Restructuring by Structure Removal

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Virtually all approaches to restructuring infinitives ("kohärente Infinitive") developed over the last three decades postulate either uniformly monoclausal structures or uniformly biclausal structures for the phenomenon; i.e., they do not actually rely on a concept of syntactic restructuring. Against this background, the goal of this talk is to outline an approach to restructuring with control verbs in German that radically departs from standard approaches in that it presupposes that genuine syntactic restructuring does indeed exist, and can be held responsible for conflicting pieces of evidence that suggest both a monoclausal and a biclausal structure. This, in effect, implies a return to earlier transformational approaches according to which an initial biclausal structure is eventually reduced to a monoclausal structure. Arguably, the single main reason why these approaches were at some point generally abandoned is that they depended on reanalysis rules bringing about structure removal that were both unprincipled and unrestricted, and that lacked independent motivation. I would like to suggest that the situation is different in a derivational minimalist approach where an elementary operation Remove (which removes structure) conceptually suggests itself as a complete mirror image of the operation Merge (which builds structure), and can be shown to be empirically motivated in areas unrelated to restructuring (see Müller (2015; 2016), Pesetsky (2016)).