

Choice functions and alternatives: two classes of Georgian *wh*-indefinites

Richard Luo

Yale University

Natasha Thalluri

Harvard University

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1 What's been said so far

Previous literature has argued for various semantic analyses of indefinites as existential quantifiers, variables (Heim 1982), sets of individuals (Kratzer and Shimoyama 2002), choice functions (Reinhart 1997), or dynamic existential quantifiers over possible assignments (Farkas and Brasoveanu 2020). From a static view, these all deliver truth conditions that look something like (1).

- (1) a. **A really cool conference** is happening in Hyde Park.
b. $\exists x[\text{really-cool-conference}(x) \wedge \text{happening-in-Hyde-Park}(x)]$

An important property of indefinites is that they carry existential import. Therefore, we should expect them to be able to interact scopally with other quantifiers.

For example, indefinites have been shown to produce ambiguities between *de re* or *de dicto* readings when they are embedded under an intensional verb, also commonly analyzed as being a difference in scope (Fodor 1970, Fodor and Sag 1982, *a.m.o.*).

(2) Sally wants to meet a man from Chicago.

- a. $\checkmark \text{ want} \gg \exists$ (*de dicto* = narrow scope indefinite)

As long as a person Sally meets matches the description “man from Chicago,” she’ll be happy.

- b. $\checkmark \exists \gg \text{want}$ (*de re* = wide scope indefinite)

There’s a man_{*x*} from Chicago (the same man in all of Sally’s *want*-worlds), such that Sally will be happy if she meets him_{*x*}.

Besides their formal semantic identity, indefinites have also been known to carry different functional distributions across languages (Haspelmath 1997). One typological comparison that has been made in recent work is with respect to *specificity* and *epistemic* readings (Aloni and Degano 2022).

(3) *Specificity*

- a. Specific: A really cool conference is happening in Hyde Park.
 $\rightsquigarrow$ It's called CLS/I forgot what it was.
- b. Non-specific: I hope that a really cool conference is happening in Hyde Park.
 $\rightsquigarrow$ #It's called CLS/I forgot it was.

(4) *Epistemicity*

- a. Known: A really cool conference is happening in Hyde Park.
 $\rightsquigarrow$ I am presenting at it.
- b. Unknown: I noticed that a really cool conference is happening in Hyde Park.
 $\rightsquigarrow$ #I am presenting at it.

Putting these two properties together, there are three possible readings that an indefinite may take:

- Specific Known (sk): Someone called. I know who.
- Specific Unknown (su): Someone called. I don't know who.
- Non-specific (ns): John needs to find someone for the job.

Indefinites which are able to acquire any of the three readings are *unmarked*, while indefinites which are restricted in their interpretation are *marked* (Aloni and Degano 2022).

In this talk, we will examine two classes of indefinites that are derived from *wh*-words in Georgian: *-me* indefinites and *-ğac* indefinites. They have been claimed to have the following distribution:

(5)

INDEFINITE	SK	SU	NS	TYPE
<i>-ğac</i>	✓	✓	✗	specific
<i>-me</i>	✗	✗	✓	non-specific

We point out two challenges with this characterization. First, *-ğac* indefinites are not restricted to specific readings, but are able to license non-specific readings as well—hence, they are unmarked. Second, *-me* indefinites are non-specific, but they differ from non-specific indefinites found in other languages, e.g., Russian *-nibud*—these differences will motivate an *alternative* semantic analysis.

Roadmap

§2 Distribution of *-me* vs. *-ǧac* indefinites

- An initial confirmation from sluicing
- An NPI-*me* hypothesis: modal/intensional verbs, polar interrogatives, conditional antecedents, restrictors of universal quantifiers, negation

§3 Absence of universal force, existential free choice

- A FCI-*me* hypothesis: imperatives, comparatives, free choice disjunction
- An extra caveat: simple declaratives

§4 Two indefinites = two semantic derivations

- A contrast between *-me* vs. other non-specific indefinites
- A plural form for *-ǧac*, not *-me*
- A closing thought on the nature of ‘why’

2 Georgian indefinites

At first blush, the specific/non-specific contrast seems to capture certain properties of *-ğac* vs. *-me* indefinites. One example of this is sluicing, where the *wh*-remnant must have an antecedent—only *-ğac* indefinites are licensed in these contexts, but not *-me* indefinites (6).

