Linking Dialog Elements to Natural Variables

In cases where you want to map database fields or other program variables to the user interface, input field controls and selection box controls may be linked to Natural variables. This makes it easier to modify and query them.

If the end user has entered data in an input-field control or a sebox control and sets the focus to another dialog element, a leave event occurs and the content (`STRING`) is moved to the variable. Thus, the variable is updated. Note that the variable will *not* be updated if the end user enters data and a change event occurs.

To refresh the content of the dialog element after the linked variable has been modified in code

- Use the `PROCESS GUI` statement action `REFRESH-LINKS`.

Modifying and querying input field controls with the `ASSIGN` statement would normally work like this:

```
...
#IF-1.STRING := '12345'
#TEXT := #IF-1.STRING
...
```

However, you can also link a Natural variable to the input field control or selection box control. You can also link an indexed variable to a dialog element or an array of dialog elements.

To link a variable in Natural code, set the attribute `LINKED` to `TRUE` and modify the attribute `VARIABLE` by setting it to the Natural variable name:

```
...
#IF-1.LINKED := TRUE
#IF-1.VARIABLE := MYVARIABLE
...
```

To use the dialog editor to enter the name of the Natural variable

1. Double-click on your input field control. The corresponding attributes window appears.
2. Choose the **Source** button to the right of the **String** entry. The Source for *handlename* dialog box appears.
3. Choose **Linked variable**.
4. Enter the variable name (such as `MYVARIABLE` in the example above).

There are two possibilities to link an indexed variable such as `MYVARIABLE (A20/1:5)`:

- you link a single dialog element to the indexed variable; then you specify the index, such as `MYVARIABLE(2)` in the variable name field of the Source for *handlename* dialog box, or
- you link an array of dialog elements to the indexed variable; then you do not specify an index in the variable name field. In this case, the occurrences of the array and the index of the variable must be compatible. `MYVARIABLE (A20/1:5)` could be linked to a one-dimensional array with up to five

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occurrences.