

Infinitives vs. subjunctives:
What do we learn from obviation and from exemptions from obviation?
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Do the particular moods have cross-linguistically invariant deeper properties? Does each mood have a coherent set of properties within a particular language, and if yes, are these characteristic only of that mood? What determines what mood or moods a particular verb selects in a particular language? How do the lexical semantics of the verb and the inventory of functional heads and features collaborate in the choice?

I will not attempt to answer these general questions here. What I will do is look at some data pertaining to obviation and responsibility in Hungarian and in some other languages. Because obviation is characteristic of subjunctives, I expect that it tells us something about the semantics of subjunctives. And because exemptions from obviation are rampant, I expect that they tell us something about obviation itself.

Obviation (disjoint reference effect) in the literature

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| (1) The subject of a subjunctive is disjoint in reference from the subject/attitude-holder argument in the immediately higher clause. | |
| (2) # Ed wanted that he (would/should/might) visit MoMA. | only in subjunctive |
| (3) Ed knows that he will visit/is visiting/visited MoMA. | |
| (4) I recommended to Ed that he visit MoMA. | only wrto subject |
| (5) I begged Ed that he (would/should/might) visit MoMA. | |
| (6) Ed wanted Mary to demand that he visit MoMA. | local |
| (7) Ed wanted for it to be required that he visit MoMA. | |

Ruwet 1984/1991

- (8) My summary of Ruwet's core intuition:
Subjunctives "iconically" convey a discontinuity between the will and the actions of a person. If it is mind-boggling how such a discontinuity could exist, we get a disjoint reference effect. Obviation is weakened (the sentence becomes acceptable) when, for some reason or other, that discontinuity makes sense.

- | | | | |
|------|----|---|---------------------------------------|
| [37] | a. | Je veux partir.
I want to leave. | |
| | b. | *Je veux que je parte.
I want for me to leave. | disjoint reference effect (obviation) |

- [39]a. ?Je veux que je sois enterré dans mon village natal.
I want for me to be buried in my native village.
- [41]a. ?Je veux que je puisse attaquer à l'aube.
?I want for me to be able to attack at dawn.
- [46]b. Ah! Je voudrais que je sois déjà parti!
Oh! I would like for me to be already gone!
- [49] Je veux que tu partes et que je reste.
I want for you to go and for me to stay.
- [56]a. ?Dites-lui bien que je veux que je reçoive son message dans les plus brefs délais.
??Do be sure to tell him that I want for me to receive his message without delay.
- [68]a. Je veux que je sois très amusant ce soir.
I want for me to be quite amusing tonight.
- [80]b. ?Je ne veux pas que je me trompe de clé (encore).
?I do not want for me to mix up the keys (again).
- [82]a. Je veux absolument que j'amuse ces enfants.
I absolutely want for me to amuse the children.

Farkas 1992

- (9) RESP(*i,s*) holds between an individual *i* and a situation *s* just in case *i* brings *s* about, i.e. just in case *s* is the result of some act performed by *i* with the intention of bringing *s* about. If so, *s* is called the (possibly) intentional situation and *i* its initiator. The initiator is similar but not identical to an agent. (Farkas 1988: 36)
- (10) Obviation: "In world-dependent complements [subjunctives] that conform to the canonical control case [have RESP], the form used to mark Su[bject] dependency [infinitive, if there is one] blocks the form used for world-dependency." (1992:102-104)

Terzi 1992: Romanian obviation depends on ca, not on rival infinitives (there are none).

Constantini 2005, mainly re: Italian

- (11) Obviation occurs only in clauses in which the subjunctive verb is a full verb (simple tense, active voice, non-modal).

