In comparison to related constructions such as questions and relative clauses, modal existential wh-constructions (MECs) have been understudied. One of the consequences is the lack of a proper cross-linguistic description of MECs. It is the goal of this chapter to broaden and deepen the current empirical knowledge of the morphology, syntax, and semantics of MECs. The putative universal status of a number of MEC phenomena will in some cases be confirmed, while in others disputed. New implicational universals will be established and a new cross-linguistic typology will emerge.

So far, I have been able to identify MECs in twenty-seven languages. A closer characterization of the class of languages that have MECs and one example per each language are given in §2.1. Sixteen languages were chosen for a more thorough examination, the result of which is presented in §2.2. The data reported come from two sources: from the published or unpublished literature on MECs and from my own survey conducted for the purpose of this dissertation. New data were collected from native speakers on the basis of a questionnaire and in some cases personal or email communication. For many languages, I have not been able to consult multiple speakers, which is why occasional idiosyncracies may occur. The validity of the data and the generalizations drawn from them should therefore be tested by further empirical research. For reasons of space I can only include a fraction of the actual data; most facts will only be reported on.

The findings presented in this chapter are summarized in the form of universals, tendencies, and implicational universals in §2.3. In addition, I include a sketch of an emergent typology of MECs. The chapter is concluded in §2.4.

The complete body of data, both from the literature and from my informants, will be made available to whoever is interested.
2.1 Cross-linguistic distribution

The cross-linguistic distribution of MECs is fairly well-known\(^2\) MECs occur in most languages of Europe and neighbouring areas, i.e. in Romance, Slavic, Finno-Ugric, Baltic, and Semitic languages, Albanian, Greek, and Basque. Germanic languages form a notable exception, where only Yiddish and New York English have been reported to have MECs (see \(\S 2.1.2\)).

Two factors appear to determine the cross-linguistic distribution of MECs: geographical and structural. The relevance of the former is suggested by the fact that MECs appear in typologically and genealogically unrelated languages but their geographical distribution is remarkably continuous. Therefore, it is possible that language contact has affected their distribution. This is especially clear with Yiddish (and possibly New York English, by transitivity), which, of all Germanic languages, had the strongest linguistic contact with Slavic languages (as noted by Caponigro 2003). As for the latter factor, there appears to be a necessary structural substrate that enables a language to develop the class of MECs, namely the ability to form wh-dependencies by overt wh-movement. Consequently, the distribution of MECs roughly coincides with the distribution of free relatives \(\text{[Caponigro 2003]}\) and possibly embedded questions utilizing wh-movement. Taking the structural view, it would be interesting to search for MECs in wh-movement languages that are geographically distant from Europe. Unfortunately, undertaking this task was beyond the research presented in this thesis.

Concerning the curious gap in distribution constituted by most Germanic languages, nobody has a satisfactory explanation of why this gap should exist.\(^3\) This thesis will contribute only a little in addressing this issue—by providing a detailed analysis and thus pointing to possible sources of variation.

2.1.1 Examples of MECs

Below, I provide examples of MECs, grouped according to language families. The data come from the literature wherever possible and the particular citations track the oldest observations. For a complete overview of literature on MECs in relation to languages discussed in it, see Appendix A.2.

\(^2\)A comprehensive list of languages in which MECs can be found is in [Caponigro 2003:Ch3]. MECs from a cross-linguistic perspective are also discussed in [Pancheva-Izvorski 2000:Ch2] and [Grosu 2003].

\(^3\)Pancheva-Izvorski (2000) attempts to derive this distributional gap from the fact that Germanic modal verbs cannot select for clauses. However, this explanation is problematic, as I briefly point out in \(\S 2.2.3\).
Universals and the typology of MECs

Romance languages

(1) **French** *(Hirschbühler 1978:218)*
   Il n’a pas où mourir.
   he NEG has NEG where die:INF
   ‘He doesn’t have a place to die.’

(2) **Spanish** *(Plani 1980:142)*
   Esa familia no tiene de que vivir.
   that family NEG has of what live:INF
   ‘That family doesn’t have anything to live on.’

(3) **Catalan** *(Hirschbühler and Rivero 1981:119)*
   La pobra no tenia amb qui parlar.
   the poor NEG has with who talk:INF
   ‘The poor one did not have who to talk to.’

(4) **Romanian** *(Grosu 1987:52)*
   Andrea nu are cu cine { vota / s-a voteze}.
   Andrea NEG has with who vote:INF / SBJ vote
   ‘Andrea doesn’t have anyone with whom to vote.’

(5) **Portuguese** *(Móia 1992:94)*
   O Paulo não tem a quem pedir ajuda.
   the Paulo NEG has to whom ask.for:INF help
   ‘Paulo doesn’t have anybody to ask for help.’

(6) **Italian** *(Pancheva-Izvorski 2000:26)*
   Ha con chi parlare.
   have:3SG with who speak:INF
   ‘There is someone to talk to.’

Slavic languages

(7) **Czech** *(Zubatý 1922:66)*
   Mám se čím chlubit.
   have:1SG REFL what:INSTR brag:INF
   ‘I have something to brag about.’

(8) **Russian** *(Chvany 1973:62)*
   Est’ komu éto delat’.
   is who:DAT it do:INF
   ‘There is someone to do it/who can do it.’

(9) **Bulgarian** *(Rudin 1986:156)*
   Imam kakvo da četa.
   have:1SG what to read:1SG
   ‘I’ve got something to read.’
2.1. Cross-linguistic distribution

(10) **Slovak** [Ružička 1994:59]
Nemám sa s kym povyprávat.
NEG:have:1SG REFL with who:INF
‘There’s nobody for me to talk with.’

(11) **Serbo-Croatian** [Pancheva-Izvorski 2000:25]
Nemam kome da ga dam.
NEG:have:1SG who:DAT da it:ACC give:1SG
‘I have no one to give it to.’

(12) **Polish** [Grosu 2004:408]
(Nie) mam co robić.
(NEG) have:1SG what do:INF
‘There (is something, isn’t anything) I can do.’

(13) **Macedonian** [Grosu 2004:407]
{Imame / nemame} komu da mu gi
have:1PL / NEG:have:1PL who:DAT sbj him:DAT them:ACC
ispratime parite.
send:1PL money.the
‘We (don’t) have someone to whom to send the money.’

(14) **Ukrainian** (Alex Mikhnenko, p.c.)
Ya ne mayu scho robyty
I NEG have what do:INF
‘I have nothing to do.’

(15) **Slovenian** (Marko Hladnik, p.c.)
Imam s kom govoriti.
have:1SG with whom speak:INF
‘I have somebody to speak with.’

**Finno-Ugric languages**

(16) **Hungarian** [Caponigro 2003:89]
Van kivel beszélni.
is who:INSTR talk:INF
‘There is someone with whom one could talk.’

(17) **Estonian** [Caponigro 2003:89]
Mul on kelle-ga rääkida kui ma kurb olen.
I:ALL have who:COM talk:INF when I: NOM sad am
‘I have somebody to talk to when I’m sad.’

(18) **Finnish** [Caponigro 2003:90]
Minulla on kenelle puhua kun olen surullinen.
I:ADE is who:ALL speak:INF when am sad
‘I have somebody I can talk to when I’m sad.’
Universals and the typology of MECs

Baltic languages

(19) Lithuanian (Ambrazas 1997:728)
Jiens nebūvo ką veikti.
they:DAT NEG:be:PAST what do:INF
‘They had nothing to do.’

(20) Latvian (Andris Jankevics, p.c.)
Man ir kur gulēt.
me:DAT be:IMPRS where sleep:INF
‘I have a place to sleep.’

Semitic languages

(21) Hebrew (Grosu 1994:138)
Eyn li im mi le-daber.
NEG:is to.me with whom talk:INF
‘I do not have (anyone) with whom to talk.’

(22) Moroccan Arabic (Caponigro 2003:90)
mon-zfiar fiand-t mfia man n-odw-t malī kan kun hazim
from-luck have:1SG with whom 1SG:talk:1SG when was be:1SG sad
‘Fortunately, I have somebody I can talk to when I’m sad.’

(23) Classical Arabic (Grosu 2004:409)
Laysa li mā aًf’alu.
is:NEG to.me what do:IND.IMPRF.1SG
‘There is nothing I can do.’

Germanic languages

(24) Yiddish (Caponigro 2001:53)
[...] nisht vayil es iz nisht geven mit vemen tsu redn.
not because it has not been with who:DAT to speak
‘[...] not because there wasn’t anyone to talk to.’

(25) New York English (Caponigro 2003:87) (disputable)
I don’t have what to eat.

Other languages

(26) Greek (Pancheva-Izvorski 2000:26)
Exo ti na foreso gia to xoro.
have:1SG what SBJ wear:1SG for the dance
‘I have something to wear for the dance.’

4This example does not prove that New York English actually has MECs. It is possible that the example corresponds to the German Ich habe was zu essen ‘I have what to eat’, which is not an MEC, despite the superficial difference. See 2.1.2
2.1. Cross-linguistic distribution

(27) Albanian (Grosu 2004:409)
Nuk ka kush tê na dërgojë mall.
NEG have:IMPRS who SBJ us send:1PL merchandise
‘There is noone who can send us the merchandise.’

(28) Basque (Urtzi Etxeberria, p.c.)
Maria-k ez du zein-eta-z fidatu.
Maria-ERG NEG has who-INDET-INST trust:INF
‘Mary has somebody to trust.’

2.1.2 A note about German and Dutch

It should be mentioned that German and Dutch have now and then been pointed out as languages that also have MECs (e.g. Suñer 1983:377/378 and Lipták 2003), putative examples of which are given in (29).

(29) a. German
   Ich habe was zu tun.
   I have what to do
   ‘I have something to do.’
   b. Dutch
   Ik heb wat te doen.
   I have what to do
   ‘I have something to do.’

There are at least two arguments against treating (29) as a MEC: (i) the wh-word needs to be formally licensed in the matrix clause, as illustrated by (30a), a requirement not existent in MECs (see the discussion of matching effects in §2.2.2) and (ii) the modality is ambiguous in force: as MECs, it can be existential (30b), but unlike MECs, it can be universal, too (30c) (see the discussion of modality in §2.2.6).

(30) German
   a. *Ich habe über was / worüber zu sprechen.
   b. Ich langweile mich nicht: Ich habe hier was zu tun.
   I bore me NEG I have here what to do
   ‘I’m not bored: I have something that I can do here.’

