

Overt Infinitival Subjects in Hungarian and Cross-linguistically

We are interested in sentences analogous to (1)-(4), where the bracketed complement is infinitival (Szabolcsi 2005). They are out in English, German, Dutch, and French, but in in various other languages. Notice that `begin` has a raising version here: in (3)-(4) I/John did not begin anything (Bartos 2006).

	Hung	Ital	MxSp	Rom	Rus
(1) Utálok [csak én dolgozni] `I hate that only I work`	+	+	+	+	-
(2) Utál [csak János dolgozni] `John hates that only he works`	-	-	-	-	-
(3) Elkezdtem [csak én kapni szerepeket] `It began that only I get roles`	+	+	+	+	+
(4) Elkezdett [csak János kapni szerepeket] `It began that only John gets roles`	+	+	+	+	+

Compare the above LOW readings with the HI readings:

- (5) Only I hate to work (others don't hate to work).
- (6) Only I began to get roles (others experienced no such change).

	HI Scenario: (3) false, (6) true		LOW Scenario: (3) true, (6) false	
	Before 2006	In 2006	Before 2006	In 2006
Eva	no roles	no roles	no roles	no roles
Clara	some roles	some roles	some roles	no roles
Me	no roles	some roles	some roles	some roles

The infinitive-internal position of the nominative DP is clearly diagnosed by interpretation, and more or less clearly (depending on the language) by word order facts. In Hungarian, nem én cannot be postverbal in its own clause, thus (8) can only be analyzed with nem én in the infinitival clause:

- (7) a. Nem én kapok szerepeket.
not I get roles
`It is not me who gets roles`
- b. *Szerepeket kapok nem én.
roles get not I
- (8) Utálnék / Elkezdtem [nem én kapni szerepeket].
would.hate / began not I to.get roles
`I would hate for it not to be me who gets roles / It began that it is not me who gets roles`

In languages with postverbal `only`-phrases e.g. the following have unambiguously LOW readings:

- (9) Non vuole andare solo lui / *solo Gianni a scuola.
`He/*Gianni doesn't want to be the only one who goes to school`
- (10) Ha iniziato a ricevere buoni incarichi solo lei / solo Maria.
`It began to be the case that only she/Mary was getting good roles`
- (11) Stal prixodit' domoj tol'ko on / tol'ko Gordon pjanym.
`It began to be the case that only he/Gordon was going home drunk`

What is the correct syntactic analysis of these nominative DPs? Maybe they are not really subjects, just emphatic elements? That could perhaps hold for the pronoun cases, but not for the name cases. Or maybe they instantiate backward control/raising? Polinsky—Potsdam 2006 take matrix scope to be a diagnostic of what they analyze as backward control/raising. Since (1), (3), and (4) have LOW scope,

these qualify as impostors in their terminology. One might add overt reconstruction to their theory (voiding the scope diagnostic), but notice that e.g. begin does not support reconstruction even in English:

- (12) Only Mary began ___ to get good roles.
 *`It began to be the case that only Mary got good roles`

In fact, the contrast between (2) and (4) probably argues against the “control as raising” theory in general.

Clause union is also an unlikely source, since not only restructuring verbs (`want`, `seem`) but also non-restructuring ones (`hate`, `begin` [elkezdi]) participate. We assume that (1), (3), (4) and their counterparts have genuine overt infinitival subjects and make the following hypotheses:

- (13) Nominative Assignment
 Infinitival subjects in all languages may get Nominative Case by long-distance Agree[ment] with a finite INFL (there is no “weak/strong feature parameter” here).
- (14) The Bottleneck is the Finite Subject
 An overt infinitival subject is possible if the finite subject can legitimately be “missing” or if both subjects can be pronounced simultaneously. It is in this respect that languages differ.

Long-distance Agree is subject to the same constraints as overt movement (pied piping):

- (15) Nem akarok [megpróbálni [csak én menni autóval]]
 `I don't want to try to be the only one to go by car`
- (16) *Jobb lenne / lennék [csak én úszni].
 `* I would be better to swim`

The finite subject can be “missing” if the language is pro-drop (Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, Romanian) or, in the case of raising verbs, if predicate inversion or something else takes care of the theta-less finite subject position. The latter is probably the case in Russian, which is at most marginally pro-drop, and exhibits overt nominatives with raising verbs only.

Multiple nominatives are indeed possible in several languages but, it seems, only with control verbs:

- (17) Én se akarok [csak én menni autóval]
 I-neither want.1sg only I go.inf car.with
 `Neither do I want to be the only one who goes by car`
- (18) János nem akart [PRO megpróbálni [csak ő menni autóval]]
 John not wanted.3sg try.inf only he go.inf car.with
 `John didn't want to try to be the only one who goes by car`
- (19) Nem akarok [én is megpróbálni [csak én menni autóval]]
 not want.1sg I too try.inf only I go.inf car.with
 `I don't want to be another person who tries to be the only one who goes by car`
- (20) ?* Nem fogok [én is elkezdni [nem én kapni szerepeket]]
 not will.1sg I too begin.inf not I get.inf roles

Finally, the cross-linguistically robust pronoun—R-expression contrast with control verbs ((1)—(2)) is a Principle C effect. If the same INFL assigns Nominative to two DPs (overt or pro), they are automatically coindexed. DP1/i... INFL/i ... only DP2/i is okay if DP2 is a pronoun, or if DP2 is an R-expression but DP1 has no theta-role (as in the raising case), but not if DP1 has a theta-role and DP2 is an R-expression.

References:

- Bartos, És mégis mozog [Eppur si muove], Ms. 2006.
 Polinsky—Potsdam, Extending the Scope of Backward Control, *Syntax* 2006.
 Szabolcsi, Overt Infinitival Subjects (If That's What They Are), In Broekhuis et al., eds., 2005.