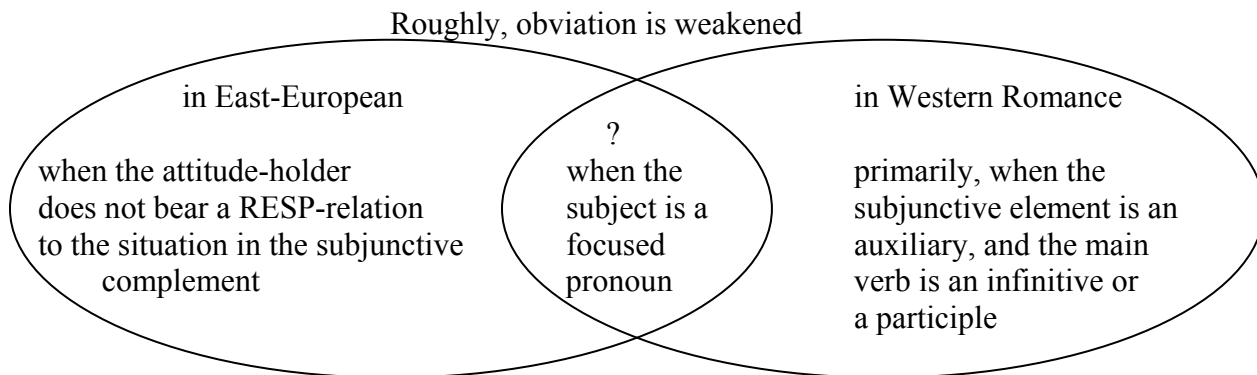
When the speaker's assignment sequence is not on C, *de se* interpretation of a complement subject pronoun or pro is impossible. A *de se* reading of the complement is possible only if it contains an implicit argument that is theta-identified with the attitude bearer. Only the subjects of non-finite verbs are implicit arguments. So, the main verb of the subjunctive complement clause must be non-finite: either an infinitive or a participle (and the subjective must be an auxiliary).

Focused overt subjects? Spanish [Kempchinsky 2009], Catalan, EP

- (12) % La ministra insiste en que ELLA / ella misma preside la sesión.
'The minister insists that SHE / she herself chair(subj) the session.'

Ruwet vis-a-vis cross-linguistic divergence: East European vs. Western Romance

There is but a loose connection between (what I believe to be) Ruwet's core intuition about the (dis)continuity of will and actions on the one hand and the set of French data he brings to support the intuition. This by itself would only suggest that his theory is not very good. What makes the situation rather more interesting is the fact that there is a set of languages that bear out his core intuition rather crisply – and there is another set of languages that align with the data that he lists rather well.



Obviation and exemption from obviation in Hungarian

Agentive verbs in the complement – obviation (under normal circumstances)

- (13) # (Azt) Akarom, hogy távozzam.
it-acc want.1sg that leave.subj.1sg
'I want for me to leave'
- (14) # (Azt) Akarom, hogy meglátogassam Marit.
it-acc want.1sg that pfx.visit.subj.1sg Mary-acc
'I want for me to visit Mary'
- (15) Megkértek (engem), hogy távozzam. (object control)
pfx.asked.3pl me that leave.subj.1sg
'They asked me for me to leave'

Similar effect with indicative complements:

- (16) ?? Remélem/sajnálom, hogy távozzom / meglátogatom Marit.
hope.1sg/regert.1sg that leave.ind.1sg pfx.visit.ind.1sg Mary-acc
'I hope that I am leaving I visit Mary'

Are certain Hungarian indicatives “subjunctives in disguise”? (Cf. Romanian ca-less subjunctives are infinitives in disguise. Ritter&Szabolcsi 1985: English that-less indicatives are subjunctives in disguise.)

Non-agentive complements – no obviation

- (17) Azt akarom, hogy jó jegyeket kapjak.
 it-acc want.1sg that good grades-acc receive.**subj.1sg**
 `I want for me to receive good grades`
- (18) Azt akarom, hogy egészséges legyek.
 it-acc want.1sg that healthy be.**subj.1sg**
 `I want for me to be healthy`
- (19) Azt akarom, hogy ne essek le.
 it-acc want.1sg that not fall.**subj.1sg** down
 `I want for me not to fall down`

Dependence on authorities or on the co-operation of others – no obviation

- (20) Ha azt akarod, hogy velünk gyere, viselkedj szépen.
 If you want for you to come with us, behave well.
- (21) (fairy offers to grant three wishes) Azt akarom/kívánom, hogy legyőzzem a sárkányt, feleségül vegyem a királylányt, és palotában lakjak.
 `I want/wish that I'd kill the dragon, marry the princess, and live in a palace`
- (22) Azt akarom, hogy nyerjek.
 it-acc want.1sg that win.**subj.1sg**
 `I want for me to win`
- (23) Azt akarom, hogy (csak/ne) ÉN látogassam meg Marit.
 it-acc want.1sg that only/not I visit.**subj.1sg** fx Mary-acc
 `I want for it to be only me who visits Mary` /
 `I want for it not to be me who visit Mary`

