Want, hope, and regret

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1

The classical notion of obviation

The subject of a subjunctive clause is disjoint in reference from the subject of the next higher clause.

1. * Je veux que je parte.
     I   want   that I   leave.**subj**
   `I want for me to leave'   (Ruwet 1984/1991)

Following John Goldsmith's translation of Ruwet, also Portner, I will use *for DP to VP* as the English subjunctive in this context.

"Obviation" and "disjoint reference" aren't ideal labels. What's certain is that (1) is unacceptable in some way, and if the complement had, say, *tu* `you,' it'd be fine.

2

Ruwet 1984/1991, weakened 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.

[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).

3

Some questions

What is a good characterization of the divide between the cases where obviation is in full force and those where it is weakened or disappears?

<We'll see that intentional action plays a role; that's how obviation is related to the topic of this workshop.>

Are obviation(-like) effects restricted to subjunctives?

If not, what is the umbrella under which they all fit?

What causes obviation (where it obtains)?

4

Plan

• Consider two accounts of subjunctive obviation:
  Farkas 1992, WANT: When RESP, infinitive blocks subjunctive.
  Kaufmann 2019, directives: Contradiction between director's beliefs: uncertainty (POSS not-*p*) and certainty (MUST *p*).

• Observe that obviation exists under HOPE and REGRET in Hungarian, verbs that only take indicative complements.

• So, blocking is out. How about the contradiction account?
  HOPE and WANT do involve uncertainty.
  REGRET does not. Here the offense is reminiscent of the negation of sincerity conditions in illocutionary acts or thoughts (Searle 1969, Shoemaker 1996).

• Introspective access to or control of the complement situation cannot be called into question in the matrix.

5

Farkas 1988, 1992   RESP

• The responsibility relation RESP(*i, s*) holds between an individual *i* and a situation *s* just in case *s* is the result of some act performed by *i* with the intention of bringing *s* about. If so, *s* is the (possibly) intentional situation and *i* its initiator. Initiator is similar (but not identical) to agent.

• Obviation: The infinitive is best suited to the case where the individual linked to the matrix and the complement subjects bears RESP to the complement situation. In this case, the infinitive blocks the subjunctive [if it is available in the language].

• Intends to capture Ruwet's obviation data, but offers a very different explanation. Blocking is not semantic, even though the conditions refer to RESP, a semantic notion.

6

Hungarian: RESP draws the line correctly

... if the following cases don't qualify as *initiated* by the agent, and thus are not instances of RESP:

- actions performed due to an urge or by accident,
- actions requiring the authority, direction, power, or cooperation (action or even inaction) of others.

- So RESP is descriptively useful for any theory.
- The demarcation line is not syntactic (unless a lot of pragmatics and context is encoded in covert syntax).
- The Hungarian contrasts are much sharper than the French and English, but all go in the same direction.

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

2. # Azt   akarom,   hogy távozzam.
    it-acc   want.1sg   that   leave.**subj**.1sg
    `# I want for me to leave'
3. # Azt   akarom,   hogy   meglátogassam Marit.
    it-acc   want.1sg   that pfx.visit.**subj**.1sg Mari-acc
    `# I want for me to visit Mary'

Non-agentive complements – no obviation

4. Azt akarom, hogy jó jegyeket kapjak.
    `I want for me to get good grades'
5. Azt akarom, hogy egészséges legyek.
    `I want for me to be healthy'
6. Azt akarom, hogy ne essek le.
    `I want for me not to fall'

Urges, mistakes and accidents, even if the complement verb is agentive – no obviation

7. Fogjál le! Nem akarom, hogy megöljem a gazembert.
    `Hold me down! I don't want for me to kill the rascal'
    (= I don't want for it to happen that I kill him;
     =/= I have no desire to kill him)
8. Magasságiszonyom van. Nem megyek fel a toronyba, nem akarom, hogy leugorjak.
    `I have the fear of heights. I'm not going up the tower, I don't want for me to jump'
    (= I don't want for it to happen that I jump)
9. Nem akarom, hogy (véletlenül/tévedésből) az egészséges lábat amputáljam.
    `I don't want for me to (accidentally/by mistake) amputate the healthy leg'

Dependence on the authority or the co-operation of others, even if complement is agentive – no obviation

10. (to fairy offering to grant wishes) Azt akarom, hogy legyőzzem a sárkányt és feleségül vegyem a királylányt.
    `I want for me to kill the dragon and marry the princess'

11. (actor to director) Azt akarom, hogy táncoljak is ebben a jelenetben.
    `I'd like for me [=my character] to dance in this scene'

12. Azt akarom, hogy (csak/ne) ÉN látogassam meg Marit.

    `I want for it to be { me / only me / not me } who visits Mary'

    the subject alone can't make the clause true

New data: Obviation in indicatives without competitors

Obviation-like effects arise with *remél* `hope' and *sajnál* `regret' when the attitude-holder is solely responsible for the complement situation, and
with *remél* `hope' also when the complement describes a direct experience.