---

5 See also Bayer and Brandner (2004), who describe an interesting infinitival construction in two German dialects—Bavarian and Alemanian—and speculate about a possible relation to MECs.

6 Grosu (1987: 55, footnote 2) gives one more argument: the wh-word in the relevant structure does not undergo wh-movement. While this is arguably true, no examples are given to support this claim.
Universals and the typology of MECs

2.2 Cross-linguistic description

In this section, I provide a thorough description of the morphological, syntactic, and semantic properties of MECs, drawing data from the following 16 languages (the names in brackets are my primary informants): Bulgarian (Kostadin Cholakov), Catalan (Jordi Fortuny), Czech, French (Guillaume Thomas), Greek (Ourania Sinopoulou), Hebrew (Aynat Rubinstein), Hungarian (Anikó Lipták), Italian (Ivano Caponigro), Latvian (Andris Jankevics), Polish (Krzysztof Migdalski), Portuguese (Adriana Cardoso), Serbian-Croatian (Jelena Prokić), Romanian (Camelia Constantinescu), Russian (Aysa Arylova), Slovenian (Marko Hladnik), and Spanish (Cintia Widmann). I will discuss issues concerning the syntactic distribution of MECs (§2.2.1), the morphosyntax of the wh-element (§2.2.2), the grammatical mood of the MEC (§2.2.3), the syntactic transparency of MECs (§2.2.4), sluicing (§2.2.5), the MEC modality (§2.2.6), the quantificational and scopal properties of the MEC (§2.2.7), and the referential dependency of the MEC-internal subject (§2.2.8).

2.2.1 Syntactic distribution

MECs in all languages have a very limited distribution. They are only licensed in the (apparently) direct object position of a narrow class of verbs, to the characterization of which I will turn later. Let us start with a negative delimitation.

Where MECs cannot appear

That MECs cannot appear in the subject position was first observed by Plann (1980) for Spanish.
2.2. Cross-linguistic description

(31)  

\[\text{Spanish}\]

a. Plann (1980:124)

*Con quien dejar los niños llegarán a las tres.

with who leave:INF the children arrive:FUT at the three

‘With whom to leave the children will arrive at three.’

b. Plann (1980:126)

*{ A quien dirigirse / Con quien platicar / A quien

A who turn.to:INF.REFL / with who chat:INF / A who

consultar} no fue encontrado por Julia.

consult:INF NEG was found by Julia

‘{No one to turn to / No one to chat with / No one to consult}

was found by Julia.’

A part of this observation, namely (31a), holds universally—MECs never appear in the subject position if they realize external arguments (e.g. agents). What some languages do allow is the type of example in (31b), i.e. a situation where the MEC in the subject position corresponds to the internal argument. This was first observed by Pesetsky (1982) for Russian, see the adapted example in (32a). It turns out, however, that there is an additional condition, namely that the MEC must surface after the matrix predicate; hence the ungrammaticality of (32b) (and possibly (31b)).

(32)  

\[\text{Russian (Aysa Arylova, p.c.; adapted from Pesetsky 1982:154)}\]

a. Bylo kupleno čem zakusit’.

was bought what:INSTR eat.after.drinking.vodka:INF

‘Something to eat after drinking vodka was bought.’

b. *Čem zakusit’ bylo kupleno.

what:INSTR eat.after.drinking.vodka:INF was bought

‘Something to eat after drinking vodka was bought.’

Similarly, some languages allow MECs as arguments of unaccusatives:

(33)  

\[\text{Russian (Pesetsky 1982:154)}\]

Pojavilos’ čem pisat’.

appeared what:INSTR write:INF

‘Something to write with appeared.’

MECs are further ruled out from indirect object and object-of-preposition positions, as illustrated by (34a) and (34b) respectively.

(34)  

\[\text{Czech}\]

a. *Daruji to auto s kým jet na dovolenou.

give:1SG the car with who go:INF on vacation

‘I will give the car to somebody with whom I/one could go on vacation.’

\[\text{7For a discussion of MEC passivization, see 6.5.4}\]
b. *Potkal ho pred kde nakupovat.
   met him in.front.of where do.shopping:INF
   ‘He met him in front of (the place) where one could do shopping.’

Very recently [Grosu 2004] added the observation that MECs cannot appear in the predicative position:

(35) **Romanian** [Grosu 2004:428]
   *Săpunul ăsta este cu ce să te speli pe față.
     soap.the this is with what SBJ REFCL.2SG wash on face
   ‘This piece of soap is something with which to wash your face.’

Due to the homomorphy with infinitival relatives, it can be hard to decide whether MECs can function as attributive modifiers. But languages that distinguish relative operators from MEC operators provide evidence that MECs cannot modify NPs. The example below shows that once an MEC-like structure (an infinitival relative) is headed, a relative operator kogoto ‘who:REL’ is required. The use of an operator characteristic of MECs, i.e. the bare wh-word kogo ‘who’ leads to ungrammaticality.

(36) **Bulgarian** (Kostadin Cholakov, p.c.)
   Imam njakogo, s kogo*(to) da govorja
   have:1SG somebody with who:(REL) SBJ talk
   ‘There is somebody with whom I can talk.’

Turning the issue of modification around, we can ask: Can MECs be modified? On the one hand, [Grosu 1994:139] claims that MECs cannot stack. Stacking is a special case of modification, where one MEC is modified by another MEC.

(37) **Romanian**
   Maria nu are cu cine să iașă (* de cine să se poată
   Maria NEG has with who SBJ go.out:3SG of who SBJ REFCL can
   attach
   ‘Maria does not have (anyone) with whom to go out (to whom to be able to get close).’

On the other hand, cases of apparent modification have been reported. Consider the following examples, where dežuren po tova vreme ‘on duty at this time’ in (38a) and dans le frigo/en la heladera ‘in the fridge’ in (38b,c) can be analyzed as modifiers of the respective MECs. Another possible view, one held by [Izvorski 1998] about (38a), is that these phrases are small clause predicates that take the MECs as their external arguments.

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8 Notice that if this analysis is right, the ban on subjects discussed earlier does not hold across the board. At the same time, it still holds that the MEC functions as the main argument of an existential verb, even though as part of a bigger constituent.
2.2. Cross-linguistic description

(38) a. **Bulgarian** (Izvorski 1998:163)
    Edva-li ima koj da ti pomogne { dežuren po tova
    hardly have who SBJ you:DAT help on-duty at this
    vreme / smart}
    ‘There is hardly anyone who can help you {who is on duty at this
    time / who is smart}.’

b. **French** (Thomas 2008a:7/8)
    Il y a de quoi manger dans le frigo.
    ‘There is something that one can eat in the fridge.’

c. **Spanish** (Cintia Widmann, p.c.)
    En la heladera tengo qué comer.
    ‘There is something to eat in the fridge.’

No matter how the examples in (38) are analyzed, they cannot be replicated in every language. See the two examples below. (39a) has two readings, neither of which is the one that Izvorski reports for (38a): either the putative small clause predicate *ve službě* ‘on duty’ is construed as a modifier of the predicate *pomocť ti* ‘help you’ or as a depictive related to *ti* ‘you’, the object of ‘help’. Similarly, (39b) only has the absurd reading under which *v ledničce* ‘in the fridge’ modifies the predicate *jíst* ‘eat (something)’.

(39) **Czech**

a. Sotva ti má kdo pomoc tě ve službě.
    hardly you:DAT has who:NOM help:INF now on duty
    ‘There is hardly anyone who can [help you on duty].’
    ‘There is hardly anyone who can help you while you’re on duty at
    this time.’
    *‘There is hardly anyone who can help you who is on duty at this
    time.’

b. Mám v ledničce co jíst.
    have:1SG in fridge what eat:INF
    ‘There is something that I can eat while sitting in the fridge.’
    *‘There is something in the fridge that I can eat.’

I will briefly discuss the case of apparent MEC-modification in (38b). In sum, MECs cannot appear in subject positions, if they realize the external argument or if they appear preverbally. They cannot appear in indirect object and object-of-preposition positions. They cannot function as predicates of nominals. They cannot modify nominals, but in some languages can be modified by non-nominal predicates.
Where MECs can appear

Let us now turn to the internal argument position and try to figure out the right distribution of MECs. The prototypical position of MECs, attested in all languages, is the argument position of the existential verbs ‘be’ and/or ‘have’ (if these exist in the language), often in their impersonal forms. I will call these **stative MEC-embedders**. A proper subset of languages allow their MECs to appear in the object position of other predicates, which I will call **dynamic MEC-embedders**. These include (di)transitive predicates like ‘find’, ‘look for/seek’, ‘choose’, ‘give’, ‘get’, ‘take’, ‘send’, ‘bring’, ‘buy’, or ‘build’, and more marginally unaccusative predicates like ‘arrive’, ‘appear’, or ‘occur’. Grosu (2004:406) characterized this class of dynamic predicates as verbs of “coming into being, view, or availability, or causation of one of these”. Relying on Szabolcsi (1986) (as also Grosu 2004 does), we can characterize the whole set of verbs capable of embedding MECs as verbs whose lexical meaning supports existential quantification over their indefinite internal argument. What is interesting is that modal verbs like ‘want’ or ‘need’ are systematically ruled out.

In table 2.1 below, I give an overview of predicates available in different languages. Needless to say, the judgements are not so clear cut as it may appear from the table. The two-way distinction between + (acceptable) and − (unacceptable) often relies on relative acceptability rather than on sharp grammaticality contrasts. Also, some minus-marked fields stand for non-productivity rather than unacceptability, as it turns out that many predicates that are unacceptable MEC-embedders in general can exceptionally embed some MECs, typically depending on the lexical semantics of the embedded predicate. The precise characterization remains to be done. The empty spaces indicate lack of data and the letter “n” stands for “not available”. This concerns mainly the predicates ‘be’ and ‘have’, which do not always cooccur in a single language (e.g. in Russian) or only one of them is reserved for existential use (e.g. in Portuguese).

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9I am grateful to Lena Karlovskaya (p.c.) for helping me understand this intricate situation. Unfortunately, I found out about this acceptability-affecting aspect too late to be able to include a broader discussion.
Table 2.1: MEC-embedding predicates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>be</th>
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<th>find</th>
<th>seek</th>
<th>choose</th>
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</table>

As pointed out by Pesetsky (1982), there appears to be yet another prerequisite for a verb to be able to select an MEC, namely its capacity to assign structural case (or, analogously, its inability to assign a lexical case). To prove this, Pesetsky gives the minimal pair in (40), where the ability of *zaxvatil ‘seized’ to select an MEC is correlated with its accusative-assigning capacity (in contexts where it selects an ordinary nominal object) and the inability of *ovladel ‘seize’ to select MECs correlates with its instrumental-assigning capacity (to nominal objects).