Mistakes, accidents, and other happenings beyond one's control – no obviation

- (24) Fogjatok le! Nem akarom, hogy **megöljem** a gazembert.
 `Hold me down! I don't want that I'd kill the rascal`
- (25) Magasságiszonyom van. Nem megyek fel a toronyba, mert nem akarom, hogy **leugorjak**.
 `I have the fear of heights. I'm not going up the tower, I don't want that I'd jump down`
- (26) Nem akarom, hogy (véletlenül/tévedésből) az egészséges lábat **amputáljam**.
 `I don't want that (accidentally/by mistake) I'd amputate the healthy leg`

Non-RESP relations: ‘... (want) for it to happen/to be the case that...’

- (27) Obviation, cf. (8) Ruwet + (9) Farkas
 Hungarian akar + subjunctive complement means (asserts, presupposes, or implicates, whatever) that the attitude-holder does **not** stand in the RESP-relation to the complement situation.
 This is incompatible with cases where the literal meaning and/or the context of use strongly suggest that the attitude-holder is in fact in the RESP-relation to the complement situation. (= obviation effect)
- (28) *A first stab at the semantics of Mari azt akarja, hogy nyerjen ‘Mari wants that she’d win’*
 (i) according to the attitude-holder (wanter), the complement is true in at least one realistic extension of her real world;
 (ii) the attitude-holder prefers this extension of the real world to other extensions in which the complement is not true;
 (iii) the attitude-holder’s counterpart is not the center of this world; but
 (iv) the attitude-holder may perfectly well recognize this individual as her own counterpart; no mistaken identity or amnesia needs to be involved -- cf. **me** below.

(If I were you,) **I**’d be nicer to **me**. (NB: **myself**, in Hung., etc.)

center of the pretend-world, who I identify with non-center, whom however I recognize as the counterpart of me-in-the-real-world

- (29) *Standard semantics for Mari nyerni akar ‘Mary wants to win’*
 (ii) the attitude-holder prefers those possible worlds in which the complement is true to other worlds in which the complement is not true;
 (iii) the attitude-holder’s counterpart is the center of those possible worlds.

(29iii) makes infinitival control inescapably *de se*. What is the effect of (28iii-iv)? They allow the subjunctive complement to be bound but *de re* (mistaken identity, amnesia). But that’s not the normal case. What about the normal case, where Mary knows full well that the person whose victory she wants to materialize is herself? Is this “*de se* as a special case of *de re*” (Zimmermann 1991, Anand 2006)? For arguments against that trick in another domain, see Charlow (2010); they may or may not carry over. For the time being, I assume that

- (30) In the spirit of (28) Mari wants that she’d win can be paraphrased as, ‘Mari wants for it to be the case/to actually happen that she wins’

Whether or not (28) by itself explains obviation or binding theory also needs to be invoked, there must be something in the sentence that carries the ‘for it to be the case/to happen’ bit. This may be a complementizer, a feature, or a silent clause. Pretheoretically, I label it the “**non-RESP marker**”. Below I argue that the non-RESP marker can be detected in non-subjunctive, non-obviative sentences.

PPIs reveal the existence of a structural correlate of non-RESP (the “non-RESP marker”)

Controlled infinitives are applicable in both RESP and non-RESP cases. I argue that they are ambiguous. The ambiguity can be diagnosed, because a phenomenon that prima facie has nothing to do with RESPonsibility, but is sensitive to locality, turns out to track exactly whether you have RESP.

Something/valami are positive polarity items:

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|------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| (31) | I don't think that he called someone. | OK not > [CP some |
| (32) | He didn't call someone. | * not > some |

Szabolcsi 2004: “When CP is infinitival, the data are less clearcut. Voluntary and involuntary actions do not appear to behave alike:

- | | | |
|------|--|-----------------------|
| [i] | I don't want to offend someone / to break something. | OK not > [CP/IP some |
| [ii] | I don't want to call someone / eat something. | ?? not > [CP/IP some” |

I don't want to offend someone doesn't mean 'I have no desire to offend', it means, or definitely can mean, 'I want not to offend'. I take this kind of data to be strong evidence that the non-RESP relation has a structural correlate. The well-formedness conditions of PPIs have nothing to do with the voluntariness of the actions. The PPI can only be sensitive to a “by-product” of non-RESP: the plain bulk of the “non-RESP marker” that shields it from negation.