But in Hungarian, the complements of these verbs are indicatives, and these verbs only take indicative complements (no infinitives, no subjunctives).

(English *hope* and *regret* also take indicatives, but not only indicatives.)

Some background on Hungarian

- **Mood.** Hungarian is indicative-heavy. Way fewer infinitives or subjunctives than in Western Romance or English. E.g.,

	INF	SUBJ	IND
akar `want'	+	+	
követel `demand'		+	
elhatároz `decide'			+
remél `hope'			+
sajnál `regret, consider [it] regrettable, wish [it] weren't the case'			+

- **Focus** in Hungarian is visible in constituent order. In (13-14), there is *no focus* on post-V `the cat.'

13. Remél `hope' [simult. present compl.]

a. Remélem, hogy benne vagyok a csapatban.
  `I hope that I'm on the team'
b. Remélem, hogy nem untatlak.
  `I hope that I'm not boring you'
c. Remélem, hogy biztonságban vagyok.
  `I hope that I'm safe'
d. Remélem, hogy egyenesen állok.
  `I hope that I'm standing straight'
  unless in front of a mirror
e. # Remélem, hogy fél lábon állok.
  `I hope that I'm standing on one leg'
f. # Remélem, hogy (nem) szédülök.
  `I hope that I (don't) have vertigo'

Remél `hope' [simult. pres., cont'd]

g. # Remélem, hogy ugrándozok.
  `I hope that I'm jumping up and down'
h. # Remélem, hogy simogatom a macskát.
  `I hope that I'm stroking the cat'
h'. Remélem, hogy a MACSkát simogatom.
  `I hope that it's the cat that I'm stroking'
  when room is pitch dark
i. # Remélem, hogy próbálok segíteni.
  `I hope that I'm trying to help'
j. Remélem, hogy csak ÉN ugrándozok.
  `I hope that only I am jumping up and down'
  if not sure what the others are doing

14. Remél `hope' [immediate past compl. the immed. foreseeable future is similar]

a. Remélem, hogy megkaptam az állást.
  `I hope that I got the job'
b. Remélem, hogy nem untattalak.
  `I hope that I wasn't boring you'
c. Remélem, hogy biztonságban voltam.
  `I hope that I was safe'
d. Remélem, hogy egyenesen álltam.
  `I hope that I was standing straight'
e. ?? Remélem, hogy fél lábon álltam.
  `I hope that I was standing on one leg'
f. ?? Remélem, hogy (nem) szédültem.
  `I hope that I (didn't) have/d vertigo'

Remél `hope' [immediate past, cont'd. the immed. foreseeable future is similar]

g. ?? Remélem, hogy ugrándoztam.
  `I hope that I was jumping up and down'
h. ?? Remélem, hogy simogattam a macskát.
  `I hope that I was stroking the cat'
h'. Remélem, hogy a MACSkát simogattam.
  `I hope that it's the cat that I was stroking'
i. ?? Remélem, hogy próbáltam segíteni.
  `I hope that I was trying to help'
j. Remélem, hogy csak ÉN rugdostam az ajtót.
  `I hope that only I was jumping up and down'

Overview of *remél* `hope'

HOPE presupposes that the hoper doesn't know.
 Either she has no way of knowing, or she isn't
 confident what it is that she is doing / experiencing.
If the complement is episodic simultaneous present:
 outright bad (#), if subject bears RESP
  (jumping up and down, stroking the cat),
 and if subject has direct experience
  (having vertigo, standing on one leg),
 in both cases, when she is confident what it is...
If the complement is episodic past or future:
 weird (??) if no recollection/prediction is strange.

RESP seems relevant in two ways

If the individual linked to the subject of the
"obviative clause" is the intentional instigator, then

(i) it is up to her whether she brings about
  that situation (event); and

(ii) she has the same kind of internal perspective
  of the event as a direct experiencer of a state.

The specific attitudinal context determines how
these aspects come into play. WANT and REGRET
are sensitive to (i), but HOPE is sensitive to both
(probably mainly to (ii) and consequently to (i)).

