Budapestet készülöm meglátogatni
Issues in Hungarian long-distance agreement

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1 Introduction

The literature on infinitival complements in Hungarian identifies several classes of verbs with different properties w.r.t. object agreement between the finite matrix verb and the object of the infinitive (É. Kiss 1987, 1989, Kálmán C. *et al.* 1989, Kenesei *et al.* 1998, den Dikken 2004, É. Kiss 2002, Szécsényi 2017, Szécsényi & Szécsényi 2017). The construction under discussion is shown in (1) and some examples are given in (2) and (3).[1]

(1) **Matrix verb with infinitival complement**
[... finite verb [$_{INF}$ infinitive (object-ACC)]]

(2) a. **Intransitive matrix verb, intransitive infinitive**

János igyekez-ett [$_{INF}$ *bemen-ni*].
János strive-3SG.PST enter-INF
'János strove to enter.'

b. **Intransitive matrix verb, transitive infinitive**

Anna igyekez-ett [$_{INF}$ *meg-tanul-ni a vers-et*].
Anna strive-3SG.PST VM-learn-INF the poem-ACC
'Anna strove to learn the poem.' (Kenesei *et al.* 1998: 33)

c. **Intransitive matrix verb, transitive infinitive**

Igyekez-lek meglátogat-ni (téged).
make effort-1SG.SBJ>2.OBJ visit-INF you.ACC
'I am making an effort to visit you.' (É. Kiss 2002: 54)

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[1] Abbreviations: 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, ACC = accusative, ADE = adessive, ADJ = adjective, ADV = adverbial, COM = comitative, COP = copula, DAT = dative, DEF = definite, ELA = elative, ILL = illative case, INDEF = indefinite, INE = inessive case, INF = infinitive, NEG = negative, OBJ = object, PL = plural, POSS = possessive, PST = past, REFL = reflexive, SBJ = subject, SG = singular, SUBL = sublative, SUPE = superessive, VM = verbal modifier.

(3)   a.   **Transitive matrix verb, intransitive infinitive**

János   meg-próbál-t   [_{INF} *bemen-ni*].
János   vm-try-pst.3sg.sbj   enter-inf
'János tried to go in.'   (É. Kiss 1989: 153)

      b.   **Transitive matrix verb, transitive infinitive**

Anna   meg-próbál-ta   [_{INF} *meg-tanul-ni   a   vers-et*].
Anna   vm-try-pst.3sg.obj   vm-learn-inf   the   poem-acc
'Anna tried to learn the poem.'   (Kenesei *et al.* 1998: 33)

A and B show the main patterns that are discussed in the literature:

A.   intransitive matrix verb

  1. intransitive infinitive   ⇒ finite verb with sbj agreement
  2. transitive infinitive, indef/def.obj ⇒ finite verb with sbj agreement
  3. transitive infinitive, 2.obj   ⇒ finite verb with *-lak/-lek* agreement

B.   transitive matrix verb

  1. intransitive infinitive   ⇒ finite verb with sbj agreement
  2. transitive infinitive, indef.obj   ⇒ finite verb with sbj agreement
  3. transitive infinitive, def.obj   ⇒ finite verb with obj agreement

Points A1 and B1 are trivial — since there is no object to agree with, the verb will not agree with anything. Points B2 and B3 are regular as well — the transitive verb is able to agree with the object of the infinitive and agrees with it in definiteness.

   A2 and A3 are the interesting cases: why can a 2nd person object trigger object agreement, but not a def 3rd person object? Are there two different types of agreement?

Claims

- the empirical picture is more complex than A2/A3 (cf. É. Kiss 1987)

⇒ speakers allow agreement with 3rd person def objects with intransitive verbs as well

- analogy with transitive verbs that take infinitival complements, cf. B2 and B3

- speaker variation can be explained via competing motivations

  – intransitive matrix verbs generally do not take acc arguments and do not agree

  – transitive matrix verbs in the same contexts agree with a non-local acc argument

⇒ speakers allow a probe on intransitive matrix verbs that agrees with the embedded object

⇒ 2nd and 3rd person object agreement can mostly appear in the same contexts

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2 Data

Intransitive predicates which are said not to agree with the ACC object of their infinitival complement (generalisation A2) include the ones in (4).

(4) **Intransitive verbs taking infinitival complements**
igyekszik 'strive'
(el)jön 'come'
jár 'go (regularly)'
készül 'prepare'
próbálkozik 'attempt'
siet 'hurry'
vágyik 'long for', ...

