Control and covert modality in Hungarian

MECs and postverbal-only focus constructions

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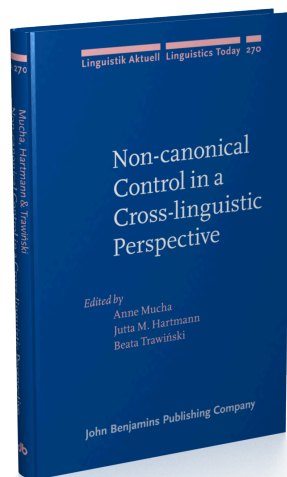# Control and covert modality in Hungarian

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We discuss two seemingly unrelated constructions of Hungarian: a type of modal existential *wh*-construction (MEC), and a structure that on the surface seems to be a monoclausal focus construction. They are argued to have a similar biclausal underlying structure involving control and covert modality, the latter triggering the raising of the embedded verb to the selecting predicate. To account for this movement and other transparency phenomena attested in these constructions, adjunction of the moved wh-words to a non-finite TP-domain is proposed following Šimík (2011, 2013a). This analysis is closer to standard cross-linguistic accounts of both control and restructuring: though infinitival clauses can contain their own focus-related elements, it seems justifiable to assume that they are smaller than CPs.

1. Introduction

The focus of the present paper is on two Hungarian constructions with at first sight rather idiosyncratic properties. One of them is the postverbal-only focus construction of Hungarian: sentences that seem to be monoclausal, containing only a postverbal focus without there being a preverbal focus as shown in (1a). That postverbal focus usually necessitates a preverbal focus constituent in Hungarian is indicated by the contrast in grammaticality between (1b) and (1c), also discussed in É. Kiss (1998). The *only*-DP, when appearing as the only focus-related constituent within the sentence, must occupy the preverbal focus position (1c). To ease understanding, a context is provided for (1a).

Context for (1): Family at a restaurant: finished with the main course, everybody is full except one person who is ready for dessert. However, when it turns out that there is no one else who wants to have dessert, this person also decides against it, saying:

(1) a. Nem esz-ek csak én   desszert-et.
         not   eat-1SG only I.NOM dessert-ACC
         'I am not **willing to/going to** be the only one who eats dessert.'

  b. *Esz-ek desszert-et   csak én.
         eat-1SG dessert-ACC only I.NOM
         'Only I eat dessert.'

  c. Csak én   eszek   desszert-et.
         only I.NOM eat-1SG dessert-ACC
         'Only I eat dessert.'

The second construction-type under consideration in this paper is modal existential constructions (MECs), among them one particular pattern that is attested only in Hungarian in the corpus of Šimík (2011). In (2a) we can see a regular Hungarian MEC with many cross-linguistic parallels regarding the selecting predicate. In (2b) there is a variant of it with the verb *tud* 'can, know' unparalleled as the selecting verb in the languages of the world according to Šimík, in spite of the fact that MECs always express circumstantial modality. This is also indicated by the presence of *can* in the English translations of the sentences in (2), even when it does not overtly appear in the Hungarian sentence.

(2) a. (Nekem) nincs   mi-t   olvas-n-om.
         I.DAT   NEG.EXIST what-ACC read-INF-1SG
         'There is nothing that I can read.'

  b. (Én)   nem tud-ok   mi-t   olvas-ni.
         I.NOM not   can-1SG what-ACC read-INF
         'There is nothing that I can read.'

What connects (1a) and the MEC examples in (2) is that, as the glosses also indicate, both construction types express more than what actually appears on the surface. In (1a) we need to account for how the willingness interpretation arises. In the MECs either the existential or the circumstantial verb has an overt presence, to the exclusion of the other, with the option in (2b) apparently restricted to Hungarian, similarly to the sentence in (1a) with the given interpretation as far as I know. These observations are what determine the main research questions of this paper:

1. How to derive the covert modal meanings in these different constructions? This raises further questions related to the interaction between the clauses involved such as the size of the embedded clause and the nature of obligatory control.

2. How to account for the exceptional nature of the Hungarian patterns in (1a) and (2b)?

By juxtaposing (1a) with the somewhat better studied MEC constructions we discuss the implications of an account in terms of a biclausal obligatory control structure for postverbal-only focus constructions. This results in an analysis more in line with the general properties of Hungarian, with the irregular nature of the construction being only apparent. The surface monoclausality results from the presence of a covert modal in the sentence, another property shared with MECs.

The structure of the paper is as follows: In Section 2 the properties of the two constructions are presented in more detail highlighting parallels with better studied related constructions. Section 3 presents earlier accounts of these structures together with a brief discussion of covert modality and clausal transparency. Section 4 refines the earlier accounts and presents the main proposal of this paper: the raising of the embedded verb to the covert modal head indeed happens in a local domain and the differences in the Hungarian constructions can be accounted for by assuming parametric variation regarding the presence of an applicative head. Section 5 focuses on specific properties of control and the nature of the empty subject in different types of MECs and argues that a raising analysis is more suitable for one of them. Section 6 briefly summarizes our findings.

2.   General overview of the data

2.1   Postverbal-only focus

To my knowledge it was Csaba Olsvay (p.c.) who first emphasized the importance of the postverbal-only focus data as potential counterargument to Szabolcsi's (2005, 2009a; b) account of embedded infinitival clauses with nominative subjects (3a). These constructions have a special signature: they show a kind of overt DP/PRO alternation where what is usually the obligatorily controlled PRO in a control infinitive (3b) is realized in the form of an overt DP in the left periphery of the embedded clause. Summarizing briefly, Szabolcsi claims that the nominative DP with a focus interpretation (*csak ő* 'only he/she in (3)) is the subject of the infinitive that appears in the FocusP (FocP) of the infinitival clause.[1]

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1.   The fact that the infinitive and the *only*-DP are adjacent in (3a) (as opposed to (3b)) indicates that the *only*-DP is indeed in the directly preverbal focus position of the embedded clause.

(3) a. Péter nem akart   [csak ő   men-ni busz-szal]
         Peter not want.PST.3SG only he.NOM go-INF bus-INSTR
         'Peter didn't want to be the only one to take the bus.'
     b. Péter$_i$ nem akart   [PRO$_i$ busz-szal men-ni]
         Peter not want.PST.3SG   bus-INSTR go-INF
         'Peter did not want to go by bus.'

Indeed, if it is possible to have a postverbal focus in a monoclausal construction such as (1a), Szabolcsi's claims for the *only*-DP of Example (3) as belonging to the infinitive are substantially weakened. Szécsényi (2018a) demonstrates parallels between the Szabolcsi-sentences and the postverbal-only focus construction. Here let's focus on one of the arguments to reinstantiate the claim that the exceptional nature of the postverbal-only focus construction is only apparent. The two sentences actually have very similar underlying representations, which is to say that Szabolcsi's account can be maintained.