Sajnál `regret = consider [it] regrettable, wish [it] weren't the case'

- Past complements: All are fine (can't do anything about it)
- Present, future complements:

  Direct experience is fine:
  15. Sajnálom, hogy szédülök.
      `I wish I didn't have vertigo'

  Non-RESP is fine:
  16. Sajnálom, hogy benne vagyok a csapatban / untatlak.
      `I wish I weren't on the team / boring you'

  RESP complement is weird (≈ WANT+subjunctive)
  17. ?? Sajnálom, hogy simogatom a macskát.
        `I wish I weren't stroking the cat'

19

Interim conclusion:
In view of obviation in indicatives without competitors, blocking cannot be a general explanation for obviation.

How about a semantic-pragmatic clash approach to the old and the new data?

20

A semantic-pragmatic account: Kaufmann 2019 on directive obviation

- Directives are subjunctives that serve as matrix and embedded imperatives and have person-number agree-ment, so they have 1st person vs non-1st person subjects.
- Directive obviation reflects a contradiction that arises -- if the director is identical to the instigator -- between the director's epistemic uncertainty about *p* and her public commitment to believing that *p* will come true once the instigator receives the directive. According to the former belief, Epistemic Uncertainty (EUC), it is possible for *p* to be false, and according to the latter, Director's Anticipation (DA), *p* is necessarily true, in the same worlds.
- Obviation only occurs with RESP, i.e. if subject of the imperative is instigator of *p*.

21

Kaufmann 2019 on directive obviation, cont'd

"Generally, directive speech acts with content *p* can be performed only if (i) [director] *d* does not take *p* for granted; in the semantics of the imperative, this surfaces as the Epistemic Uncertainty Condition (EUC); and (ii) *d* possesses the relevant authority; in the semantics of the imperative, this surfaces as a combination of Epistemic Authority Condition (EAC) and Decisive Modality (DM). The main idea of the semantic-pragmatic account for directive obviation is that the conventional meaning expressed by directive clauses with the respective subject settings is at odds with the contextual requirements for the felicitous use of a directive."

(DA) If director *d* is publicly committed to believing that instigator *a* believes that $p \in \Delta$ is R-necessary, then *d* is publicly committed to believing that *p* will come true:

$$\Box^{PB_d}\Box^{B_a}\Box^R p \rightarrow \Box^{PB_d} p$$

22

Extending the semantic clash approach

Kaufmann 2020 proposes that her approach to directive obviation extends to WANT + subjunctive (cites Kempchinsky 2009 for a convergent intuition).

I'll accept this proposal and move to investigate the newly discovered cases of HOPE and REGRET.

All the discussion will be very informal.

23

Uncertainty—certainty under HOPE

(13) f. # I hope that I (don't) have vertigo.

   h. # I hope that I'm jumping up and down.

- $HOPE_{AH}(p)$ |= attitude-holder is uncertain about *p*.
- Simultaneous direct perception entails certainty of *p*. Likewise, simultaneous engagement in intentional action involving *p* entails certainty of *p* (unless event isn't confidently identified, cf. focus on *the cat*).
- This can be straightforwardly modeled after Kaufmann's account, although without the specifics of directives, and direct perception as a source of certainty must be figured in.

24

REGRET plausibly involves a contradiction, but not of the uncertainty--necessity kind

18. ?? Sajnálom, hogy simogatom a macskát.

    `I wish I weren't stroking the cat'

    $\Rightarrow$

    `I'm stroking the cat (per factivity).

    AND

    It's up to me whether I'm stroking the cat (per RESP)

    AND

    If it were up to me whether I'm stroking the cat,

    I wouldn't be stroking the cat'

25

Tantalizingly similar: negations of sincerity conds. for illocutionary acts

19. # It is raining but I don't believe it.

                             (Moore's paradox)

20. # I promise to join but I don't intend to.

21. # I don't want to know but who killed the lady?

22. # Turn left but it's a bad idea.

(Searle 1969: a sincerity condition specifies a psychological state of the speaker; the performance of the illocutionary act expresses that state.)

26

Need not be acts: thought is enough

Shoemaker (1996, 74-76) "What seems to me too little noticed is that there is something paradoxical or logically peculiar about the idea of someone's *believing* the propositional content of a Moore-paradoxical sentence, whether or not the person gives linguistic expression to this belief. What really needs to be explained is why someone cannot coherently *believe* that it is raining and that she doesn't believe that it is, despite the fact that the conjuncts of this belief can both be true... Consider the proposition that is the conjunction of ["It is raining, but I don't believe that it is raining"] and the proposition that the speaker believes this... That *is* self-contradictory... "

Rain & $\neg Bel(Rain)$ & $Bel(Rain$ & $\neg Bel(Rain))$ entails
        $\neg Bel(Rain)$ & $Bel(Rain)$.