(5) shows transitive verbs which allow object agreement; whether agreement appears or not depends on syntactic and semantic properties of the object (Bartos 1999, É. Kiss 2002, den Dikken 2006, Coppock & Wechsler 2012, Coppock 2013, Bárány 2015).

(5) **Transitive verbs taking infinitival complements**
akar 'want'
fog (future auxiliary)
megpróbál 'try'
un 'find boring'
utál 'hate', ...

Some properties other than object agreement cross-cut the distinction between (4) and (5), e.g. movement of the verbal modifier (VM) or pre-verb (É. Kiss & van Riemsdijk 2004b).

(6) a. *János utál-ja   Mari-t   fel hív-ni   telefon-on.*
         János hate-3SG.OBJ Mari-ACC VM call-INF phone-SUPE
         'János hates to call Mary on the phone.'

     b. *János fel fog-ja   akar-ni   hív-ni   Mari-t   telefon-on.*
         János VM FUT.AUX-3SG.OBJ want-INF call-INF Mari-ACC phone-SUPE
         'János will want to call Mari on the phone.'   (É. Kiss & van Riemsdijk 2004b: 14)

2.1 Agreement of intransitive verbs with 3rd person objects

The intransitive verbs in (4) can appear with both SBJ and OBJ agreement, in exactly the same environments as the transitive verbs in (5). The data below are from Google.[2] Each example is coded with a permutation of [123], indicating the order of the finite matrix verb (1), the object (2) and the infinitive (3).

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[2] Further data are found in the Hungarian National Corpus, the "Magyar nemzeti szövegtár" (MNSZ), `http://corpus.nytud.hu/mnsz/`. See Appendix A for a list of sources and see `https://github.com/andrasbarany/icsh13/` for the full set of data.

2.1.1 First person singular subject, third person object

Examples with first person singular subjects, agreement with third person definite objects (1SG.OBJ):

(7) OBJ — finite verb — INF [213]

*A   Windows XP-t   készül-**öm**   levált-ani   linux-ra   ...*
the Windows XP-ACC prepare-1SG.OBJ change-INF linux-SUBL
'I am planning to switch from Windows XP to Linux.'

(8) OBJ — INF — finite verb [231]

Most, hogy hat nap eltelté-vel   beszámoló-m-at külde-ni készül-öm,   ...
now that six days passing-COM report-1SG-ACC send-INF prepare-1SG.OBJ
'Now that I am preparing to send my report after six days have passsed ...'

(9) finite verb — OBJ — INF [123]

azért,   mert   készül-öm   a böjt-öt fogad-ni.
for the reason because prepare-1SG.OBJ the fast-ACC welcome
'... because I am preparing to follow the fast'

(10) INF — finite verb — OBJ [312]

Elhagy-ni készül-öm   a   város-t
leave-INF prepare-1SG.OBJ the city-ACC
'I am preparing to leave the city'

2.1.2 Second person singular subject, third person object

Examples with second person singular subjects, agreement with third person definite objects (2SG.OBJ):

(11) finite verb — INF — OBJ [132]

Bocs, ha épp készül-t-ed   betanul-ni az Oxford nagyszótár-at.
sorry if just prepare-PST-2SG.OBJ learn   the Oxford big.dictionary-ACC
'Sorry if you were just preparing to learn the Oxford dictionary by heart.'

(12) finite verb — INF — OBJ [132]

Ha te   magad   próbálkoz-od összeöntöget-ni a   fűszer-ek-et   ...
if   you yourself try-3SG.OBJ mix-INF   the spice-PL-ACC
'if you try to mix the spices yourself ...'

(13) OBJ — finite verb — INF [213]

még ha csak a kameraszög-et is próbálkoz-od belő-ni
even if only the camera angle-ACC too try-3SG.OBJ shoot-INF
'even if you're only trying to get the camera angle right'

(14) finite verb — INF — *pro*; VM-climbing!

de most teljes üresség van, ha meg próbálkoz-od nyit-ni
but now complete emptiness COP if VM try-2SG.OBJ open-INF
'but now it's completely empty if you try to open it'

2.1.3 Third person singular subject, third person object

Examples with third person singular subjects, agreement with third person definite objects (3SG.OBJ):

(15) OBJ — finite verb — INF [213]

Edward Bellá-t készül-i megcsókol-ni
Edward Bella-ACC prepare-3SG.OBJ kiss-INF
'Edward is preparing to Kiss Bella.'