(40)  

\[
\text{Russian (Pesetsky 1982:153)}
\]

\[
\text{a. Spekuljant zaxvatil čto prodavat’.
segregator seized what sell:INF
}\]

\[
\text{b. *Spekuljant ovladel čto prodavat’.
segregator seized what sell:INF
‘The speculator seized something to sell.’}
\]

Unfortunately, I did not manage to replicate Pesetsky’s test, as my informant (Aysa Arylova, p.c.) finds both of the two examples above equally ungrammatical. Despite the unreliability of Pesetsky’s example, it is most probably correct that structural case assignment is a necessary, though not sufficient condition for a verb to be able to select an MEC.

Particular languages may display occasional idiosyncratic specialties. Hun-
garian, for instance, allows MECs to be embedded under the verb tud, which is ambiguous between the epistemic ‘know’ and the circumstantial modal ‘can/be able to’. In the MEC-like example below, the latter meaning is clearly obtained (Anna Szabolcsi, p.c.).

(41) **Hungarian** (Lipták 2003:3)

Peter:nom cudott mit felvenni az ünnepélyre.

‘Peter had things to put on for the feast.’

Obviously, neither of the two meanings of tud straightforwardly matches the meaning of ‘be’, ‘have’, or any other standard MEC-embedding predicate. On the other hand, this use of a modal verb is exceptional even within Hungarian, as shown by the data below. Besides bûr, a substandard variant of tud, there is no other modal verb that can embed MECs.

(42) **Hungarian** (Anna Szabolcsi, p.c.)

   *NEG cud:1SG what:ACC put.on:INF
   ‘There is nothing that I can put on.’

b. *Nem engedtem Marinak mit felvenni.
   *NEG let.pst.1SG Mar:DAT what:ACC put.on:INF
   ‘I didn’t let Mary to put on anything.’

c. *Nem { akartam / próbáltam} mit felvenni.
   *NEG wanted:1SG / tried:1SG what:ACC put.on:INF
   ‘I didn’t want / try anything that I could put on.’

d. *Nem sikerült nélkül betömni a lyukat.
   *NEG managed what.with plug:INF the hole:ACC
   ‘[We] didn’t manage to plug the hole with anything.’ / ‘There was nothing we could plug the hole with.’

### 2.2.2 Wh-element

There are five types of phenomena that pertain to the morphosyntax of the wh-element in MECs: the (in)ability to host affixes, the formal feature licensing (matching effects), the surface syntactic position (wh-movement), the range of wh-elements that can participate in the MEC, and the (un)availability of multiple wh-elements per MEC.

**Affixes**

All MECs in all languages contain a wh-element. In all languages, the wh-element, whether pronominal, adverbial, or determiner-like, can be “bare”, i.e. no morphemes are attached to it. For the absolute majority of languages, this is the only option. This fact is relevant for the comparison of MECs with related
constructions, especially questions and (free) relative clauses: wh-elements in MECs are morphologically interrogative rather than relative (see esp. Izvorski [1998] and Pancheva-Izvorski 2000). This can be illustrated on two types of ungrammatical MECs: those making use of a specialized wh-based relative operator, e.g. in Greek (43b) or Slovenian (43c), and those making use of the ‘ever’ morpheme, which can attach to wh-words in most languages’ free relatives; cf. (43a).

(43) a. French [Hirschbühler] (1978: 176)
*J’ai trouvé quiconque mettre au travail.
I have found whoever put:INF to work
‘I found whoever to put to work.’
Dhen exo { ti /* oti} na foreso sto parti.
NEG have:1SG what / what:REL SBJ wear:1SG at.the party.
‘I have nothing to wear at the party.’
c. Slovenian (Marko Hladnik, p.c.)
Nimam s { čime /* čimer} pomiti posodo.
NEG:have:1SG with what / what:REL clean:INF dishes
‘I have nothing to clean the dishes with.’

There are three facts that might compromise the universality of the latter effect. One of them has been richly discussed in the literature on Russian MECs (see esp. Rappaport [1986] and the references cited therein) and is illustrated in (44), where the wh-word komu ‘who’ is not “bare” but rather is prefixed by a negative morpheme ne. This negative morpheme expresses sentential negation, as suggested by the English translation.

(44) Russian [Chvany] (1975: 362)
Nekomu bylo éto delat’.
NEG:who:DAT PAST it do:INF
‘There was no one to do it.’

As recently argued by Babby (2000), however, there are good reasons to believe that the wh-word composes with the negative morpheme ne only after wh-movement takes place and thus is underlingly “bare”. See also Kondrashova and Šimik (to appear), who draw the same conclusion, based on a different argument.

The second potential counterargument to the universality of wh-bareness comes from Bulgarian, Macedonian, and a handful of other languages, where two types of wh-based (and hence non-bare) indefinites can be used: a plain indefinite ‘somebody’, as in (45a), and a negative concord indefinite ‘anybody’,

(45) a. French [Hirschbühler] (1978: 176)
*I found whoever to put to work.’

11 The example (43b) is constructed from Agouraki’s (2003) example (2) and her claim that MECs “are not marked as RFRs [realis free relatives]” (302).
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as in (45b).\(^{13}\)

(45)  
\(\text{a. Bulgarian} \quad \text{(Bužarovska and Mišeska Tomić 2008:11)}\)

\[\text{Njama njakoj da mi podari takava igračka.} \]
\[\text{NEG:have:IMPRS somebody SBJ me:DAT give:3SG such toy} \]
\[\text{‘There is nobody to give me such a toy as a present.’} \]

\(\text{b. Macedonian} \quad \text{(Bužarovska and Mišeska Tomić 2008:11)}\)

\[\text{Nema nikoj da te zameni.} \]
\[\text{NEG:have:IMPRS anybody:NCI SBJ you replace:3SG} \]
\[\text{‘There is nobody to replace you.’} \]

Though related to MECs, presumably in a similar fashion as infinitival headed relatives, the clauses in (45) do not qualify as MECs proper. The syntactic position which is bound by the indefinite pronoun within the embedded clause is highly restricted. In all the examples given by Bužarovska and Mišeska Tomić (2008), the indefinite binds the embedded subject position. All other positions, though acceptable, yield a different interpretation. This is illustrated in (46) for \text{nikáde ‘anywhere:NCI’}.

(46)  
\(\text{Bulgarian (Diana Dimitrova, Kostadin Cholakov, p.c.)} \)

\[\text{Njama nikáde da spja.} \]
\[\text{NEG:have:IMPRS anywhere:NCI SBJ sleep:1SG} \]
\[\text{‘I won’t sleep anywhere.’} \]
\[\text{‘There is no place for me to sleep.’} \]

This suggests that the use of ordinary indefinite pronouns is highly restricted and is not an equal alternative to the use of bare wh-words.

The third counterargument comes from Hungarian. As observed by Lipták (2003), besides interrogative-like bare wh-words (see (47a)), Hungarian can also use wh-based relative pronouns in MECs. The morphological make-up of these pronouns is exactly parallel to the one in Greek or Bulgarian; in particular, they are composed of a wh-word and the prefix \(a\)-, morphologically identical to a definite determiner, see \text{ahova ‘REL:where.to’} in (47b).

\(^{12}\) Apparently, this Balkan-Slavic pattern was relatively recently acceptable in Czech, too, as discussed by Zubatý (1922:67/68), who gives the following examples:

(i)  
\(\text{a. Máš něco jíst?} \)
\[\text{have:2SG something eat:INF} \]
\[\text{‘Do you have anything (for me/for yourself) to eat.’} \]

\(\text{b. Již nemám nic dělat.} \)
\[\text{already NEG:have:1SG anything:NCI do:INF} \]
\[\text{‘I have nothing to do anymore.’} \]

Zubatý notices the difference in embedded subject reference determination, thus acknowledging that the sentences in (i) are not quite like MECs. He also speculates that they arise as a result of German influence (cf. \text{Ich habe nichts mehr zu tun}). For me, these sentences are no longer grammatical (under the intended interpretations) and I am not aware of ever hearing them.
2.2. Cross-linguistic description

(47) **Hungarian** (Lipták 2003 and p.c.)

a. Péter van kit küldjön a postára.
   ‘Peter has someone whom he could send to the post office.’

b. Nincs ahova leüljek.
   ‘I don’t have any place where I could sit.’

Though there are some differences between the two types of Hungarian MECs (see Lipták 2003 and §5.3.2), the latter type does qualify as an MEC in that it is interpreted existentially and with purely existential modality.

The last observation clearly falsifies the assumption that MECs universally make use of operators that strictly correspond to interrogatives.

**Matching effects**

As first discussed in Grimshaw (1977), wh-words in standard free relatives are typically subject to double-licensing: their case and syntactic category need to conform to the requirements of both the matrix and the embedded context. This is illustrated by the following examples, borrowed from Van Riemsdijk (2007:350). (48a) is ungrammatical because the category of the wh-phrase (adjective) does not match the embedded context and (48b) is bad due to a category mismatch in the matrix context:

(48) a. *She will make you however happy your ex married.
   b. *She will marry however happy her ex made her.

On the other hand, wh-phrases in MECs only need licensing in the embedded clause, as illustrated by (49): despite the fact that the verb *encuentra* ‘find’ requires a direct object (a DP), the wh-phrase in the MEC can be a PP.

(49) **Spanish** (Suñer 1983:365)
   Briana neg encuentra { con quien salir / de quien fiarse}.
   ‘Briana can’t find anyone to go out with.’

I know of no exception to this generalization. Matching effects will be discussed at more points in the thesis, but for a discussion relevant for the present proposal, see §6.5.3.

**Wh-movement**

In all languages, the wh-element must undergo wh-movement. As already pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, the availability of wh-movement might well be a necessary condition for a language to be able to construct MECs: there is no known wh-in situ language that has MECs. This is illustrated by the ungrammaticality of the examples in (50), where čto ‘what’ in Russian and ti ‘what’ in Greek remain in situ.
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(50) Pancheva-Izvorski (2000:41)
a. Russian
   *Mne est’ čitat’ čto.
   me:DAT be:IMPRS read:INF what
   ‘I have something to read.’
b. Greek
   *Exo na foreso ti gia to xoro.
   have:1SG SBJ wear what for the dance
   ‘I have something to wear for the dance.’