- (6) manana-m gušin {**ra-ğac(a)**/***ra-me**} i-q'ida, magram ar v-i-c-i
Manana-ERG yesterday **what-ĞAC**/***ME.NOM** PV-buy-AOR.3SG but NEG 1.SG-PV-know-TS
(tu) ra
Q.COMP what.NOM
'Manana bought something yesterday, but I don't know what.' (Erschler 2015: 41)

As we will see, *-me* indefinites cannot take wide scope and are only compatible with non-specific readings. However, we also find that the two indefinites share an overlapping distribution: there are many environments in which *-me* indefinites can appear as well as *-ğac* indefinites.

2.1 Modal/intensional verbs

In the scope of an intensional verb like *unda* ‘want,’ both *-me* and *-ğac* forms are possible.

- (7) a. minda **vin-me** v-i-p’ov-o, [vin-c lap’arak’-ob-s kartul-ad]
 want.PRS.1SG **who-ME** 1-PV-find-OPT, who-REL speak-TS-PRS.3SG Georgian-ADV
 ‘I want to find someone who speaks Georgian.’
- b. minda **vi-ğac** v-i-p’ov-o, [vin-c lap’arak’-ob-s kartul-ad]
 want.PRS.1SG **who-ĞAC** 1-PV-find-OPT who-REL speak-TS-PRS.3SG Georgian-ADV
 ‘I want to find someone who speaks Georgian.’

However, there is a subtle difference between the two sentences: (7a) only allows the *de dicto* reading, whereas (7b) is compatible with both *de re* and *de dicto* interpretations.

It is also possible for *-me* indefinites to yield a non-specific, referentially transparent interpretation in the scope of an intensional verb—the so-called *third readings* (Fodor 1970).

- (8) *Context: There are three people who are competing (with several others) in a piano competition, and Saba wants one of them to win. But he doesn't know that all three of them are my friends.*

saba-s {**romeli-me/romeli-ğac**} čem-i megobr-is ga-marjv-eb-a unda

Saba-DAT **which-ME/ĞAC** my-GEN friend-GEN PVB-win-TS-NMLZ.NOM want

‘Saba wants a friend of mine to win.’

In (8), the speaker may use *romelime čemi megobris* ‘one of my friends’ to refer to one of the three individuals whom Saba wants to win, despite Saba not associating them as such in his *want*-worlds. And *romeliğac čemi megobris* ‘one of my friends’ is also acceptable.

Both *-me* indefinites and *-ġac* indefinites are also allowed in the scope of modals, independent of flavor (epistemic or circumstantial), with the same difference in interpretational possibilities:

(9) *Epistemic modal*

{vin-me/vi-ġac} še-i-dzl-eb-a gvian mo-v-i-d-e-s parti-ze

who-ME/ĠAC might late PVB-arrive-TS-IMPF-SUBJ-3SG party-on

‘Someone might arrive late to the party.’

(10) *Circumstantial modal*

ana-m unda i-p’ov-o-s **{ra-me/ra-ġac}** lamaz-i t’ansacmel-i parti-s-tvis

Ana-ERG must PV-find-OPT-3SG **what-ME/ĠAC** pretty-NOM clothing-NOM party-GEN-for

‘Ana must find something nice to wear for the party.’

2.2 Polar questions

With polar questions, the same pattern emerges: both *-me* and *-ğac* are acceptable. However, our Georgian consultants tend to prefer *-me* in interrogative contexts, especially with embedded clauses.

- (11) še-g-i-dzl-i-a mo-m-c-e {**romeli-ğac/romeli-me**} c'ign-i?
 PVB-2-PV-be.able-PERF-SG PVB-1-give-OPT.2SG **which-ME/ĞAC** book-NOM
 'Could you pass me a book?'

- (12) šota-m i-c-i-s, [{**romeli-me/?romeli-ğac**} st'udent'-ma
 Shota-ERG PV-know-TS-PRS.3SG **which-ME/?ĞAC** student-ERG
 c'a-i-k'itx-a tu ara tav-is-i saq'varel-i c'ign-i]
 PVB-PV-read-AOR.3SG or not REFL-GEN-NOM favorite-NOM book-NOM
 'Shota knows whether some student read his favorite book.'