    Crucial evidence comes from scope interaction. In this regard the two sentences behave on a par, whereby scope relationships are reflected in the surface ordering of constituents. Hungarian is well known for this kind of mapping of scope readings to linear order. What we can see in (4) is the biclausal construction discussed by Szabolcsi (2005, 2009a; b) with different scope interpretations regarding negation and *only*-focus. In order to account for why this pattern is not more frequently attested in the languages of the world Szécsényi (2018a; b) identifies conditions regarding the size of the embedded infinitival clause that relatively few languages meet: the scope interpretation of (4a) hinges on the presence of a left periphery in the infinitival clause where the *only*-focus can appear in the scope of matrix negation.

(4) a. Péter$_i$ nem akar-t   csak ő$_i$ men-ni busz-szal.
         Peter not want-PST.3SG only he.NOM go-INF bus-INSTR
         'Peter didn't want to be the only one to take the bus.'   negation >> *only*
     b. Csak Péter   nem akar-t   busz-szal men-ni
         only Peter.NOM not want-PST.3SG bus-INSTR go-INF
         'Only Peter didn't want to take the bus.'   *only* >> negation

Szabolcsi (2009a; b) discusses further evidence for the *only*-DP being the subject of the infinitival clause: in this obligatory control construction the nominative DP can only be a pronoun.

    Interestingly, when we factor in scope in the postverbal-only seemingly monoclausal sentences, we find a similar alternation (5a, b) as far as scope interaction is

concerned. (5c) has been added to show that in the absence of negation postverbal focus indeed leads to ungrammaticality.[2]

(5) a. Nem esz-ek csak én desszert-et.
       not eat-1SG only I.NOM dessert-ACC
       'I am not **willing to/going to** be the only one who eats dessert.'

                                                          negation >> *only*

    b. Csak én nem esz-ek desszert-et.
       only I.NOM not eat-1SG dessert-ACC
       'It is only me who does not eat dessert.'   *only* >> negation

    c. *Esz-ek csak én desszert-et.
       eat-1SG only I.NOM dessert-ACC

However, as we have seen before, there is an additional meaning component appearing in the sentence with postverbal-only focus (5a). As the translation indicates, a volitional meaning, absent in (5b), emerges in this case. Explaining its source is one of the main aims of this paper. In order to do so, we consider a better studied construction type in the next section: modal existential wh-constructions, which also have a covert modal component.

2.2 Modal existential wh-constructions

Cross-linguistically, and in Hungarian as well, modal existential wh-constructions (MECs) come in different forms.[3] The sentences in (6) show some of the variation. Hungarian MECs, as discussed in Lipták (2003) have two major classes: those with infinitival (6a, b) or subjunctive (6c) embedding. When the MEC is in the subjunctive mood, the form of the *wh*-word can be either interrogative or relative, in the latter case appearing with an *a-* relativizing prefix added to the *wh*-root (6c).

(6) a. (Nekem) van mi-t olvas-n-om.
       I.DAT be what-ACC read-INF-1SG
       'I've got something to read./There is something that I can read'

    b. (Nekem/PRO$_{arb}$) nincs mi-t ten-ni.
       I.DAT NEG.EXIST what-ACC do-INF
       'I've got nothing to do.' OR 'There's nothing to do.'

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2. Szabolcsi used similar sentences to emphasize the ban on postverbal-only focus in Hungarian. While postverbal focus is not impossible, it is contingent on the presence of a preverbal one.

3. For an extensive discussion of the possible patterns see Šimík (2011).

c. (?Nekem/?Én) nincs   (a-)mi-t   olvas-sak.[4]
    I.DAT/NOM   NEG.EXIST REL-what-ACC read-SBJV.1SG
    'I've got nothing to read.'

As indicated by the examples in (6a, b), infinitival MECs can differ in whether the infinitive is inflected or not. When the infinitive is not inflected and there is no overt DP subject present in the sentence, the result is an arbitrary control interpretation (6b).[5] The construction is limited to a small class of selecting verbs with an availability meaning component in the languages of the world, in Hungarian MECs are available with the stative MEC-embedder *van* 'be', the dynamic MEC-embedder *talál* 'find' with a richer lexical content, and, rather idiosyncratically, the verbs *tud* 'can, be able to/know' and *bír* 'be able to',[6] which is going to become highly significant shortly.[7] Notice the special form of negation in the sentences with the

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4.   I am rather puzzled by the uncertainty of the case form of the subject of (6c). It seems that neither the dative nor the nominative form is fully grammatical, and the fact that Hungarian is a pro-drop language cannot account for this observation, since the judgments do not improve under focus either. It is as if grammar could not decide between the two competing forms: the dative associated with the existential part of the construction similarly to the BE-possessives of Hungarian that also have dative possessors (i) and the nominative case form associated with the subject of an embedded subjunctive clause (ii).

(i) (Nekem) nincs   erkély-em.
     I.DAT   NEG.EXIST balcony-1SG.POSS
     'I have no balcony.'
(ii) Fontos,   hogy (én)   nyerjek.
     important that   I.NOM win-1SG.SUBJ
     'It is important that I win.'

5.   Whether an infinitive is inflected in Hungarian or not also depends on the selecting verb. If it shows no phi-agreement with its subject (the reasons for this can vary: it can be an impersonal predicate, an evaluative one, etc.), the infinitival clause is inflected and the overt subject of the sentence has dative case. If the verb selecting an infinitival clause agrees with the subject in person and number, the infinitive is never inflected and the overt subject is nominative typically controlling a covert subject in the infinitival clause.

6.   One of the reviewers asks why the discussion is limted to *tud* 'can, know', as opposed to *talál* 'find'. It is because *tud* is what is exceptional. The verb *talál* 'find' is one of the definiteness effect verbs of Hungarian, so it is not unexpected that it can be a MEC-embedder. A different form of the verb with a perfectivizing preverb, *megtalál*, can take a definite object. The reason why it is only verbs meaning 'can' that appear as extras is that they are those that can express circumstantial modality. What I find puzzling is why it cannot appear more frequently in MECs cross-linguistically.

7.   As circumstantial modals, the two verbs are interchangeable, with *bír* being a slightly substandard variant of *tud*, possibly with a mildly stronger flavour of agentivity. In the rest of the paper I will use examples with *tud* only, *bír* behaves by and large the same way in MECs. However, as opposed to *tud*, it cannot ever mean 'know'.

existential verb: whereas the ordinary negative particle of Hungarian is *nem* 'not', we find the negative existential verb *nincs* 'there is not' in (7b, c). Note that in simple copular constructions a zero form of the copula is used in the present tense as opposed to the overt BE-verb of MECs, and, as it will become relevant later, also possessive constructions. The negative existential verb *nincs* therefore can be identified as the negated form of that overt BE. The dative subject can be dropped in the presence of inflection on the infinitive.[8,9]

3.   Earlier accounts

In this section existing proposals for related constructions are presented focusing not only on postverbal-only focus and the analysis of MECs, but also on covert modality and clausal transparency.

3.1   Postverbal-only focus

Postverbal-only focus constructions are relatively rarely addressed in the literature. Surányi (2002) discusses examples similar to ours concluding that postverbal foci are justifiable in case the constructions with postverbal and preverbal foci result in potentially distinct interpretations (7). This also accounts for the ungrammaticality of postverbal focus in those cases when there is no difference between the interpretations of sentences with preverbal and postverbal focus (8).

