

Implicit exemption from obviation in a French infinitive purpose clause

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1. Introduction

It is often claimed that a French subjunctive purpose clause, *pour que*+*SUBJ*, should be replaced by an infinitive clause, *pour*+*INF*, when its subject is coreferential with the matrix subject¹. We however observe cases where this obviation constraint is exempt, as in (1a,b).

- (1)a. [...] j'avais étudié d'avance [le rôle] pour que je fusse capable de le soustraire. (Proust)
'I had studied in advance [the rôle] so that I be able to subtract it'
b. Il veut pas que je participe à l'attaque, pour ne pas que je sois reconnu. (Frantext)
'He doesn't hope that I participate in the attack, in order not that I be recognized.'

This study proposes, referring to Szabolcsi (2010), that obviation may be even implicitly exempt in infinitive purpose clauses, and tries to clarify the conditions of this type of exemption.

2. Responsibility and exemption from obviation in the complements of volition verbs

Szabolcsi (2010) points out that PPI indefinites in English controlled infinitive complements of volition verbs sometimes take narrow scope under the matrix negation, as in (2a). To account for this reading, she invokes Farkas's (1988) idea of *responsibility*, signaled by RESP (*i,s*) and defined as a relation holding between an individual *i* and a situation *s* just in case *i* brings *s* about intentionally. She then observes, following Farkas (1992), that in Hungarian, when the complement of volition verbs expresses a non-RESP situation, obviation may be exempt and a subjunctive complement becomes acceptable, as in (2b), where a PPI indefinite *valakit* 'someone' in the complement is appropriately licensed by a clause-external negation.

- (2)a. I don't want to (inadvertently) offend **someone**. [$\sqrt{\text{not}} > \text{someone}$] (Szabolcsi 2010: 6)
b. Nem akarom, hogy lelőjek **valakit**. (Hungarian)
NEG want.1SG that shoot.SBJV.1SG someone.ACC [$\sqrt{\text{nem}} > \text{valakit}$]
'I don't want that I (inadvertently) shoot **someone**.' (*idem*. 7)
c. I want for it not to be the case that I offend **someone**. (*ibid.*)

Szabolcsi (2010) next claims that, parallel to the Hungarian controlled subjunctive in (2b), the English controlled infinitive in (2a) is implicitly reinterpreted, because of its non-RESP nature, as a subjunctive clause, as in (2c), where *someone* is licensed by a clause-external negation.

3. Proposals

Szabolcsi's analysis in terms of non-RESP holds for explicit cases of the exemption from obviation in the French purpose clause in (1a,b): it seems natural to classify a capability expressed in (1a) and a passive event conveyed in (1b) among non-RESP situations. The same is true for (3) where the adverbial, *par inadvertance* 'inadvertently', clarifies a non-RESP nature of the situation. It should be noted that *quelqu'un* ('someone') is here out-scoped by a clause-external negation, just as in the Hungarian example (2b).

- (3) Tu attendras que *je* maîtrise suffisamment mes sorts de glaces [of a video-game] pour ne pas que *je* blesse **quelqu'un** par inadvertance !! (google) [$\sqrt{\text{pas}} > \text{quelqu'un}$]
'You shall wait that I sufficiently control my lots of glaces [of a video-game] in order not that I inadvertently hurt **someone**.'

Moreover, in a French infinitive purpose clause in (4a), *quelqu'un* 'someone' takes narrow scope under the clause-mate negation. Now, by adopting Szabolcsi's analysis of (2a), I claim that, when the infinitive purpose clause convey a non-RESP situation, it is reinterpreted as a controlled subjunctive purpose clause with an clause-externalized negation, as in (4b), which allows PPI indefinites to be out-scoped by an apparently clause-mate negation, as in (4a).

¹ "Lorsque les sujets de la principale et de la subordonnée sont coréférents, la subordonnée finale est obligatoirement remplacée par un infinitif complément circonstanciel." (Nazarenko 2000: 29)

- (4)a. [...] comme la salle était très grande et il y avait beaucoup d'hommes, pour ne pas déranger **quelqu'un** je suis parti m'asseoir sur les derniers bancs [...] (google)
 'As the hall was very large and there were a lot of people, in order not to disturb **someone**, I left to sit down on the benches in the last row'. [$\sqrt{pas > quelqu'un}$]
- b. pour ne pas que je dérange **quelqu'un**, je suis parti [...]
 'in order not that I disturb **someone**, I left [...]

