

# Intensional Transitives and Silent HAVE: Distinguishing between *Want* and *Need*

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## 1. Introduction

This paper presents a new generalization regarding the distribution of the intensional transitive verbs *want* and *need* across Indo-European (IE). It is shown that only IE-languages with transitive verbal *have* (henceforth H-languages) also have a transitive verb *need*. In contrast, no such generalization can be made for transitive *want*. A number of languages that lack verbal *have* (henceforth B(E)-languages), e.g. Russian, have a transitive verb *want* although they lack transitive *need*. These facts call into question unified syntactic approaches to intensional transitives, such as Larson et al. (1997), where it is argued that both *want* and *need* (among other intensional predicates) select for a concealed complement clause that involves a silent embedded HAVE.<sup>1</sup> If this analysis were to hold cross-linguistically, then we would expect all B-languages to lack both the intensional transitives *want* and *need*, contrary to fact.

In order to account for these facts, I propose, contra Larson et al. (1997), that the underlying syntactic structures for *want* and *need* are in fact distinct. A control analysis of *want* is argued for that does not (necessarily) involve a silent predicate HAVE, while a raising analysis of *need* is posited that involves incorporation of *need* into HAVE (following Harves and Kayne 2008).

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In Section 2 I present the motivation for analyses of *want* and *need* that involve silent embedded HAVE. In addition, I discuss a number of syntactic and semantic similarities and differences exhibited by these predicates that any crosslinguistic analysis must account for. In Section 3 I summarize the distribution of transitive *want* and *need* throughout Indo-European, and in Section 4 I present my analysis.

## 2. Wanting and Needing: What's HAVE got to do with it?

Intuitively the sentences in (1) can be paraphrased by those in (2) as pointed out by McCawley (1974), Ross (1976), and Larson et al. (1997) (among many others). Such paraphrases have led to analyses of *want* and *need* that involve silent embedded HAVE. Such paraphrases are not possible with all transitives, as shown in (3).

- (1) a. Mira needs that book.  
b. Mira wants that book.
- (2) a. Mira needs to have that book.  
b. Mira wants to have that book.
- (3) a. Mira wrote/read/reviewed/trashed that article.  
b. \*Mira wrote/read/reviewed/trashed to have that article.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this paper, CAPS will be used to represent silent lexical items.

If we take such paraphrases seriously, we are lead to posit covert infinitival HAVE-complements for intensional transitives whenever they arise. Evidence in favor of such additional structure comes from ambiguities found with adverbial modification, first pointed out by McCawley (1974).

- (4) a. Bill wants your apartment until June. (McCawley 1974: 85)  
 b. Right now Bill wants your apartment until June, but tomorrow he'll probably want it until October.

The most straightforward reading of (4a) is supported by (4b), i.e., one in which the adverbial *until June* is understood to modify Bill's having of the apartment, not his wanting of it. Schwarz points out that similar kinds of ambiguities exist with transitive *need* (5).

- (5) Matt needed some change before the conference. (Schwarz 2006: 261)  
 a. There was a time before the conference at which Matt needed some change.  
 b. Matt's need is to have some change before the conference.

These examples suggest that there is, indeed, a lower (concealed) attachment site for the adjunction of time adverbials such as *until June* and *before the conference*, lending empirical support to the claim that intensional transitives embed concealed clausal complements. Larson et al. (1997) propose the structure in (6) for intensional transitives such as *want* and *need*.

- (6) Max will need [<sub>CP</sub> PRO TO HAVE a bicycle tomorrow].

We will see below that while appealing on a number of levels, this analysis will not account for a range of crosslinguistic facts.

### 2.1. How (else) are 'want' and 'need' alike?

Thus far, we have seen that *want* and *need* are similar in terms of (i) semantically equivalent paraphrases with *have* and (ii) ambiguities with time adverbial adjuncts. Let us now consider further shared semantic properties of these predicates. Transitive *want* and *need* exhibit two hallmark characteristics of intensional contexts, as discussed by Frege (1892), i.e., failure to preserve truth by substitution of a co-referring term (7) and the lack of falsity induced by a non-denoting object (8).