(7)   Surányi (2002: 44–45 (53)):
   a.   Nem láthatta   AZT A   LÁNYT.
         not   saw.may.PAST.3SG that   the girl.ACC
         'He cannot have seen THAT GIRL.'   negation > epistemic modal > focus

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8.   Due to limitations of space this paper cannot include a cross-linguistic comparison of inflected and non-inflected infinitives in MECs. What I find especially promising is the Portuguese data: similarly to Hungarian, European Portuguese has inflected infinitives, and it is also possible to have constructions parallel to (1). However, though Portuguese has infinitival MECs, it does not have MECs with inflected infinitives, which can shed further light on the microparametric variation involved in these cases. For more information on differences between the inflected infinitives of Portuguese and Hungarian see Barbosa (2018) and Szécsényi (2018c).

9.   And, somewhat unexpectedly, it is true vice versa as well: in the presence of an overt subject the agreement marker on the infinitive is optional. This variation does not affect the proposal in the present paper and is hence disregarded. For more about potential reasons see Tóth (2000: Chapter 4)

b.   Nem AZT A   LÁNYT láthatta.
      not   that the girl.ACC saw.may.PAST.3SG
      'It's not that girl that he can have seen.'

negation > focus > epistemic modal

(8) a.   Nem MARI   ment   el.
           not   Mary.NOM went.3SG PV
           'It's not Mary who went along.'
     b. *Nem ment   el MARI.
           not   went.3SG PV Mary-NOM
           'It's not the case that it's Mary who went along.'

The difference between our data and those of Surányi (200) is that modality is overtly realized in the latter. Our grammatical postverbal-only focus construction resembles the ungrammatical construction in (8b) on the surface. As we saw in (5), however, the trigger for the different orders can be identified as being scope-driven, just like in the grammatical sentence pair in (7). What needs to be accounted for, again, is how the covert modal meaning emerges.

To capture the richer meaning of (1) repeated here as (9b), Szécsényi (2018a) claims that (9b) and the Szabolcsi-sentence repeated as (9a) should be described as having similar underlying structures, where (9b) also has a biclausal underlying structure as indicated below. Sentence (9b) is a seemingly monoclausal structure, where the lower verb moves to the higher clause to support a bound empty modal as shown in (9b′) (based on Szécsényi 2018a: 498). In both of the sentences below the verbs undergo further movement to a position within the FocP of the matrix clause due to the presence of a negative particle. The exact details of negation need not concern us here.[10,11]

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10. Strictly speaking, Kenesei (2001) identifies only three verbs as auxiliaries in Hungarian not targeting an independent VP projection: *fog* 'will', *szokott* 'usually does' and *talál* 'happen to (do sg)'. Since *akar* 'want' is not one of them we place it in a VP for now in line with traditional assumptions that we have two full CPs in these constructions.

11. Responding to the reviewers' remarks: the verbs leave the matrix VP because of negation and move to the head position of a FocP, as evidenced by preverb-verb inversion elsewhere in the presence of negation and focusing, cf. (i). Since *akar* 'want' and other verbs participating in this construction do not take preverbs, this inversion cannot be made overt in examples like (9a).

(i) a.   Péter el-olvasta   a   könyv-et.
           Peter PV-read.PST the book-ACC
           'Peter read the book.'
     b.   Péter nem olvasta el a   könyv-et.
           Peter not   read.PST PV the book-ACC
           'Peter did not read the book.'

(9) a. (=(3)) Péter nem akart csak ő men-ni busz-szal.
　　　　　Peter not want.PST.3SG only he/she.NOM go-INF bus-INSTR
　　　　'Peter didn't want to be the only one to take the bus.'

　　a'. [TopP **Peter**j [FocP **not want**i [VP/ModP ti [CP [FocP [**only he**j] [F **go-INF**k [vP **t**j
　　　tk **by.bus**]]]]]]

　　b. (=(1)) (Én) Nem esz-ek csak én desszert-et.
　　　　　I.NOM not eat-1SG only I.NOM dessert-ACC
　　　　'I am not **willing to/going to** be the only one who eats dessert.'

　　b'. [TopP **I/**pro [FocP **not eat**i **-1sg** [VP/ModP **t**i [CP [FocP **only I**j][F **t**i [FocP **dessert**k]
　　　… [vP **t**j **t**i **t**k]]]]]]

Reaching the conclusion concerning the need for movement, Szécsényi (2018a) fails to consider whether this movement is possible at all, a matter far from being trivial. Under standard assumptions it is not clear how to move the embedded verb to the matrix CP observing the locality restrictions on movement. This paper is meant to fill in this lacuna in argumentation, where accounts of MECs and control (Landau 2015; Livitz 2013; Šimík 2013a; Burukina 2020) turn out to offer important insights.

3.2　Modal existential wh-constructions

Moving on to modal existential wh-constructions, Šimík (2011) highlights the fact that the class of verbs selecting MECs always contains an availability meaning component, which not only accounts for the highly restricted nature of the relevant group but also makes it predictable.[12] Typically MEC-selecting predicates are a proper subset of Szabolcsi's (1986) definiteness effect verbs (Grosu 2004). This offers a straightforward explanation for why it is often only the verbs *be* and *have* that participate in this construction with equivalents of *send, bring*, and *find* being further likely candidates in the languages of the world.

　　The *wh*-word of MECs does not have the usual wh-operator reading, rather, it is interpreted as an existentially construed indefinite, as also indicated in the translations. Šimík (2011) captures the essence of a MEC as a clause that always has a modal meaning of circumstantial possibility resulting from pragmatic inference that is grammaticalized in MECs with the modality ending up conventionally encoded in the selecting verb BE. In order to account for the transparency effects often but not always observed he proposes that the movement of the wh-word takes place within a domain smaller than the CP, which is far from being a trivial matter. Under such assumptions the fact that *tud* 'can/know' and *bír* 'be able to' also select MECs

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12. Šimík (2013b) further refines this availability semantics and accounts for MECs in terms of affordances, where MECs specify the value of affordance variables, the events that it affords. This is what accounts for the obligatory circumstantial modality interpretation of MECs.

in Hungarian indeed seems rather idiosyncratic, since these verbs are typically not associated with an existential meaning component and do not belong to the group of definiteness effect verbs as defined by (Szabolcsi 1986). They do not trigger the definiteness effect requiring that one of their complements be an indefinite.

In subsequent work Šimík (2013a) develops a more detailed analysis of control MECs. An applicative analysis is adopted, proposing the structure in (10) for a sentence like '*Mary has who to visit*'. This is intended to account for Hungarian control MECs as well. Out of the data introduced in Section 2.2, it is the subjunctive MECs that are discussed in Šimík's work.