(16) OBJ — INF — finite verb [231]

ahogy Sam Witwicky munká-t keres, új barátnő-jé-t, Carly-t
as Sam Witwicky employment-ACC seek.3SG.SBJ new girlfriend-3SG-ACC Carly-ACC
  lenyúl-ni készül-i annak gyanús főnöke
  make off with-INF prepare-3SG.OBJ her suspicious boss
'…her suspicious boss is preparing to make off with her.'

(17) finite verb — INF — OBJ [132]

… birtok-ba készül-i ven-ni az új föld-jé-t
  possession-ILL prepare-3SG.OBJ take-INF the new land-3SG-ACC
'he wants to take his new plot of land into possession.'

(18) OBJ — finite verb — X — INF [213]

Barát-já-t szándékoz-t-a magá-val vin-ni.
friend-3SG-ACC intend-PST-3SG.OBJ REFL.3SG-COM bring-INF
'S/he intended to bring his/her friend along.' (Kiss 1977)

2.1.4 First person plural subject, third person object

Examples with first person plural subjects, agreement with third person definite objects (1PL.OBJ):

(19) INF— finite verb — OBJ [312]

… *megválaszt-juk a ruhá-nk-at, megcsinál-juk a frizurá-nk-at, az internetes*
choose-1PL.OBJ the clothes-1PL-ACC do-1PL.OBJ the hair-1PL-ACC the internet.ADJ
húspiac-on is ugyanúgy elad-ni készül-jük magunk-at.
meat market-SUPE too likewise sell-INF prepare-1PL.OBJ REFL.1PL-ACC
'… we choose our clothes, we do our hair, and in the same way we prepare to sell ourselves on the online meat market.'

(20) OBJ — finite verb — INF [213]

Akár hivatalosak vagy-unk a lagzira, akár a saját-unk-at készül-jük
if invited.PL be-1PL the wedding-SUBL if the own-1PL-ACC prepare-1PL.OBJ
megül-ni
celebrate-INF
'whether we're invited to a wedding, or we are preparing to celebrate our own'

(21) finite verb — INF — OBJ [132]

különösen, ha az autóban készül-jük hagy-ni ő-t
particularly if the car-INE prepare-1PL.OBJ leave-INF s/he-ACC
'in particular if we plan to leave her/him [a dog!] in the car'

(22) OBJ — finite verb — INF [213]

ahol közös élet-ünk elkövetkező minimum 15 év-é-t készül-jük leél-ni.
where shared life-1PL following minimum 15 year-3SG-PL prepare-1PL.OBJ live-INF
'where we prepare to spend at least 15 years of our future life together'

2.1.5 Second person plural subject, third person object

Examples with second person plural subjects, agreement with third person definite objects (2PL.OBJ):

(23) finite verb — INF — *pro*

Mennyi-ért készül-itek ven-ni?
how much-for prepare-2PL.OBJ buy-INF
'For how much are you preparing to buy it [a computer]?'

(24) finite verb — OBJ — INF [123]

azon kívül, hogy igyeksz-itek ez-t a rémálm-ot elfelejt-eni, ...
that apart that strive-2PL.OBJ this-ACC the nightmare-ACC forget-INF
'apart from the fact that you strive to forget this nightmare'

(25) finite verb — INF — OBJ [132]

Igyeksz-itek kerül-ni egymást?
strive-2PL.OBJ avoid-INF each other-ACC
'Are you making an effort to avoid each other?'

(26) finite verb — INF — OBJ [132]

Mi-vel igyekez-t-étek megnyugtat-ni magatokat, amikor elhagyott a
what-COM strive-PST-3SG.OBJ calm-INF REFL-3PL-ACC when left the
    szerelmetek több év után?
    love-3PL several year after
'How did you try to calm yourselves when your lover left you after several years?'

2.1.6 Third person plural subject, third person object

Examples with third person plural subjects, agreement with third person definite objects (3PL.OBJ):

(27) INF — finite verb — OBJ [312]

a lándzsá-ik-kal épp csikiz-ni készülik a hatalmas tappancs-á-t
the spear.POSS-PL-3PL-COM just tickle-INF prepare-3PL.OBJ the massive paw-3SG-ACC
'They are preparing to tickle his massive paw with their spears.'

