. Relying on a theory of adverbial base positions proposed by Frey and Pittner (1998) and Pittner (1999), I argue that PC1 with different interpretations are adjoined at different levels of the syntax tree, depending on their semantic scope. I show that the meaning of a PC1 can change when its position in the sentence changes.

I analyse the PC1 as having an implicit subject which appears as controlled PRO in the structure. My corpus study shows that the implicit PC1 subject corresponds to the matrix subject in 89 % of the constructions. The implicit subject of the remaining 11 % is controlled by the matrix proposition, a direct object, an implicit agent, the generic pronoun *man* (“one”) or another DP in the context. Using modern theories of control, I argue that the control relation between the controlling entity and the PRO subject of the PC1 is not a direct relation between these two elements themselves, but an Agree relation which includes a functional head in the structure (see Flaate 2007 and Thurén 2008 for similar analyses of control in free adjuncts).

### References:

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