(10)   Šimík (2013a: 1186 (44))
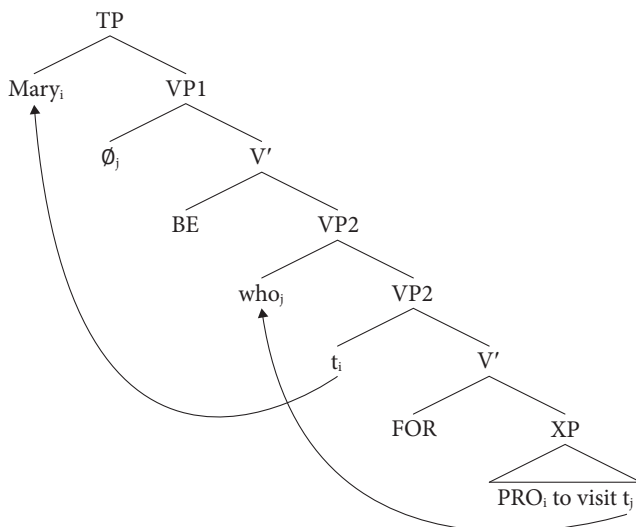
The main idea is that a MEC-embedding control predicate is always a combination of the impersonal availability predicate BE and the abstract predicate FOR, with the latter accounting for control itself. It is a two-argument predicate taking a property and an individual to whom that property is attributed. The specifier of this applicative head is an entity benefitting from the event described in its complement, which is formally licensed in the matrix TP (Šimík 2013a: 1185). It also serves as the controller of PRO in the embedded clause. The movement of the wh-word is motivated by semantic considerations and corresponds to lambda abstraction turning the MEC into a property. The circumstantial modal meaning results from the semantics of BE. It introduces availability, a possibility operator "ranging over a set of situations circumstantially accessible" (Šimík 2013a: 1183).

Before we move on to the proposal of the present paper, alternative ways of accounting for covert modality are considered in the next section.

3.3   Covert modality

Covert modal constructions have been identified to be present in a lot of the lan-
guages of the world (Bhatt 2006 and references cited therein), and, similarly to the
cross-linguistic variation among MECs, they show systematic variation, so mean-
ingful correlations can be established. One shared property is that they are typically
associated with infinitives, or, in broader terms, non-finiteness (see e.g. Rooryck
& Postma 2007 for a discussion of Dutch participle clauses) if the language under
consideration has such clauses.

In Hungarian, there exists a construction with a covert circumstantial modal
meaning where movement that is similar to the one proposed for postverbal-only
focus constructions (see (9b')) can be assumed to take place. On the surface we
seem to be dealing with a root infinitive (11), but this infinitive actually behaves
like a finite verb does: among others it triggers obligatory preverb-verb inversion
(11b, Bartos's (2002: 25 his Example (22b)) in the presence of focus (see (15a, b)
vs. (16a, b) in Section 3.4 for comparison).

(11) a. Halla-ni a-mi-t   mondok?
          hear-INF REL-what-ACC say.1SG
          '**Is it possible** to hear what I say?'
      b. Alig   érez-ni meg/*meg-érez-ni ez-t   a   finom remegés-t.
          hardly feel-INF PV/PV-feel-INF this-ACC the gentle quiver-ACC
          'This gentle quivering can hardly be felt.'

The properties of this construction are described in detail in Bartos (2002), where
the author argues for the presence of a minimal covert modality layer selecting
the infinitival clause without the movement of the predicate itself (12a). Szécsényi
(2018a) goes one step further and claims that by assuming the movement of the
predicate into the matrix clause along the lines of (12b) we can straightforwardly
account for the observation that the infinitive present in the sentence as the only
overt verb behaves as if it were finite. The difference between postverbal-only fo-
cus constructions and the circumstantial modals here is in the size of the moved
constituent: in the case of postverbal focus only the verbal head moves, whereas
in Bartos's circumstantial modality constructions the verb moves together with its
infinitive marker suggesting a bigger embedded structure.[13] Again, under standard

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13. Bartos (2002) leaves the infinitival verb form as an unanalyzed unit. For our purposes a
FinP headed by the infinitive marker should be assumed that the verb lands in on its way to the
finite clause. This can account for the different constructions where an infinitive (11) vs. just an
uninflected verb (9b) undergoes movement.

assumptions according to which infinitival clauses are CPs in Hungarian, the details of this movement are not clear.

(12) a. Mod$_{circ}$P [CP … [VP Vinf]]   (Bartos 2002)
     b. Mod$_{circ}$P [$_{Mod}$ V$_i$ [CP … [VP t$_i$]]]   (Szécsényi 2018a)

In recent work accounting for the DP/PRO alternation attested in Russian mandatives and deontic modal constructions, Burukina (2020) argues for the presence of a silent deontic modal in the complement position of mandative verbs in Russian. Such an analysis accounts for the parallels observed between mandative verbs and deontic modal constructions, where overt DPs alternate with PRO showing correlations with whether there is an overt dative DP in the matrix clause: overt embedded DPs in dative case are possible only in the absence of a matrix one. In (13), Burukina's (1a and c), we can see the mandative construction.

(13) a. Maša   velela Anne$_i$ [PRO$_{i+}$ sdelať vmeste zadanije].
        Maša.NOM ordered Anna.DAT   do.INF together task.ACC
        'Maša ordered Anna to do the task together.'
     b. Maša   velela [projektu zakončiť'sja k   srede].
        Maša.NOM ordered project.DAT complete.INF by Wednesday
        'Maša ordered for the project to be complete by Wednesday.'

The source of dative case is identified as the applicative head itself with either the matrix DP or the embedded one assigned case, the latter via long-distance case assignment.

Though the modality involved is different in this case, the proposed structure is strikingly similar to Šimík's treatment of control MECs as shown in (14).

(14) Burukina (2020: 3(3))
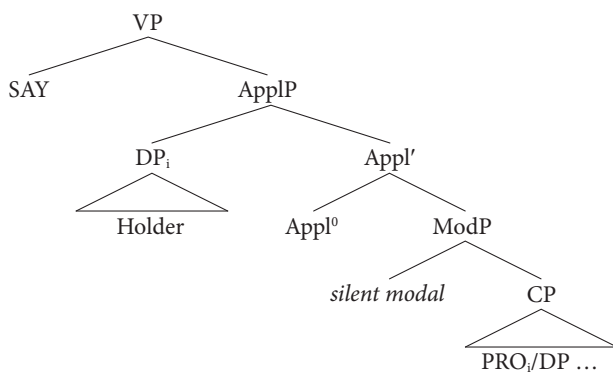
In both of the cases there is an applicative phrase (see Pylkkänen 2008) proposed to host an argument. Burukina makes the explicit claim that "an applied object related by the applicative head to a saturated modal constituent (…) always gets interpreted as a Holder" (Burukina 2020: 12). This is different from the Beneficiary role that Šimík (2013a) identifies in MECs, but there is room for making refinements. The kind of modal that the applicative head takes as its complement should affect the role of the applied object: Obligation Holder when combining with deontic modality, Beneficiary with a circumstantial modal, etc. Future research can establish further correlations.