While there has been virtually no dispute about the universality of wh-movement, the nature of the wh-movement might require more investigation, at least in some languages. Recently, I pointed out that in Czech the wh-element needs not move all the way to the left periphery of the infinitival clause (Simk 2009a:189). Notice the example (51a), where the embedded copula precedes the wh-word. Yet, wh-movement is still required, as showed by the ungrammaticality of (51b).

(51) Czech
   a. Nemáš být na co pyšný.
      NEG:have:2SG be on what proud
      ‘There’s nothing you could be proud of.’
b. *Nemáš být pyšný na co.
   NEG:have:2SG be proud on what
   ‘There’s nothing you could be proud of.’

The same very short wh-movement can be applied in Slovenian. The following example shows that in copular contexts, the wh-word (češa ‘what’) can either precede or follow the copula.

(52) Slovenian (Marko Hladnik, p.c.)
   Nima ti { češa} biti { češa} žal.
   NEG:have:3SG you:DAT what be what sorry
   ‘There’s nothing you can feel sorry about.’

The range of wh-elements

There is a significant cross-linguistic (and sometimes cross-speaker) variation as for which wh-elements can be used in MECs. Let us first concentrate on non-complex wh-phrases, i.e. wh-pronouns (such as ‘what’) and wh-adverbials (such as ‘how’). All languages can use ‘what’, ‘who’, and ‘where’, including its derivatives (‘to-where’, ‘from-where’), while only some languages can use the adverbials ‘when’, ‘how’, and ‘why’. According to how liberal they are, languages can be divided roughly into five groups:

1. Languages with no restrictions: Bulgarian, Catalan, Czech, Greek, Hungarian, Romanian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Ukrainian
2. Languages which disallow ‘why’: Hebrew, Slovenian
3. *Languages which disallow ‘how’ and ‘why’*: Latvian, Russian

4. *Languages which disallow ‘when’ and ‘why’*: Polish, Portuguese

5. *Languages which disallow ‘when’, ‘how’, and ‘why’*: French

Below, I provide examples featuring ‘when’, ‘how’, and ‘why’, for each of the groups above.

(53) **Greek** (Ourania Sinopoulou, p.c.)

a. Den exo pote na pao volta.
   \[\text{NEG have:1SG when SBJ go:1SG walk}\]
   ‘I don’t have time to go for a walk.’

b. Den exo pos na jiriso sto spiti.
   \[\text{NEG how SBJ return:1SG to the house}\]
   ‘I don’t have a way to return home.’

c. Den vrisko jìati na min pao.
   \[\text{NEG find:1SG why SBJ NEG go:1SG}\]
   ‘I can’t find a reason not to go.’

(54) **Hebrew** (Caponigro 2003:84)

a. mafti’a she-yesh la matay li-kro sfarim.
   surprising that-have her:DAT when to-read books
   ‘I am surprised she has (some) time to read.’

b. ani micta’er: eyn li eyx la-asot et ze.
   I apologize not-have me:DAT how to-do ACC it
   ‘I am sorry, but I don’t have a way to do it.’

c. *eyn li lama la-asot et ze.
   NEG:have me:DAT why to-do ACC it
   ‘I don’t have any reason to do it.’

(55) **Latvian** (Andris Jankevics, p.c.)

a. ?Man nav kad iet iepirkties.
   me NEG:be when go:INF shopping
   ‘I don’t have time to clean my room.’

b. *Man nav kā iet uz skolu.
   me NEG:be how go:INF to school
   ‘There was (a/no) way to go to school.’

c. *Man nav kāpee smieties.
   me NEG:be why laugh
   ‘I had (a/no) reason to laugh.’

(56) **Portuguese** (Adriana Cardoso, p.c.)

a. *Eu não tenho quando lá ir.
   I NEG have when there go:INF
   ‘I don’t have time to go there.’
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b. Não tenho como resolver este problema.
   not have:1SG how solve:INF this problem
   ‘I do not have how to solve this problem.’

c. *Eu não tenho porque lá ir.
   I NEG have why there go:INF
   ‘I don’t have any reason to go there.’

(57) French (Thomas 2008a:6)

a. *Il y a quand partir en vacances.
   it LOC have:3SG when leave:INF on holiday
   ‘There is some time when one can go on holiday.’

b. *Il y a comment résoudre le problème.
   it LOC have:3SG how solve:INF the problem
   ‘There is some way to solve the problem.’

c. *Il y a pourquoi parler à Jean.
   it LOC have:3SG why talk:INF to Jean
   ‘There is a reason to talk to Jean.’

This grouping follows from the cross-linguistic hierarchy of wh-words in (58):
If a language disallows the use of a certain wh-word in MECs, all wh-words
that are lower on the hierarchy are disallowed, too.\textsuperscript{13}

(58) \{what, who, where\} \succ \{when, how\} \succ why

In some languages, MECs behave like negative polarity items in that they tend
to (or even must) appear in the scope negation or some other downward entail-
ing operator. The reason why I mention it at this point is that this property of
MECs always depends on the wh-word used. Thus, Plann (1980) claims that in
Spanish, ‘who’-MECs are only grammatical in negative contexts. Her examples
and judgements are in (59). On the other hand, Suñer (1983) gives the example
in (60), where a ‘who’-MEC is judged to be perfectly fine.\textsuperscript{14}

(59) Spanish (Plann 1980:123/124)

a. \{* (No)\} tenemos a quien dirigirnos.
   (NEG) have:1PL to who turn:INF.REFL
   ‘We have noone/someone to turn to.’

b. \{* (No)\} había con quien jugar.
   (NEG) have:IMPRS with who play:INF
   ‘There was noone/someone to play with.’

\textsuperscript{13}As is well-known, the very same hierarchy underlies the distribution of locality phenomena: The lower a wh-word is on the hierarchy, the less likely it is to be extractable from embedded structures. See e.g. Rizzi (1990) for a discussion.

\textsuperscript{14}Later in the same paper (p. 372), Suñer endorses Plann’s observation and even provides a tentative solution. Cintia Widmann (p.c.) also feels no polarity sensitivity with quien ‘who’. 
2.2. Cross-linguistic description

(60) **Spanish** (Suñer 1983:365)
Andrea tiene { de quien burlarse es su clase / por quien Andrea has of whom make.fun:INF in her class / for whom votar}.
votar:INF
‘Andrea has somebody who she can make fun on / who she can vote for.’

An NPI-like behavior is also reported on for Greek by Agouraki (2005), unfortunately, without any specific examples. This state of affairs was not confirmed by my informant Ourania Sinopoulou, who reports no such sensitivity. Avgustinova (2003: footnote 3) reports on the finding of Apresjan and Iomdin (1989) that the Russian wh-words kogda ‘when’, čego ‘why’, and k čemu ‘why’ only appear in their negative (ne-wh) versions. In Simík (2008b), I presented a small corpus study showing that in Czech, ‘when’-MECs, ‘how’-MECs, and ‘who:nom’-MECs are only licensed in downward entailing contexts, such as negation or antecedents of conditionals.

(61) **Czech**
      has here who:nom / how / when clean.up:INF
      ‘There is somebody / some way / some time to clean here up.’
   b. Nemá tady kdo / jak / kdy uklidit.
      NEG:has here who:nom / how / when clean.up:INF
      ‘There is no one/no time/no way to clean here up’
   c. Pokud tady má kdo / jak / kdy uklidit, tak to není
      if here has who:nom / how / when clean.up so it NEG:is
      problem
      ‘If there’s any one/any way/any time to clean here up, then it’s
      no problem’

Polarity sensitivity was reported to me by Andris Jankevics and Marko Hladnik for ‘when’-MECs in Latvian and Slovenian respectively. See the contrast below:

(62) **Latvian** (Andris Jankevics, p.c.)
      me:DAT be when clean:INF room
      ‘I have time to clean my room.’

\[15^*\]There could perhaps be some connection between IFRs [irrealis free relatives, i.e. MECs] and negative polarity items. [...] The affinity between IFRs and NPIs does not stop at the observation that IFRs are sometimes licensed in the same environments as NPIs. The interpretation of IFRs seems to bear similarities to the interpretation of NPIs.” (321/322)
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b. ?Man nav kad iepirkties.
   me:DAT NEG:be when go:INF shopping
   ‘I don’t have time to go shopping.’

The significance of polarity sensitivity for the structure of MECs will be discussed in §6.5.5.

Finally, it should be mentioned that French and Italian (and probably also Catalan) share a rather mysterious restriction on the use of direct object wh-words in MECs. This is illustrated below:

(63) French (Thomas 2008a:6/7)
    a. *Il y a quoi manger.
       it LOC have:3SG what eat:INF
       ‘There is something that one can eat.’
    b. *Il y a qui employer.
       it LOC have:3SG who hire:INF
       ‘There is someone one can hire.’

(64) Italian (Ivano Caponigro, p.c.)
    *Non avevo che / cosa / che cosa mangiare.
    NEG have:PAST.1SG what / thing / what thing eat:INF
    ‘I didn’t have anything to eat.’

While French has an interesting way around this (at least for ‘what’), namely using de quoi instead of quoi, Italian requires the use of a paraphrase, for instance by using a verb that does not take a direct object but rather a PP:

(65) French (Thomas 2008a:7/8)
    Il y a de quoi manger dans le frigo.
    it LOC have:3SG of what eat:INF in the fridge
    ‘There is something that one can eat in the fridge.’

(66) Italian (Ivano Caponigro, p.c.)
    Non avevo di che nutrirmi.
    NEG have:PAST.1SG of what feed:INF.REFL
    ‘I didn’t have anything to feed myself with.’

For all languages that I investigated so far, some sort of allergy to complex wh-phrases such as ‘which NP’, ‘whose NP’, or ‘how many/much NP’ has been observed. Some examples are provided below:

(67) a. Bulgarian (Rudin 1986:157)
    *Imam koja / lakva kniga da četa.
    have:1SG which / what.kind.of book SBJ read:1SG
    ‘I’ve got a / some kind of book to read.’
2.2. Cross-linguistic description

b. Hungarian

*Van hány órakor uszodába járni,
   is which hour swimming pool go:INF
   ‘There is some hour in which one can go to the swimming pool.’

