

# Agreement with possessed direct objects in Hungarian

## An experimental approach

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# Overview

Intro: Object agreement and possessed NPs

The data

Surveys

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- ▶ Roughly sensitive to definiteness of the DO
- ▶ Possessed direct objects are an exception
- ▶ They can be indefinite yet require agreement
- ▶ Standard Hungarian: all possessed DOs agree
- ▶ But: dialectal variation?

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- ▶ What kind of variation do we find?
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## Methods and results

- ▶ Series of online surveys
- ▶ Acceptability judgments with and without contexts
- ▶ Forced choice tests with and without contexts
- ▶ Speakers treat all possessed DOs alike: **syntactic** trigger?

# The data

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‘Mari sees a dog.’

b. *Mari lát-ja/ %lát egy kutyá-m-at.*

M. see-3SG.OBJ see.3SG the dog-1SG.POSS-ACC

‘Mari sees a dog of mine.’

## Types of possessed NPs

- (3) a. *Mari*        (\*a) *kutyá-ja*  
      Mari.NOM (the) dog-3SG.POSS  
      ‘Mari’s dog’

Nominative possessor



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- (3) a. *Mari* (\*a) *kutyá-ja*  
Mari.NOM (the) dog-3SG.POSS  
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Nominative possessor

- b. *Mari-nak a* *kutyá-ja*  
Mari-DAT the dog-3SG.POSS  
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Dative possessor

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b. *Mari-nak a kutyá-ja*  
 Mari-DAT the dog-3SG.POSS  
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Dative possessor

c. *az ő kutyá-ja*  
 the s/he.NOM dog-3SG.POSS  
 ‘her/his dog’

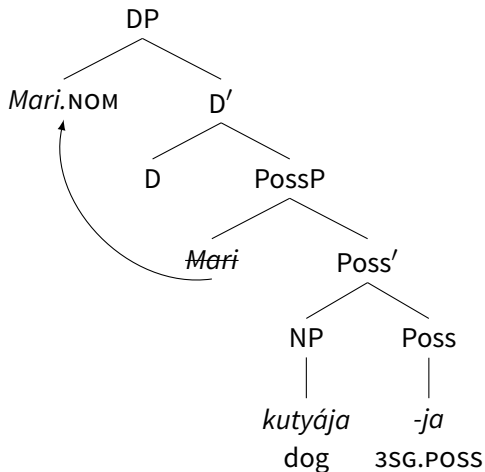
Pronominal possessor

## Types of possessed NPs

- (3) a. *Mari* (\*a) *kutyá-ja* Nominative possessor  
Mari.NOM (the) dog-3SG.POSS  
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- b. *Mari-nak a kutyá-ja* Dative possessor  
Mari-DAT the dog-3SG.POSS  
'Mari's dog'
- c. *az ő kutyá-ja* Pronominal possessor  
the s/he.NOM dog-3SG.POSS  
'her/his dog'
- Distribution suggests different heights in the NP (Bartos 1999; den Dikken 1999; Dékány 2015)

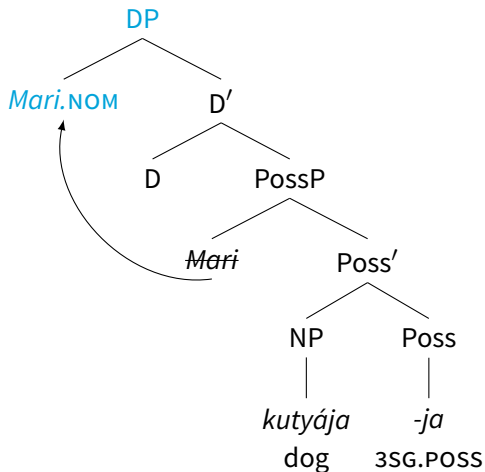
# Structures: NOM possessor

(4)

*Mari kutyája* 'Mari's dog'