A more spectacular difference between the two approaches is how covert modality is accounted for. For Burukina (2020) a silent modal appears as the complement of the applicative head, for Šimík (2011) it is the consequence of the availability interpretation of the main predicate, BE. This variation will become important in accounting for the Hungarian data.

3.4   Transparency and clause size

One of the main problems with the Hungarian data concerns the size of the clauses involved: Hungarian infinitival clauses are standardly claimed to be CP-sized (Dalmi 2004; Kenesei 2005; Szécsényi 2009), undergo restructuring and establish control nevertheless. It is far from clear how to integrate the Hungarian data into cross-linguistic accounts of control systematically, assuming that only clauses that are smaller than full-fledged CPs can contain a controlled minimal pronoun (Wurmbrand 2001, 2002 and subsequent work). This section focuses on how this apparent paradox can be reconciled.

While it is true that infinitival clauses can have their own foci, and we do find *wh*-words on the edge of the embedded clause in MECs, these constituents behave differently from focus in finite clauses.

The standard test for identifying movement to FocP in Hungarian is preverb-verb inversion, which is obligatory in finite clauses. This is the position that wh-words are also assumed to target. In (15) we can see a neutral simple sentence contrasted with one containing the subject as the focus. (15c) shows that *wh*-words also trigger the same inversion. In the latter case the perfectivizing preverb *meg* has to appear in the postverbal domain.

(15) a. Péter meg-érkez-ett.
          Peter PV-arrive-3SG.PST
          'Peter arrived.'

      b. PÉTER érkez-ett   meg.
          Peter   arrive-3SG.PST PV
          'It is Peter who arrived.'

     c.   Ki   érkez-ett   meg?
          who arrive-3SG.PST PV
          'Who arrived?'

In infinitival clauses preverb-verb inversion is optional with the inverted version being slightly more marked than the uninverted one (16).

(16) a.   Szeret-nék   CSAK HOLNAP meg-érkez-ni.
         would.like-1SG only   tomorrow PV-arrive-INF
         'It is only tomorrow that I would like to arrive.'
     b.   ˀSzeret-nék   CSAK HOLNAP érkez-ni   meg.   ibid.
         would.like-1SG only   tomorrow arrive-INF PV

In MECs even optional preverb-verb inversion is ruled out (17) as pointed out in Surányi (2005).[14]

(17) a.   Van mit   meg-beszél-n-ünk.
         be   what-ACC PV-talk-INF-1PL
         'There are things for us to discuss.'
     b.   *Van mit   beszélnünk meg.
         be   what-ACC talk-INF-1PL PV

The lack of inversion can be taken as evidence for a lower position for foci and wh-words, possibly along the lines proposed in Šimík (2011). The wh-word does not move to a designated FocP, but adjoins to the edge of the verbal domain. Based on the semantics of fronted wh-words it is claimed that wh-movement applies freely: " wh-words (…) undergo operator movement to the edge of some XP, serving to lambda abstract over a variable (their trace). They literally map to a lambda operator and hence have no semantic type" (Šimík 2013a: 1179). Based on this it is claimed that syntactically wh-movement translates into adjunction as opposed to movement necessarily driven by feature-checking considerations. This opens up the possibility of analyzing embedded wh-clauses as something smaller than a CP, especially in those cases when there is no [+wh] feature involved in the derivation.[15]

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14. Though Lipták (2003) judges both orders grammatical, the author of the present paper strongly disagrees. The survey carried out in Prohászka (2019) also confirms that native speakers of Hungarian systematically judge the inverted forms ungrammatical.

15. Observations of Tabatowski (2020), according to which *wh*-words can precede infinitival topics, quantifiers and the focus in MECs, seem to undermine the proposal for a low position for the *wh*-word in MECs. Nevertheless, they are not incompatible with the adjunction analysis, but rather predicted by it: the *wh*-word adjoins to the lowest XP possible (e.g. as the scope interpretation of the sentence requires).

The relatively low position of focus in Hungarian (the position directly preceding the verb) also suggests that an account along these lines is feasible. This makes cross-clausal head-movement of the embedded verb a possibility.

3.5   Interim summary

To capture the properties of postverbal-only focus constructions and circumstantial modality clauses in Hungarian, movement of the embedded verb to a higher clause with a modal verbal head has already been proposed in Szécsényi (2018a). This section has shown that under the assumption that the embedded clauses are not CPs in spite of the presence of left peripheral constituents the proposed movement of the embedded verb can be defended.

The account of MECs proposed by Šimík (2013a) and Burukina's (2020) treatment of mandatives contain important parallels that we are going to compare with the Hungarian data in working out the details of the analysis: the applicative head that functions both as an argument taking predicate (as emphasized by Šimík) and a case assigner (as highlighted by Burukina) will be used to account for some properties of the Hungarian sentences as well.

The next section contains further details of the proposal for the Hungarian data.
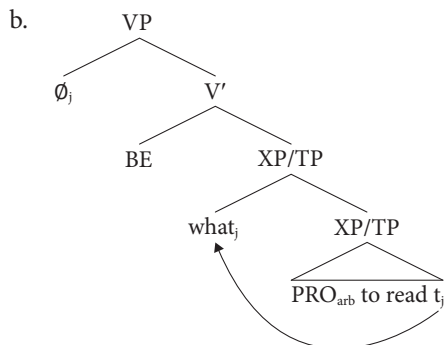
4.   The proposal

4.1   Verb movement and covert modals

Relatively few adjustments are required at this point to account for Hungarian MECs and postverbal-only focus constructions. I claim that Hungarian MECs involve a novel derivational path compared with what is discussed in Šimík (2011, 2013a). On the one hand there is what can be considered the standard pattern, but in Hungarian the circumstantial modal *tud* 'can, know' can also be realized overtly. I assume that in the latter case the modal verb selecting the non-finite clause headed by *tud* 'can, know' triggers the movement of *tud* to the higher existential matrix clause. This way the analysis of postverbal-only focus constructions and *tud*-MECs converges nicely: in both cases we have an embedded verb undergoing movement to the matrix clause to support a bound empty modal verb.
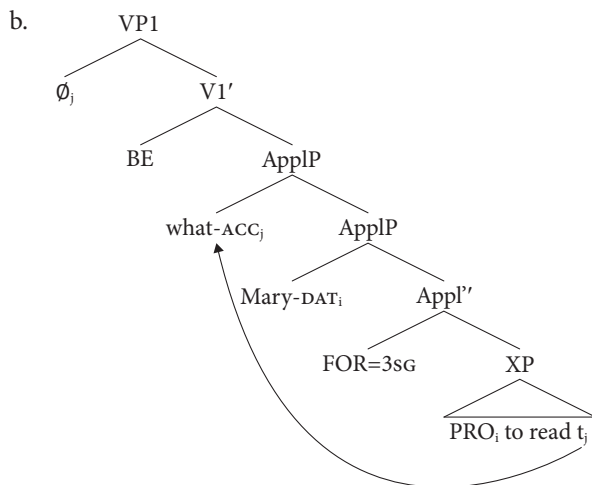
The details of the analysis are as follows: for MECs with the existential verb we can use the analysis proposed by Šimík (2013a) containing a FOR component functioning as an argument-selector applicative head. This is very similar to what Burukina (2020) proposes for Russian mandatives. This also helps us distinguish impersonal MECs from MECs with a subject argument the same way as proposed

in Šimík: whereas in impersonal MECs there is no applicative head (18), dative subjects indicate its presence (19).