- (7) a. Mira needs/wants Superman.  
 b. Mira needs/wants Clark Kent.
- (8) Mira needs/wants a unicorn.

Non-intensional transitives do not exhibit such effects. For example, in (9a), if Mira met Clark Kent, then she also definitely met Superman. And in contrast to the sentence in (8), the sentence in (9b) is simply false.

- (9) a. Mira met Clark Kent/Superman.  
 b. Mira owns a unicorn.

Intensionality effects are also found in all clausal complement constructions (10), suggesting a link between intensional transitive verbs on the one hand and clausal complements on the other.

- (10) a. Mira believed/said [that Superman had arrived].  
 b. Mira believed/said [that Clark Kent had arrived].  
 c. Mira believed/said [that a unicorn was in her room].

This fact lends further support to an analysis in which transitive *want* and *need* have concealed clausal complements. We can account for the semantic similarities of these constructions by positing a shared syntactic derivation, i.e., all intensional contexts are clausal.

## 2.2. How are 'want' and 'need' different?

In spite of their similarities, *want* and *need* differ in interesting ways as well. For example, *need* exhibits properties of raising verbs with infinitival complements, while *want* does not. As shown in (11), only *need* allows for expletive subjects, similar to canonical raising predicates such as *seem*. Moreover, only sentences with *need* maintain a truth-conditionally equivalent interpretation under passivization (12). Sentences with *want* do not. Finally, *need* allows for low scope of indefinite subjects, while *want* does not (13).

- (11) a. An adult **seems** to be in every car.  
 b. There **seems** to be an adult in every car.  
 c. An adult **needs** to be in every car.  
 d. There **needs** to be an adult in every car.  
 e. An adult **wants** to be in every car.  
 f. \*There **wants** to be an adult in every car.
- (12) a. The doctor **seemed** to examine every patient.  
 b. Every patient **seemed** to be examined by the doctor.  
 c. The doctor **needs/wants** to examine every patient.  
 d. Every patient **needs/wants** to be examined by the doctor. (Meaning shift for *want*)
- (13) Someone **needs/wants** to be home when the kids get back.  
 a. *need*/\**want* > Someone  
 b. Someone > *need*/*want*

In sum, both *want* and *need* suggest an analysis that involves concealed clausal complementation. On the other hand, their derivations must not be identical. If they were, the systematic differences exhibited by these predicates could not be accounted for. A natural question to ask is whether these similarities and differences occur crosslinguistically. As we will see, the answer to this question is both yes and no.

## 3. *Want*, *Need*, and *Have*: The Indo-European Facts

We begin our crosslinguistic investigation by noting that not all IE languages have both transitive *want* and *need*. Harves and Kayne (2008) point out that within IE, only H-languages appear to have transitive *need*. The distribution of transitive *need* within various IE languages is given in (14).

- (14) Transitive *need* (Harves and Kayne 2008: 16)

	H-languages	B-languages
Languages with transitive <i>need</i>	Czech, Slovak, Polish, Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian (dialects), Belorussian, English, German, Luxemburgish, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian, Icelandic, Spanish, Catalan	**
Languages without transitive <i>need</i>	Bulgarian, Serbian (standard), Lithuanian, French, Italian, Bellinzonese, Portuguese, Romanian, Farsi, Armenian	Russian, Latvian, Bhojpuri, Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Irish, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic

If the proposal put forward in Larson et al. (1997) is correct, then we would expect the distribution of transitive *want* within IE to mirror that of transitive *need*, since both predicates are argued to have a concealed clausal complement with embedded HAVE. That is, we would expect B-languages to have neither transitive *want* nor transitive *need* since these languages lack *have* (and by extension HAVE) altogether. As the shaded cell in the table below indicates, this expectation is not borne out. While transitive *need* only exists in H-languages, transitive *want* exists in a number of B-languages as well as H-languages.<sup>2</sup> Accounting for the surprising distribution of languages in the shaded cells in (14-15) will be the focus of the analysis in Section 4.