(28) OBJ — finite verb — INF [213]

a fogadás elvesztés-é-ért járó büntetés-ük-et készül-ik letölt-eni.
the bet loss-3SG-for deserved punishment-3PL-ACC prepare-3PL.OBJ spend-INF
'they were preparing to sit out the punishment they got losing the bet'

(29) finite verb — INF — OBJ [132]

Ezért a német lovag-ok a 14. század-ban igyekez-t-ék
because of this the German knight-PL the 14th century-INE strive-PST-3PL.OBJ
    elfoglal-ni Litvániá-t is.
    conquer-INF Lithuania-ACC too
'Because of this, in the 14th century the German knights strove to conquer Lithuania as well.'

(30)   OBJ − X − finite verb − INF [2X13]; topical OBJ

A   fog-ak-at   már   az ókor-ban   is   igyekez-t-ék   pótol-ni.
the tooth-PL-ACC already the antiquity-INE too strive-PL-3PL.OBJ replace-INF
'They aimed to replace already in the antiquity.'

3 Distribution of agreement

3.1 Person

The examples in Section 2 show that object agreement with *third* person definite objects is found with intransitive verbs like *próbálkozik, készül* and *igyekszik*. This is true for any combination of person of subject and object where object agreement is overtly coded.

Each cell in Table 1 with ✓ has at least one attested instance of agreement with an object of that person with at least one verb. In the empty cells in Table 1, the verb forms are intransitive anyway, so there is nothing to look for. Both singular and plural subjects can agree with 3rd person objects.

Agreement with 2nd and 3rd person

✔ The difference between agreement with 2nd and 3rd person objects is quantitative, not qualitative. In other words, the data shown in Section 2 indicate that object agreement between intransitive matrix verbs and 3rd person objects of the embedded infinitival exists, with any subject person — cf. Table 1.

↓ SBJ, OBJ →	1	2	3
1SG		✓ (2c)	✓ (7)–(10)
1PL			✓ (19)–(22)
2SG			✓ (11)–(14)
2PL			✓ (23)–(26)
3SG			✓ (15)–(18)
3PL			✓ (27)–(30)

Table 1   Distribution of LDA with intransitive matrix verbs

3.2 Word orders

Examples with overt objects are coded with a permutation of [123], indicating the order of the finite matrix verb (1), the object (2) and the infinitive (3).

(31) a. [123]: (9), (24)

  b. [132]: (11), (12), (17), (21),(25), (26), (29)

  c. [213]: (7), (13), (15), (18), (20), (22) (28), (30)

  d. [231]: (8), (16)

  e. [312]: (10), (19), (27)

  f. [321]:

The orders [213] and [312] mostly indicate focusing of either the object [213] or the infinitive [312] in the matrix focus position. Both of these orders lead to adjacency between the finite verb and the object[3] but object agreement is attested without adjacency as well.

[321] order involves fronting both the infinitive (3), as a (contrastive) topic, and the object (2) as a matrix focus; a constructed example with the transitive verb *akar* is shown in (32):

(32) *Olvas-ni a   könyv-et   akar-om.*
      read-INF the book-ACC want-1SG.OBJ
      'As for reading, it is the book I want to read.'

I do not see a principled reason for ruling out [321] (as in (32)) with an intransitive verb like *igyekszik, készül*, etc., given the range of data found with other orders shown in (31).

Word orders

✔ Out of six possible permutations of the word order of the intransitive finite matrix verb, an object, and the infinitive, five are readily found. Orders are influenced by information structure, exhibiting focus and topic movement. Object agreement between an intransitive matrix verb and the object of the infinitive is thus not restricted to special word orders or special configurations of information structure.

3.3 Past tense

Den Dikken (2004) points out out that with verbs forming "come/go verb aspectual constructions" the grammaticality of object agreement, in particular 2nd person agreement, depends on tense. For example, *jön* can form a 1SG>2.OBJ form in the past but not the present tense, as shown in (33).

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[3] Maybe adjacency helps construing the object as an argument of the matrix verb; see Peredy (2009) for discussion w.r.t. object agreement.