(18) a. Van mi-t   olvas-ni.
          BE   what-ACC read-INF
          'There is something to read.'

  b.

```
              VP
            /    \
          Øⱼ      V′
                /    \
              BE    XP/TP
                    /    \
                 whatⱼ   XP/TP
                         /    \
                    PRO_arb to read tⱼ
```

(19) a. Mari-nak   van mi-t   olvas-ni-a.
          Mary-DAT BE what-ACC read-INF-3SG
          'Mary has something to read.'

  b.

```
              VP1
            /     \
          Øⱼ      V1′
                 /    \
               BE    ApplP
                    /     \
               what-ACCⱼ  ApplP
                          /     \
                     Mary-DATᵢ   Appl″
                                /    \
                           FOR=3SG    XP
                                     /   \
                                PROᵢ to read tⱼ
```

The inflection appearing on the infinitive can be identified as the overt realization of the applicative head triggering the movement of the infinitive to the head of ApplP. The dative subject usually undergoes further movement to the matrix Topic positions.

I propose that in the case of *tud*-MECs the circumstantial modal is base-generated in the position of Burukina's (2020) silent modal and then undergoes

movement to the empty zero existential followed by further movement to the TP head. Importantly, in this case, in this position, *tud* cannot mean 'know'. The two sentences in (20) have the same truth-conditional meaning. Crucially, in sentence (20b) the emphasis is on the availability of food as well, it can never mean 'I can eat something'. The difference between the two sentences is which of the verbs remains covert: the circumstantial modal in (a), existential be in (b). The structure of (20a) is analogous to (19b) with a potentially dropped *pro* subject.

(20) a. Nekem/*pro* van mi-t   en-n-em.
     I-DAT   be what-ACC eat-INF-1SG
     'There is something that I can eat.'

    b. Én/*pro* tud-ok   mi-t   en-ni.
     I-NOM can-1SG what-ACC eat-INF
     'There is something that I can eat.'
     never: 'I can eat something.'

   b′.
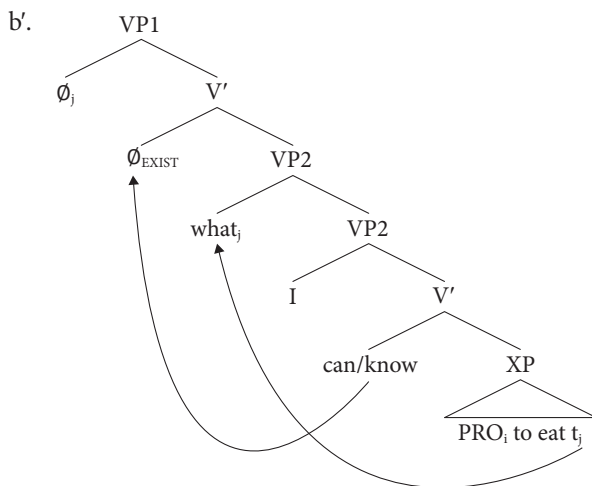
In *tud*-MECs the verb introduces its own argument without the need for an applicative phrase. The absence of the applicative head is supported by the case form of the argument: it receives nominative case in the TP above VP1 as opposed to the dative case assigned by the applicative head. It also serves as the controller of the subject of the infinitival clause.

Negation facts provide support for the proposed movement: the interpretation of (21a) indicates that the surface position of *tud* is actually higher than the clause directly preceding the infinitive, where it is base generated. In a sentence like (21a) negation does not directly scope over circumstantial possibility but the existential verb, just like in (21b).

(21) a. Nem tud-ok mi-t   en-ni.
          not   can-1SG what-ACC eat-INF
          'There's nothing that I can eat.' never ~~I cannot eat anything~~.'
                                  negative > existential > circumstantial modality
      b. Nincs   mi-t   en-n-em.
          NEG.EXIST what-ACC eat-INF-1SG
          'There is nothing that I can eat.'

Admittedly, at this point it remains a question why equivalents of *tud* 'can' cannot undergo this kind of movement more frequently cross-linguistically.[16] We expect another somewhat idiosyncratic feature of Hungarian to be responsible for this. The next subsection tackles cross-clausal object agreement as a potential candidate.

4.1.1   *Agree*

Den Dikken (2018: 118), following Rackowski & Richards (2005) highlights the role of Agree as a key factor in transparency: "the active ingredient in determining whether a particular domain Δ is an absolute island or not is its participation in an Agree relation with an asymmetrically c-commanding head π: whenever Δ Agrees with π, it is not an absolute island; whenever it does not Agree with π, it is."

Crucially for us, a Hungarian verb selecting an object always seems to agree with it, be it nominal or clausal. Object agreement depends on the definiteness of a nominal object (22a, b),[17] whereas in case of clausal agreement finiteness is the main factor. Descriptively speaking, with infinitival clauses we use the indefinite/unmarked agreement form on the selecting verb (23a), whereas with finite clauses the definite agreement form is used (23b, c).[18]

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16. Šimík (2011: 153) discusses similar Italian data concluding that in MECs can/know has to be a restructuring verb.

17. In retrospect it seems important to highlight the fact that we always have the indefinite object agreement form of the verb *tud* 'can' in the MECs. This automatically follows from the obligatorily indefinite interpretation of the wh-word in this construction. An embedded question after *tud* 'can, know', however, triggers definite agreement on the selecting verb, cf. the contrast between (i) and (ii).

    (i)   Tud-ok   mi-t   en-ni.
          can-1SG.INDEF what-ACC eat-INF
          'There is something that I can eat.'
    (ii) Tudom,   (hogy) mit   egyek.
          know-1SG.DEF that   what-ACC eat-INF
          'I know what to eat.'

18. Upon closer inspection, however, finite clauses may turn out not to agree with the selecting verb at all. Rather, agreement can be argued to be with an optional proleptic pronoun in accusative case. For the purposes of the present paper it is immaterial which account we adopt.

(22) a. Szeretné-k   egy könyv-et.
          would.like-1SG.INDEF a   book-ACC
          'I would like a book.'

      b. Szeretné-m   a   könyv-et.
          would.like-1SG.DEF   the book-ACC
          'I would like the book.'

(23) a. Olvasni szeretné-k.
          read-INF woul.like-1SG.INDEF
          'I would like to read.'

      b. (Azt)   szeretné-m,   hogy Péter elolvas-son
          that/it-ACC would.like-1SG.DEF that Peter read-3SG.SBJV
          egy könyv-et.
          a   book-ACC
          'I would like Peter to read a book.'

      c. Tudom   (azt),   hogy Péter el-olvas-ott   egy könyvet.
          know-1SG.DEF that/it-ACC that Peter PV-read-3SG.PST a   book-ACC
          'I know that Peter read a book.'

