

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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Object agreement in Hungarian

- (1) a. *Mari lát egy kutyá-t.*
M. see.3SG a dog-ACC
'Mari sees a dog.'

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- ▶ Possessed direct objects are an exception

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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?

This presentation

Questions

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Methods and results

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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

Object agreement

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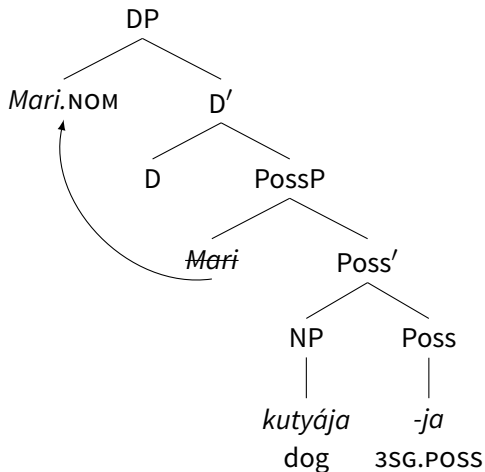
b. *Mari lát-ja/ %lát egy kutyá-m-at.*

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

‘Mari sees a dog of mine.’

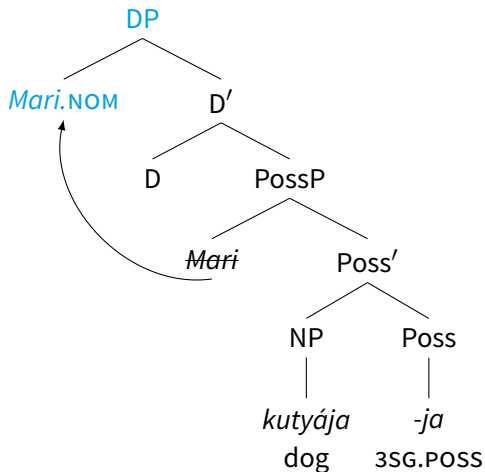
Structures: NOM possessor

(4)

Mari kutyája 'Mari's dog'

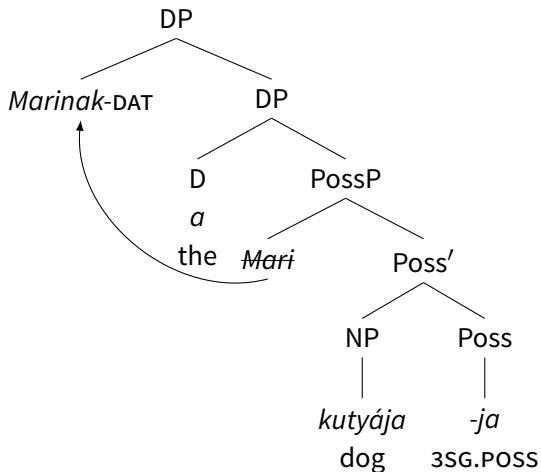
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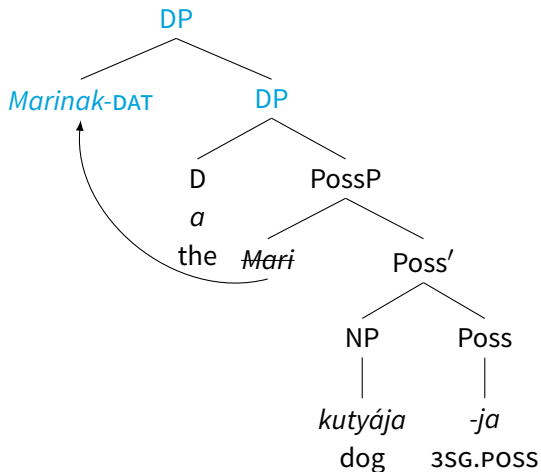
Structures: DAT possessor

(5)

Marinak a kutyája 'Mari's dog'

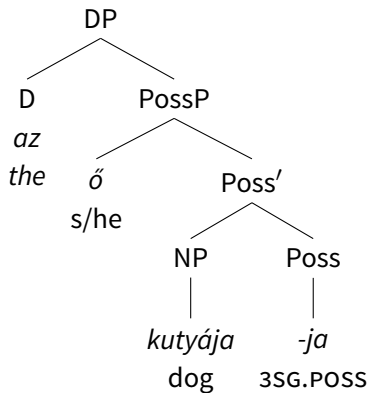
Structures: DAT possessor

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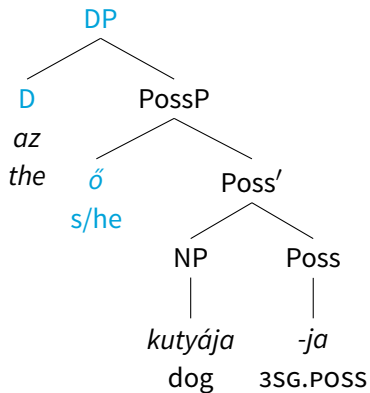
Structures: pronominal possessor

(6)

az ő kutyája 'her/his dog'

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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.'

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Mari.NOM is dog-3SG.POSS

Syntactic and semantic properties

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- ▶ Only extracted possessors in definiteness effect-contexts (7a)

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- ▶ Non-specific reading in (7a)

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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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- ▶ Mapping the variation
- ▶ Determining which factors cause variation ...
- ▶ ... and determine agreement

Surveys

Acknowledgements

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