In some instances, there may be a slight nuance in the two meanings (at least pragmatically). With *-me*, the speaker has no expectation that a witness to the existential quantifier actually exists, i.e. $\exists x$ such that you bought me x in w ; with *-ğac*, however, such an expectation does arise.

(13) *Context: I know that my mom went out shopping earlier. She comes back home later that day, her hands full of shopping bags, which prompts me to ask:*

a. **ra-me** m-i-qid-e?

what-ME 1-PV-buy-AOR.2SG

Did you buy me anything? (anything at all?)

b. **ra-ğac** m-i-qid-e?

what-ĞAC 1-PV-buy-AOR.2SG

Did you buy me something?

2.3 Indicative conditionals

Inside the antecedent of conditionals, both *-me* and *-ğac* can be construed as narrow scope indefinites.

- (14) *Context: Maia is the organizer of a party, and she invited many people to attend. However, on the day of the event, Maia is disappointed by the fact that no one showed up after 30 minutes of the party's start time. She is hoping/waiting for even one guest to arrive...*

tu {**vin-me/vi-ğac**} mo-v-a c'veuleba-ze, maia-s
 if **who-ME/ĞAC** PVB-COME-FUT.3SG party-on Maia-DAT
 ga-u-xar-d-eb-a
 PVB-PV.APPL-happy-INTR-TS-FUT.3SG

'If anyone/at least one person comes to the party, Maia will be happy.' (if » ∃)

However, in a different context where only the exceptional wide scope reading is available—scoping outside the *if*-clause—the *-ğac* indefinite must be used, not the *-me* indefinite.

- (15) *Context: Maia organizes another party, and this time there are many guests who arrive on time. However, there is a certain person whom Maia is hoping would show up to the party...*

tu {**vi-ğac/*vin-me**} mo-v-a c'veuleba-ze, maia-s
 if **who-ĞAC/*ME** PVB-COME-FUT.3SG party-on, Maia-DAT
 ga-u-xar-d-eb-a
 PVB-PV.APPL-happy-INTR-TS-FUT.3SG

'If someone comes to the party, Maia will be happy.' (∃ » if)

2.4 Restrictors of universal quantifiers

Another environment where *-me* and *-ǧac* indefinites are both licensed is the restrictor of universal quantifiers—though the latter is dispreferred in contexts like (16) that render an “at least one” interpretation salient, facilitated by the concessive particle *mainc* ‘still / yet / however.’

- (16) *Context: A pool of candidates are applying for a research postdoc position at UChicago. Each candidate is given three rounds of interviews, and will be hired if they pass at least one.*

q'vela k'andidat'-i, vin-c {**romeli-me/romeli-ǧac**} int'erviu-s mainc
every candidate-NOM who-REL **which-ME/ǧAC** interview-ACC still
ča-a-bar-eb-s, da-sakm-d-eb-a
PVB-PV-pass-TS-FUT.3SG PVB-hire-INTR-TS-FUT.3SG

‘Every candidate who passes some interview (out of the three) will be hired.’

Unlike the *-ǧac* indefinite, however, the *-me* indefinite cannot specifically pick out one of the three interview rounds (first, second, etc.).

2.5 Negation

So far, we have shown that *-me* indefinites are found in several DE environments: questions, modals, conditional antecedents, and restrictors of universal quantifiers. But they *cannot* be licensed in the scope of clause-mate negation—only *-ğac* indefinites are allowed here (17).

- (17) *Context: You gave a very special present to one of your friends. But it wasn't just any friend; you gave it to your best friend, because that gift was valuable and you wanted it to be given to one of the people you care about the most.*

{vi-ğac-is-tvis/*vin-m-is-tvis} ar m-i-čuk-eb-i-a es sačukar-i, sauk'eteso
who-ĞAC/*ME-GEN-for NEG 1-PV-gift-TS-PERF-3SG this gift-NOM best.DAT
megobar-s v-a-čuk-e
friend-DAT 1-PV-gift-AOR

'I didn't give this gift to ANY friend...' (I gave it to my best friend.)