- | | |
|------|--|
| (33) | Context: Look at those rocks. It would be fun to climb and jump.
OK I am not going. I don't want to jump from anywhere.
(Nem akarok leugrani sehonnan.)
* I am not going. I don't want to jump from somewhere.
(Nem akarok leugrani valahonnan.) |
| (34) | Context: There's a great view from those rocks. Lets go climb them.
* I have the fear of heights. I don't want to jump from anywhere.
(Nem akarok leugrani sehonnan.)
OK I have the fear of heights. I don't want to jump from somewhere.
(Nem akarok leugrani valahonnan.) |
| (35) | Context: I am going over to the buffet. Would you like to join?
OK No thanks. I don't want to eat anything.
(Nem akarok enni semmit.)
* No thanks. I don't want to eat something.
(Nem akarok enni valamit.) |
| (36) | Context: [I am working for a catering service. The supervisor has just told me to go and set out the desserts.]
* I'd prefer to arrange the chairs. I don't want to devour anything.
(Nem akarok felfalni semmit.)
OK I'd prefer to arrange the chairs. I don't want to devour something.
(Nem akarok felfalni valamit.) |

In sum, the following sentences are pretty synonymous:

- (37) Nem akarok lelőni valakit. 'I don't want to shoot someone'
 (38) Nem akarom, hogy lelőjek valakit. 'I don't want that I shoot someone'

Likewise, sentences with overt infinitival subjects are nearly synonymous with the “self-aware” (*de se*?) reading of the corresponding subjunctives, as observed in Szabolcsi (2009) following M. Abrusán; they differ as to plain preference vs. actual possibility (realizability).

- (39) A hős nem akart csak ő kapni érdemrendet.
 the hero not wanted.3sg only he get-inf medal-acc
 'The hero did not want it to be the case that only he gets a medal'
 only *de se*
- (40) A hős nem akarta, hogy csak ő kapjon érdemrendet.
 the hero not wanted.3sg that only he get-subj-3sg medal-acc
 'The (amnesiac) hero did not want that only he get a medal'
de se or *de re* or disjoint

How is the introduction of the non-RESP marker decided in the derivation?

Consider now subjunctives where the attitude-holder is distinct from the complement subject (I vs. you). Here obviation is not at issue. Still, a PPI is possible under matrix negation just in case the action in the complement is non-voluntary.

- (41) Nem akarom, hogy leessél valahonnan.
 I don't want that you fall from somewhere (want>not>some)
- (42) ?? Nem akarom, hogy énekeljél valamit.
 ?? I don't want that you sing something (want>not>some)
 Cf. ?? I don't want for you to sing something.
- (43) ?? Nem akarom, hogy leüljünk valahol egy kávéra.
 ?? I don't want that we sit down somewhere for a coffee (want>not>some)
 Cf. ?? I don't want for us to sit down somewhere for a coffee.
- (44) Nem akarom, hogy leugorjál valahonnan / megverjél valakit.
 I don't want that you jump from somewhere / beat up someone (want>not>some)
 OK if jumping/beating is due to an urge, or inability to resist a temptation, as opposed to a planned voluntary action

This is good, because it indicates that the presence of what I call the extra layer on the complement is decided locally: by looking at the complement, and not by looking at the relation between a participant of the matrix situation and the complement.

The local determination of the insertion of the non-RESP marker potentially bears on another puzzle: Does partial control count as RESP or non-RESP? (S. Mascarenhas)

- (45) ?? Nem akarok körülvenni valakit. (infinitive)
 `I don't want to surround someone`
- (46) ?? Nem akarom, hogy körülvegyünk valakit. (subjunctive)
 `I don't want that we surround someone`
- (47) We don't want to surround someone.
 (dist) `each member of me and my group is such that he/she doesn't want him/herself and his/her group to surround someone`
- (48) I don't want to surround someone.
 (dist) `I don't want myself and my group to surround someone`

If the distributive-wanting readings of both sentences have essentially the same representation for the complements, then at the time when we have to decide about the non-RESP marker we cannot know what the controller will be, so we have to consider the complement RESP-y and forgo the non-RESP marker.

