

OCP effects in Germanic possession: dialectal and diachronic evidence

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Adnominal Possession

Introduction

OCP effects

Linkers

Present-day Ger.

Middle Low Ger.

Analysis

Adnominal Possession

- An asymmetric relation between two nominals
- One denotes the possessor, the other denotes the possessum
- (1) The man's house
- (2) The wheel of the car
- (3) The taste of the wine

Adnominal Possession

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Analysis

Possession comprises different semantic relations:

(1) The man's house ownership

(2) The wheel of the car part-whole

(3) The taste of the wine *property*

Possession expresses some sort of affiliation between the two nominals involved

Across Germanic, various constructions to express such a relation exist

Adnominal Possession in Germanic

Introduction	construction	example	distribution	
OCP effects	POSSESSIVE PRONOUN ^a	hus-et mitt house-DEF my	Norw., Ice., Northern Swe.	
Linkers	1 Coolsolv L 1 Roive Civ	mitt hus my house	all Gmc. languages (North Scand., emphatic)	
Present-day Ger.	ADNOMINAL GENITIVE	das Haus des Mannes the house the GEN man GEN	Standard Ger., Ice.	
Middle Low Ger.	TIBROWING GENTITYE	mannen-s hus man-gen house	Eng., Standard Dan., (WJut., Dutch/Ger. dialects)	
Analysis	s-possessive ^b	Mutter-s Haus mother-poss house Ice. proper names, Ger./Far. also kinship terms		
	PLC	dem Mann sein Haus the.DAT man his house	Norw. dialects, Dan. (WJut.), Dutch/Ger. dialects	
		hus-et hans Per house-def his Per	North Swe., Norw., Ice. (proper names/kinship terms)	
	PREPOSITIONAL POSSESSIVE	hus-et till Per house-def to Per	all Gmc. languages except Dan., Swe., Ice.	

The Possessor Linking Construction (PLC)

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- (1) a. Alemannic (SynAlm)²
 des isch [dem Vater sin Platz]
 this is the.MASC.SG.DAT father his seat
 'this is father's seat'
 - b. Middle Low German (CHLG: Lauremberg)³
 men wat in [disses Mans syn Hovet] is begrepen
 but what in this.GEN man.GEN his head is understood
 'but whatever in this man's head is understood'
 - → Possessor Linking Construction (PLC)

Terminology: Dem Mann sein Haus

Possessor DP, Possessive element, Possessum DP

Other names:

- possessor doubling
- possessive dative
- garpe-genitiv

Ordering restrictions in the PLC

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Analysis

In the PLC the possessor must precede the possessum:

ADNOMINAL GENITIVE

(2) German

PLC

- a. dem Mann sein Haus the.dat Mann his house 'the man's house'
- b. * sein Haus dem Mann his house the.dat Mann Intended: 'the man's house'

(3) German

- a. das Haus des Mannes the house the GEN man.GEN 'the man's house'
- b. des Mannes Haus the.GEN man.GEN house 'the man's house' (archaic)
- (5) German
 - a. das Haus der Frau the house the.gen woman 'the woman's house'
 - b. * der Frau Haus the.gen woman house Intended: 'the woman's house'

PREPOSITIONAL POSSESSIVE

- (4) German
 - a. das Haus von dem Mann the house of the.DAT man 'the man's house'
 - b. von dem Mann das Haus of the.dat man the house 'the man's house'

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This paper

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OCP effects

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Present-day Ger.

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- Account for the ordering restrictions in Germanic possessive constructions via the OCP (Obligatory Contour Principle)
- Motivate possessive markers as linking elements in relation to the OCP
 - → multifunctionality



- → judgement/translation tasks
- Diachronic data: Middle Low German
 - → corpus data





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Analysis

OCP – Obligatory Contour Principle

- Originally a phonological constraint (Leben 1973; Goldsmith 1976)
 - →Two adjacent tonemes must be distinct
 - (1) a. *HHL
 - b. HL
- Now: general principle of linguistic organisation which operates across different linguistic dimensions (Mohanan 1994; Plag 1998; Yip 1998; Nevins 2012)
 - → 'identity avoidance'
 - → 'distinctness violation'

Extended to various morphosyntactic phenomena

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Analysis

Strategy 1: deletion ('haplology', Nevins 2012; Neeleman & van de Koot 2017)

- (11) English (Menn & MacWhinney 1984: 523)
 - a. girl/z/ girl.gen.sg
 - b. girl/z/ girl.pl
 - c. girl/z/ (*girl/zəz/) girl.gen.pl

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Strategy 2: suppletion

- (12) Italian (Bonet 1995: 609)
 - a. * Si si lavaone self washes'One washes oneself'
 - b. Ci si lavawe self washes'One washes oneself'

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Analysis

Strategy 3: (lack of) movement/word order

- (15) Serbo-Croatian (Nevins 2012: 89)
 - a. Ko koga vidi?who whom sees'Who sees whom?'
 - b. Šta uslovljava šta?what conditions what'What conditions what?'