However, *-me* indefinites can be licensed in other negative contexts, e.g., non-clause-mate negation. Specifically, they may occur across clause boundaries in the scope of negative quantifiers (20a) or negative lexical verbs like *uarqops* ‘to deny’ (20b). In such contexts, *-ǵac* indefinites are ambiguous between a narrow scope (non-specific) and wide scope (specific) reading:

- (20) a. **ara-vis** u-tkv-am-s, [rom {**vin-me/vi-ǵac**} mo-d-i-od-a]
 NEG-**who.DAT** PV.APPL-say-TS-PERF.3SG that **who-ME/ǵAC** PVB-COME-TS-IMPF-3SG
 ‘Nobody said that anyone/someone was coming.’
- b. giorgi-m uar-qo, [rom {**vin-me/vi-ǵac**} mo-d-i-od-a]
 Giorgi-ERG deny-AOR.3SG COMP **who-ME/ǵAC** PVB-COME-TS-IMPF-3SG
 ‘Giorgi denied that anyone/someone was coming.’

Conclusion: *-me* indefinites are polarity-sensitive weak NPIs, in the sense that they are acceptable in DE contexts excluding antimorphic (sentential negation) *and* anti-additive (negative quantifier) contexts (cf. van der Wouden 1997).

Restrictions on anti-additivity distinguish Georgian *-me* indefinites from weak NPIs in other languages like German *irgendein* (Kratzer and Shimoyama 2002), Romanian *vreun* (Fălăuș 2009), or Russian *nibud'* (Brown and Franks 1995).

What about *-ğac* indefinites? Unlike *-me* indefinites—which are obligatorily narrow scope—they are able to take exceptional wide scope out of islands, e.g., *if*-clauses. But *contra* Aloni and Degano 2022, they are able to take narrow scope optionally as well, i.e., are compatible with non-specific readings!

Here is a summary of the contexts we have examined so far:

(21)

	MODALS	POLQS (MATRIX/EMBEDDED)	CONDS	$\forall$ -RESTRICTORS	NEGATION (CLAUSE-MATE)	NEGATION (NON-CLAUSE-MATE)
- <i>me</i> indefinites	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
- <i>ǵac</i> indefinites	✓	✓ / (?)	✓	✓	✓	✓

In the environments where both *-me* and *-ǵac* are acceptable, interpretive differences may arise with regards to scope-taking possibilities. In particular, the *-ǵac* indefinites seem to provide access to a specific wide-scope reading that *-me* indefinites do not.

The next section will show that *-me* indefinites, having the profile of weak NPIs, differs from *-ǵac* indefinites in allowing existential free choice readings. However, it will be shown that no universal force is possible with either *-ǵac* nor *-me* indefinites—they can only denote existentials.

3 *me* indefinites as Free Choice Items

Many languages allow NPIs to be co-extensive with other semantic functions, e.g., English *any* or German *irgendein* have free choice interpretations (cf. Chierchia 2013). In Japanese, different particles *-ka* and *-mo* are built on *wh*-indeterminates to produce existential and universal quantificational force, respectively (Kirby 2023). A natural question to ask, then, is whether Georgian *-me* or *-ğac* indefinites permit quantificational variability of this sort, and whether they may allow FCI interpretations.

3.1 Imperatives

For *-me* indefinites, the answer is yes to FC. It has been noted for some time that imperatives allow FC readings of indefinites without universal force (Horn 1972); in Georgian, a sharp contrast arises between *-me* indefinites and *-ğac* indefinites in such contexts, with *-me* being predominantly realized:

(22) *Context: There is teacher in the classroom, and she is addressing students in her class.*

{romeli-me/*romeli-ğac} gamo-d-i-t dapa-s-tan

which-ME/*ĞAC PVB-COME-TS-IMP blackboard-DAT-with

‘Someone come to the board.’

Léa Nash (p.c.) notes that *-ğac* indefinites are not completely ruled out in imperative contexts, but are at least strongly dispreferred to their *-me* counterparts.

3.2 Comparatives

Another context in which *-me* indefinites appear to license FC interpretations is in the standard of comparatives headed by *vidre* ‘than / before’ (23).