This is different from focus on the subjunctive subject, where we know, already by inspecting the complement, that the individual whose name is focussed cannot singlehandedly bring about the complement situation.

Summary

I utilized both Ruwet's and Farkas's intuitions, but made no use of iconicity or competition. Following Constantini and his sources, I related obviation to *de se* interpretation, but made no appeal to verbs with implicit arguments (in part because I was not trying to account for Western Romance). I argued that Farkas's disembodied RESP relation (or rather, the lack thereof) has a structural correlate.

It appears that infinitives and subjunctives that do not involve RESP are a good testing ground for theories of *de se* interpretation. They pose challenges in their simple natural form, with no need to invent convoluted situations.

Some of the main open questions:

What is the precise semantics of non-RESPonsibility? What is the (even approximative) syntax of what I called the non-RESP marker?

Can the cross-linguistically varied subjunctives and obviation effects can be brought under the same umbrella; how can the variation be predicted?

Does anything that we (can) learn here help with the overt infinitival subjects problem?

Russian (thanks to Igor Yanovich and Inna Livitz)

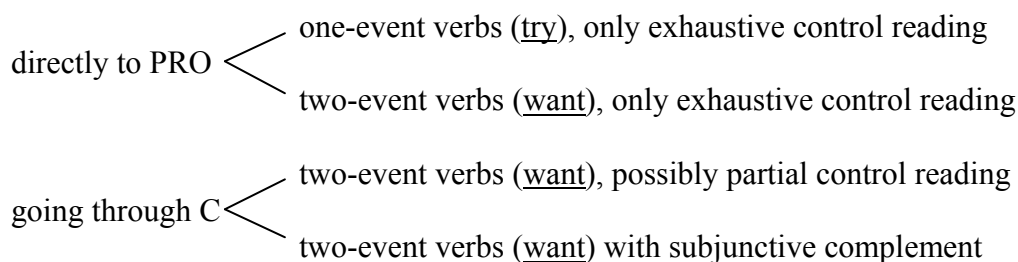
- (49) The “want”+ subjunctive construction, Ya hochu, chtoby ya V-la ‘I want that I’d V’ is acceptable iff the wanter does not bear a RESP-relation to the intentional situation of V-ing, and basically the same factors count for RESP as in Hungarian.
- (50) In “want”+infinitive, Ya ne hochu nikogo V-t’ (with the negative concord item nikto ‘no one’) means that I have no intention to V anyone, where V-ing a person can be a voluntary or involuntary action, whereas Ya ne hochu kogo-nibud’ V-t’ (with kto-nibud’ that does not normally co-occur with clause-mate negation) conveys that V-ing a person is involuntary, non-RESP.

Polish (thanks to Luiza Newlin-Lukowicz and Adam and Dorota Szczegielniak)

- (14) I want that I visit relatives.
* Chcę , żebym odwiedziła rodzinę.
- (15) I want that I too visit relatives.
ok Chcę , żebym i ja odwiedziła rodzinę.
- (18) I don’t want that I (accidentally) offend my mother.
ok/?? Nie chcę , żebym *(przypadkiem) vraziła mamę. (cross-speaker variation)
- (19) I want that I be(come) (finally) healthy.
ok Chcę , żebym *(w końcu) wyzdrowiała.
- (20) I don’t want that I be(come) sick.
ok Nie chcę , żebym się rozchorowała.
- (21) I don’t want that I fall.
ok Nie chcę , żebym spadła.
- (22) I don’t want to visit no one.
ok Nie chcę nikogo odwiedzić. (negative concord with infinitive)
- (23) I don’t want to visit someone.
* Nie chcę kogoś odwiedzić. (want>not>some)
- (23) (I won’t speak up.) I don’t want to offend someone
ok Nie chcę kogoś obrazić. (want>not>some)
- (25) (I am drunk; take this gun from me.) I don’t want to kill someone.
ok Nie chcę kogoś zabić. (want>not>some)

Romanian (thanks to Oana Savescu)

According to Landau (2004) non-Balkan languages have the following types of control:



In a language that has both infinitives and subjunctives, all 4 possibilities are exploited. Romanian has few infinitives (and not with try/want) and uses subjunctives instead. The subjunctive may occur **without ca, and then it behaves like infinitives** in Hungarian and English (control or ECM), possibly like Sundaesan & McFadden's (2009) nominative exx. Or the subjunctive may **have ca, and then it behaves like a Hungarian subjunctive**. See Szabolcsi (2009): subject of ca-less infinitive is de se, subject of ca-infinitive de re or de se (A. Grosu, p.c.); Terzi (1992); Landau (2004).