It should be noted that the precise level of unacceptability is subject to speaker variation, as contradicting judgements have been reported. For instance, Jelena Prokić (Serbo-Croatian) and Kostadin Cholakov (Bulgarian) tend to accept ‘which NPs’ but not ‘what kind of NPs’. Contrary to these intuitions, Grosu (1994) and Izvorski (1998); Pancheva-Izvorski (2000) are convinced that D-linking is at stake and claim that only D-linked wh-phrases (i.e. ‘which NPs’ as opposed to ‘what kind of NPs’ or ‘whose NPs’) are ungrammatical:

(68) Russian (Izvorski 1998:165)

mne est' {* katoruju / kakuju / č’ju knigu čitat’}
me:DAT is which / what.kind.of / whose book read:INF
*There is some of the books I can read’
‘There is some kind of book/someone’s book I can read’

(69) Romanian

a. Grosu (1994:139)

*Maria nu găsește cu care să iasă.
   Maria NEG finds with which-one SBJ go.out
   ‘Maria didn’t find anybody to go out with.’


Nu mai avem ce locuri noi să vizităm
   NEG more have:1PL what places new SBJ visit
   ‘There are no longer any new places for us to visit.’

However, other factors must play a role as well, as ‘how much/many NPs’ are typically non-D-linked and yet sharply ungrammatical in all languages.\(^\text{16}\)

(70) a. Serbo-Croatian (Jelena Prokić, p.c.)

*Imam koliko knjiga da pročitam.
   have:1SG how.many books SBJ read:1SG
   ‘There is a number of books that I can read.’

b. Bulgarian (Kostadin Cholakov, p.c.)

*Imam kolko knigi da cheta
   have:1SG how.many books SBJ read
   ‘There are many books that I can read.’

Other forms of wh-phrase complexity, in particular those arising from pied-piping, are reported to be allowed. However, the only examples I have seen

\(^{16}\)Grosu (2003:416) points out that examples with complex wh-phrases (in particular ‘whose NPs’ in Romanian and Hebrew; see (71d)) are “sometimes accepted by informants only if a suitable context has been made sufficiently salient [...]” and goes on to illustrate that D-linking in fact increases the acceptability rather than the other way around.
come from the work of Alexander Grosu, yet, from four different languages.

(71) a. **Spanish** (Grosu 1987:53)
    María no tiene la foto de quien mirar.
    ‘Maria doesn’t have anyone at whose picture to look.’

b. **Romanian** (Grosu 1987:53)
    Maria nu are la fotografie cu cine se uite.
    ‘Maria doesn’t have the photo of whom to look.
    ‘Maria doesn’t have anyone at whose picture to look.’

c. **French** (Gross 2002:158)
    Je n’ai plus avec la femme de qui danser.
    ‘There is no longer anyone whose wife I could dance with.’

d. **Hebrew** (Grosu 2004:414)
    Eyn li im bito sel mi le-daber.
    ‘There is nobody whose daughter I can talk to.’

This relatively heavy pied-piping is certainly not universally allowed, as witnessed by the ungrammatical Czech example:

(72) **Czech**
    *Už nemám s ženou koho tančit.
    already NEG:have:1sg with wife who:GEN dance:INF
    ‘There is no longer anyone whose wife I could dance with.’

It is possible that pied-piping in MECS is allowed only if it is also allowed in embedded questions. The validity of this implicational universal needs further investigation.

**MECs with multiple wh-elements**

The availability of multiple (non-coordinated) wh-elements in MECS was first noted for Bulgarian by Rudin (1986). According to whether this is allowed or not, languages divide into two groups:

1. **Multiple wh-elements allowed**: Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Latvian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, Ukrainian
2. **Multiple wh-elements disallowed**: French, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish

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17 The Spanish example in [71a] is claimed to be ungrammatical by Cintia Widmann (p.c.).
Some examples follow:

(73)  a. **Bulgarian** [Rudin 1986:193]

Imaˇ s li s kogo kůde da otideš?

‘Do you have somewhere to go and someone to go with?’

b. **Russian** [Pancheva-Izvorski 2000:41]

Teb e est’ kuda s kem pojiť?

‘Do you have somewhere to go and someone to go with?’

c. **Latvian** (Andris Jankevics, p.c.)

Man ir ar ko par ko parunāt.

‘I could speak with someone about something.’

(74)  **Spanish** (Cintia Widmann, p.c.)

a. *Todav´ıa still tengo have:1sg with who about what speak:inf

‘I still have somebody with whom I can speak about something.’

b. *Todav´ıa still tengo have:1sg with who speak:inf about what

‘I still have somebody with whom I can speak about something.’

So far, it appears that the implicational universal suggested by [Grosu 2004:418] could hold: Multiple wh-elements in MECs are allowed only in multiple wh-fronting languages.

The following examples point to a contrast between Bulgarian and Czech multiple wh-MECs. While the former exhibit superiority effects, the latter do not. This pattern replicates the behavior of multiple wh-interrogatives in the respective languages (cf. Rudin 1988), which in turn suggests that wh-fronting in MECs is closely related to wh-fronting in interrogatives.

(75)  **Bulgarian** [Bošković 1998:8]

a. *Ima st a da ti proda.

‘There is someone who can sell you something.’

b. *Ima st a da ti proda.

‘There is someone who can sell you something.’

(76)  **Czech**

a. Tady už ti nemá kdo co prodat.

‘Here, nobody can sell you anything anymore.’
2.2.3 Grammatical mood

MECs in all languages are characterized predominantly as non-indicative. Their main verb appears in the infinitive or subjunctive form. According to the grammatical mood(s) that a language uses for its MECs, three groups can be distinguished:

1. **Infinitive**: Catalan, French, Hebrew, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Slovenian, Spanish, Ukrainian, Yiddish

2. **Subjunctive**: Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian

3. **Infinitive and subjunctive**: Czech, Hungarian, Serbo-Croatian, Romanian

The infinitive is the primary MEC mood. This is because all languages that have the infinitive in their verbal paradigm can use it in MECs, while not all languages that have the subjunctive can use it in MECs (e.g. Russian, French, Italian, and Latvian), or can do so only under very restricted conditions (Portuguese, Spanish, possibly Lithuanian). Generally, a language is in the subjunctive-only group if it possesses no infinitival morphology.

Examples are given below, (77) for group 1, (78) for group 2, and (79) for group 3:

(77) a. **French** *(Thomas 2008a:1/2)*
   (i) Il y a où dormir
      ‘There is some place where one can sleep.’
   (ii) *Il y a où { on dort / on it LOC have:3SG where sleep:INF
      one sleep:IND.3SG / one dorme}
      sleep:SBJ.3SG
      ‘There is some place where one can sleep.’

b. **Latvian** *(Andris Jankevics, p.c.)*
   (i) Man ir ar ko parumāt,
      me:DAT be:IMPRS to who speak:INF
      ‘There’s someone with whom I can speak.’
   (ii) *Man ir ar ko būt rakstīt
      me:DAT be:IMPRS with what SBJ write:PST.PTCP
      ‘I have something with which I can write.’

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18 The existence of subjunctive MECs was recognized by Grosu (1987), i.e. later than that of the infinitive.
19 Serban is claimed to prefer the infinitive and Croatian the subjunctive.
20 Portuguese and Hungarian also have inflected infinitives (see Raposo 1987; Tóth 2000 for discussion). Hungarian can use inflected infinitives in MECs, while Portuguese cannot. Arguably, this discrepancy can be explained by the (in)ability of inflected infinitives to be controlled into; see 5.4.3.
2.2. Cross-linguistic description

(78) a. **Albanian** (Grosu 2004:409)
   Nuk ka
   NEG have:IMPRS who SBJ us send:1PL merchandise
   ‘There is no one who can send us the merchandise.’

b. **Greek** (Pancheva-Izvorski 2000:26)
   Exo ti na foreso gia to xorο.
   have:1SG what SBJ wear:1SG for the dance
   ‘I have something to wear for the dance.’

(79) a. **Czech** (Ceplova 2007:33)
   Petr neměl koho { pozvat / by pozval}.
   Petr NEG:had who invite:INF / SBJ:3 invite:PST.PTCP
   ‘Petr didn’t have anyone he could invite.’

b. **Hungarian** (Grosu 2004:408)
   Nincs kinek { írmunk / írjunk}
   is:NEG who:DAT write:INF.1PL / write:SBJ.1PL
   ‘We have no one we can write to.’

Is there any reason why languages in group 3 display optionality? Or, looking from the inverse perspective, what prohibits the use of subjunctive for languages in group 1 (i.e. for those that have it)? Pancheva-Izvorski (2000:66) draws a correlation between the kind of mood used in MECs and the kind of mood used in clauses embedded under modals. It is unclear, though, what kind of modals Pancheva-Izvorski has in mind. Take Czech and Russian as examples of the two respective groups. Despite the difference in MEC-mood, both languages display the same choice of mood under modals. If we take circumstantial, deontic, and epistemic modals such as can, may, must, etc., both languages can only use the infinitive:

(80) a. **Czech**
   Můžu / musím { zůstat v posteli /* abych
   can:1SG / must:1SG stay:INF in bed / COMP.SUBJ.1SG
   zůstal v posteli}.
   stay:PST.PTCP in bed
   ‘I can / must stay in bed.’

b. **Russian** (Aysa Arylova, p.c.)
   Ja mogu / dolžna { navitst’ tjotju /* čtoby ja
   I can / have.to visit:INF aunt / COMP.SBJ I
   nавести tjotju}.
   visit:PST.PTCP aunt
   ‘I can / have to visit my aunt.’

If we take bouletic modals such as wish or want, both languages have a choice (sometimes restricted by independent grammatical factors) between infinitive and subjunctive.
Pancheva-Izvorski’s idea that the choice of mood in MECs correlates with the choice of mood under modals might be on the right track. Nevertheless, her formulation is too general and in the light of (80) and (81) appears to be incorrect.

A remark is due concerning Spanish, which I categorize as a group 1 language despite previous claims that it can use the subjunctive and therefore belongs to group 3. Consider the examples below:

(82) **Spanish** (Izvorski 1998:159)

El Coronel no tiene quien le escriba

The colonel NEG has who him write:SBJ.3SG

‘The colonel has no one who could write to him’

The problem is that the **subjunctive** is not really productive in Spanish MECs (as correctly noticed by Grosu 2004:409). This is witnessed by the following examples, which employ wh-elements in the direct and prepositional object function.

(83) **Spanish** (Cintia Widmann, p.c.)

a. *No tengo qué me ponga.