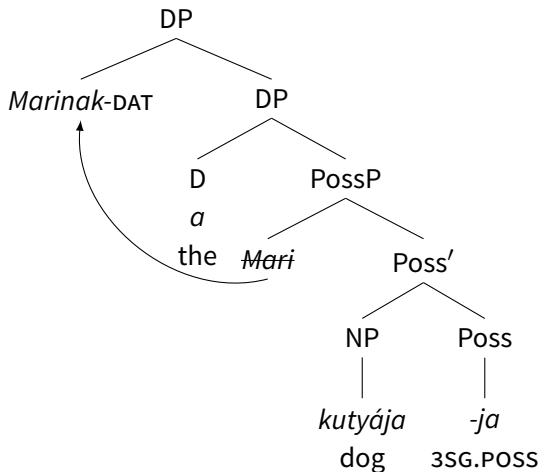
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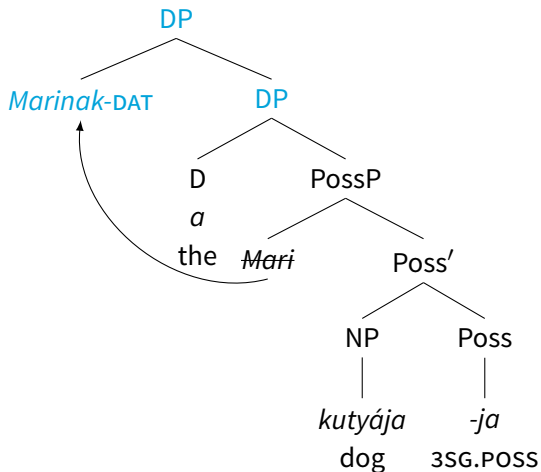
# Structures: DAT possessor

(5)

*Marinak a kutyája* 'Mari's dog'

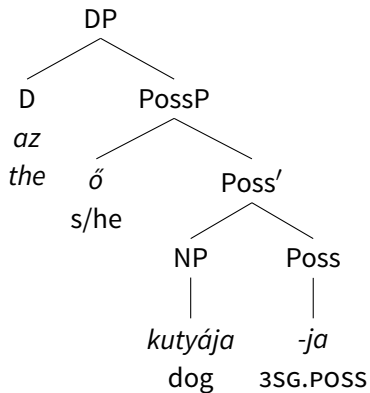
# Structures: DAT possessor

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# Structures: pronominal possessor

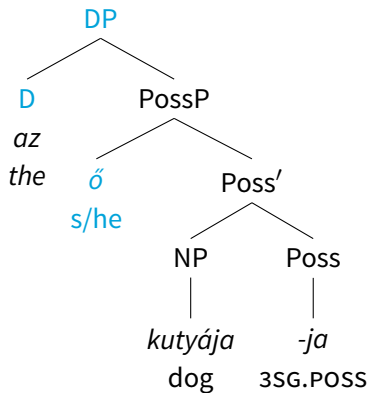
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# Syntactic and semantic properties

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- ▶ Dative possessors can be extracted (Szabolcsi 1994)

(7) a. *Mari-nak van kutyá-ja.*  
Mari-DAT is dog-3SG.POSS  
'Mari has a dog/dogs.'

b. \**Mari van kutyá-ja.*  
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- ▶ Only extracted possessors in definiteness effect-contexts (7a)

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## Extraction

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- ▶ Non-specific reading in (7a)

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# Variation

- ▶ Szabolcsi (1994): DOs with extracted possessors show variation

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- ▶ **Semantic agreement?** only specific DOs agree

- (8) a. %*Chomsky-nak nem olvas-t-ál vers-é-t.*  
           Chomsky-DAT NEG read-PST-2SG poem-3SG.POSS-ACC  
           ‘You haven’t read a poem of Chomsky’s.’
- b. *Chomsky-nak nem olvas-t-ad vers-é-t.*  
       Chomsky-DAT NEG read-PST-2SG.OBJ poem-3SG.POSS-ACC  
       ‘You haven’t read a poem of Chomsky’s / Chomsky’s poem.’

# What triggers object agreement?

- ▶ Syntax? DP structure

(Bartos 1999)



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- ▶ Finding out which factors determine variation ...
- ▶ ... and agreement

# Surveys

# Acknowledgements

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