(15) Transitive *want*

	H-languages	B-languages
Languages with transitive <i>want</i>	Czech, Slovak, Polish, Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian, Belorussian, English, German, Luxemburgish, Dutch, Spanish, Catalan, Bulgarian, Lithuanian, French, Italian, Bellinzone, Portuguese, Romanian, Farsi, Armenian	Russian, Hindi, Bhojpuri, Bengali, Scottish Gaelic
Languages without transitive <i>want</i>	Norwegian, Swedish, Icelandic	Latvian, Irish, Welsh

#### 4. Towards an Analysis of *Want* and *Need*

Before considering an analysis of *want* and *need*, let us first summarize the generalizations that such an analysis needs to account for. First, our analysis needs to account for the following cross-linguistic generalizations.

- (16) a. Only H-languages have transitive *need*.  
 b. Not all H-languages have transitive *need*.  
 c. Both B-languages and H-languages have transitive *want*.

Second, the following similarities and differences between these predicates need to be accounted for.

- (17) a. Both *need* and *want* exhibit ambiguities with time adverbials.  
 b. *Need* exhibits properties of raising verbs; *want* is a control verb.

##### 4.1. Transitive ‘*want*’

We begin with an analysis of *want*. Nothing we have seen thus far argues against Larson et al.’s (1997) analysis of intensional transitives for H-languages. Recall that Larson et al. argue in favor of a hidden clausal complement to *want* that involves silent HAVE. Specifically, they argue that intensional transitives select for a full CP infinitival complement that undergoes restructuring à la Baker (1988) as in (18).

<sup>2</sup> Many thanks to the following people for help with the data: David Adger (Scottish Gaelic), Cori Anderson (Lithuanian), Vatche Attarian (Armenian), Rajesh Bhatt (Hindi), Andrea Cattaneo (Italian and Bellinzone), Sean Corner (Farsi), M. Cristina Cuervo (Spanish), Carlos Guedes (Luxemburgish and Portuguese), Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson (Icelandic), Nikolay Nikolov (Bulgarian), Oana Săvescu Ciucivara and Andreea Nicolae (Romanian), Peter Svenonius (Norwegian), Anna-Lena Wiklund (Swedish), Luka Szucsich (Burgenland Croatian), and Benedict Williams (Irish). Due to space limitations, only the distribution of *want* and *need* in these languages can be summarized here. See Harves and Kayne (2008) for examples of *have* and *need* in these languages.



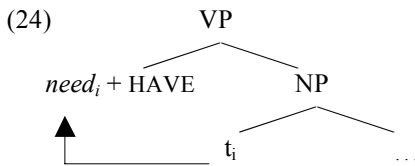
- (22) Matt needed some change before the conference. (Schwarz 2006: 261)  
 (= Matt needed TO HAVE some change before the conference.)

A problem that arises for this analysis is the fact that the same kinds of ambiguities are attested in B-languages where transitive *need* and *have* are completely absent. Consider (23) from Russian.

- (23) Ivanu byli nužny den'gi do sobranija.  
 Ivan-DAT were-3PL necessary-ADJ PL money-NOM PL before meeting  
 'Ivan needed some money before the meeting.'
- a. There was a time before the meeting at which Ivan needed some money.  
 b. Ivan's need was to have some money before the meeting.

Such facts suggest that silent embedded HAVE is not the adjunction site for time adverbials in B-languages (although it may be for H-languages). As with transitive *want*, it appears that we must allow for the silent embedded verb to vary, perhaps between BE, HAVE, and GET.<sup>6</sup> Adopting such an analysis raises the following question, however: How do we capture the fact that B-languages lack transitive *need*? We still have no explanation for the crosslinguistic generalization mentioned at the outset of this paper, namely, that only IE H-languages have transitive *need*.

I will propose, following Harves and Kayne (2008), that transitive *need* results from incorporation of nominal *need* into silent HAVE, as shown in (24).<sup>7</sup>



This proposal accounts straightforwardly for the lack of transitive *need* in B-languages since B-languages lack transitive HAVE. Only H-languages are predicted to have transitive *need*, which is precisely the generalization we find across IE. One aspect of this proposal that Harves and Kayne (2008) do not address in detail, however, is the fleshing out of the complement of *need*.