   NEG have:1SG what me wear:SBJ.1SG

   ‘I don’t have anything to wear.

b. *Esa familia no tiene de qué viva.

   that family NEG have:3SG of what live:SBJ.3SG

   ‘That family has nothing to live of.’

It turns out that (82) is grammatical only because it is the subject that takes the form of the wh-element. As is implicit in Plann’s (1980:123) discussion and as clearly demonstrated in (84), infinitival MECs prohibit the use of a wh-subject. Apparently, this is because the infinitive contains no functional structure capable of licensing the nominative.\(^{21}\)

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\(^{21}\) It is worth mentioning that no other subject than one realized by a wh-word can enforce the use of the subjunctive. Consider the following ungrammatical example, where the subject is a 2sg pro.
2.2. Cross-linguistic description

(84) *Spanish* (Cintia Widmann, p.c.)

No tengo quién me { ayude /* ayudar }.

NEG have:1SG who me:DAT help:SBJ:3SG / help:INF

‘I don’t have anyone who can/will help me.’

The subjunctive should therefore not be seen as a genuine MEC mood in Spanish, but rather as a last resort device used to accommodate wh-subjects. This observation will be further elaborated on in §5.4.3 and its consequences for the syntax and semantics of control (in MECs) will be discussed in §6.4. Let us now see that the infinitive-subjunctive switch and the condition under which it happens is not limited to Spanish. Exactly the same situation obtains in Portuguese. Notice that the subjunctive in Portuguese can only be used in (85a), i.e. in the context where the infinitive fails.

(85) *Portuguese* (Adriana Cardoso, p.c.)

a. Eu não tenho quem {* fazer / faça} isto.

I NEG have who do:INF / do:SBJ this

‘I do not anyone who could do this.’

b. Eu não tenho com quem { falar /* fale}.

I NEG have with who talk:INF / talk:SBJ

‘I don’t have anyone to talk with.’

c. Eu tenho quem { convidar /* convide } para jantar amanhã.

I have who invite:INF / invite:SBJ for dinner tomorrow

‘I have somebody who I can invite for dinner tomorrow.’

Interestingly, the very same condition, i.e. the presence of a wh-subject, leads to the use of the indicative in Hebrew. The reason why Hebrew uses the indicative in this context is that it lacks the subjunctive altogether.

(86) *Hebrew* (Grosu 2004:423)

Eyn li mi {* la’azor / še yuxal la’azor} li.

NEG to:me who help:INF / that can:FUT help:INF me

‘I have no one who will be able to help me.’

A mixed pattern conditioned by the same environment is reported for Italian, which uses the subjunctive in case the matrix verb is negated and the indicative in case it is affirmative.

(i) *Spanish* (Cintia Widmann, p.c.)

*No tengo qué leas.

NEG have:1SG what read:SBJ:2SG

‘I don’t have anything for you to read.’

22 See Landau (2004), who argues that Hebrew future tense is the spell-out of subjunctive in Hebrew.

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(87) *Italian* (Ivano Caponigro, p.c.)

a. Non ho chi si prenda */?* prende cura di me quando sono malato.

b. Ho chi si *prenda / prende* cura di me quando sono malato.

*I (don’t) have anybody/somebody who could take care of me when I am sick.*

Arguably, Lithuanian also belongs to this group of languages. While the primary mood of Lithuanian MECs is clearly the infinitive, as confirmed by Ambrazas (1997) and Kalėdaitė (2008), the subjunctive and indicative can also be used, though only to a limited degree. Ambrazas says that these forms have “a dialectal colouring” (728) and Kalėdaitė says that the “grammatical form is restricted to the present active participle, subjunctive mood, or present indicative form of the verb [...].” (132) Interestingly enough, five out of six examples provided by these sources exhibit a nominative wh-word in the subject position. Two examples are given below:

(88) *Lithuanian* (Kalėdaitė 2008:131)

a. Ambrazas (1997:728)

Nėra ką ėri.

NEG:is what does (plough)

‘There is no one to do the ploughing.’

b. Kalėdaitė (2008:132)

Aš kojojau, kraują liejau, o dabar nėra kam mane apginti?

I fought blood:ACC shed and now NEG:be who:DAT me:ACC protect:

‘I fought, I shed my blood and now there is no one to protect me?’

Lithuanian is also interesting because it does not conform to the idea that subjunctive/indicative steps in as a last-resort strategy to license wh-subjects. The reason is that Lithuanian can independently express subjects of infinitives by marking them dative:

(89) *Lithuanian* (Kalėdaitė 2008:131)

Aš kovojau, kraują liejau, o dabar nėra kam mane

I fought blood:ACC shed and now NEG:be who:DAT me:ACC

‘I fought, I shed my blood and now there is no one to protect me?’
I have found a number of counterexamples to the generalization that the subjunctive and indicative in MECs (in infinitive-only languages) can only appear in contexts of wh-subjects/nominatives. They come from Lithuanian, Yiddish, and Catalan:

(90) a. Lithuanian (Ambražas 1997:728)
   Nėrą kąs dārą su tōkiu
   NEG:is what:ACC do:ACT.PRESPART.NEUT with such
   karaliumi.
   king:INSTR.SG
   ‘There is nothing one can do with such a king.’

b. Yiddish (Caponigro 2001:53)
   Ihkh hob nit mit vemen ikh kan reden az ikh bin
   I have NEG with who:DAT I can speak when I am
   troyerik.
   sad
   ‘I don’t have anybody to talk to when I’m sad.’

c. Catalan (Jordi Fortuny, p.c.)
   Tinc en qui puc confiar.
   have:1SG in who:1SG trust:INF
   ‘I don’t have anybody who I can trust.’

Notice that one of the conditions on indicative MECs, namely that it be modal/non-episodic, is still satisfied in (90). Due to the lack of informants, I have not been able to verify the acceptability of these examples.

2.2.4 Syntactic transparency

MECs are syntactically transparent structures: In almost all languages MECs allow for A-bar extraction. I give some examples below.

(91) a. Bulgarian (Pancheva-Izvorski 2006:53)
   Kāde imas s kogo da ošteš?
   where have:2SG with who SBJ go:2SG
   ‘Where is the place such that you have someone to go with to that place?’

b. Romanian (Grosu and Landman 1998:157)
   Despre ce (mi) ai [cu cine să vorbeşti t]?
   about what (NEG) have:2 with whom SBJ talk
   ‘What is such that you have no one with whom to discuss it?’
c. **Portuguese** (Peres and Móia 1995, Adriana Cardoso, p.c.)
   Este é um dos assuntos que a Ana não tem com quem this is one of the subjects that the Ana NEG has with whom discuss:INF
   ‘This is one of the subjects that Ana does not have with whom to talk’

d. **Hebrew** (Grosu 2004:413)
   Al ma eyn lexa im mi ledaber?
   on what is:NEG to:you with who talk:INF
   ‘What is such that you have no one with whom to talk about it?’

e. **Latvian** (Andris Jankevics, p.c.)
   Ar Jāni tev ir par ko parumiāt(?)
   with Janis you be about what speak:INF
   lit. ‘With Janis there is nothing about which I can speak with (him).’

The only exception that I found so far is Italian:

(92) **Italian** (Ivano Caponigro, p.c.)
   *Chi non avevi dove far dormire?
   who NEG have:PAST:2SG where let:INF sleep
   ‘Who is such that you don’t have a place where you could let him sleep.’

It is often assumed that the level of transparency for extraction matches the one of embedded wh-questions (Grosu 1994 Grosu and Landman 1998 Izvorski 1998 Pancheva-Izvorski 2000). However, some report the transparency of MECs to be intuitively higher than in corresponding wh-questions. Consider the following contrasts:

(93) **Greek** (Ourania Sinopoulou, p.c.)
   a. Se pjon den exis ti na dosis?
      to whom:ACC NEG have:2SG what:ACC SB:J give:2SG
      ‘Who don’t you have what to give to?’
   b. ?Se pjon anarotiese ti na dosis?
      to whom:ACC wonder:2SG what:ACC SB:J give:2SG
      ‘To whom do you wonder what to give?’

(94) **Czech** (Simkák 2008a:123)
   a. Komu nemáš co dát?
      who:DAT NEG:have:2SG what:ACC give:INF
      ‘Who is such that you can’t give anything to him.’
   b. *Komu se ptal co dát?
      who:DAT REF:asked:what:ACC give:INF
      ‘Who did he ask what to give?’
2.2. Cross-linguistic description

Furthermore, in some languages the transparency of MECs clearly exceeds the one of wh-questions, as even clitic climbing is allowed—something completely impossible for wh-questions.\footnote{See \cite{Pancheva-Izvorski2006} for the discussion of a well-known Italian example of apparent clitic climbing out of infinitival wh-questions.} This holds for Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, and Czech MECs, even though only for their infinitival versions, the subjunctive being opaque. Observe the following two examples, where the clitics (\textit{ga} ‘him’ and \textit{ho} ‘him’) are arguments of the embedded predicates but appear in the matrix clause in case the MEC is infinitival.

(95) a. Serbo-Croatian (\cite{Pancheva-Izvorski2006}, Jelena Prokić, p.c.)
\[ \text{Nemam ga kome dati} /* \text{kome da dam}. } \]
\[ \text{NEG:have:1SG it:CL whom give:INF / whom SBJ give:1SG} \]
\[ \text{‘I have no one to give it to.’} \]

b. Czech \cite{Ceplova2007}
\[ \text{Petr ho má kam pozvat} /* \text{kam by Petr him:CL has where invite:INF / where SBJ:3 pozval}.} \]
\[ \text{invite:PST.PTCP} \]
\[ \text{‘Petr has a place where he could invite him.’} \]

Yet, not all languages that allow for clitic climbing also allow it in MECs:

(96) Portuguese (Adriana Cardoso, p.c.)

a. Tenho [ com que me entreter].
\[ \text{have:1SG with what myself:CL amuse:INF} \]

b. *Tenho-me [ com que entreter].
\[ \text{have:1SG-myself:CL with what amuse:INF} \]
\[ \text{‘I have with what to amuse myself.’} \]

Finally, we should note that the transparency may depend on the matrix verb. While Serbo-Croatian and Spanish MECs generally allow for A-bar extraction, embedding them under the verb ‘send’ (\textit{poslao} and \textit{mandaste} respectively) makes them opaque. This is illustrated by the ungrammaticality of wh-extraction of \textit{ˇsta} ‘what’ in \textit{(97b)} and \textit{qué} ‘what’ in \textit{(98b)}.