There is further variation possible when verbs select infinitives, which is also one of the transparency diagnostics: when an infinitival complement clause has an object of its own the selecting verb agrees with the object of the infinitive (Szécsényi & Szécsényi 2017, 2019):

(24) a. Szeretné-*k*   olvasni *egy* könyvet.
          Would.like-1SG.INDEF read-INF a   book-ACC
          'I would like to read a book.'

      b. Szeretné-*m*   olvasni *a* könyvet.
          Would.like-1SG.DEF   read-INF the book-ACC
   'I would like to read the book.'

As sentence (23b) indicates, a subjunctive CP in Hungarian is not a domain for this kind of Agree. The embedded clause contains an indefinite object, but the selecting verb still has a definite agreement form, solely determined by the finiteness of the complement clause. The ban on agreement with the object of the embedded verb can be accounted for under the assumption that object agreement does not make the embedded clause transparent when it is finite, as the finiteness feature of the clause itself triggers definite agreement, making the complement clause an opaque domain for further Agree operations.

Object agreement is not frequently attested in the languages of the world, not to mention object agreement with clauses. Szécsényi and Szécsényi (2017, 2019) make the explicit claim that in order for agreement to take place the infinitival clause itself needs to be equipped with agreement features and cross-clausal agreement is not

the result of long-distance Agree in Hungarian.[19] If something like object agreement is a condition for clausal transparency, possibly even irrespective of clause size, it is easier to see why it is not the default option cross-linguistically.

To complete this section let us consider the derivation for the relevant part of the postverbal-only focus construction.

(25) a. (Én) nem esz-ek csak én   dessert-et.
         I-NOM not   eat-1SG only I.NOM dessert-ACC
         'I am not willing to be the only one who eats dessert.'

   b.
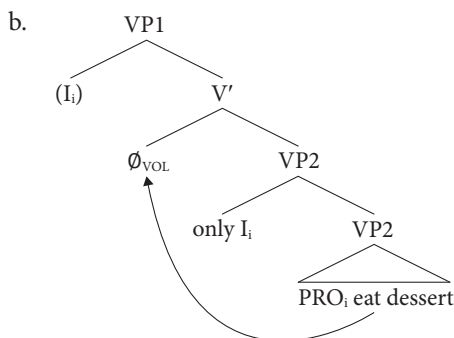
The head of the matrix verb is a covert volitional verb triggering the movement of the embedded verb. The *only*-focus is in the scope of negation so it is confined to the lower clause. Since it is focused, this PRO cannot remain covert. The controller is the subject of the volitional verb case-licensed in the TP.

The properties of the four constructions are summarized in Table 1 below. The wh-word and the focused subject are adjoined to the lowest embedded clause everywhere.

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19. One of the arguments is that non-agreeing infinitives block object agreement in multiple infinitival constructions, as shown by the contrast between (ia, b) with a sequence of agreeing infinitives and (ic, d) containing a non-agreeing one, *fél* 'be.afraid':

(i) a. Péter fog/*fogja   akarni nézni   egy filmet.
         Peter will.INDEF/will.DEF to.want to.watch a   film.ACC
         "Peter will want to watch a film."
   b. Péter *fog/fogja   akarni nézni   a   filmet.
         Peter will.INDEF/will.DEF to.want to.watch the film.ACC
         "Peter will want to watch the film."
   c. Péter fog/*fogja   félni   nézni   egy filmet.
         Peter will.INDEF/will.DEF to.be.afraid to.watch a   film.ACC
         "Peter will be afraid to watch a film."
   d. Péter fog/*fogja   félni   nézni   a   filmet.
         Peter will.INDEF/will.DEF to.be.afraid to.watch the film.ACC

Table 1. Properties of MECS and postverbal-only focus constructions

	Impersonal BE-MEC	BE-MEC with an inflected infinitive	TUD-MEC	Postverbal-only focus
matrix subject	empty	overt: dative DP	overt: nominative DP	overt: nominative DP
embedded infinitival subject	PRO$_{arb}$	OC PRO (but see Section 5.1 for raising MECs)	OC PRO	OC PRO, (overt in the focus position)
Applicative head present	no	yes	no	no
Modality involved	circumstantial possibility	circumstantial possibility	circumstantial possibility	volition
realization of modal	covert	covert	overt	covert

5. Control and raising MECs in Hungarian

After the discussion of the structural representations of MECs and postverbal-only focus constructions in Section 4, this section focuses on control. The Hungarian facts indicate that a property analysis of obligatory control is on the right track (Šimík 2013a; Landau 2015).

Most Hungarian MECs are obligatory control constructions and, as we have seen, the biclausal derivation of postverbal-only focus constructions also has to involve control to account for the restriction on the interpretation of the subject of these sentences: the subject of the matrix clause and that of the embedded clause have to be coreferent (26).

(26)   [$_{CP}$ [$_{NegP}$ **not eat$_i$ -1sg** [$_{vP1}$ t$_i$ [$_{vP2}$ [$_{vP2}$ **only I$_j$ … ** [$_{vP}$ **PRO$_j$** t$_i$ **dessert**]]]]]]

In discussing similar data, Livitz (2013) assumes that the overt subjects of the infinitival clause are equivalent of PRO, a minimal pronoun, and what forces the pronunciation of the element is the fact that they are associated with a focus feature.

The standard analysis of MECs is in terms of obligatory control cross-linguistically (Šimík 2011; Pancheva-Izvorski 2000) with occasional instances of independent reference in a subjunctive clause. Though subjunctive mood is a possibility in Hungarian, such MECs are also always obligatory control constructions, their subjects being referentially dependent on the matrix subject (27).

(27) a. *Nekem nincs (a-)mi-t egy-él.
  I.DAT NEG.EXIST REL-what-ACC eat-SUBJ.2SG
  Intended meaning: 'I have nothing for you to eat.'

b. Péter$_i$ nincs (a-)kit {PRO$_i$/*pro$_j$/Mari} meghív-jon.
  Peter(-DAT) NEG.EXIST REL-what-ACC PRO/pro/Mary invite-SBJV.3SG
  'Peter has no one who he can invite.'
  Not available: 'Peter has no one who Mari could invite.'

The analysis of Hungarian infinitival MECs is not that straightforward, which is partly due to the fact that they come in two forms: inflected infinitives and uninflected ones. In the former case there seems to be evidence for a raising analysis coming from parallels with possessive constructions showing the same agreement marking as inflected infinitives.

5.1 Control vs. raising

In order to distinguish base-generation from movement, É. Kiss (2002, 2014) and Dalmi (2020) highlight a difference between possessive nominals and clauses regarding agreement: when the possessor is a third person plural lexical DP, plural agreement is ruled out within the DP (28a). In possessive clauses either singular or plural agreement is possible (28b).

(28) a. A fiúk/A fiúk-nak a kutyá-ja/*kutyá-juk.
  the boys.NOM/the boys-DAT the dog-3SG/dog-3PL
  'The boys' dog(s)'

b. A fiúk-nak van kutyá-ja/kutyájuk.
  The boys-DAT be.3SG dog-POSS/dog-3PL.POSS
  'The boys have a dog/dogs.'