Harley (2004) suggests that *need* embeds a PP<sub>HAVE</sub> complement. However, this proposal is problematic, as pointed out by Marušič and Žaucer (2006), since a PP will not introduce an independent event that is subject to adverbial modification. Furthermore, there is no evidence that PP<sub>HAVE</sub> exists in B-languages, and as we have seen, even B-languages such as Russian show the same modificational ambiguities with intransitive, non-verbal *need*.

Larson et al. (1997) suggest that the complement is a CP/TP. However, this proposal is problematic when one considers a language such as German. Schwarz (2006) points out that German *brauchen* 'need' behaves as an NPI with infinitival complements (25), but not with DP complements.<sup>8</sup>

- (25) a. Hans **braucht** keine Angst zu haben. (Schwarz 2006: 271)  
 Hans needs no fear to have  
 'Hans doesn't need to be afraid.'
- b. \*Hans **braucht** Angst zu haben.  
 Hans needs fear to have  
 'Hans needs to be afraid.'

<sup>6</sup> See Marušič and Žaucer (2006) for further arguments in support of such an analysis, albeit for *want*.

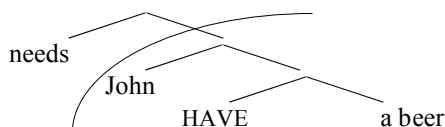
<sup>7</sup> In the spirit of Hale and Keyser (1993) and Noonan (1993).

<sup>8</sup> The behavior of *need* as an NPI is also attested in Polish, Burgenland Croatian, Dutch, and Norwegian.

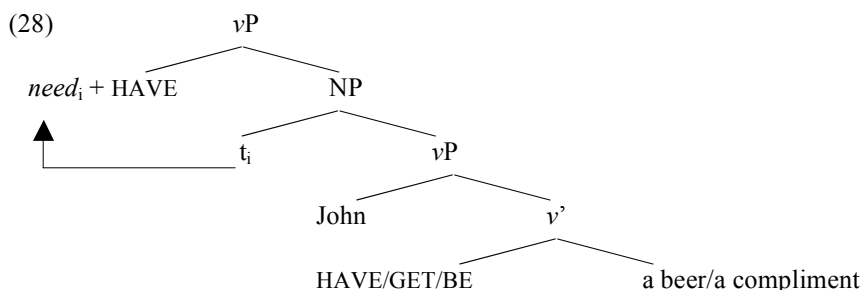
- (26) Hans **braucht** (kein) Geld. (Schwarz 2006: 271)  
 Hans needs (no) money  
 ‘Hans needs (no) money.’

As (26) shows, the DP object of *braucht* ‘needs’ does not require a negative quantifier, in contrast to the sentence in (25a). (25b) shows that omission of *keine* ‘no’ results in ungrammaticality with infinitival complements. If transitive *brauchen* had an embedded full clausal complement, we would have no explanation for the lack of polarity sensitivity here. To account for these facts, Schwarz (2006) argues that *need* selects for a Small Clause complement that is headed by silent HAVE (27).

- (27) John needs a beer. (Schwarz 2006: 273)



If we combine a modified version of Schwarz’s (2006) proposal with that of Harves and Kayne (2008), we can account for the properties of transitive *need* listed in (16-17) above. The structure I propose is shown in (28).



This structure will account for the (crosslinguistic) adverbial modification facts since the complement of the modal operator *need* is a clausal propositional complement that introduces an event (or perhaps a set of situations). Thus, adverbials can combine with it. In addition, by allowing the Small Clause to be headed by an unpronounced verb that is not restricted to HAVE, we account for the fact that even *needing* expressions with a non-verbal modal operator *need* (e.g. Russian, where *need* is an adjective) combine with propositional complements that license time adverbials. Furthermore, this proposal accounts for the lack of transitive *need* in B-languages, since there is no HAVE for nominal *need* to incorporate into. Finally, this structure will also capture the fact that *need*, as opposed to *want*, exhibits properties of a raising verb, rather than a control verb.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4.3. H-languages that lack transitive ‘need’: the ‘have need of’ construction

Having considered derivations for transitive *want* and *need*, let us consider one additional construction that occurs in a wide variety of H-languages – the *have need of* construction. Thus far, nothing has been said in terms of either the semantic or syntactic similarities and/or differences between this construction and transitive *need*. Bulgarian, Romanian, French, Italian, and Farsi are all languages that lack transitive *need* and instead make use of this construction (29). It is also found (perhaps marginally) in English.