27

Need not be plain negation of sincerity condition: expressing uncertainty is enough

19'. # It is raining but it may not be raining.

20'. # I promise to join but I may not intend to.

21'. # I may not want to know but who killed the lady?

22'. # Turn left but it may be a bad idea.

Likewise (when read as simultaneous report)

23. # I may have vertigo, I may be cold, I may be itching

24. # I may be jumping up and down, I may be scratching

25. # Do I have vertigo? Am I jumping up and down?

28

A common thread

A psychological state of the speaker (Searle 1969)

Self-knowledge, introspection, first-person access (several essays in Shoemaker 1996)

The internal distance between the two instances of the self tends to vanish vs. a certain distance is introduced between two facets of the self (Ruwet 1984/1991)

An internal perspective (event *de se,* in addition to individual *de se*) in infinitive but not in subjunctive (Schlenker 2005, 2011)

Zu 2018, Newari conjunct subjects require linking to the seat of knowledge, RESP, and internal perspective

Costantini 2016 on self-knowledge in subjunctive complements of Italian epistemic predicates (*pensare*) 29

Conclusion

Obviation-like effects aren't restricted to the subjunctive or to complements that have mood-competitors.

Accounts of obviation in HOPE+indicative and REGRET+indicative can be modeled after Kaufmann's of directive obviation: contradictions between the beliefs of one and the same person as the attitude-holder and as the complement subject, although with different specifics. The commonality: in the bad cases, introspective, first-personal insight into, or control of, the complement situation is called into question in the matrix.

To do: Proper conceptual unification and grammatical characterization call for further research. 30

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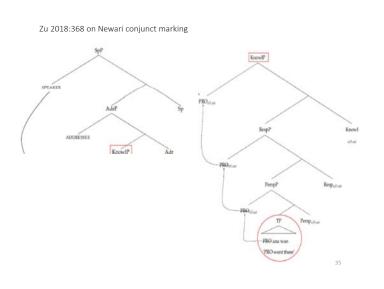
Quotes from Ruwet 1991, Schlenker 2011, Zu 2018

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31

"Two distinct facets of the self"

(Ruwet 1991: 16) "All other things being equal, the finite complement, with two occurrences of coreferential subjects, will be adequate if, on the one hand, the relation of self-to-self determined by the meaning of the matrix verb involves an internal differentiation and highlights two distinct facets of the self, and/or introduces a certain distance between self and self—and if, on the other hand, the relation of self-to-self tends to be viewed, in the same context, in the same manner as the relation of self-to-other.
Inversely, the infinitival complement, with a single occurrence of the subject, will be appropriate if the relation of self-to-self, as determined by the matrix verb, contrasts with the relation of self-to-other, and if the internal distance between the two instances of the self tends to vanish, or if they are viewed from fundamentally the same point of view."

32

Internal perspective ≈ individual & event *de se* (Higginbotham, Schlenker)

- **De se** reading of subject*:*
  there can be no error through misidentification.
- The "controlled" pronominal subject in
  DP_i want/hope/regret [that pronoun_i VP_{subj/indic}]
  is no doubt read *de se* in the cases relevant to us.

A further contrast, relevant to us:

- Just individual *de se* (**no internal perspective**)
  I remember that I fell down / walked to school.
- Also event *de se* (**internal perspective**)
  I remember PRO falling down / walking to school.

33

Schlenker 2005, 2011

The (new) De Se complementizer is a simultaneous λ-abstractor over individuals x, events e, and worlds w:

$[\![\text{ that }_{x\_i,\ e\_k,\ w\_n} F]\!]^{c,s} =$
$\qquad \lambda x'_e\, \lambda e'_i\, \lambda w'_s\ [\![F]\!]^{c,\ s[x\_i \to x',\ e\_k \to e',\ w\_n \to w']}$

I remember PRO falling

$\quad w^*\ e^*\ I\ \text{rem. } \text{that}_{x\_i,\ e\_k,\ w\_n}\ [w_n\ e_k\ (PRO_i\ falling)]$

I remember that I was falling

$\quad w^*\ e^*\ I\ \text{rem. that}_{x\_i,\ e\_k,\ w\_n}\ [\exists e_m: e_m \approx e_k]\ [\ w_n\ e_m\ (I_i\ falling)]$

Here $e_m \approx e_k$ indicates that the events e_m and e_k occurred at the same time.

Both sentences are De Se wrto the subject, but only
I remember falling is De Se wrto the event argument.

34

Zu 2018:368 on Newari conjunct marking

35

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36