(97) Serbo-Croatian (Jelena Prokić, p.c.)

a. Na ovu zabavu nisam odabrao [ koga da pozovem].
\[ \text{for that party NEG:be:1SG chose who SBJ invite:1SG} \]
\[ \text{‘I didn’t choose anyone who I could invite for that party.’} \]

\[ \text{‘What is the thing that you send him such that he can repair something with that thing.’} \]
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(98) *Spanish* Cintia Widmann (p.c.)

a. Con quién ya no tenés [de qué hablar]? with whom already NEG have:2SG of what speak:INF
   ‘Who is such that you no longer have anything to speak about with that person?’

b. *Qué le mandaste [con qué limpiar]?* what him:DAT sent:2SG with what clean:INF
   ‘What is such that you sent him something with which you can clean that?’

2.2.5 Sluicing

Sluicing is a term for an IP-ellipsis which is fed by wh-movement or focus movement (see e.g. [Merchant 2001] van Craenenbroeck and Lipták 2006). That sluicing (or its variants, such as sprouting) is possible in MECs was first observed by [Rudin 1986]:

(99) *Bulgarian* [Rudin 1986:191]

a. Njama zašto. NEG:have:IMPRS why
   ‘There’s no reason (for what X to happen).’

b. Šte ima koj. will have:IMPRS who
   ‘There will be someone (to do it).’

The absolute majority of investigated languages allow for sluicing in MECs. The outlier is, once again, Italian. Some examples are provided below.

(100) a. *Serbo-Croatian* (Jelena Prokić, p.c.)
   Želela bih da idem na zabavu, ali nemam s wanted be:1SG SBJ go:1SG to party but NEG:have:1SG with kim.
   who
   ‘I wanted to go to the party but there was nobody to go with.’

b. *Czech*
   Chtěl jsem tam jít, ale nebylo kdy. wanted PAST.1SG there go but NEG:be:IMPRS when
   ‘I wanted to go there but there was no time.’

c. *Latvian* (Andris Jankevics, p.c.)
   Es gribēju ištūrīt istabu, bet es neatradu ar ko.
   I wanted clean:INF room but I NEG:found with what
   ‘I wanted to clean the room but I didn’t find anything to clean it with.’
2.2. Cross-linguistic description

(101) **Italian** (Ivano Caponigro, p.c.)

*Volevo andare al cinema con qualcuno ma non {avevo / c’era} con chi.

‘I wanted to go to the movies with somebody but I didn’t have / there wasn’t anybody (I could go with).’

Finally, it should be noted that in most languages, the availability of sluicing disappears under certain predicates, such as ‘send’.

(102) a. **Bulgarian** (Kostadin Cholakov, p.c.)

*Toj iskaše da izčisti kolata, no az ne mu izpratih s

he wanted to clean car the but I NEG him sent with kakvo
what

‘He wanted to clean the car but I didn’t send him anything (with which he could do it).’

b. **Serbo-Croatian** (Jelena Prokić, p.c.)

*Hteo je da očisti auto ali mu nisam
wanted be:3SG SBJ clean:3SG car but him:DAT NEG:be:1SG
poslala čime.
sent what:INST

‘He wanted to clean the car but I didn’t send him anything (with which he could do it).’

2.2.6 Modality

MECs are always modal. Traditionally, two parameters of modality are distinguished [Kratzer 1981]: the modal force and the modal flavor. I discuss both in turn.

**Modal force**

As first explicitly pointed out by [Izvorski 1998:160], the modality in MECs invariably has an existential force, i.e. it expresses possibility rather than necessity:

(103) **Czech**

Mám kam jít.

‘There is a place where I can go’

*’There is a place where I am supposed to / have to go.’

The fact that this property is a MEC universal is indirectly confirmed by the numerous paraphrases of MECs given in various papers.

The only apparent exception that I know of comes from Czech:
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Czech (Zubaty 1922:67)
Máš co dělat, chceš-li přijít v čas.
have:2SG what do:INF want:2SG-COND come:INF in time
‘There’s a lot you have to do if you want to come in time.’

*There’s something you can do if you want to come in time.’

Even though this MEC is perfectly grammatical, it is highly restricted in range and productivity. No other wh-words, for instance, seem to support an analogous deontic necessity reading:

Czech #Máš kam jít, chceš-li to všem
where.to go:INF want:2SG-COND it:ACC everybody:DAT
predlat.
give:INF

*‘There are (a lot of) places where you have to go if you want to hand it over to everybody.’

Notice also that the plain existential nature of MECs is compromised in this type of examples: as suggested by the English paraphrase, there is a clear amount reading, which can in fact be explicitly marked by an amount adverbial such as dost ‘a lot/enough’:

Czech
Máš dost co dělat, chceš-li přijít včas.
have:2SG a.lot what do:INF want:2SG-COND come:INF in time
‘There’s a lot you have to do if you want to come in time.’

I conclude that this is a slightly different type of construction (see §6.5.2 for a brief discussion) and does not directly affect the existential-only generalization about MEC modality.

Modal flavor

The issue of modal flavor is slightly more intricate. While all scholars agree on the point that the modality expressed by MECs is of the root-type (i.e. it is surely not epistemic), the exact nature of it has been a matter of controversy. Izvorski (1998:160) says the modal in MECs is “restricted by a bouletic accessibility relation”. Pancheva-Izvorski (2000:27/28) says that “we are dealing with [...] a circumstantial accessibility relation.” Grosu (2004:406) claims that besides “possibility”, MECs can also express “ability”. Thomas (2008a:1), similarly to many others, points out that the modality has a flavor of “availability”, which he dubs in more technical but also less specific terms as “existential circumstantial modality”.

My investigation so far sides with Pancheva-Izvorski (2000) and Thomas (2008a), who claim that MECs express modality of circumstantial possibility. This is apparent from the translations/paraphrases provided by native speak-
To the best of my knowledge, the claims that MECs can express bouletic (Izvorski 1998) or ability (Grosu 2004) modality have not been supported by evidence. Furthermore, the examples below suggest that these types of modality are indeed ruled out.

(107) **Czech**
   a. #Přišel jsem, protože ti mám co říct.
      came be:1SG because you:DAT have:1SG what tell:INF
      ‘I came because I want/with/have to tell you something.’
   b. #Nemáme proti tomu viru co udělat.
      NEG:have:1PL against that virus what do:INF
      ‘There is nothing we can (are able to) do against that virus.’

The only reading that the above MECs can receive are pragmatically odd (due to the context) circumstantial possibility readings: ‘I came because it is possible for me to tell you something’ for (107a) and ‘There is nothing such that it is possible that we do it’ for (107b). The issue of modal flavor is discussed in §4.1.2.

Different types of modality might occasionally be attested if a language allows the use of indicative (see §2.2.3). In that case, MECs can be interpreted generically or habitually:

(108) **Italian** (Caponigro 2003:94)
   C’è chi sà dire solo no.
   there.is who can:3SG say only no
   ‘There are people who say no all the time.’

However, this type of MEC is not only cross-linguistically rare, but also extremely limited in productivity (it depends on the use of the wh-word in the subject position) and therefore should not be considered in a general account of MECs.

### 2.2.7 Quantification and scope

Two issues are of particular interest here: the quantificational force and scope. I discuss them in turn.

#### Quantificational force

MECs have the semantics of existentially construed indefinites. As pointed out by Caponigro (2004), the arguably indefinite wh-word contained in the MEC is not subject to quantificational variability effects (cf. Bermai 1991). Consider the following example, which demonstrates that the MEC (or the wh-word in it) must preserve its existential character even when “lured” by the adverbial universal quantifier.
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(109) **Czech**

Vždycky mám s kým mluvit.
always have:1SG with who talk:INF

‘All situations/times are such that I have somebody to speak with.’

*‘All individuals that I can speak with are such that I have them.’

The existential-only generalization was challenged on the grounds of Hungarian MECs with multiple wh-words by Lipták (2000, 2003) and Surányi (2005). They claim that higher wh-words can have a universal force.

(110) **Hungarian**

Végre Jánosnak van kinek mit adnia
finally Janos:DAT be:3SG who:DAT what:ACC give:INF.3SG

‘Finally John has something to give to everyone’

‘John has things to give to people’

However, the facts are not very convincing. As noted by Lipták (2000), if an MEC like the one above is negated, the higher wh-word must apparently be construed as a wide-scope universal:

(111) **Hungarian**

Nincs kinek mit adnom.
be:NEG who:DAT what:ACC give:INF.1SG

a. ‘Everyone of them is such that there is nothing I could give it to them.’

b. *‘It is not the case that I could give everybody something.’

While it is possible to assume (as Lipták does) that the wh-word is a true universal, which obligatorily scopes high (i.e. above the matrix negation), it is also possible that the wh-word is construed as a narrow scope existential, giving rise to the truth conditions which are equivalent to (111a), i.e. ‘it is not the case that I could give something to somebody’. I will discuss this issue in more detail in §6.3.

**Quantificational scope**

Plann (1980) was probably the first to point out that MECs typically scope very low. Pancheva-Izvorski (2000:45/46) confirms this claim and demonstrates that MECs cannot outscope matrix negation (112a), DP quantifiers (112b), intensional verbs (112c), or modals (112d).

(112) a. **Scope of negation** (Serbo-Croatian)

Jovan nema čto čitati.
Jovan NEG:have:3SG what read:INF

‘Jovan doesn’t have anything to read.’

*‘There is something such that Jovan cannot read it.’
b. **Scope of quantifiers** (**Bulgarian**)

Vseki ima kakvo da čete.

everyone has what SBJ read:3SG

‘For everyone there is something that they can read.’

*‘There is something particular that everyone can read.’

c. **Scope of attitude predicates** (**Bulgarian**)

Ana vjarva da Ivan ima kakvo da čete.

Ana believe:3SG that Ivan have:3SG what SBJ read:3SG

‘Ana believes that there is something that John can read.’

*‘There is something such that Ana believes that John can read it.’

d. **Scope of modals** (**Bulgarian**)

Marija može da ima kakvo da čete.

Marija may SBJ have:3SG what SBJ read:3SG

‘It is possible that there is something that Marija can read.’

*‘There is something such that it is possible that Marija can read it.’

In Šimík (2008a) I demonstrated that the MEC scopes even below MEC-internal quantifiers. (113a) and (113b) differ only in word order, which by the way has no impact on the semantics: in both cases the universal scopes over the MEC. Incidentally, it is the version that reflects the semantic scope (113a) that happens to be more acceptable.