<sup>9</sup> Note that nothing crucial actually hinges on the raising analysis of transitive *need* here. If it turns out to be the case that transitive *need* embeds a Small Clause with a PRO subject in certain cases, issues of theta-role and Case-assignment would need to be addressed further.

- (29) a. John **has need of** your assistance. (English)
- b. Nikolaj **ima nužda ot** pomošč. (Bulgarian)  
 Nikolay-NOM has-3SG need of help  
 ‘Nikolay needs help.’
- c. Gianni **ha bisogno di** una macchina. (Italian)  
 Gianni has need of a car  
 ‘Gianni needs a car.’
- d. Jean **a besoin d'une** voiture. (French)  
 Jean has need of-a car  
 ‘Jean needs a car.’
- e. John **are nevoie de** o mașină. (Romanian)  
 John has need of a car.  
 ‘John needs a car.’
- f. Sean **ehtiaj beh yek kitab darad.** (Farsi)  
 Sean need to/for one book has  
 ‘Sean needs a book.’

Like transitive *need* this construction also exhibits hallmark characteristics of intensional contexts. For example, the sentence *John has need of a unicorn* does not yield a false utterance induced by a non-denoting object (the same judgments hold for the other languages in 29 as well). Also like transitive *need*, expressions using this construction exhibit the same ambiguities with respect to the adjunction of temporal adverbials. An example from French is given in (30).

- (30) Aujourd’hui Jean **a besoin de** votre appartement jusqu’en Juin. (French)  
 Today Jean has need of your apartment until June.  
 ‘Today John needs your apartment until June.’

These facts suggest that nominal *need* embeds a clausal complement with a silent unpronounced light verb as well. If true, the next question we must ask is whether this construction exhibits properties of raising or control. Consider first the contrast in (31) for English.

- (31) a. There is need of your apartment.  
 b. \*There has need of your apartment.

The fact that only (31a) allows for expletive insertion suggests that the *have need of* construction in (31b) is not a raising construction. The equivalent in French is also not allowed (where *il* is an expletive, not a personal pronoun). This suggests that the *have need of* construction is best analyzed as one of control, rather than raising.

- (32) \*Il **a besoin de** votre appartement. (French)  
 it has need of your apartment

H-languages that lack transitive *need* present us with a serious question that, for the moment, remains unanswered. What prevents incorporation of nominal *need* into HAVE in these languages? Transitive *have* appears to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for licensing transitive *need* in a given language. What other properties must a language have in order to have transitive *need*? I leave this question for future research.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that there is a derivational link between transitive intensional *need* and verbal *have* crosslinguistically, but that there is no such link between intensional *want* and *have*. That is, while transitive *need* involves incorporation into verbal HAVE, transitive *want* does not. Such an analysis leads us to expect that transitive *want*, in contrast to *need*, is free to occur in various B-languages of the world. As the data clearly show, this prediction is borne out.

Although the analysis presented here appears to account nicely for the distribution of transitive *want* and *need* throughout Indo-European, one must ask whether it can be extended more generally to other languages of the world. It might simply be the case that the generalization noted here is an IE phenomenon, and that other B-languages do in fact have transitive *need*. A quick look outside of IE shows that Japanese, Chinese, Turkish, and Hungarian fit the generalizations put forward here, while Finnish and Hebrew pose interesting challenges, as they appear to be B-languages with transitive *need*. I leave further investigation of these languages to future research.

This paper also raises a number of new research questions. First, why do a number of H-languages lack transitive *need* (e.g. French, Italian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Farsi)? Second, why do certain H-languages that have transitive *need* lack transitive *want* (e.g. Norwegian, Swedish, Icelandic)? Finally, why do some languages lack both *need* and *want* (e.g. Latvian, Irish, Welsh)? For the moment, these important questions remain unanswered.

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