<p>No CA, null subject in complement, bound</p> <p>cf. I want to swim.</p>	<p>No CA, unstressed pronoun in complement, obviative</p> <p>cf. *I want me to swim.</p>	<p>No CA, stressed pronouns in matrix and complement bound/disjoint/fullDP</p> <p>cf. "I want me to swim / I want ME to swim</p>
<p>ok Vreau să înot. want.1sg să swim</p> <p>Nu vreau să omor pe cineva. not want.1sg să kill someone ok, "accident"</p> <p>Nu vreau să omor pe nimeni. not want.1sg să kill noone ok</p>	<p>?? Vreau să înot eu. want.1sg să I swim</p> <p>* Nu vreau să omor (eu) pe cineva eu. not want.1sg să kill (I) someone I</p> <p>??* Nu vreau să omor (eu) pe nimeni eu. not want.1sg să kill (I) noone</p>	<p>EU vreau să înot eu. "I want.1sg să "I swim</p> <p>ok, "I want that I swim (not someone else wants that I swim)</p>
<p>ok Vreau să fiu sănatos. want.1sg să be healthy</p>	<p>?? Vreau să fiu sănatos eu. want.1sg să I be healthy</p>	<p>?? EU vreau să fiu eu sănatos. "I want.1sg să "I be healthy</p>
<p>ok Nu vreau să cad. not want.1sg să fall</p>	<p>?? Nu vreau să cad eu. not want.1sg să I fall</p>	<p>??/* EU nu vreau să cad eu. "I not want.1sg să "I fall</p>

With CA, unstressed pronoun in complement cf. Hungarian subjunctives	With CA, stressed pronoun (possibly with <i>only/also</i>) in complement cf. Hungarian subjunctives
Vreau ca eu să înot. want. 1sg ca I să swim ok, “want it to be the case that”; otherwise * (disjoint) Nu vreau ca eu să omor pe cineva. not want. 1sg ca I să kill someone ok, “be put in position,” less good: “accident” Nu vreau ca eu să omor pe nimeni. not want. 1sg ca I să kill noone ?/??	Vreau ca (și) EU să înot. want. 1sg ca (also) “I să swim ok, contrast needed for bound reading
Vreau ca eu să fiu sănatos. want. 1sg ca I să be healthy ok, no special context required	Vreau ca (și) EU să fiu sănatos. want. 1sg ca (also) “I să be healthy ok no special context required
Nu vreau ca eu să cad. not want. 1sg ca I să fall ok, no special context required	Nu vreau ca (și) EU să cad. not want. 1sg ca (also) “I să fall ok no special context required

The Romanian data confirm the correlations between RESP and obviation that one sees in Hungarian and in Russian. That’s good news. Unfortunately, they do not seem to tell us more about the hypothesized silent structure. Presence or absence of ca does not correlate with control going through C or directly to PRO, cf. Landau, nor with there being an extra structural layer in non-RESP infinitives. Starting with the latter,

- (51) Nu vreau să omor pe cineva.
not want. 1sg să kill someone
‘I don’t want to kill someone by accident’

by my assumptions this construction must have a non-RESP marker that protects the PPI from negation. But it doesn’t contain ca, so this marker is not made visible.

Furthermore, based on the fact that Hungarian overt nominative subjects do not support plural partial control (see my supplement to the Landau discussion), and on Landau’s claim that partial control goes through C, I have argued that overt nominative subjects in infinitives must rely on direct PRO-control. But according to Landau, PRO-control does not entail that C is absent, only that it is not used to mediate control. And since overt nominative subjects create a non-RESP constellation, we want to allow the non-RESP marker to be present too (whether or not we require that it be present is a different matter).