

This paper reports results of a series of surveys of possessive constructions in Hungarian and their behaviour with respect to object agreement. Hungarian has differential object agreement: while all subjects trigger agreement with the verb (glossed as *SBJ*), a proper subset of direct objects (DOs) triggers additional object agreement (glossed as *OBJ*). In (1a), the verb agrees with the subject only, in (1b), it agrees with both the subject and the object.

- Definiteness (as in (1)) is not a perfect predictor of object agreement. With respect to possessed direct objects, Szabolcsi (1994), É. Kiss (2000) suggest that there are two varieties of Hungarian: one group, the “standard”, requires object agreement with *all possessed DOs*, independently of their interpretation. Another variety, the “non-standard”, makes a semantic distinction: non-specific possessed DOs co-occur with subject agreement only (sBJ), while specific and definite possessed DOs trigger object agreement (oBJ). A relevant example is shown in (2), which is only acceptable for a subset of Hungarian speakers.

- In previous surveys, we have not found a significant number of speakers who accept examples like (2). One reason for this is the absence of a determiner (participants consistently judged examples with determiners higher than those without). Another reason is the ambiguity of examples like (2): for “standard” speakers, there is no morphosyntactic difference between specific and non-specific readings, which makes it difficult to control for effects of interpretation.

(3) a. *Hív-j-ál* *be egy titkárnő-m-et.* SBJ, non-specific DO
 call-IMP-2SG.SBJ in a secretary-POSS.1SG-ACC
 ‘Call in a secretary of mine.’

b. *Hív-d* *be egy titkárnő-m-et.* OBJ, non-specific DO
 call-IMP.2SG.OBJ in a secretary-POSS.1SG-ACC
 ‘Call in a secretary of mine.’

2 Tests Participants were asked to judge sentences like (3) on a seven-point Likert scale, to choose one of two alternatives like (3a,b), and to fill in a verb form in a gap: *possessed DO*.

1

4 Conclusions Our results suggest that ...

References **Abbott**, B. 2010. *Reference*. Oxford University Press. **É. Kiss**, K. 2000. The Hungarian noun phrase is like the English noun phrase. In G **Alberti** & I **Kenesei** (eds.), *Approaches to Hungarian*, 119–149. JATEPress. **Szabolcsi**, A. 1994. The noun phrase. In F **Kiefer** & K **É. Kiss** (eds.), *The syntactic structure of Hungarian*, vol. 27, 179–274. Academic Press.