

## On the syntax of instrumental clauses. The case of *indem*-clauses in German

Łukasz Jędrzejowski (University of Agder)  
lukasz.jedrzejowski@uia.no

In this talk, I examine the external and internal syntax of instrumental *indem*-clauses in German. As a subordinating conjunction, *indem* takes a finite TP as its complement and triggers verb final position, cf. [1]:

- [1] Max hat Maria beleidigt,  
Max have.3SG Maria offend.PTCP  
[<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>C</sub><sup>0</sup> *indem*] er sie vollkommen ignoriert hat].  
*indem* he her.ACC completely ignore.PTCP have.3SG  
'Max offended Maria by completely ignoring her.'

Semantically, *indem* introduces, as Sæbo (2011: 1435) puts it, an action as an instrument of another action. In [1], the action of ignoring is understood as an instrument of the action of offending. Accordingly, the main task of the instrumental clause is to elaborate on the content of the matrix clause by providing more specific content (cf. Behrens & Fabricius-Hansen 2002 and Bücking 2014 for more details).

I provide evidence showing that instrumental *indem*-clauses can operate only on the content level and that they cannot be interpreted epistemically, nor can they modify a speech act (contrary to how many other types of adverbial clauses behave). Furthermore, I argue that although *indem*-clauses are restricted to a particular interpretation, they can attach at two distinct heights in the matrix clause. If they are analyzed as central adverbial clauses, they attach as TP adjuncts. If, on the other hand, instrumental *indem*-clauses are treated as peripheral adverbial clauses, they are JP adjuncts (Krifka 2023). Main evidence for the analysis comes from: i) variable binding and Principle C effects, ii) movement to the left periphery of the matrix clause, and iii) licensing conditions of weak and strong root phenomena (Frey 2023).

### References

- Behrens, Bergljot & Cathrine Fabricius-Hansen. 2002. Connectives in contrast: A discourse semantic study of Elaboration based on corpus research. In Hilde Hasselgård, Stig Johansson, Bergljot Behrens & Cathrine Fabricius-Hansen (eds.), *Information Structure in a Cross-Linguistic Perspective* (Language and Computers 39), 45–61. Leiden: Brill.
- Bücking, Sebastian. 2014. Elaborating on events by means of English *by* and German *indem*. *Empirical Issues in Syntax and Semantics* 10. 19–36.
- Frey, Werner. 2023. On the categorial status of different dependent clauses. In Jutta Hartmann & Angelika Wöllstein (eds.), *Propositionale Argumente im Sprachvergleich: Theorie und Empirie / Propositional Arguments in Cross-Linguistic Research: Theoretical and Empirical Issues* (Studien zur deutschen Sprache 84), 363–408. Tübingen: Narr.
- Krifka, Manfred. 2023. Layers of assertive clauses: Propositions, judgements, commitments, acts. In Jutta Hartmann & Angelika Wöllstein (eds.), *Propositionale Argumente im Sprachvergleich: Theorie und Empirie / Propositional Arguments in Cross-Linguistic Research: Theoretical and Empirical Issues* (Studien zur deutschen Sprache 84), 115–182. Tübingen: Narr.
- Sæbø, Kjell Johan. 2011. Adverbial clauses. In Klaus von Stechow, Claudia Maienborn & Paul Portner (eds.), *Semantics. An International Handbook of Natural Language Meaning* (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft / Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science 33/2), 1420–1441. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter.