The Mood of Modal Existential Constructions in Spanish

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Gustavo Guajardo

0. Introduction

This paper examines a type of non-interrogative wh-construction that occurs as the complement of existential predicates and is interpreted as a narrow-scope indefinite (Caponigro 2003). These constructions have been studied by various researchers and they have all given them different names. For example, existential free relatives (Caponigro 2004), wh-non-indicative constructions (Izvorski 1998), non-specific free relatives (Ramos-Santacruz 1994) and modal existential constructions (Grosu 2004). For the sake of consistency, I will adopt the term modal existential constructions (henceforth MECs) and use it throughout the paper.

In this paper, I look at the mood of the verb inside the MEC and provide novel data that call into question previous generalizations and analyses regarding the possible moods that can appear in these constructions. Specifically, I present data from Spanish that show that (i) the generalization that MECs only contain subjunctives or infinitivals does not hold in Spanish, (ii) the mood alternation in MECs can be derived from independent factors in the grammar and (iii) the typology of MEC languages needs to be revised to include a language like Spanish, which allows all moods to appear in MECs.

The paper is organized as follows: §1 presents an overview of MECs and provides a great deal of data from Spanish MECs. §2 discusses the mood that verbs take inside a MEC cross-linguistically. In §3, I look at mood in Spanish MECs in relation to different factors that determine the choice of mood both in MECs and in the grammar of Spanish in general. §4 is an overview of the definiteness effect, which will become crucial to support the claim that MECs are possible with indicatives. In §5 I discuss the meaning of the Spanish subjunctive and offer an explanation of why the indicative can surface in Spanish MECs. In §6 I discuss the implications of the findings in this paper with regard to linguistic theory and I conclude with §7 with a conclusion and a summary.

1. Modal Existential Constructions (MECs)

A modal existential construction (MEC) is a non-interrogative wh-construction that occurs as the complement of an existential predicate (Caponigro 2003).

1. No   tengo   [**qué** decir][1].
   Not   have.1S   **what** say.INF
   "I don't have anything to say" (lit: "I don't have what to say")

MECs are found in most European languages (Romance, Baltic, Slavic , Albanian, Greek, Finno-Ugric, and Basque), in Semitic languages (Caponigro 2003, 2004, Grosu 2004) and they have recently been found in Mixtec as well (Caponigro et al 2013). In the European family, the exception is the Germanic family, where only Yiddish and New York English have been claimed to have MECs (Caponigro 2003, Grosu 2004).

Cross-linguistically, there is a great deal of variation regarding which wh-words can be used in MECs. Languages cluster into five different groups depending on which wh-element they allow in MECs: (i) languages with no restrictions whatsoever in which all wh-elements can participate in MECs (e.g., Catalan, Greek, Hungarian), (ii) languages that do not allow "why" (e.g., Hebrew, Slovenian), (iii) languages that do not allow "how" and " why" (e.g., Russian), (iv) languages that disallow "when" and "why" (e.g., Portuguese), (v) languages that disallow "when", "how", and "why" (French) (Šimík 2011)[2]. Spanish belongs to group (i), the most

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[1] Glosses: 1: first person, 2: second person, 3: third person, PL: plural, S: singular, SUBJ: subjunctive, IND: indicative, INF: infinitive, reflx: reflexive pronoun, masc: masculine, fem: feminine, neut: neuter gender, CLT: clitic, recip: reciprocal.
[2] Italian also disallows "when", "how" and "why" (Caponigro p.c)

liberal group, allowing all wh-words to ocurr in MECs. The following data from Spanish show MECs with all wh-elements available[3].

2. En   Bahía tengo [con **quién** salir].   (who)
   In   Bahia I have with **who**   go.out.INF
   "In Bahia I have somebody/people to go out with"

3. Para   mi   primer   trabajo   ya   tengo   (what)
   For   my   first   paper   already   have.1S

   sobre **qué** escribir].
   about **what** write.INF
   "I already have something to write about for my first paper".

4. Compré   muchas   cosas, y   no   tengo **dónde**   (where)
   I bought   many   things and not   I.have **where**

   ponerlas].
   put.INF.them
   "I bought many things and now I don't have anywhere to put them"

5. Compró   un   auto nuevo y   ahora no   tiene   (how)
   bought.3S   a   car   new   and now   not   have.3S
   cómo   pagarlo].
   how   pay.INF.it
   "He bought a new car and now he doesn't have a way to pay for it".

6. Yo   no   dije   que lo   iba   a   hacer, (why)
   I   not   said.1S   that it   went.1S   to   do.INF

   así   que   no   tengo   [**por qué**   hacerlo].
   so   that not   have.1S   **why**   do.INF.it
   "I didn't say I was going to do it so there's no reason why I should do it"

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[3] Wh-words in Spanish may be written with an accent mark or not, depending on the construction and type of clause in which they occur. In MECs, they always receive an accent mark, except for *quien* "who", which bears an accent mark in an infinitival MEC but no accent mark in a finite MEC.

7. Quería   viajar   pero no   tengo   [**cuándo**   (when**)**
   wanted.1S   travel.INF but   not   have.1S   **when**

   hacerlo].
   do.INF.it
   "I wanted to start yoga but I don't have any time to do it"

Note that, although MECs and free relatives look like very similar constructions, they are different. Unlike MECs, free relatives in Spanish cannot take "why" (8), and the wh-word for "what" is *que* in MECs (9a) but *lo que* in free relatives (9b).

8. *Leo   fue   a   Madrid   [**por qué**   Mario fue]
   Leo   went.3S   to   Madrid   **why**   Mario went.3S
   Intended reading: "Leo went to Madrid for the same reason that Mario went"

9. a. No   tengo   [**qué/*lo**   **que**   comer].
      not   have.1S   **what/the.neut**   **that**   eat.INF
   "I don't have anything to eat"

   b. Quiero   [***qué/lo**   **que**   ella   tiene]
      want.1S   **what the.neut** **that** she   have.3S
   "I want what she has"

Although the examples in (2-7) all contain the same predicate, i.e., "have", MECs can occur under other predicates. (Grosu 2004) identifies two major classes of predicates under which MECs can be embedded. These are (i) predicates that denote assertion of existence (e.g., "be" and "have" types) and (ii) predicates that denote coming into being, view or availability and/or its causation (e.g., "choose", "look for", "find", "send", "obtain" and "arrive"). From now on, I will refer to these predicates as predicates of type (i) and predicates of type (ii), respectively[4].

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[4] I discuss the types of predicates and their classification in more detail in section 4. But the motivation behind choosing Grosu's classification over some other classification of predicates like Vendler's is that the number of predicates that can

10. Está   buscando   [con **quién** dejar   a   los   chicos]
    is   seeking   with **who** leave.INF   to   the.PL kids
    "He's looking for someone to leave the children with".

11. Finalmente encontró   [de **qué**   hablar.]
    finally   found.3S.   of **what**   talk.INF
    Finally, he found something to talk about.

12. Hay   [en **dónde**   refugiarse   si   se
    there's   in **where**   shelter.INF   if   reflx.3S
    larga   a   llover].
    start.3S   to   rain.INF
    "There's a place where we can shelter should it rain".

13. Consiguieron   [**dónde**   mandar   a   los   chicos
    obtained.3PL   **where**   send.INF   to   the.PL kids

    en   el   verano]
    in   the   summer
    "They managed to find a place where to send the children in the summer"

It is not the case that all these predicates occur with MECs in all the languages that have been found to possess MECs. Cross-linguistically, it looks like all languages allow predicates of type (i) to take MECs as complements, whereas only a subset of these languages allow predicates of type (ii) to take MECs as their complement. The data in (10-13) show that Spanish is one of the languages that allow MECs with a greater variety of predicates besides the predicate *tener* "have".

A relevant question is whether these constructions are not merely embedded interrogatives of the form "I don't understand [what to do]", where the predicate

embed MECs is highly restricted and it is pretty much limited to those listed in the main text. Grosu's classification highlights the fact that these predicates need to possess an existential component, be it in the simple form of "be"-types or in those where causation of coming into being or availability are involved. Vendler's classification does not capture this generalization and would make the wrong prediction because it is not true that accomplishments can embed MECs; only a very small number of them actually can.

"understand" takes as its complement the non-finite wh-clause "what to do". The surface form between MECs and embedded interrogatives is indeed very similar. Both constructions contain a wh-element in the embedded clause and the verb is found in the infinitive just as in MECs. (e.g., data in (10-13)). However, they differ in the types of wh-elements that can occur in them. In embedded interrogatives, we find complex wh-phrases, where the wh-phrase has a NP complement such as "which boy" (15, 17), but these are not allowed to occur in MECs (14, 16).

14. *No   encuentro   [**qué** amigos   sepan   surfear].
    not   find.1S   **what** friends   know.3PL.SUBJ   surf.INF
    ("I can't find which friends know how to swim")

15. No   sé   [**qué**   amigos   saben   surfear].
    not   know.1S **what**   friends   know.3PL.IND   surf.INF
    "I don't know which friends can surf"

16. *No   tengo   [con **qué**   personas   vivir]
    not   have.1S   with **what**   people   live.INF
    ("I don't have with which people to live")

17. Me   pregunto   [con **qué** personas   vive   Juan]
    me   ask.1S   with **what** people   live.3S.IND   Juan
    "I wonder which people Juan lives with"

Another relevant construction to compare MECs with are free relatives. Free relatives are wh-constructions with a gap that are paraphrased with a definite DP (adapted from Caponigro 2004) as in *I bought [what you requested].* They certainly look identical on the surface, so they are worth looking at if we are examining MECs and claiming that the wh-clauses containing the indicative are MECs. I discuss this in detail in §4. But now we need to look inside the MECs to discuss the verb forms that appear in them. In §2, I present the observations that have been made so far

about the mood in MECs and I provide an explanation for the alternation between the possible verb forms encountered in MECs in Spanish.

2. MECs and Mood

Another defining characteristic of MECs is the verb forms that can occur in them. Many researchers have observed that MECs are characterized by containing a verb form in either the infinitive or the subjunctive, if a language possesses this form (or some functionally equivalent verb form) (Grosu (2006), Pesetzky (1982), Suñer (1984), Rappaport (1986), Rivero (1986), Rudin (1986, Grosu (1989, 1994), Grosu and Landman (1998) and Izvorski (1998)). Different authors have tried to offer an explanation of why MECs are environments which seem to require the subjunctive or the infinitive, and, crucially, exclude the indicative. I will provide an overview of the three of the most influential works on MECs that have looked at the mood in MECs.

Izvorski (1998) explains the impossibility of indicative forms by resorting to the fact that indicative clauses are blocking environments for some syntactic processes such as Subject Raising, Obligatory Control, and Clitic Climbing. She assumes that the same blocking effect prevents quantificational binding from the matrix into the subordinate clause, which would prevent existential binding into MECs by the matrix predicate.

The problem with this proposal is that the correlation between transparency of mood and Raising, Control and Clitic Climbing varies from language to language. While in the Balkan languages subjunctive clauses are transparent to these syntactic

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processes this is not true in Spanish (and Western Romance in general) (Grosu 2004).

18. Alejandra   no   (*la)   tiene   [quien la   ayude].
    Alejandra   not   her   have.3S   who   her   help.3S.SUBJ
    "Alejandra has no one to help her"

19. a. Alejandra   no   tiene   [que   escribirlo].
       Alejandra   not   have.3S   that   write.INF.CL.3S.MASC
    "Alejandra doesn't have to write it"

    b. Alejandra   no   lo   tiene   [que   escribir].
       Alejandra   not   CL.3S.MASC   have.3S   that   write.INF
    "Alejandra doesn't have to write it"

In (18) the bracketed clause contains the subjunctive and the clitic *la* "her". The clitic cannot climb out of the embedded clause, which shows that subjunctive clauses are not transparent to clitic climbing in Spanish. (19a) and (19b) show that clitic climbing is possible out of an embedded infinitival clause ((19a) contains the clitic in situ, (19b) contains the clitic out of the embedded clause preceding the finite verb)[5].

Grosu (2004) attempts to explain the exclusion of indicative forms in MECs by simply stipulating that MECs are internally marked for non-indicative mood. He assumes that the C node of MECs bears the features [GQ$_\exists$] and [-INDIC]. Leaving details aside, he claims that the [-INDIC] feature ensures that the GQ has narrow

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[5] Clitic climbing in Spanish has received a lot of attention with respect to the reason why clitics can climb out of a clause and also regarding which matrix verbs allow clitic climbing, for detailed discussions about this topic see Contreras (1979), Luján (1980), Napoli (1982), Suñer (1980), Pizzini (1982), among others.

scope[6]. He does not really discuss or motivate the [-INDIC] feature so it is hard to evaluate his proposal in more detail since stipulation of a feature *per se* is not explanatory.

The third line of research I will discuss is Šimík's (2011) dissertation, which is a very in-depth survey and analysis of MECs cross-lingusitically. He does not propose an analysis of why MECs exclude indicatives as such. Instead, he proposes an implicational universal based on the long-standing observation that rules out the possibility that a language may use another verb form different from an infinitive or a subjunctive.

20. **Šimík's Implicational Universal 3**

If a language has the infinitive mood, it uses it in its MECs. Otherwise, it uses the subjunctive (or its functional equivalent) (Šimík 2011: 62)

In his language sample of sixteen languages, Šimík found no exceptions to this implicational universal. Based on this, he develops a typology of MEC-languages. Regarding the mood or verb form used in MECs, the following pattern emerges:

(i) languages that use the infinitive (e.g., Russian).

(ii) languages that use the subjunctive (e.g., Greek).

(iii) languages that use both (e.g., Hungarian).

At first glance, this observation holds in Spanish as well (Spanish was indeed part of Šimík's sample). All examples so far contain an infinitive within the MEC, but

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[6] [GQ∃] is a feature that tells the semantics to interpret CP as an existential general quantifier (GQ).

Spanish must use the subjunctive when the subject of the MEC is different from the subject of the main clause. This fact about Spanish, puts it in category (iii) above. For now, let us look at examples in which the wh-word is the subject of the embedded clause.

21. Gustavo   no   tiene   [quien le   **cocine**].
    Gustavo   not   have.3S   who him   **cook.3S.SUBJ**
    "Gustavo has no one who can cook for him."

22. La   empresa   busca   [quien la   **financie**].
    the   company   seek.3S   who it   **finance.3S.SUBJ**
    "The company is looking for someone who can finance them"

23. No   encuentro   [en   quien **confíes**.]
    not   find.1S   in   who **trust.2S.SUBJ**
    "I can't find who you trust"

The MECs in examples (21-23) contain a verb in the subjunctive. In each case, the subject of the embedded clause is different from the subject in the main clause (i.e., they do not co-refer). The fact that the subjunctive surfaces in MECs in this particular case is not restricted to these constructions alone. Spanish requires the subjunctive whenever the subject of an embedded clause is different from the subject of the main clause as in (24) (provided the predicate of the main clause requires the subjuntive). When the subject of the embedded clause is co-referential with the subject of the main clause, the infinitive must be used (25).

24. Voy   al   banco para   que   me   **vendan**   una   casa.
    go.1S to.the bank for   that   me   **sell.3PL.SUBJ**   a   house
    "I'm going to the bank so that they can sell me a house"

25. Voy   al   banco para **vender**   una   casa.
    go.1S to.the bank to   **sell.INF**   a   house
    "I'm going to the bank to sell a house"

However, this is not the complete picture for Spanish MECs. In this paper, I show that Spanish does in fact allow MECs with the indicative mood. These data from Spanish has never been presented before.

3. Mood in Spanish MECs

In §1, we discussed the cross-linguistic observation that languages seem to only use the infinitive or the subjunctive with MECs. In this section, I present data from Spanish that show that infinitives and subjunctives are not the only mood choices available for MECs (at least in Spanish). The data is organized based on the type of predicates that introduce MECs as described in §1. Recall that predicates of type (i) are "be" and "have" types, and predicates of type (ii) are predicates denoting coming into being, view, availability or its causation.

A) Predicates of Type (i):

26. a. Hay   [quien **cree**   en   el   Diablo]   (ind)
       there's   who   **believe.3S.IND**   in   the   devil
    "There are people who believe in the Devil"

    b. *Hay   [quien **crea**   en   el   Diablo]   (subj)
       there's   who   **believe.3S.SUBJ**   in   the   devil
    ("There are people who believe in the Devil")

27. a. Hay   [quien **dice**   siempre   que   no.]   (ind)
       there's   who   **say.3S.IND**   always   that   no
    "There is someone who always says no"

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b.* Hay   [quien   **diga**   siempre   que   no] (subj)
    there's   who   **say.3S.SUBJ**   always   that   no
    ("There's someone who always says no")

28. a. Tengo   [quien   **quiere**   trabajar   los   martes](ind)
       have.1S   who   **want.3S.IND** work.INF   the   Tuesdays
       "There is someone who wants to work on Tuesdays"

    b. *Tengo   [quien **quiera**   trabajar   los   martes](subj)
       have.1S   who   **want.3S.SUBJ**   work.INF   the   Tuesdays
       (There is someone who wants to work on Tuesdays).

29. a. *No hay   [quien   **cree**   en   el   Diablo](ind)
       not there's who   **believe.3S.IND**   in   the   devil
       (There are no people who believe in the Devil)

    b. No   hay   [quien   **crea**   en   el   Diablo](subj)
       not there's who   **believe.3S.SUBJ**   in   the   devil
       "There are no people who believe in the Devil"

30. a. *No hay   [quien   **dice**   siempre   que   no]   (ind)
       not there's who   **say.3S.IND**   always   that   no
       ("There isn't anyone who always says no")

    b. No   hay   [quien   **diga**   siempre   que   no]   (subj)
       not there's who   **say.3S.SUBJ**   always   that   no
       "There aren't always people who say no"

31. a. *No tengo   [quien   **quiere**   trabajar   **(**ind)
       not have.1S   who   **want.3S.IND**   work.INF

    los   martes
    the   Tuesdays
    ("There is someone who wants to work on Tuesdays")

    b. No   tengo [quien   **quiera**   trabajar   los   martes](subj)
       not have.1 who   **want.3S.SUBJ**work.INF   the   Tuesdays
       (There is someone who wants to work on Tuesdays).

32. a. Siempre   hay   [con   quién **hablar**].   (inf)
    always   there's   with   who   **speak.INF**
    "There's always someone to talk to"

b. No   hay   [con   quién **hablar]**   (inf)
    not there's with   who   **speak.INF**
    "There's no one to talk to".

From the data in (26-32) the following generalization arises: with predicates of type (i), if the main clause is affirmative, the indicative must be used, and crucially the subjunctive renders the sentence ill-formed. When the main clause is negative, the reverse holds; the subjunctive must be used, and the indicative renders the sentence ill-formed. The infinitive is possible for both affirmative and negative main clauses (32). It is worth emphasizing that this is not what has been claimed in previous work; the indicative has always been excluded from MECs in previous work (see, for example, Suñer 1984 for Spanish). Now let us look at the second type of predicates.

B) Predicates of type (ii):

33. a. *No encuentro   [quién   **dice**   siempre   que   no   (ind)
    not find.1S   who   **say.3S.IND**   always   that   not
    (I can't find anyone who always says no)

b. No   encuentro   [quién   **diga**   siempre   que   no**]** (subj)
    not find.1S   who   **say.3S.SUBJ**   always   that   not
    "I can't find anyone who always says no"

34. a. *Necesitamos   [quién nos   **ayuda**   con   esto]   (ind)
    need.1PL   who   us   **help.3S.IND** with   this
    (We need someone to help us with this)

b. Necesitamos　　　[quién　　　nos　　**ayude**　　　con　　esto]　(subj)
　　need.1PL　　　　who　　　us　　**help.3S.SUBJ**　　　with　　this
　"We need someone to help us with this".

35. a. *Busco　　　[quién **puede**　　　actuar　　　y　　　cantar]　　　(ind)
　　　seek.1S　　who　　**can.3S.IND**　　act.INF　　　and　　sing.INF
　("I'm looking for someone who can act and sing")

b. Busco　　　　[quién　　　**pueda**　　　actuar y　　　cantar].　　(subj)
　　seek.1S　　who　　**can.3S.SUBJ**　　　act.INF　　　and　　sing.INF
　"I'm looking for someone who can act and sing"

36. a. Conseguí　[con　quién **ir**　a　　la　　boda**]**　　　(inf)
　　obtained.1S　with　who　**go.INF** to　the　　weding
　"I got someone to go to the wedding with"

b. No　conseguí　　[con　quién **ir**　a　　la　　boda**]**　　(inf)
　　not　obtained.1S　with　who　**go.INF** to　the　　wedding
　"I couldn't find anyone to go to the wedding with"

The data in (33-36) suggest the following generalization: with predicates of type (ii), the indicative can never be used. The subjunctive must be used with non-coreferential subjects and the infinitive with co-referential subjects. This is true whether the main clause is affirmative or negative. These generalizations are summarized in table 1.

Predicate	Affirmative Matrix Clause	Negative Matrix Clause
Type (i)	Indicative	Subjunctive
Type (ii)	Subjunctive	Subjunctive

Table 1. Mood alternations per type of predicate

This observation raises the question why predicates of type (i) do not pattern exactly with predicates of type (ii). Ideally, we would be able to explain this fact by

looking at the behavior of the indicative mood in Spanish in contrast with the subjunctive. As I mentioned above, the infinitive/subjunctive alternation in MECs is not an isolated fact restricted to MECs, but it's present in other types of embedded constructions (see (24) and (25) above) so it is a very general pattern of subjunctive use. I will show in the next section that the same can be said about the indicative/subjunctive alternation. We can simply derive the possible use of the indicative in MECs from more general mechanisms in the language that are not construction specific.

3.1.   Mood and Negation in Spanish

In this section I look at the relationship between matrix negation and the mood in embedded clauses in Spanish. The generalization for predicates of type (i) was that the MEC can only take the subjunctive when the matrix clause is negated, otherwise it must take the indicative.   This is a very well-known pattern of subjunctive versus indicative use in Spanish. There are many predicates that must take an indicative embedded clause with an affirmative matrix clause (37a) and (38a) but a subjunctive embedded clause when the matrix clause is negated (34b) and (35b).

37. a. Creo   que   hoy   **es/*sea**   jueves.
     believe.1S   that   today **be.3S.IND/SUBJ**   Thursday
     'I think it's Thursday today"

    b. No   creo   que   hoy   **sea/*es**   jueves.
      not   believe.1S   that   today **be.3S.SUBJ/IND**   Thursday
     "I don't think it's Thursday today"

38. a. Es   cierto que   Julio   **toma/*tome**.
       be.3S.   true   that   Julio   **drink.3S.IND/SUBJ**
    "It's true that Julio drinks"

    b. No   es   cierto que   Julio   **tome/*toma**
       not   be3S   true   that   Julio   **drink.3S.SUBJ/IND**
    "It's not true that Julio drinks"

These data make it clear that there is a close relationship between the type of matrix clause and the mood the embedded verb appears in. So the mood alternation we see in MECs with predicates (i) are not an isolated or unexpected fact of the language, but a pervasive feature of mood alternation in Spanish.

With predicates of type (ii) the issue is a bit more complex but we nevertheless find a very clear picture of a more general pattern of subjunctive/indicative alternations in the language. Recall the generalization about predicates of type (ii) was that the indicative can never be used inside the MEC with these predicates, the only options being the subjunctive or the infinitive. As with predicates of type (i), it would be ideal if we could find an independent explanation of this pattern by looking at similar constructions in the language. In the next section, I examine other constructions in which the subjunctive-indicative alternation is found that will shed light on the seemingly construction-specific prohibition of the indicative from MECs with predicates (ii).

3.2.   Specificity of NPs

In this section I examine the relationship between the specificity of noun phrases and mood in Spanish in order to motivate the appearance of the subjunctive in MECs with predicates of type (ii). I compare wh-clauses embedded under predicates of

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type (ii) with the indicative and the subjunctive in the wh-clause and I conclude that a wh-clause with an indicative verb is a head-relative clause, whereas a wh-clause with the subjunctive is a MEC.

The subjunctive in Spanish is also used in headed relative clauses with non-specific indefinites. If the relativized noun is a specific indefinite then the indicative must be used (Rivero 1975, Leonetti 1999, Perez Saldanya 1999).

39. a. Busco   (*a)   una   persona   que   hable   ruso.
       seek.1S   to   a   person   that   speak3S.SUBJ Russian
    "I'm looking for a person that speaks Russian"

    b. Busco   *(a)   una   persona   que   habla   ruso.
       seek.1S   to   a   person   that   speak3S.IND   Russian
    "I'm looking for a certain person that speaks Russian"

 A good paraphrase of (39a) is "I'm looking for a person that speaks Russian but I don't know such a person, nor do I know whether I'll find one". (40b) means "I know someone and I'm looking for that person, and something characteristic of them is that they speak Russian". In other words, (39a) contains a non-specific DP (*una persona*) whereas the DP (*a una persona)* in the headed relative clause in (40b) is referential.

Another important difference between (40a) and (40b) is the presence of the marker *a* in (40b). Crucially, note that (40a) lacks *a*. This will become important to our analysis of MECs so it is worthwhile to look at what other types of expressions can take the marker *a* and which ones do not before we draw any conclusions about MECs in particular.

40. a. Conozco   *(a)   Federico.
      know.1S   to   Federico
   "I know Federico"

     b. Conozco   (*a)   Buenos Aires .
       know.1S   to   Buenos Aires
   "I know Buenos Aires" (meaning: I've been to Buenos Aires)

41. a. No   encuentro   *(a)   mis   amigos.
       not   find.1S   to   my.PL   friends
   "I can't find my friends"

     b. No   encuentro   (*a)   amigos.
       not   find.1S   to   friends
   "I can't find any friends"

42. a. No   busco   *(a)   nadie.
       not   seek.1S   to   nobody
   "I'm not looking for anybody"

     b. Conseguí   *(a)   un   profesor   de   China   que   habla
       found.1S   to   a   teacher   from   China   that   speak.3S.IND

     inglés.
     English
   "I found a teacher from China that speaks English"

     c. Busco   *(a)   alguien   de   Madrid.
       seek.1.S   to   someone   from   Madrid
   "I'm looking for someone from Madrid"

In (40a) the direct object is a human being and referential so *a* is used and, as the asterisk shows, the lack of *a* results in ungrammaticality. The reverse is true for (40b), where "Buenos Aires" is an inanimate object. In (41a), the direct object is a human definite DP "my friends" and the marker is obligatory. (41b) contains a bare plural direct object and *a* is ruled out. In (42a) the object is a quantifier and the

marker is also obligatory and (42b) contains an indefinite referential DP and *a* is grammatical. (42c) contains the indefinite pronoun *alguien* and *a* is required.

The broad generalization that emerges then is that *a* surfaces depending on the semantics of the object DP. Much has been written about the *a* marker so I will focus on what is relevant for the purpose of this paper[7]. Specifically, *a* is used with animate/human-like referential expressions like definite DPs, animate/human-like indefinite quantified DPs and indefinite pronouns. With bare plurals, the situation is a bit more complicated. Some verbs have lexicalized the affectedness of the object with the marker *a*, meaning that the marker is always obligatory with predicates whose object conveys a high level of affectedness. Some of these predicates are *odiar "*hate"*, amar* "love"*, despreciar "despise", atacar* "attack"*.* Predicates with a lower level of affectedness do not impose the requirement of the marker, it is simply optional. These are predicates like *encontrar* "find", *buscar "*look for" and *ver* "see". Leonetti (2004) notes that with the first group (the predicates that always require the marker *a)* bare nouns are never possible, whereas they are possible with the second group.

The marker *a* and the subjunctive-indicative alternation are tightly related. In general, in headed relative clauses, the verb will be in the subjunctive if the relativized DP is not marked by *a* and in the indicative if it is marked by *a*.

43. Necesito   una   persona   que   sepa/*sabe   leer.
    need.1S   a   person   that   know.3S.SUBJ/IND read.INF
    "I need a person that can read"

---

[7] For a detailed discussion of the use of the marker *a* see, for example, Leonetti (2004) and von Heusinger and Kaiser (2007).

44. Conozco   a   una   persona   que   *sepa/sabe   leer
    know.1S   to   a   person   that   know.3S.SUBJ/IND
        read.INF
    "I know someone who can read"

45. Necesito   a   Juan.
    need.1S   to   Juan
    "I need Juan"

(43) is a headed relative clause that contains the subjunctive, and there is no *a* preceding the relativized noun *una persona* "a person", a non-specific indefinite. In (44) the relative clause contains a verb in the indicative and the head noun is preceded by *a* (i.e., **a** *una persona).* (45) shows that the verb *necesitar* "need" can indeed take a complement with *a* if its complement requires it (in this case because *Juan* is an animate definite DP).

These data show then that the alternation between subjunctive and indicative forms in wh-clauses is closely tied to the semantics of the head noun, namely whether the head noun is animate, (in)definite, a quantifier or a bare plural and whether the main clause is affirmative or negative. The relationship between specificity of the relativized noun and the mood in the embedded clause has received a lot of attention in the literature (see e.g., von Heusinger & Kaiser 2003 and references therein). What has not been discussed is the interaction of these factors and the mood in MECs specifically. Having shown that a-marked relative clauses behave differently from non-a-marked relative clauses with respect to the subjunctive-indicative alternation, I will now show that the subjunctive/indicative alternation found in MECs can be independently motivated from the semantic meaning of MECs and the observations just discussed, without having to resort to

construction-specific rules such as "the mood in a MEC must be subjunctive or infinitive".

Recall the data in (33-36) where it was observed that MECs with predicates of type (ii) could not take the indicative, and only the subjunctive or the infinitive yielded a well-formed sentence. However, the ungrammatical sentences in this data set all become grammatical when the wh-word is preceded by *a.*

46. | No | encuentro | **a** | quién | dice | | siempre | | que | no. |
    |---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
    | not | find.1S | **to** | who | say.3S.IND | | always | | that | not |

    I can't find the person who always says no.

47. | Necesitamos | **a** | quién | nos | | ayuda | | con | esto. |
    |---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
    | need.1PL | **to** | who | us | | help.3S.IND | | with | this |

    "We need the person that helps us with this".

48. | Busco | | **a** | quién | puede | | actuar | | y | cantar. |
    |---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
    | seek.1S | | **to** | who | can.3S.IND | | act.INF | | and | sing.INF |

    "I'm looking for the person who can act and sing"

In each case in (46-48) the speaker has someone in particular in mind. For example, in (46) I know this person that is always saying no, but I just cannot find them (or someone may have told me about them, so I know they exist). These data show that the verbal mood in a MEC does not need to be explained away by construction-specific mechanisms. In other words, MECs are no different than other embedded clauses where the subjunctive occurs, and so we do not require a special analysis to account for why MECs require or not the subjunctive. For example, Grosu's [GQ∃] feature or Izvorski's quantificational analysis discussed above are no longer necessary when we understand that the principles driving mood choice in

MECs are just the same as in any other subjunctive clause: type of matrix predicate, presence of matrix negation and specificity of the complement DP.

Now we turn to the difference between the embedded clauses with *a* and without *a*. Both clauses contain a wh-element in complement position but sometimes the wh-element is preceded by the marker *a* and sometimes it is not. We also saw that this is correlated with the mood of the wh-clause. When the wh-element is preceded by *a*, the indicative appears in the embedded clause and the subjunctive otherwise. The wh-clauses preceded by *a* are ordinary free relatives and they receive a definite interpretation (hence the marker *a*) whereas the wh-clauses not preceded by *a* are MECs.

Having shown the correlation between the referential marker *a* and the presence of the indicative, I will now show that the presence of the subjunctive in MECs is predicted from the semantic meaning of MECs as set-denoting expressions in the same way as bare plurals.

We briefly noted with (42b) that bare plurals cannot be marked by the referential marker *a*. Bare plurals are not referential expressions. In Romance, bare plurals have been argued to be set-denoting expressions that must undergo existential closure (Chierchia 1998). If the marker *a* marks referentiality, it is no surprise that bare plurals cannot be preceded by it.

49. No   tengo   (*a)   empleados.
    not   have.1S   to   employees
    "I don't have employees"

50. Conseguimos (*a)   voluntarios.
got.1PL   to   volunteers
"We got volunteers"

51. Buscamos   (*a)   ingenieros.
seek.1PL   to   engineers
"We're looking for engineers"

(49-51) show that bare plurals can never be preceded by *a* in complement position. When they are relativized, they are relativized without *a* and with the subjunctive in the relative clause.

52. Buscamos   (*a)   ingenieros   que   programen.
seek.1PL   to   engineers   that   program.3PL.SUBJ
"We're looking for engineers who can program"

53. Necesito   (*a)   niños   que   sepan   cantar.
need.1S   to   children   that   know.3PL.SUBJ   sing.INF
"I need children who can sing"

This is exactly the same pattern that MECs with subjunctives display; MECs can never be preceded by *a*. As I just noted above, if a wh-word is preceded by *a,* the indicative must be used.

54. Busco   (*a)   quién sepa   de   computadoras.
seek.1S   to   who know.3S.SUBJ of   computers
"I'm looking for someone who knows about computers"

55. Encontré   (*a)   quien me   arregle   el   televisor.
found.1S   to   who me   fix.3S.SUBJ   the   television
"I've found someone who can fix my TV".

56. No   tengo   (*a)   quién me   planche   la   ropa.
not   have.1S   to   who me   iron.3S.SUBJ the   clothing
"I don't have anyone who can iron my clothes"

These data show the reversed situation from (46-48). Subjunctive MECs pattern with bare plurals in not being able to be preceded by the marker *a.* In fact,

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Caponigro (2004) proposes an analysis of MECs as set-denoting entities, which is the meaning of bare plurals. Therefore, the presence of subjunctives in MECs can be traced back to the same explanation as with bare plurals: it's the semantics of the complement that forces the subjunctive to appear in the embedded clause and not the construction itself. In other words, the absence of referentiality in MECs is expressed through the lack of the referential marker preceding them and the appearance of the subjunctive inside them.

To summarize, in this section I discussed the different moods that can appear in MECs and I presented novel data that show that in Spanish the indicative can appear in affirmative MECs with Grosu's predicates of type (i). By looking at the referential marker *a* as well as the semantics of bare plurals I also showed that the appearance of the subjunctive in MECs with predicate of type (ii) can be derived from independent factors in the grammar eliminating the need to postulate construction specific rules and giving an account of what, thus far, has been taken as an epiphenomenon of the construction.

One may wonder whether the facts about predicates of type (i) may not be similar to the facts about predicates of type (ii) in that with the use of the indicative the construction is no longer a MEC. This is a reasonable question that needs to be addressed, so in the next section I will examine this question and provide evidence for supporting the analysis that the wh-constructions with predicates of type (i) with indicatives are certainly MECs.

4.   The Definiteness Effect

In this section I discuss the definiteness effect (DE) observed in many languages whereby some existential predicates cannot take definite NPs as complements. I show that the DE is very robust in Spanish, which leads us to conclude that the MECs with indicative are true MECs and not a different wh-construction.

As I briefly noted above, the DE refers to the observation that certain predicates can only take indefinites as their complements (Szabolsci 1986). The DE goes back to Milsark's dissertation (1974) on English *there*-constructions[8]. In his work, he notes that certain NPs are excluded from the complement position of existential constructions in English. These NPs, he says, have in common that they have some kind of syntactically definite determiner. These include "the NP" (58), "X's NP" (59), demonstratives (60), proper names (61), and definite pronouns (62) (Milsark 1974).

57. *There is the cat on the sofa.

58. *There is John's cat on the sofa.

59. *There is that dog on the sofa.

60. *There is John on the sofa.

61. *There is him on the sofa.

Universally quantified NPs are also excluded (63), as well as "any NP" when "any" functions as a negative polarity item (64).

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[8] Milsark talks about the "definite restriction" of existential *there,* but the phenomenon is the same.

62. *There are all cats in the room.

63. *There isn't anything Anna would do for me.

The DE has been found to be a property present in many other languages, but there is cross-linguistic variation. Some languages are sensitive to the nature of the complement of existential constructions (e.g., English, Hungarian, Spanish) whereas other languages are not sensitive to it and allow any type of NP in this position (e.g., Italian).

The DE is not just restricted to existential predicates like existential *there*-constructions or its counterparts in other languages. The DE is a phenomenon that arises with other types of existential predicates. Szabolcsi (1986) examines the DE in Hungarian and proposes a classification of predicates that trigger the DE. She refers to those predicates that are sensitive to the DE as definite effect predicates.

Szabolcsi's four classes of definite effect predicates:

i. EXIST: be

ii. BECOME AVAILABLE IN A PARTICULAR FASHION: arrive, happen, be born

iii. CAUSE TO BECOME AVAILABLE IN A PARTICULAR FASHION: get, find, obtain.

iv: CAUSE TO BECOME EXISTENT IN A PARTICULAR FASHION: draw, cook, sew.

As I discussed in §1, in his cross-linguistic study of MECs, Grosu (2004) took Szabolcsi's classification and reduced it to two main groups to characterize the type of predicate that can take a MEC as complement. Grosu's re-classification put Szabolcsi's groups (ii), (iii) and (iv) into one category, and these are our predicates of type (ii).

The DE is important for our purposes because it can serve as a test for whether the complement of an existential predicate is definite or not. So, if a wh-construction can occur as the complement of an existential construction, this would indicate that we are dealing with a wh-construction that behaves as an indefinite. Recall that MECs are interpreted as indefinites, thus in a language that is sensitive to the DE we should be able to apply this test and see whether we are dealing with a MEC or not. In the same vein, if the language is sensitive to the DE, then definite NPs should be disallowed from the complement position of existential predicates. In the next section, I will discuss the DE in Spanish and show that the DE is present in Spanish, which will help answer the question of whether MECs with indicative are in fact MECs.

4.1. The Definite Effect in Spanish

The DE in Spanish is very robust (Suñer 1982, Leonetti 2008). Generally speaking, Spanish does not allow definite NPs in complement position of existential constructions. More specifically, definite NPs are excluded from the complement position of *haber* "there to be" and *tener* "have".

64. *Hay los autos en la vereda.
      there's the cars in the sidewalk
("There are the cars on the sidewalk)

65. *No hay los autos en la vereda.
    not there's the car in the sidewalk
("There aren't the cars on the sidewalk)

66. *Tengo los amigos.
    have1S the friends
"I have the friends"

67. *Tenemos los caballos.
    have.1PL the horses
("We have the horses")[9]

The data in (64-67) illustrate that the predicates *tener* and *haber* trigger the DE effect in Spanish. This means, just for the sake of clarification, that neither *haber* nor *tener* take definite complements.

Crucially, these two predicates are our predicates of type (i). Now we are in a position to address the question of whether the wh-constructions that appear as complements of predicates of type (i) with the indicative are MECs or free relatives. Free relatives have the semantics of definite DPs and they denote a maximal entity (Caponigro 2004). They can always be paraphrased or replaced with a definite DP.

68.   a. I like [what you wrote].
       b. I like [the things you wrote].

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[9] Sentence (67) can be grammatical with a different interpretation, in which the predicate *tener* "have" means "catch", "get", "find". But (68) can never be the answer to the question *¿Qué tienes?* "What do you have?".

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But in §1, we defined MECs as wh-constructions that get interpreted as indefinites and we saw that MECs can be replaced with indefinite and not with definite DPs. Let us look at one more example for concreteness.

69.   No   hay   [qué   comer].
      not   there's   what   eat.INF
      "There is nothing to eat"

Besides the paraphrase test, we just saw that the existential predicate *haber* in Spanish cannot take a definite complement, so the clause [qué comer] cannot be definite and therefore cannot be a free relative. More specifically, MECs do not denote a maximal entity; they denote a set (Caponigro 2004). So it should hopefully be clear by now that the wh-constructions that appear with predicates of type (i) (e.g, (26a), (27a) and (28a)) must be MECs and cannot be free relatives. If they were free relatives, the sentences should be ungrammatical because neither *haber* nor *tener* can take definite DPs as complements.

    In summary, in this section I diséussed the DE in Spanish and showed that the DE is very robust in Spanish. This fact provided us with independent evidence that shows that the wh-constructions with predicates of type (i) in the indicative are true MECs.[10].

    Having shown that the wh-constructions with indicatives are indeed MECs, we still need to explain why predicates of type (i) are the only predicates that

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[10] Italian also allows the indicative with *c'è* "there is", but Italian is not sensitive to the DE, so it is harder to show that this is a MEC and not a free relative (Caponigro p.c.)

require the use of the indicative in MECs. To this end, I discuss the different uses of the subjunctive and indicative in Spanish.

5.   The Subjunctive Mood in Spanish

The use of the subjunctive in Spanish has been discussed extensively in the literature. It is generally accepted that the meaning of the subjunctive is tightly connected to the speaker's attitude to the truth of a proposition, meaning that it is used when the speaker does not want to commit himself to the truth of the proposition (Borrego, Asencio, and Prieto 1986). The environments in which the subjunctive is used for non-assertion can be broken down into three main categories: (i) a proposition that refers to an event that is unrealized at the moment of speech, (ii) a proposition that refers to something untrue or doubtful, and (iii) a proposition that is known to the speaker and hearer so it doesn't have to be asserted.

King (1992) proposes that the meaning of the subjunctive is [-objective] as opposed to the indicative which is [+objective]. This is meant to capture the fact that the content of a proposition is not part of the real world. According to Mejías-Bikandi (1994), the subjunctive is used when the speaker does not want to mark the proposition as factual. Gregory (2001) proposes that the subjunctive is used to mark non-information. Within the framework of relevance theory, Lunn (1995) argues that the subjunctive occurs with information that is not of high relevance.

Looking at the subjunctive-indicative alternation in relative clauses, Lunn (1995) notes that subjunctive relative clauses usually refer to unknown or non-

existent individuals. Similarly, Maldonado (1995) claims that the subjunctive is used to modify individuals that are conjectural or not individuated. Spanish also uses the subjunctive to index the subject's lack of control over the subject of the embedded clause (Travis 2003). This can be seen with verbs of influence like *conseguir* "to get, to manage" which can take the subjunctive as in (70) below.

70. Conseguí   que   se   vayan.
     managed.1S   that   reflx.3PL   go.3PL.SUBJ
   "I managed to make them leave"

The subjunctive in (70) receives an interpretation of indirect causation, which implies the subject's lack of control over the patient.

Now, getting back to MECs and the exclusion of the subjunctive in the predicates of type (i), it should be clear why the subjunctive cannot be used. Predicates of type (i) are verbs that express the existence of an individual. In other words, these predicates express that the set denoted by its complement is not empty (i.e., they assert the existence of at least one individual within that set). This could not be more incompatible with the meaning of the subjunctive that we just discussed. The following examples illustrate this.