(33) a. *Jö-tt-elek*   *meg-látogat-ni* (*téged*).
      come-PST-1SG>2.OBJ VM-visit-INF   you.ACC
      'I came to visit you.'

    b. * *Jö-lek*   *meg-látogat-ni* (*téged*).
      come-1SG>2.OBJ VM-visit-INF   you.ACC
      intended: 'I am coming to visit you.'   (den Dikken 2004: 451)

Other verbs with similar semantics and argument structure, like *jár* 'go (regularly)' can form 1SG>2.OBJ in both present and past, although as with all data presented here, there is variation in how acceptable these forms are:

(34) a. *Jár-lak*   *meg-látogat-ni* (téged*).
      go-1SG>2.OBJ VM-visit-INF
      'I go to visit you regularly.'

    b. *Jár-ta-lak*   *meg-látogat-ni* (téged*).
      go-PST-1SG>2.OBJ VM-visit-INF
      'I went to visit you regularly.'

I suggest that the reason here is not semantic, but rather morphological: past tense stems are always regular, present tense stems need not be.

Preference for past tense: morphology?

?   A reason for why past tense forms like *jö-tt-elek* 'come-PST-1SG>2.OBJ' are more acceptable than their present tense counterparts **jö(l)-lek* 'come-1SG>2.OBJ' can lie in morphology. The present tense form of *jön, megy, lenni* are irregular, while their past tense forms are regular, based on a single stem ending in *-t*. It is straightforward to form analogical (agreeing) patterns based on transitive forms in the past; this is not possible in the present tense — cf. Table 2.

3.4 More on *jár*

jár, while generally intransitive, can be used transitively with locational objects straightforwardly (also with different VMs):

(35) a. *Jár-om*   *az ut-am.*
      go-1SG.OBJ the way-1SG
      'I am going my way.'

    b. *Jár-ja*   *az ut-já-t.*
      go-3SG.OBJ the way-3SG-ACC
      'S/he is going his/her way.'

	Present	Past	Present	Past
1sg	*jöv-ök*	*jö-tt-em*	*jár-ok*	*jár-t-am*
2sg	*jö-sz*	*jö-tt-él*	*jár-sz*	*jár-t-ál*
3sg	*jön*	*jö-tt*	*jár*	*jár-t*
1pl	*jöv-ünk*	*jö-tt-ünk*	*jár-unk*	*jár-t-unk*
2pl	*jöt-tök*	*jö-tt-etek*	*jár-tok*	*jár-t-atok*
3pl	*jön-nek*	*jö-tt-ek*	*jár-nak*	*jár-t-ak*

Table 2   Present and past tense forms of *jön* 'come' (irregular) and *jár* 'go (regularly)'

In contrast to the predicates in Section 2, however, it agrees with the object of the infinitive in even fewer cases. An attested example is shown in (36).

(36)   *Két   napig   a   falu   nép-e   jár-t-a   néz-ni   a   fölakasztott*
       two day-TERM the village people-3sg go-PST-3sg.OBJ watch-INF the hung
       ember-t.
       person-ACC
       'The villagers went to watch the hung person for two days.'

Speakers' judgments on similar examples vary: agreeing *készül* seems more frequent than agreeing *jár*, but this needs to be checked in detail.

4 Towards an analysis

To the degree that it is accepted, agreement between an intransitive matrix verb and the infinitive's object is *regular*, i.e. a definite second or third person object can trigger object agreement, but an indefinite object cannot. This is schematically shown in (37).

(37)   a.   [V-SBJ ... [$_{INF}$ V DP-DEF]]   ✓

       b.   [V-OBJ ... [$_{INF}$ V DP-DEF]]   ✓

       c.   [V-SBJ ... [$_{INF}$ V DP-INDEF]]   ✓

       d.   [V-OBJ ... [$_{INF}$ V DP-INDEF]]   ✗

Transitive matrix verbs show types (37b,c). Intransitive verbs can additionally show type (37a). But neither class would show (37d), e.g. object agreement with an indefinite object.
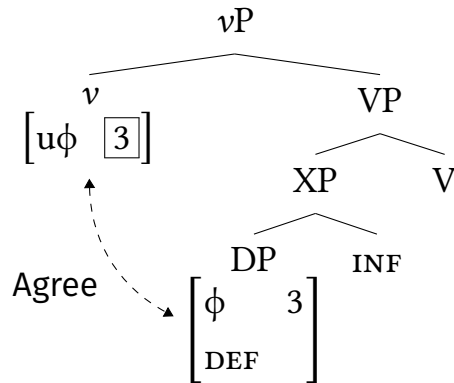   These patterns can be accounted for with a few assumptions:

- being intransitive, verbs like *készül, próbálkozik, igyekszik* etc. do not come with a φ-probe that can agree with an ACC object

- but when these verbs appear with infinitival complements, they are analogous to transitive verbs like *akar, fog* etc.
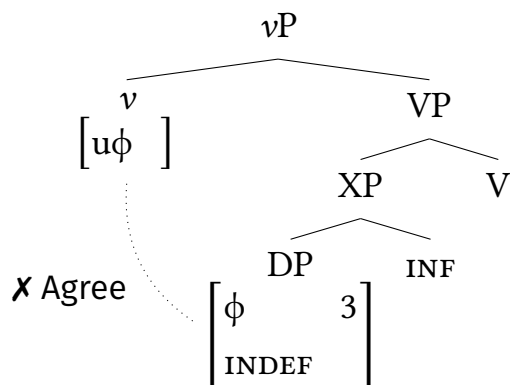
- this presumable allows speakers to construe the *intransitive* verbs as having a ϕ-probe (only with infinitival complements)

- this ϕ-probe then agrees when it can, and not otherwise
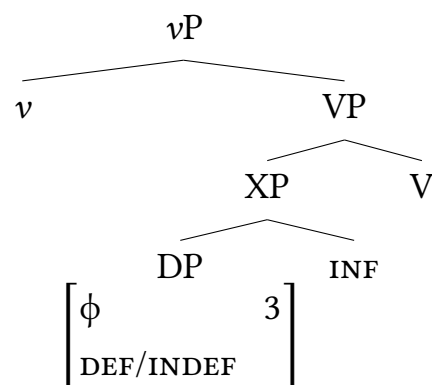
These assumptions lead to three types of derivations.

(38) a. Agreement with a definite third person object

b. No agreement with an indefinite third person object

c. No probe on intransitive *v*

Transitive verbs only allow (38a,b), but not (38c). Intransitive verbs vary: speakers who treat them analogously to transitives allow (38a,b), others allow (38c), the "standard" case. But there is no way to derive a pattern like (37d).

┌─────────────────────────── **Analysis** ───────────────────────────┐

If an intransitive with an infinitival complement has a φ-probe, it behaves like a regular transitive: if the infinitival complement's object is definite, it will agree; if the object is indefinite, it will not.

- agreement with objects of infinitival complements is regular

- the distribution of probes on intransitive verbs is more idiosyncratic

- intransitives do not have (ACC) objects, but subcategorisation for an infinitival complement can add a probe

⇛ much of the variation in agreement lies in when there can be a probe

⇛ differences between intransitive verbs: regularity of paradigms, possibly frequency?

⇛ but the variation need not be in the syntax of agreement

└──┘

5 Open questions

5.1 When are there probes?

A possible answer lies in subcategorisation: intransitive verbs that cannot take infinitival complements will never have a probe. Intransitive verbs that can take infinitival complements can have them exactly when they appear with an infinitival complement (like with cognate objects?).

5.2 Second person agreement

(39) a. *Hagy-od*   (*János-nak*) *meg-látogat-ni Péter-t.*
          let-3SG.OBJ János-DAT VM-visit-INF   Péter-ACC
          'You allow Péter to be visited (by János).'

     b. *Hagy-lak*   (*János-nak) *meg-látogat-ni* (*téged*).
          let-1SG>2.OBJ János-DAT VM-visit-INF   you.ACC
          'You let me be visited (by János).'   (den Dikken 2004: 453)

Den Dikken (2004) suggests that the obligatory absence of *Jánosnak* in (39b) indicates that agreement with a third person and agreement with a second person are different, since *-lak/-lek* is blocked by the intervening DAT.

    Another question is why and to what degree speakers *only* accept second person agreement but not third person agreement. This question has to be looked at by studying individual speakers in depth. The data above show that in general, agreement with third person is found as well.

6 Conclusions

Agreement on intransitive verbs

Intransitive verbs with infinitival complements can agree with the object of the infinitive.

- Agreement is found with third person definite objects and with second person objects
    - with any subject person
    - with different predicates
    - with different information structure, i.e. word orders
    - in the present and the past tense alike

➠ Object agreement need not be categorically different with third and second person objects

- Competing grammatical pressures can motivate agreement on intransitives
    - intransitive verbs do not select for objects: *contra* agreement
    - analogy to transitive verbs in the same contexts: *pro* agreement

Acknowledgments

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See http://github.com/andrasbarany/icsh13/ for the full data set.