- (23) om-i bevr-ad upro sc’rap-ad mo-d-i-s vidre **vin-me-s**
war-NOM much-ADV more quick-ADV PVB-COME-TS-PRS.3SG than **who-ME-DAT**
h-gon-i-a
3-think-PERF-PRS.3SG

‘War is coming sooner than anyone thinks.’

(Source: Rustavi 2 News)

This FC interpretation is likewise manifest in antecedents of conditionals (14).

3.3 Universal free choice?

Although *-me* indefinites yield a FC interpretation in certain contexts, they do not carry universal force. In (24), *-me* does not have a universal FC interpretation under the scope of the dynamic modal *šeudzlia* ‘is able to’; in order to convey universal FC, Georgian uses the determiner *nebismier* ‘any.’

- (24) a. maia-s še-u-dzl-i-a da-e-xmar-o-s **romeli-me** st’udent’-s
Maia-DAT PVB-PV-can-PRS.PERF-COP PVB-PV-help-OPT-3SG **WHO-ĠAC** student-DAT
‘Maya can help one of the students.’
- b. maia-s še-u-dzl-i-a da-e-xmar-o-s **nebismier** st’udent’-s
Maia-DAT PVB-PV-can-PRS.PERF-COP PVB-PV-help-OPT-3SG **any.FCI** student-DAT
‘Maya can help (any and all) of the students.’

The same pattern can be observed for free choice disjunction, which allows only the FC determiner *nebismier* ‘any’ to express universal force; *-me* indefinites cannot (25).

- (25) a. **nebismier-s** še-u-dzl-i-a enatmecniereb-is sc’avl-a, k’ac-s
 any.FCI-DAT PVB-PV-CAN-PRS.PERF-COP linguistics-GEN study-NMLZ.NOM man-DAT
 tu kal-s
 or woman-DAT
 ‘Anyone can study linguistics, man or woman.’
- b. ***vin-me-s** še-u-dzl-i-a enatmecniereb-is sc’avl-a, k’ac-s
who-ME-DAT PVB-PV-CAN-PRS.PERF-COP linguistics-GEN study-NMLZ.NOM man-DAT
 tu kal-s
 or woman-DAT
 INTENDED: ‘Anyone can study linguistics, man or woman.’

Conclusion: *-me* indefinites, like *-ščac* indefinites, are limited to existential indefinite readings.

3.4 Simple declaratives

There is one more wrinkle to consider: in affirmative episodic sentences with aorist (past perfective) or imperfect tense, only the *-ǧac* indefinite is permitted; *-me* cannot be used.

- (26) šota-m icno {**vi-ǧac**/***vin-me**}, vin-c a-t'ar-eb-d-a be-em-ve-s
Shota-ERG recognized **who-ǧAC**/***ME**, who-REL PV-ride-TS-IMPF-3SG BMW-DAT
'Shota recognized someone who was driving a BMW.'

- (27) {**vi-ǧac**/***vin-me**} c'ign-s q'id-ulob-d-a
who-ǧAC/***ME** book-DAT buy-TS-IMPF-3SG
'Somebody was buying a book.'

- (28) c'ign-ši {**vi-ǧac-as**/***vin-me-s**} purcl-eb-i amo-u-xev-i-a
book-in **who-ǧAC**/***ME-DAT** page-PL-NOM PVB-PV-tear.out-PRS.PERF-COP
'Someone seems to have torn pages out of the book.'

(Rayfield 2006:70)

Similarly, the *-me* indefinite is not allowed in present tense...

- (29) {**vi-ğac-as**/***vin-me-s**} mo-s-c'on-s tbil-i amind-i gazapxul-ze
who-ĞAC/***ME-DAT** PVB-3.OBJ-like-PRS.3SG warm-NOM weather-NOM spring-on
'Someone likes the warm weather in the spring.'

...but it becomes acceptable in the future and conditional tenses, often with concessive particle *mainc* 'still / yet/ however'!

- (30) {**vi-ğac-a**/**vin-me**} (mainc) da-a-gvian-eb-s parti-ze
who-ĞAC/**ME** still PVB-PV-COME-TS-FUT.3SG party-TO
'Someone (at least one person) will be late to the party.'