71. #Hay   manzanas,   pero   no   sé   si   existan.
     there's   apples   but   not   know.1S whether   exist.3PL.SUBJ
   #"There are apples, but I don't know whether they exist"

72. #Hay   quien dice   siempre   que   no,   pero   no
     there's   who   say.3S   always   that   not   but   not

     sé   si   exista.
     know.1S   whether   exist.3S.SUBJ
   "There are people who always say no, but I don't know whether they exist"

Both (71) and (72) show that it is incompatible to assert the existence of at least one individual in a set and question the existence of this individual at the same time. This is exactly what the use of the subjunctive in a MEC would do when embedded under an existential predicate: the matrix predicate would assert the existence of an individual whereas the subjunctive mood of the embedded clause comes with a presupposition that the individual may or may not exist (Leonetti 2004).

Negation, on the other hand, is used to express the non-existence of an individual and therefore is compatible with the subjunctive, which, as Lunn points out, is used to refer to individuals that are non-existent.

We still need to account for the fact that predicates of type (ii) never allow the indicative in MECs. Grosu's group (ii) is less homogenous than group (i) so we won't find an explanation that fits every one of the predicates in this group. I will mention the three verbs that seem to be more common with MECs in Spanish: *buscar "look for", conseguir "to manage"* and *encontrar "find".*

With the predicate *buscar* "to look for" we can resort to the same notion of talking about a non-existent or unknown individual in the mind of the speaker. When we are looking for something it is not certain that the object exists, we may look hard enough but still never find it. With *conseguir* "to get, to achieve", as I discussed above, the idea is that the agent or subject of the predicate is not in control of the patient's action and this needs to be marked morphologically in Spanish by means of the subjunctive. Last, *encontrar* can only be used in the negative with MECs so this is another case in which the subjunctive is used to mark non-existence.

To sum up, as Ahern and Leonetti (2004) point out, a clause marked as a non-assertion cannot be used as a complement of a verb whose lexical meaning include the concept of assertion itself. In the same vein, it is not possible to interpret a clause marked as an assertion by the use of the indicative in the complement position of a verb that presupposes that its complement refers to an unrealized or prospective situation.

Now that I have motivated the appearance of the indicative in Spanish MECs and explained why they must take the indicative mood, in the next section I discuss the implications of these findings.

7. Discussion

This paper raises a number of questions regarding the research on MECs and linguistic theory in general. The first question I would like to address is the role of Šimík's universal about the possible moods that can occur in MECs cross-linguistically, repeated below for convenience.

Šimík's Implicational Universal 3:

If a language has the infinitive mood, it uses it in its MECs. Otherwise, it uses the subjunctive (or its functional equivalent) (Šimík 2011: 62)

It should be clear from the data I have presented and discussed in this paper that this universal is not tenable, at least in its strong form. Simply put, the possibility is open for languages to use the indicative as well. Whether this turns out to be true

about other languages is left for further research. The possibility that other languages might allow the indicative is closely tied to the way the subjunctive behaves in those languages. If other languages also allow the indicative, they are likely to allow it with predicates of type (i) since these are the most common MEC predicates cross-linguistically, and we know that Italian has been reported to have MECs with indicatives as well (Caponigro 2003 & 2004) and Italian only allow MECs with predicates of type (i).

In close relation to Śimík's universal, it is also necessary to revisit his 3-way typology so that we can accomodate the Spanish type. The revised 4-way typology is presented in (73) with one example for each type.

73) Typology of MEC languages:

(i) languages that allow only the infinitive: e.g., Russian

(ii) languages that allow only the subjunctive: e.g., Greek

(iii) languages that allow both the infinitive and the subjunctive: e.g., Hungarian

(iv) languages that allow infinitives, subjunctives and indicatives: e.g., Spanish

Note that the reason for each possible mood in each language may certainly be language internal. For example, in Greek infinitives are excluded from MECs simply because the language does not possess infinitives. in the same way that Spanish is forced to use the indicative with affirmative existential predicates because of the meaning that the subjunctive has in Spanish, as was discussed in §5. If anything, this fact reinforces the need to look at other parts of the grammar when trying to explain

the behavior of a certain construction in order to avoid construction-specific rules that are not very explanatory. As I hope was clear from this paper, there is nothing special about MECs, as far as mood choice is concerned, that distinguishes them from other embedded clauses; they abide by the same principles that govern mood choice across the Spanish grammar.

In the broader picture, the issues discussed in this paper remind us that we must be careful when we use all-encompassing terms like subjunctive in a cross-linguistic perspective so that we are certain that we are comparing like with like (see for example, Bybee 1985 and Corbett 2000 for a discussion along the same lines). The fact that a language allows indicatives and not subjunctives under existential predicates, but other languages do not, apparently, calls into question what the label "subjunctive" actually means. When we speak of "subjunctive", is the meaning of these forms uniform across languages? If not, what do they have in common and how do we decide what properties of the construction or form are relevant so that we keep the same label for a form in different languages, and when do we decide that the same label is not appropriate so that we create a new label? These are not trivial questions, especially when cross-linguistic studies and generalizations are continually (and desirably) sought after across very different languages. Of course, this applies to any linguistic phenomenon so it is worth thinking about whether we are comparing like with like when we conduct cross-linguistic research in any sub-field of linguistics

8.   Conclusion

In this paper I discussed the mood alternation in MECs in Spanish and presented data that show that the indicative mood is not excluded from all MECs across the board, at least in Spanish. Following Grosu's classification of existential predicates that can take MECs as their complement, I showed that these two groups behave differently as far as the mood of the embedded verb is concerned. Predicates of type (ii) behave as expected, meaning that they only allow the subjunctive mood in the MEC both with affirmative and negative matrix clauses. The crucial group is predicates of type (i), which behave in a way that has not been discussed in the literature so far. With predicates of type (i), I showed that affirmative matrix clauses behave differently from negative matrix clauses: negative clauses require the subjunctive in the MEC but when the matrix clause is affirmative the indicative must be used. Crucially, the subjunctive is not possible with affirmative matrix clauses with predicates of type (i). Also, I demonstrated that the mood alternation in MECs can be derived from independent factors in the grammar like matrix negation, the specificity of the complement NP and the meaning of the subjunctive in Spanish. The welcome result is that we do not need to ascribe special features to MECs (cf. Grosu 2004) or resort to any MEC-specific analysis of the construction to explain the mood distribution. Last, as a consequence of the findings in this paper, I propose that the 3-way typology of MEC languages proposed by Šimík (2011) should be expanded into a 4-way typology to include a language like Spanish, which allows all moods to appear in MECs.

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