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Strategy 4: insertion

- (13) English (Richards 2010
 - a. * [the destruction [a city]]
 - b. [the destruction [of a city]]

Types of identity

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- Traditional OCP: identity in form
 - (19) Western/literary Pashto (Nevins 2012: 104)
 - a. motar mo/*am rAwostəcar PART.PL bought'We/y'all brought the car'
 - b. motar *mo/am mo rAwostə car part.pl part.pl bought 'We/y'all brought our/y'alls car'
- But other types of linguistic identity can be relevant, in particular in relation to morphosyntax
 - (18) English (Nevins 2012: 92)
 - a. * John is **more more** intelligent than Bill than you are.
 - b. * John is **more** tall**er** than Bill than you are.

Relevant domains

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- Traditional OCP: linear adjacency
 - (21) Hindi (Mohanan 1994: 186–187)
 - a. ?? ramm-ko baccō-ko samhaalnaa paḍaa. Ram-dat children-acc take.care.of.nf fall.perf 'Ram had to take care of the children.'
 - b. ramm-ko apnii bahin-ke baccõ-ko samhaalnaa paḍaa. Ram-dat self's sister-gen children-acc take.care.of.nf fall.perf 'Ram had to take care of his sister's children.'
 - c. ramm-**ko** [pause] baccõ-**ko** samhaalnaa paḍaa.
 Ram-dat children-ACC take.care.of.NF fall.PERF
 'Ram had to take care of the children.'
- But syntactic proximity rather than linear order can also be relevant
 - (22) Hindi (Mohanan 1994: 200)
 ilaa aramm-ko baccõ-ko bulaane b^hejegii.
 Ila-NOM Ram-DAT children-ACC call.NF send.FUT
 'Ila will send Ram to call the child.'

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OCP strategy: insertion

→ linkers (e.g. Ghomeshi 1997; Richards 2010)

(13) English (Richards 2010

a. * [the destruction [a city]]

b. [the destruction [of a city]]

"Linker" is a rather nebulous term

→ functional element between head and dependent (Samvelian 2007)

→ typically multifunctional

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- Persian ezafe; does not indicate precise semantic or syntactic nature of relation
 - (24) Persian (Windfuhr & Perry 2013: 473)
 - a. āsmān-e ābiblue-EZ sky'blue sky'
 - b. ketāb-e Hasanbook-ez Hasan'Hasan's book'
 - c. rāh-e Tehrān road-EZ Tehran 'the road to/of Tehran'

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Greek determiner spreading

- (25) Greek (Larson & Yamakido 2008: 15)
 - a. to spiti **to** meghalo **to** petrino the house the big the of-stone 'the big stone house'
 - b. * to spiti meghalo petrino the house big of-stone'the big stone house'

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- Zazaki (Indo-Iranian) reverse ezafe
 - → multifunctionality
 - (27) Zazaki (Toosarvandani & Van Urk 2014: ex. (3))
 - a. kutik-**o** girs dog-ez.masc.sg.nom big 'the big dog'
 - ju biz-a girs-e one goat-ez.fem.sg big-fem.sg 'a big goat'

OCP in present-day German possession

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Present-day Ger.

Middle Low Ger.

Analysis

Recall the ordering restrictions:

PLC

- (2) German
 - a. dem Mann sein Haus the.dat Mann his house 'the man's house'
 - b. * sein Haus dem Mann his house the.DAT Mann Intended: 'the man's house'

ADNOMINAL GENITIVE

- (3) German
 - a. das Haus des Mannes the house the GEN man.GEN 'the man's house'
 - b. des Mannes Haus the.GEN man.GEN house 'the man's house' (archaic)
- (5) German
 - a. das Haus der Frau the house the GEN woman 'the woman's house'
 - b. * der Frau Haus the.GEN woman house Intended: 'the woman's house'

PREPOSITIONAL POSSESSIVE

- (4) German
 - a. das Haus von dem Mann the house of the.DAT man 'the man's house'
 - b. von dem Mann das Haus of the.dat man the house 'the man's house'