- (31) {**vi-ğac-a**/**vin-me**} (mainc) da-a-gvian-eb-d-a parti-ze
who-ĞAC/**ME** still PVB-PV-COME-TS-FUT.3SG party-TO
'Someone would be late to the party (if I hadn't sent a reminder).'

4 Two indefinites = two semantic derivations

Here is an updated summary of the environments in which *-me* and *-ğac* indefinites are attested:

(32)

	MODALS	POLQS	CONDS	$\forall$ -LEFT	NEG	IMP	COMP	DECL
<i>-me</i> indefinites	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗ / ✓	✓	✓	✗ / ✓
<i>-ğac</i> indefinites	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	? ✓	✓	✓

Distributionally, they have a pretty substantial overlap. However, as we have observed, their semantic interpretations are not always identical in these contexts.

Claim: *-me* indefinites and *-ğac* indefinites, despite both having existential force and overlapping significantly in distribution, are semantically derived independently of each other.

4.1 -*ǵac* indefinites as (Skolemized) choice functions

We start with the simpler case: -*ǵac* indefinites. As we have seen so far, these crucially differ from -*me* indefinites in licensing specific referential readings, even being able to take exceptional wide scope. Moreover, -*ǵac* indefinites are unmarked, accessible to wide scope *and* narrow scope interpretations.

Following Reinhart 1997, we propose that -*ǵac* indefinites denote **choice functions**, whose restrictor is determined by the quantificational domain of their *wh*-word (or, in the case of determiners like *rame/romelime* built from *ra* ‘what’/*romeli* ‘which’, their NP restrictor).

Predictions:

- Existential closure may apply at different stages of the semantic composition, yielding different scope interpretations;
- -*ǵac* and -*me* indefinites are both existential force, and the former is unrestricted in its scope possibilities
⇒ -*ǵac* may occur anywhere that -*me* occurs, though are dispreferred with FC interpretations.

4.2 *-me* indefinites as PSIs

-me indefinites pattern like epistemic indefinites (EIs) in that they both express a certain level of speaker ignorance and lack of commitment to a specific referent. However, unlike *-me* indefinites, EIs are perfectly acceptable in episodic, declarative contexts. This suggests they are POLARITY SENSITIVE.

Chierchia 2013: PSIs are existentials whose morphological composition triggers alternatives which must be checked by a covert exhaustification operator (EXH) in the structure in order to be interpretable.

According to Kirby 2023, particles are alternative activators that turns a regular existential into a PSI whose semantics is a product of:

- 1) the type of alternatives it activates
- 2) the type of EXH operator that interprets the configuration.

4.2.1 *-eme* indefinites in Sakha as $\exists$ FCIs (Kirby 2023)

WH-eme indefinites in Sakha (and *WH-me* indefinites in Georgian) differ from other EIs in two crucial ways; they are not licensed in declaratives (33), or with clausemate negation (39).

- (33) *Kim eme/emit beyehee iti kinige-ni aax-pīt
who EME yesterday that book-ACC read.PST.3.SG
Intended: Somebody read that book yesterday

- (34) *Min tugu eme/emit aax-pa-taay-īm.
I what.ACC EME read-NEG-PST-1SG
Intended: I didn't read anything

For Chierchia 2013, FCIs like *irgend*, *any*, and *qualsiasi* have lexically specified pre-exhaustified sub domain alternatives. However, *-eme* and *-me* indefinites have two levels of exhaustification. They activate their sub domain alternatives, as well as the alternatives of those alternatives. They also activate all their scalar alternatives

$$(35) \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} & \{p \vee q \vee r\} & \\ \{ALT(p \vee q)\} & \{ALT(q \vee r)\} & \{ALT(p \vee r)\} \\ \{ALT(p)\} & \{ALT(q)\} & \{ALT(r)\} \\ \{p \wedge q\} & \{q \wedge r\} & \{p \wedge r\} \\ & \{p \wedge q \wedge r\} & \end{array} \right\} \quad (\text{Kirby 2023})$$

