The talk presents new ideas concerning the origin and nature of PRO and control that are supported by corpuslinguistic data from different Germanic varieties. The grammatical formative *zu* ‘to’ in its different manifestations takes center stage in connection with the thesis in (1).

(1) Zu marks the reflexivization of a genuinely asymmetric relation.

The proposition in (1) carries a contradiction: If a relation between x and y is asymmetric, then it follows that not both xRy and yRx. If x = y due to reflexivization, however, then exactly xRy and yRx. Reflexivized asymmetric relations therefore always denote falsehood, making them apparently unusable. Brandt (2016) argues though that natural language grammars may exploit hidden contradictions in certain domains: the interface suspends interpretation of part of the problematic meaning and leaves it to be interpreted in ensuing syntactic-semantic cycles. Reducing the asymmetry of the relation to "some x is P and not P", we argue "x is not P" must be accommodated non-locally. In subject-control structures (*versprechen* ‘promise’), it is interpreted in terms of the negatively defined theme theta role, taken by the infinitival complement that as a whole functions as the direct object. In all other control structures (object or anti-control), the theme role is independently taken. The next best way to interpret “x is not P” is in terms of the modal semantics of a purpose clause: x does not have the property denoted by the purpose clause in the actual world.

Starting from data from the German Reference Corpus DeReKo featuring prepositional adverbs that function as correlates (*dazu, darum*), we classify German and corresponding Dutch control verbs. Taking into account as well data from the Dutch Sonar-corpus, we argue that structures where "x is not P" cannot be identified with theme role semantics – i.e., all but subject control structures – are in need of correlates and the supposedly optional Dutch element *om* exactly to establish a thematic link on the basis of which "x is not P" can be interpreted. We furthermore seek to assess whether German dialectal *zum* in ‘nominalized infinitives’ should be taken to correspond to *um zu*, the German cousin of *om te*, as opposed to the fusion of *zu* and the definite article *dem*.