PLC

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Analysis

(2) German

a. dem Mann sein Haus the.dat Mann his house 'the man's house'



Possessor_{DP} **sein** Possessum_{DP}

b. * sein Haus dem Mann his house the.dat Mann Intended: 'the man's house'

*sein Possessum_{DP} **DAT** Possessor_{DP}

- Striking, given the fact that DAT can mark possession in external possessive constructions
- (33) a. standard German
 der Peter wäscht dem Opa die Haare
 the Peter washes the.dat grandfather the hair
 'Peter washes his grandfather's hair'
 - b. Alemannic
 des isch dem Leo
 this is the.DAT Leo
 'this belongs to Leo'

Adnominal genitive

Introduction (29)Mann-es Haus des the.masc.gen man-masc.gen house 'the man's house' **OCP** effects Possessor_{DP} GEN Possessum_{DP} Mädchen-s Haus des the.nt.gen girl-nt.gen house Linkers 'the girl's house' der Frau-Ø Haus *Possessor_{DP} Ø Possessum_{DP} the.FEM.GEN woman house Present-day Ger. Intended: 'the woman's house' Middle Low Ger. (30)das Haus des Manne-s the house the MASC. GEN man-MASC. GEN 'the man's house' Analysis Mädchen-s das Haus des the house the.nt.gen girl-nt.gen Possessum_{DP} GEN Possessor_{DP} 'the girl's house' das Haus der Frau-Ø the house the FEM. GEN woman 'the woman's house'

s-possessive

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Middle Low Ger.

Analysis

- Grammaticalised possessive marker –s derived from masc/neut.gen
- Occurs on feminine and complex prenominal possessors which otherwise lack possessor-final genitive morphology
- Low German (Strunk 2004: 109)
 - Hinnerk un Anna-s Huus Hinnerk and Anna-poss house 'Hinnerk and Anna's house'
 - un Anna Huus b. * Hinnerk-s Hinnerk-poss and Anna house Intended: 'Hinnerk and Anna's house'

Possessor_{DP} s Possessum_{DP}

*Possessor_{DP} Ø Possessum_{DP}

Prepositional possessive

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Analysis

(38) German

- a. das Haus **von** dem Mann the house of the.DAT man 'the man's house'
- b. von dem Mann das Haus von dem Mann of the.dat man the house 'the man's house'

Possessum_{DP} von Possessor_{DP}

- Roehrs (2019): prenominal variant involves movement to a higher functional projection (LLP) (with focus)
- Underlyingly, von originates between possessum and possessor

Summary

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Present-day Ger.

Middle Low Ger.

- *Possessor_{DP} Possessum_{DP}
- Possessor_{DP} sein Possessum_{DP}
- Possessor_{DP} GEN Possessum_{DP}
- Possessum_{DP} GEN Possessor_{DP}
- Possessum_{DP} **von** Possessor_{DP}

- sein, GEN and von can all prevent an OCP violation
- The OCP requirement explains the **ordering restrictions** across the various constructions

Evidence from stacking

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Analysis

- Two stacked possessive constructions are ruled out when the linkers are of the same form:
 - (43) Swabian (Alemannic)
 - a. ??/* ds Buach vom Onkl vom Nochbr the book of-the uncle of-the neighour Intended: 'the book of my uncle's neighbour'
 - b. ??/* em Nochbr seim Onkl sei Buach the.dat neighbour his.dat uncle his book Intended: 'the book of the neighbour's uncle'
 - c. ??/* dr Nochbre ihra Dande ihr Buach the neighbour.fem her.dat aunt her book 'the book of the neighbours's aunt'
- But this is grammatical when the linkers are of different forms:
 - (44) Swabian (Alemannic) (as based on Zifonun 2003: 100)
 - a. dr Doris ihram Mo sei Partei the.dat Doris her.dat husband his party 'Doris' husband's party'

'in my neighbour's sister's garden'

b. in meim Nochbr seiner Schweschdr ihram Garda in my.dat neighbour his.dat sister her.dat garden

Middle Low German

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Present-day Ger.

Middle Low Ger.