4.2.2 Licensing under modals

$$(36) \quad O_{EXH}[\diamond(p \vee q \vee r)] = \diamond(p \vee q \vee r) \wedge (\diamond p \leftrightarrow \diamond q \leftrightarrow r) \wedge \neg \diamond(p \wedge q) \wedge \neg \diamond(q \wedge r) \wedge \neg \diamond(p \wedge r) \wedge \neg \diamond(p \wedge q \wedge r)$$

In the scope of a modal, the prejacent is asserted and the exhaustification gives us the meaning that :

1. Any individual sub domain alternative is possible. $[\diamond(p \vee q \vee r) \wedge (\diamond p \leftrightarrow \diamond q \leftrightarrow r)]$
2. Only one of the alternatives is possible in a given world. $[\neg \diamond(p \wedge q) \wedge \neg \diamond(q \wedge r) \wedge \neg \diamond(p \wedge r) \wedge \neg \diamond(p \wedge q \wedge r)]$

This semantics of *wh* + *-eme* / *-me* gives us a contradiction in the absence of a modal because exhaustifying over the alternatives in the absence of a modal is equivalent to denying the prejacent. But the prejacent requires at least one alternative be true.

- (37) *Min beyehee tugu eme/emit aax-pīt-īm.
 I yesterday what.ACC EME read-PST-1SG
 Intended: I read something yesterday

$$(38) \quad O_{EXH}[(p \vee q \vee r)] = (p \vee q \vee r) \wedge ((p \vee q) \leftrightarrow r) \wedge ((q \vee r) \leftrightarrow p) \wedge ((p \vee r) \leftrightarrow q) \wedge \neg(p \wedge q) \wedge \neg(q \wedge r) \wedge \neg(p \wedge r) \wedge \neg(p \wedge q \wedge r) = \perp$$

Clausemate Negation In addition to being ungrammatical in affirmative episodic contexts, *-eme* indefinites are by clausemate negation. Under a wide scope reading, the result is a contradiction as in the affirmative case 39a; and under a narrow scope reading it simply asserts the prejacent $[(p \vee q \vee r)]$ i.e the regular existential meaning 39b.

- (39) *Min tugu eme/emit aax-pa-taay-īm.
 I what.ACC EME read-NEG-PST-1SG
 Intended: I didn't read anything

- a. Intended: 'I didn't read anything' $\times[\neg > \exists]$
 b. Intended: 'There is something I didn't' $\times[\exists > \neg]$

4.2.3 *-me* indefinites vs. other narrow-scope indefinites

Given the distribution of *-me* indefinites, one might consider the possibility that they are *dependent indefinites*. Like *-me* indefinites, these take obligatory narrow scope with respect to other quantifiers, but also require covariation, e.g., Russian *nibud'*:

- (40) a. Každyj mal'čik vstretil kogo-**nibud'** iz svoix odnoklassnic
Every boy met who-**NIBUD'** of his girl-classmate
'Every boy met one of his girl classmates.' → False if they all met the same girl
- b. Petja často vstrečal kogo-**nibud'** iz svoix odnoklassnic
Petja frequently met who-**NIBUD'** of his girl-classmate
'Petja frequently met (a different) girl classmate.' (Yanovich 2005: 314)

However, *-me* indefinites do not have this covariation property — they are compatible with (and truth-conditionally required to be) singular-denoting entities. Moreover, they are not licensed in the scope of adverbial quantifiers like *xširad* 'often/frequently,' compare (40b) vs. (41).

- (41) saba-s xširad {**vi-ğac**/***vin-me**} gogo mo-s-c'on-s
Saba-DAT often **who-ĞAC**/***ME** girl PVB-3.OBJ-like-PRS.3SG
'Saba frequently likes (a different) girl.'

Takeaway: Both *-me* and *-nibud'* are classified as non-specific indefinites in Aloni and Degano 2022. Given these differences, a more fine-grained approach must be taken with respect to (non-)specificity.