Two arguments come in favor of these hypotheses: i) When the matrix predicate conveys a RESP flavor, like 'faire beaucoup d'effort' in (5), *quelque chose* 'something' in the negated purpose clause isn't fully accepted, unlike a negative word *rien*, which indicates that the negation is clause-internal and that an implicit reanalysis as a subjunctive is not here allowed.

- (5) Ce nouveau musulman fait beaucoup d'efforts pour {ne **rien** manger / ??pour ne pas manger **quelque chose**} dans la journée pendant le ramadan. [$??pas > quelqu'un$]
 'This new Muslim makes a great effort not to eat {**anything** / **something**} in the daytime during Ramadan.'

ii) Second, even when a negated purpose clause conveys a non-RESP situation, as in (6), *quelqu'un* 'someone' is incompatible, unlike a NPI *quiconque* 'anyone', with an indefinite minimalizer, (*dire*) *un mot* '(say) a word'. The licensing of minimalizers may surely be non-local, as in (7a). But in this case, the negation is interpreted in a lower position thanks to a Neg-raising volition verb, *vouloir* 'want', while a non-local licensing is not accepted when the matrix verb is not of Neg-raising type, like *dire* 'say' in (7b) (cf. Tovena et al. 2004: 402).

- (6) Tout ermite qui vit dans le monastère de la Grande Chartreuse fait beaucoup attention pour ne pas dire *un mot* à {**quiconque** / ??**quelqu'un**} par inadvertance.
 'Every hermit who lives in the Grande Chartreuse monastery is very careful in order not to say a word to {**anyone** / **someone**} inadvertently. [$??pas > quelqu'un$]
- (7)a. Son agent [=Rostropovitch's agent] ne voulait pas qu'il boive *une goutte*. (google)
 '(lit) His agent did not want that he drink [subjunctive] *a drop*.'
- b. ??Son agent n'a pas dit qu'il buvait *une goutte*.
 'His agent did not say that he drank *a drop*.'

The incompatibility between a minimalizer and a narrowly interpreted *quelqu'un* 'someone' in (6) is thus naturally accounted for by the above hypothesis: the former requires a clause-internal interpretation of the negation, while the latter needs the opposite.

4. Semantic representation

To explicitly represent the semantics of purpose clauses, I first propose, with Portner (2018: 108), to paraphrase them by 'because x intends p ' with x bound by the matrix subject. I next adopt Grano's (2015) idea that the semantics of *intend* amounts to putting a property denoted by the complement into the matrix subject's Private To-Do-List. Thus, the semantics of (8a) is paraphrased by 'because the new Muslim intends not to eat anything, and is represented by (8b).

- (8)a. pour ne rien manger... 'in order not to eat anything...' (=5)
 b. because [$\lambda x. \neg \exists y$ eat (x, y)] \in Private T-D-L (this new Muslim)
- (9)a. pour ne pas déranger quelqu'un... 'in order not to disturb someone...' (=4a)
 b. because [$\lambda x. x$ TAKECARE $\neg \exists p$ [$p = \lambda w (\exists y. I$ disturb y in w)]] \in Private T-D-L (I)

In (9a) where the infinitive with a non-RESP predicate is reanalyzed as a subjunctive, as in (4b), I assume that a monitoring predicate, *take care*, is coerced to avoid type-mismatch, as in (9b).

References: Farkas, D. 1988. On obligatory control. *Linguistics & Philosophy* 11; Farkas, D. 1992. On Obviation. In *Lexical matters*. CSLI; Grano, T. 2015. Getting your to-do list under control. *NELS* 45; Nazarenko, A. 2000. *La cause et son expression en français*. Ophrys; Portner, P. 2018. *Mood*. Oxford Univ. Press; Szabolcsi, A. 2010. Infinitives vs. subjunctives: What do we learn from obviation and from exemptions from obviation?; Tovena, L. et al. 2004. Polarity Sensitive Items. In *Handbook of French Semantics*. CSLI.