Analysis

MLG case system: erosion gradually underway

 Genitive morphology remains present on majority of masc/neut nouns and on many fem nouns (although optional already)

	MASC.SG	NEUT.SG	FEM.SG
NOM	dach	wort	wîse
ACC	dach	wort	wîse
DAT	dage	worde	wîse(n)
GEN	dag-es	word-es	wîs-e(n)
	·		

Table 2: MLG case system (Härd 2000)

- (5) German
 - a. das Haus der Frau the house the GEN woman 'the woman's house'
 - b. * der Frau Haus the.GEN woman house Intended: 'the woman's house'

 Prediction: prenominal fem genitives in MLG should be fine, given that genitive case morphology is present to prevent an OCP violation

Middle Low German

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Middle Low Ger.

Analysis

Prediction: √

- (47) Middle Low German
 - a. (CHLG: Arznei)
 dar aff eyn plaster geleget vppe der vrowe-n hemelike stad
 thereof a plaster placed on the.gen woman-gen secret place
 'thereof a plaster placed on the woman's secret place'
 - b. (CHLG: Bremen) des ersten Sondaghes na vser vrowe-n daghe the.gen first.gen Sunday.gen after our.gen lady-gen day.dat 'the first Sunday after our lady's day'
 - c. (CHLG: Engelhus)

 de was eyner arme-n ghevange-n vrowe-n sone
 he was a.gen poor-gen captive-gen woman-gen son
 'he was the son of a poor captive woman'
 - d. (CHLG: Flos)
 dorch clarisse-n willen mochte se des nicht laten
 through Clarisse.GEN will wanted she so NEG leave
 'on account of Clarisse's will she didn't want to leave so'

More diachronic evidence

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Middle Low Ger.

- Genitive marking on the possessor later becomes confined to the rightmost edge
 → grammaticalisation, s-possessive
 - (49) a. Older Low German (Strunk 2004: 106)
 myn-s Grotvader-s older Möme sprack
 my-gen grandfather-gen old.gen grandmother language
 'the language of my grandfather's old grandmother'
 - b. Modern Low German (Strunk 2004: 107)
 mien-Ø Grotvader-s olle Möme-s spraak
 my grandfather-poss old grandmother-poss language
 'the language of my grandfather's old grandmother'
 - (50) a. Older Low German (Strunk 2004: 107)
 de-s Künige-s Dochter
 the-GEN king-GEN daughter
 'the king's daughter'
 - b. Modern Low German (Strunk 2004: 107)
 de(n) Künig-s Dochter
 the.nom.(ACC) king-poss daughter
 'the king's daughter'

PLC

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Analysis

- Range of cases marked on the possessor (in line with case erosion)
 - (51) Middle Low German
 - (ReN: Chr._Wass._Duisberg)
 Ende was hartoch Jan van cleue syn suster
 and was duke.Nom/Acc Jan van Cleve his sister
 'And (she) was Duke Jan van Cleve's sister'
 - b. (ReN: Hildesh._StR_1300)
 Sterft emme manne sin wif
 dies a.dat man.dat his wife
 'If a man's wife dies'
 - c. (ReN: Lauremberg_1652)

 Wen idt wehre de-s Her-n sin Wille if it were the.gen sir.gen his will 'if it were the sir's will'



Possessum_{DP} GEN sin Possessor_{DP}

transitional stage (redundancy)

(52) (CHLG: Braunschweig)
unses alde-n herre-n tiden
our old sir's time
'our old sir's time'



Possessum_{DP} **GEN** Possessor_{DP}

Summary

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Present-day Ger.

Middle Low Ger.

- Diachronic data from MLG further supports the OCP account of Germanic possession
- Connection: loss of genitive and rise of PLC
- OCP is standardly invoked in **synchronic** contexts
- But it can also provide useful insights in the context of **diachrony**

OCP and the possessive relation

Introduction

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- The empirical data motivate **an OCP effect** in possessive constructions
- The data also motivate the analysis of the different possessive markers as linking elements
 preventing an OCP violation
 - → The OCP effect can account for the observed ordering restrictions
 - The OCP does not explain the specific semantic relation the two DPs involved enter into
- Open question: besides the OCP effect, how can the semantic relation between the possessor and possessum be accounted for?