Comparing WH-me, WH-eme, and WH-nibud'

	WH- <i>nibud'</i> (Russian)	WH- <i>me</i> (Georgian)
Affirmative Episodic	??	*
Negation	*	*
Distributive DP	✓	✓
Modal	✓	✓
Plural DP	✓	*
Q-adverbs	✓	*

	WH- <i>eme</i> (Sakha)	WH- <i>me</i> (Georgian)
Affirmative episodic	*	*
Negation	**	
Comparative	??	
∀ restrictor	✓	✓
Conditional	✓	✓
Before clause	✓	✓
Few	✓	
Rarely	✓	
Restriction of Only	✓	
Polar Question	✓	✓
Surprise Complement	✓	
Possibility modal	✓	✓
Necessity modal	✓	✓
Imperative	✓	✓

4.3 Concluding thoughts

We have provided an analysis for *-ġac* indefinites as denoting choice functions, and *-me* indefinites as FCIs that denote singleton alternatives licensed under modals via exhaustification.

4.3.1 Plural form for *-ġac*, not *-me*

In addition to the many differences between *-me* and *-ġac* indefinites that we have already discussed, we also note that *-ġac* indefinites are compatible with the plural marker *-ebi* but *-me* indefinites are not.

(42) a. vi-ġac
who-ĠAC
'someone'

b. vi-ġac-eb-i
who-ĠAC-PL-NOM
'some people'

(43) a. vin-me
who-ME
'someone'

b. ***vin-me-eb-i**
who-ME-PL-NOM
INTENDED: 'some people'

Recall that *-ME* is an alternative activator, turning a regular existential into a PSI. We suggest that this makes *-me* indefinites incompatible with plural marking which can combine with *WH-ġac* but not *WH-me*.

4.3.2 The mystery of ‘why’-indefinites

Another reason to support the view that *-ğac* indefinites denote choice functions, and are unmarked, is that they are productive across all *wh*-words in the language. Specifically, they differ from *-me* indefinites in also permitting an indefinite to be formed from *rat’om* ‘why,’ see (44).

(44)

	<i>ra</i> ‘what’	<i>romeli</i> ‘which’	<i>vin</i> ‘who’	<i>sad</i> ‘where’	<i>rodis</i> ‘when’	<i>rogor</i> ‘how’	<i>rat’om</i> ‘why’
<i>ğac</i> -class	rağac	romeliğac	viğac	sadğac	rodesğac	rogor(i)ğac	rat’omğac
<i>me</i> -class	rame	romelime	vinme	sadme	(r)odesme	rogor(i)me	*rat’omme
MEANING	something	some(thing)	someone	somewhere	sometime/ever	somehow	for some reason

In general, *why*-indefinites are extremely uncommon across languages (cf. English **somewhy*), though little has been said about their distribution as far as we are aware. Relatedly, reason adjuncts have been shown to adjoin very high in the clausal spine, e.g., German *weil*-clauses (Müller 2020), so the interpretive possibilities with *why*-DPs must differ from other Wh-DPs.

Some evidence from Georgian may reveal a deeper motive behind this gap in the indefinite paradigm: although -*ğac* indefinites are able to license different scope-taking configurations—wide, narrow, intermediate—*rat’omğac* differs from the others in only being able to have wide scope readings:

- (45) **rat’om-ğac** linguist’ik’-is sc’avl-a m-i-nd-a
why-ĞAC/*ME linguistics-GEN learn-NMLZ.NOM 1-PV-want-PRS.3SG
 ‘I want to study linguistics for some reason.’
 ✓ Wide scope: There’s a reason I want to study linguistics. (*want* » $\exists$)
 ✗ Narrow scope: I want there to be a reason for me studying linguistics. ($\exists$ » *want*)
- (46) a. tu **rai-me mizez-it** da-a-gvian-eb, m-e-c’qin-eb-a
 if **what-ME reason-INST** PVB-PV-be.late-TS-2SG 1-PV-be.upset-TS-PRS.3SG
 ‘If for some reason you show up late, I will be upset.’
 b. ??tu **rat’om-ğac** da-a-gvian-eb, m-e-c’qin-eb-a
 if **what-ME** PVB-PV-be.late-TS-2SG 1-PV-be.upset-TS-PRS.3SG
 INTENDED: ‘If for some reason you show up late, I will be upset.’

That **rat’omme* is unattested thus follows from the requirement that *-me* indefinites be obligatorily narrow scope. To build narrow scope indefinites denoting reason alternatives, the *me*-determiner phrase *raime mizezit* ‘for some reason’ may be used (46a).

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All remaining errors are our own.

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