Based on these observations É. Kiss introduces the following diagnostic for different possessive constructions: structures with third person plural lexical possessors that do not agree must contain the possessor as base-generated within the possessive DP followed by a raising operation (29a). The presence of plural agreement is taken as evidence for external base-generation as in (29b).

(29) a. A fiúk-nak$_i$ fáj a t_i fej-e.
  the boys-DAT hurts the head-POSS
  'The boys' heads hurt.'

b. A fiúk-nak fáj a *pro* fej-ük.
  the boys-DAT hurts the head-POSS.3PL
  'The boys' heads hurt.'   (É. Kiss's (2014: (17))

Using this diagnostic for the infinitival MECs of Hungarian we see that they pattern with (29b), with obligatory plural agreement (30).

(30) A   fiú-k-nak   van mi-t   olvas-ni-uk/*olvas-ni-a.
      the boys-PL-DAT is   what-ACC read-INF-3PL/read-INF-3SG
      'There is something that the boys can read.'

Based on É. Kiss (2014), this observation can be used to rule out an account in terms of raising, since under a raising analysis a third person singular verb form should also be possible. However, instead of the small *pro* analysis of É. Kiss, we need to propose a PRO in the infinitival clause to account for the obligatory referential dependency. It has an important consequence for the analysis of possessive predication as well, indicating that the different derivations of possessive sentences discussed in É. Kiss should actually be complemented by a control structure containing a PRO with a referential dependency between the possessor and the pronominal within the DP.

However, there is evidence for a raising analysis as well. This comes from the domain of infinitival embedding. Sentences with uninflected infinitives selected by verbs such as *akar* 'want' or *szeret* 'like' are unequivocally control constructions: the selecting verb theta-marks its subject and controls the PRO subject of the infinitival clause (31).

(31) (Mi$_i$) szeret-ünk [PRO$_i$ olvas-ni/*olvas-nunk].
      We   like-1PL   read-INF/read-INF.1PL
      'We like reading.'

Tóth (2000), however, argues that the inflection of inflected infinitival constructions assigns structural dative case to the subject in Hungarian clause-internally. This clearly suggests a raising analysis for MECs as well, where the existential verb has a dative subject an inflected infinitive complement. Is there any evidence for a raising vs. control analysis of these constructions?

This question is all the more interesting as at this point we are facing a problem similar to that of Burukina (2020): one and the same construction showing control and raising properties at the same time. Assuming an applicative head in the structure helps resolve this paradox. As shown in (19b), the PRO subject of the infinitive is controlled by the DP in the specifier of the ApplP, it is this overt DP that can undergo raising. The source of the mixed properties is these different components within the structure: the controller is indeed outside the infinitive accounting for the obligatory plural agreement.

The syntax of MECs also seems to support a raising analysis based on an important observation Šimík (2013a) makes, which he labels the PRO-wh generalization: "Whenever a control MEC has a referentially independent subject, the subject is a wh-expression" (Šimík 2013a: 1174). This is used as a crucial component in arguing for an account of PRO as a lambda-abstractor, similarly to the analysis of control in Landau (2015). The following Hungarian and Spanish examples are discussed (32):

(32) a. Nekem van (a-)ki   elmenjen a   postá-ra.
          I-DAT be (REL-)who.NOM go.3SG.SBJ the post.office.to
          'I have somebody who can go to the post office.'
      b. No tengo   quién me   ayud-e/*ayud-ar.
          NEG have.1SG who   me.DAT help-3SG.SBJ/help-INF
          'I don't have anyone who can help me.'

In accounting for the requirement for subjunctive mood in the Spanish case Šimík claims that it is to do with the formal (case) licensing of the wh-word: the subjunctive mood emerges exactly when the subject of the MEC is overtly realized and as such needs to be licensed. However, if Tóth (2000) is right, and inflected infinitives can assign structural dative case to their subjects, there should not be any difference between the judgements on Hungarian MECs depending on whether the MEC is infinitival or subjunctive: the sentence in (33a) should be grammatical since the subject is case-marked clause internally, contrary to fact. This, however, can also be taken as evidence for a raising derivation of MECs with a wh-subject in inflected infinitives: if the dative marked subject originates in the infinitival clause as indicated in (33b), the ungrammaticality of (33a) is accounted for: a different subject is not possible in the embedded clause. This way Šimik's PRO-wh generalization can also be maintained.

(33) a. *Nekem van ki-nek   elmen-ni-e a   postára.
          I.DAT   be who-DAT go-INF-3SG the post.office.to
          Intended meaning: 'There is someone who can go to the post office for me.'
      b. (Nekem$_i$) van [miért t$_i$ elmen-nem a   postára]
          I.DAT   be why   go-INF.1SG the post.office.to
          'I have a reason to go to the post office.'

It is also correctly predicted that (34), where the subject of the MEC is a wh-word without there being another subject in the matrix clause is grammatical:

(34)   Van ki-nek   elmen-ni-e a   postá-ra.
       is   who-DAT go-INF-3SG the post.office-to
       'There is someone who can go to the post office.'[20]

The fact that inanimate subjects are also possible in this construction ((35), (36)) may further confirm the assumption that a raising is an available option to derive MECs with inflected infinitives.[21]

(35)   A   vonat-nak nem volt miért kés-ni-e   (de mégis késett).
       the train-DAT not was why be.late-INF-3SG (but still   was.late)
       'There was no reason for the train to be late (but it was still late).'

(36)   A   szél-nek nincs   mi-t   elfúj-ni-a.
       the wind-DAT NEG.EXIST what-ACC away-blow-INF-3SG
       'There is nothing that the wind can blow away.'

6.   Conclusion

In this paper we have discussed two seemingly unrelated constructions of Hungarian: postverbal-only focus and modal existential wh-constructions. They have been argued to share properties in terms of control and covert modality. An applicative-based component of the analysis not only accounts for the differences between subjects in dative and nominative case, but also resolves the control vs. raising paradox. The suggested analysis in terms of movement of an embedded verb into the matrix clause is in line with independently established properties of Hungarian. The proposal in terms of smaller clause size has the advantage of fitting the Hungarian data into cross-linguistic patterns of control, also resulting in a more explanatory account of clausal transparency form a cross-linguistic perspective.

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20. Notice that the inflection on the infinitive in (27) and (28) unequivocally indicates that the dative wh-word is a subject and not e.g. a beneficiary argument with inherent dative case, as in (i). Actually, this sentence is ambiguous. Due to the fact that in the presence of an overt dative subject the agreement morpheme on the infinitive can be dropped, the wh-word (less dominantly) can also be understood as referring to the subject of the infinitive (when the beneficiary argument is contextually salient and hence can be left implicit).

(i)   Van kinek   odaadni a   csoki-t.
      be   who-DAT give-INF the chocolate-ACC
      'There is someone the chocolate can be given to.'

21. But see Šimík's (2013a: 1189–90) reservations regarding the reliability of such data.

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