OCP and the possessive relation

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Analysis

All three possessive constructions span a range of semantic relations

Adnominal genitive (subtle) animacy restriction

- a. Peters Katze (OWNERSHIP)
- b. Peters Onkel (кімѕнір)
- c. Peters gute Singstimme (PROPERTY)
- d. Peters Nase (BODY PART)
- e. des Meeres Wellen (PART-WHOLE) archaic
- f. Peters Operation (AGENT/THEME)

Prepositional possessive

- a. die Katze vom Nachbarn (ownership)
- b. der Onkel vom Nachbarn (кімsнір)
- c. die Höhe von dem Baum (PROPERTY)
- d. das glänzende Fell von dem Hund (BODY PART)
- e. die Zweige von dem Baumes (PART-WHOLE)
- f. die Operation von dem Mann (тнеме)
- g. die Operation von dem Arzt (AGENT)

PLC animacy restriction

- a. dem Peter seine Katze (OWNERSHIP)
- b. dem Peter sein Onkel (кімsнір)
- c. dem Peter seine gute Singstimme (PROPERTY)
- d. dem Peter seine Nase (BODY PART)
- e. ??dem Meer seine Wellen (PART-WHOLE)
- f. dem Peter seine Operation (AGENT/THEME)

The multifunctionality of linkers

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Analysis

Elements traditionally analysed as linking elements are mostly not exclusively linkers

- Of in English → preposition
- *Ezafe* → agreement
- (reverse ezafe ≈ adjectival inflection)
- Determiner spreading in Greek → polydefiniteness
 - (25) Greek (Larson & Yamakido 2008: 15)
 - a. to spiti to meghalo to petrino the house the big the of-stone
 'the big stone house'
 - b. * to spiti meghalo petrino the house big of-stone 'the big stone house'

- (27) Zazaki (Toosarvandani & Van Urk 2014: ex. (3))
 - a. kutik-o girs dog-ez.masc.sg.nom big 'the big dog'
 - b. ju biz-a girs-e one goat-ez.fem.sg big-fem.sg 'a big goat'

Possessive markers → establish the Poss-relation between head noun and possessor

Previous approaches to possession

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Analysis

Previous approaches to adnominal possession in Germanic

- Focus on ban of possessor extraction (Olsen 1996; Gavruseva 2000; Haegeman 2004)
- Focus on parallel make-up of CP and DP (see discussion in Alexiadou et al. 2007)
- Aim for unified structure from which all poss constructions can be derived (Weiß 2008; Roehrs 2019)
 - \rightarrow Possessor in complement position (\rightarrow specific thematic relation)
 - → Possessor in some Spec of an IP/nP/PossP above NP with subject-like properties

Problem 1: Ordering restriction

• PLC possessor is never grammatical in postnominal (complement) position

Problem 2: Prenominal genitive and the PLC show an animacy restriction

 How can movement of only the 'animate subset' of possessors be accounted for if they all originate in e.g. a PossP in complement position?

A universal spine approach to complex DPs?

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Analysis

Possible solution:

Rather than trying to motivate possessors as complements or subjects, a more general approach to complex DPs based on Wiltschko (2014) might be able to bring the OCP and the semantic relation of possessor and possessum together

Wiltschko (2014)

- Observation: tense and thus TP has traditionally been regared as a universal category
- However, there are languages that do not make the past-non-past distinction
 - → Tense is not universal!
- Proposal: there is a universal category but it is more abstract → anchoring
- Crosslinguistic variation is expected as the Unit of Language (UoL) associated with it can vary

A universal spine approach to complex DPs?

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- Overall, anchoring is some sort of coincidence
- Clause-level: anchoring concerns event time and utterance time (e.g. via tense)
- Wiltschko (2014) does assume anchoring in the nominal domain, but does not apply it to complex DPs
 - → ± identity of speaker and addressee
- Complex DPs (e.g. possession): coincidence of possessor and possessum

A universal spine approach to complex DPs?

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- But [± coincidence] alone is not sufficient to provide the fine-grained semantic patterns we find in possession (ownership vs. other relations)
- Proposal: coincidence_{abs} vs. coincidence_{concr}
 plus control (to have at one's disposal, cf. Stolz et al. 2008; Kasper 2014)
- Ownership = coincidence_{abs} plus control
 - → the possessum coincides with possessor in an abstract sense, who has it at their disposal

PLC

- a. dem Peter seine Katze (ownership)
- b. dem Peter sein Onkel (кімѕнір)
- c. dem Peter seine gute Singstimme (PROPERTY)
- d. dem Peter seine Nase (BODY PART)
- e. ??dem Meer seine Wellen (PART-WHOLE)
- f. dem Peter seine Operation (AGENT/THEME)

+ control	+ coincidence _{abs}	-coincidence _{concr}
- control	+ coincidence _{abs}	-coincidence _{concr}
- control	- coincidence _{abs}	+coincidence _{concr}
- control	- coincidence _{abs}	+coincidence _{concr}
- control	-coincidence _{abs}	+coincidence _{concr}

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