(113)  

**Czech**

a. Mám každému studentovi co říct.

have:1SG every student:DAT what tell

b. ?Mám co říct každému studentovi.

have:1SG what say:INF every student:DAT

‘For every student there is something I can tell that student.’

*‘There is something such that I can tell it to every student.’

However, as illustrated by the following example, this scopal property is not a universal.

(114)  

**Portuguese** (Adriana Cardoso, p.c.)

Eu tenho o que dizer a todos os estudantes.

I have the that say:INF to every the students

‘There is some particular thing that I can tell to every student.’

‘For every student there is something that I can tell that student.’

The last issue possibly related to scope was recently raised in Šimík (2009a:197). I showed that MECs are incapable of introducing referents that could be picked up in subsequent discourse. Thus, (115b) is not a natural continuation of (115a),

25My original example was somewhat clumsy due to the unnecessary use of matrix negation. The example [113] is a clearer exposition of the same point.
arguably because to ‘it’ has no discourse referent to pick up.26

(115) Czech

a. Mám [čím napsat ten dopis].
   have:1SG what:INSTR write:INF that letter
   ‘I have something to write the letter with.’

b. #Tady to, je.
   here it is
   ‘Here it is.’

One possible explanation of this inability to introduce discourse referents dwells in the idea that the quantifier over individuals scopes below the modal quantifier. Thus, the referent is introduced only within a non-actual possible world and cannot be picked up by a pronoun which is evaluated with respect to a different (e.g. the actual) world.

The issue of discourse referent introduction is subject to language and also speaker variation. The speakers who have agreed with my judgement, i.e. that discourse referent introduction does not take place, are Adriana Cardoso (Portuguese) and Ivano Caponigro (Italian). Opposite judgements are reported by Cintia Widmann (Spanish) and Maria Aloni (Italian). Consider the following example from Italian:

(116) Italian

A: Com’era la festa ieri?
   how.was the party yesterday
   ‘How was the party yesterday?’

B: Non male. Almeno c’era / avevo [MEC con chi parlare].
   not bad at.least was:3SG / had:1SG with who talk:INF
   ‘At least I had somebody to speak with.’
   pro, Si chiama Luca. (I. Caponigro # ; M. Aloni OK)
   he refl call Luca
   ‘His name is Luca.’

2.2.8 Referential dependency of the MEC-internal subject

In many MECs, the subject position is occupied by an empty category. For some languages, this is the only option available, irrespective of whether the mood is infinitive or subjunctive (e.g. Czech or Hungarian), others can fill it with an overt subject, esp. when it is supported by the subjunctive mood (e.g. Serbo-Croatian):

26The judgement is relatively subtle. Due to the lack of any other referent in the discourse, the MEC will most likely participate in establishing the referent of the pronominal, even though by some sort of coercion rather than a conventional discourse anaphoric relation.
2.3 Universals and emerging typologies

In Chapter 1, I provided the following heuristic definition of MECs.

**Defining properties (D)**

**D1** MECs make use of fronted wh-words.

**D2** MECs are interpreted as existential quantifiers.

**D3** MECs express modality.
The primary concern of this chapter was to explore how exactly these three properties are instantiated in particular languages. We saw that there is a good deal of variation. Concerning D1, there are differences in the particular manner of wh-fronting and also in the morphological shape of the wh-word. Concerning D2, there are differences in the particular set of predicates which can provide the desired existential force. Concerning D3, there are differences in the particular mood used to express the modality and to a very limited extent also in the type of modality used.

2.3.1 List of universals, tendencies, and implications

Though the empirical base of MECs has expanded significantly, there are still many languages whose MECs are to be described. The set of (absolute or implicational) universals and tendencies that I put forth below should therefore be viewed as strong but falsifiable hypotheses about the nature of MECs. The strength of the hypotheses is indicated by the formula \([x/y; L]\), showing how many languages it is supported by \((x)\), how many languages constitute counterexamples \((y)\), and which languages constitute counterexamples \((L)\). I also provide references to the literature in which that particular universal or tendency has been stated for the first time or at least most clearly.

Absolute universals (U)

There are four absolute universals, all of which will be explained in Chapter 6. Universals U1 and U2 are closer specifications of the defining property D2. They will be explained by locating the existential quantifier in the lexical representation of MEC-embedding predicates. Universal U3 is a specification of the defining property D3. It will be explained by the assumption that all MECs are ultimately selected by one particular predicate, which is responsible for introducing the observed type of modality. Universal U4 will be explained by the assumption that MECs do not occupy the canonical internal argument position of their selecting predicates.

U1 MECs appear in the internal argument position of a subset of verbs whose lexical meaning supports an existential closure of their object. MECs appear nowhere else. \([16/0]\) (Grosu 2004)

U2 MECs take narrow scope with respect to other scope-taking elements. \([16/0]\) (Pancheva-Izvorski 2000)

U3 MECs’ modality is one of circumstantial possibility. \([16/0]\) (Pancheva-Izvorski 2000; Thomas 2008a)

U4 MECs display no matching effects. \([16/0]\) (esp. Suñer 1983)

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27 I disregard indicatives and the corresponding generic/habitual modality because of their non-productivity.
2.3. Universals and emerging typologies

General tendencies (T)
There are five cross-linguistic tendencies, all of which are listed below. Tendencies T1 and T2 will not be directly addressed. The former is left for future research and the latter is in need of further empirical clarification. Tendency T3 will be discussed at various point of Chapter 5 (§5.1, §5.2, §5.3.2, and §5.3.3). Tendency T4 will be addressed in §5.5. Tendency T5 will be addressed esp. in §6.4.

**T1** MECs tend to use bare (interrogative) wh-words. [16/1; Hungarian] (e.g. Hirschbühler 1978)

**T2** MECs tend to use wh-pronouns (as opposed to complex wh-phrases). [16/2; speaker variation]

**T3** MECs tend to be as syntactically transparent as corresponding interrogatives (A-bar extraction), or more (clitic climbing). [15/1; Italian] (e.g. Grosu and Landman 1998)

**T4** MECs tend to allow sluicing. [15/1; Italian] (Rudin 1986)

**T5** MECs tend to have a subject (typically empty) that is referentially identical to a matrix argument (if there is one). [10/3; Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian, Greek] (Pancheva-Izvorski 2000)

Implicational universals (I)
There are four implicational universals. Implication I1 will be explained by the assumption that category II predicates literally “contain” a category I predicate (see §4.4). The two-way implication I2 will be explained by the assumption that only moved wh-words correspond to lambda-abstractors (see §6.3). Implications I3 and I4 are left for future research.

**I1** If a language allows MECs to be embedded under dynamic predicates, it allows MECs to be embedded under stative predicates. [16/0] (Grosu 2004)

**I2** If a language has multiple wh-fronting, it has multiple wh-MECs. [16/0] (Grosu 2004)

**I3** If a language has the infinitive mood, it uses it in its MECs. Otherwise, it uses the subjunctive (or its functional equivalent). [16/0]

**I4** If a language disallows its MECs to utilize a wh-word on a particular point in the hierarchy (120), it disallows any wh-word that appears lower on the hierarchy. [16/0]

(120) \{what, who, where\} \supset \{when, how\} \supset why
2.3.2 Emerging typologies

While the absolute universals provide the solid ground on which every MEC in every language is built, the general tendencies and implicational universals correspond to parameters which give rise to the formation of natural classes. These class can in turn be formulated in terms of MEC or language typologies. Let me briefly present some of the emergent types, especially those that will be further discussed in this thesis.

**Transparency**  
The level of syntactic transparency (T3) divides MECs into three major groups. The most common MECs are interrogative-like MECs (e.g. Spanish), whose transparency roughly matches the one of interrogatives. Less common are two other types of MECs—restructuring MECs (e.g. Czech), which are more transparent than interrogatives, and relative-like MECs (e.g. Hungarian) which are less transparent than interrogatives. The non-transparency of relative-like interrogatives can further be accompanied by the use of relative-like wh-pronouns (T1) and the unavailability of sluicing (T4). It will turn out that this typology is a typology of MEC types, rather than a typology of languages, since one language can have more types of MECs.

**Embedded subject identification**  
The embedded subject identification parameter (T5) gives rise to a three-way distinction, too. The basic division has already been mentioned: the embedded subject either is or is not obligatorily identified (e.g. Portuguese vs. Serbo-Croatian). Within the former, there are two subgroups: control MECs, where the subject is identified by obligatory control (e.g. Spanish) and raising MECs, where the subject is identified by raising (e.g. Slovenian). As in the typology based on transparency, also this one identifies types of MECs rather than types of languages. It should also be mentioned that there are some interesting correlations between this typology and the previous one; in particular, raising MECs are always restructuring MECs. (Interestingly, however, the distinction between obligatory and non-obligatory control MECs does not correlate with interrogative-like and relative-like MECs, as one would suspect.)

**Embedding predicates**  
The embeddability implication (I1) gives rise to two basic types of MEC languages: languages that only allow the embedding of MECs under stative predicates such as ‘be’ (e.g. Czech) and languages that also allow for dynamic predicates such as ‘buy’ (e.g. French). Within the latter type, one could distinguish a high number of further types, depending on exactly which predicates can embed MECs. This typology does not seem to correlate with any other parameter, suggesting that the embeddability is a rather idiosyncratic factor.

**Multiple wh-MECs**  
The issue of the availability of multiple wh-words in a single MEC (I2) gives rise to two basic types: languages which allow multiple wh-MECs (e.g. Romanian) and languages that do not (e.g. Catalan). As already suggested, this typology is reducible to a broader one, namely the typology of multiple wh-fronting. Languages falling into the first type correspond to
2.4 Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to deepen, broaden, and organize our knowledge of the empirical properties of MECs. The presentation in §2.1 and especially §2.2 has culminated in the postulation of a number of MEC universals, tendencies, and implications in §2.3. A number of previously made claims about the possible universality of certain phenomena have materialized in absolute or implicational universals (e.g., the dependency of multiple wh-MECs on multiple wh-fronting). Others had to be weakened to tendencies (e.g., the use of bare wh-words).

In the rest of the thesis, I abandon the breadth of description in favor of a greater depth, giving way to a detailed analysis. I will devote more attention to particular phenomena in languages which represent individual MEC/language types and carefully translate the empirical properties and distinctions to the level of syntax and semantics. The ultimate goal is to reduce the observed variation to some independent properties of particular languages.