In Minimalism, MOVE is normally triggered by feature checking, whereby an element moves to check a feature of its own or on the target (Lasnik 1995). I present evidence from adjunct control in Lebanese Arabic (LA) to show that MOVE may serve as a MERGE licensing operation. In this case, an element moves out of an adjunct in order to license the merge of the adjunct with the matrix clause.

LA licenses adjuncts known as circumstantial clauses; e.g., sentences (1) and (2). The matrix and embedded subjects are obligatorily coreferential; thus, (1-2) may qualify as obligatory control constructions. The embedded subject may be pronounced as a quantificational element.

(1) l-wle:d:ı ɗ'aharo: [Ø]\ˈ^w½ ^ćam-yid'\hako: ]
the-childreni go.out.PERF.3.PL [Ø]\ˈ^w½ PROG-laugh.IMPERF.3.PL ]
‘The children went out laughing.’

(2) l-wle:d:ı ɗ'aharo: [nis'\u-\u'w½ ćam-yid'\hako: ]
the-childreni go.out.PERF.3.PL [half-them\u'w½ PROG-laugh.IMPERF.3.PL
w-nis'\u-\u'w½ ćam-yibko ]
and-half-them\u'w½ PROG-cry.IMPERF.3.PL ]
‘The children went out half of them laughing and half of them crying.’

Alternatively, (1-2) may be realized with the conjunction w- ‘and’, which in structures like (3) and (4) means ‘while’; see Eid 1983. In this case, disjoint subjects are allowed, (3-4). w- requires an overt pronoun that may follow or precede it.

(3) l-wle:d ɗ'aharo: [w-hiyye (Layla) ćam-tid’\hak ]
the-children go.out.PERF.3.PL [while-she (Layla) PROG-laugh.IMPERF.3.F ]
(4) l-wle:d ɗ’aharo: [hiyye w- (Layla) ćam-tid’\hak ]
the-children go.out.PERF.3.PL [she while- (Layla) PROG-laugh.IMPERF.3.F ]
‘The children went out while she/Layla was laughing.’

I analyze (1-2) as adjunct control structures derived via movement (Hornstein 1999). The subject merges in the embedded clause and moves to the matrix clause. At PF, the adjunct copy is deleted. If the embedded subject comprises a quantificational element, this element is stranded (Aoun et al. 2001). If this is correct, the question is: Why does the subject move? I rule out feature checking as a trigger. I argue instead that movement occurs to license the merge of the adjunct. Circumstantial adjuncts in LA, although semantically propositional, syntactically are dominated by a predicable head with a [PRED] feature. Evidence comes from the fact that the adjuncts in (1-2), unlike the adjuncts in (3-4), may not merge as arguments; e.g., (5). The reason is that “predicates are not assigned theta-roles since theta roles are assigned only to syntactically closed maximal projections” – or propositions (Rothstein 2001).

(5) [*w-hiyye \ćam-tid’\hak ] ke:n ?af’d’al wa’tet ts’awwir-a:
[*while-she prog-laugh.imperf.3.f] was best time photograph.imperf.2.m.s-her
‘While she was smiling was the best time to take a picture of her.’

[PRED] on the head of circumstantial clauses licenses their merge as predicates that need to be saturated by an argument of the matrix clause. Given that circumstantial clauses have a subject and are thus semantically saturated, they must qualify as derived predicates in order to undergo merge as open predicates in accordance with the feature specification [PRED] of their heads. According to Rothstein, this is possible only if a syntactic operation converts them to open predicates. I suggest that the operation in this case is movement. The embedded subject moves, allowing the adjunct to merge as an open predicate that is indirectly predicated of an element in the matrix clause.