REVISITING POSSESSORS IN HUNGARIAN DPs: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This paper offers a new LFG analysis of possessive DPs in Hungarian. This account is designed to overcome two difficulties that the majority of previous generative approaches had to face: *(a)* the problem of the (a)symmetrical cohead relationship between the noun head and the possessive marker *(b)* the problem of dual theta role assignment in GB (or its LFG equivalent) when the noun head is relational and the possessive marker is also considered an argument taking predicate. The new account postulates that a lexical predication template converts an ordinary, nonrelational noun into a "raising" type predicate with an (XCOMP) propositional argument and a nonthematic (POSS) function. The possessive marker is the predicate of the (XCOMP), and its open (POSS) argument is functionally controlled by the (POSS) of the raising predicate. The same lexical predication template is assumed to apply to relational nouns except that, as a result, they become "equi" predicates, that is, the (POSS) function introduced by the template is assigned to one of their arguments. This approach solves the above-mentioned problems, and it has several additional advantages.

1. Introduction

In the past two decades, several generative (GB, LFG, MP) analyses of Hungarian DPs in general and possessive DPs in particular have been developed. Most of them adopt or adapt some central insightful generalizations of Szabolcsi (1994). However, minimally there are two salient aspects of Szabolcsi's account, and those of other accounts sharing these aspects, that can be shown to be problematic (or at least these solutions can be taken to be rather marked in the given frameworks).

The first problem is that on these accounts the Poss predicate (that is, the possessive marker), realized by a morpheme attaching to the possessed noun, is minimally the central (co)head of the noun phrase; however, the possession relationship is DP/NP internal, not visible from "outside". This fact is only captured in a brute force manner.

The second problem is an instance of marked theta role assignment when both the Poss predicate and the relational (or deverbal) noun head are theta role assigners: the former is assumed to assign a formal theta role, and the latter is assumed to assign a contentful theta role.

The goal of this paper is to develop a more coherent (morpheme-based) LFG analysis that solves both these problems. I also show that it has additional favourable properties. The crucial aspect of the new solution is that a conversion process creates a "raising" predicate from an ordinary noun and an "equi" predicate from a relational/deverbal noun, and Poss attaching to this converted noun is the predicate of the propositional (XCOMP) argument of this raising or equi noun head.

The paper has the following structure. In section 2, I give a brief overview of some salient generative analyses of Hungarian possessive DPs and highlight two general problems most of them have to face, then I summarize Bresnan's (2001) account of English possessive constructions. In section 3, I present my new analysis. First, I analyze possessive DPs with ordinary noun heads (3.1). Second, I extend this approach to possessive constructions with relational/deverbal heads (3.2). Third, I discuss the most significant and most favourable aspects of the new account (3.3). In section 4, I reiterate the most important points of the paper.

2. Some previous generative accounts

In section 2.1 I discuss a basic assumption shared by several recent generative approaches to possessive DPs in Hungarian (2.1.1), and highlight those aspects of previous analyses that are directly relevant for our present purposes with special emphasis on the two central problems to be addressed (2.1.2-2.1.4). In section 2.2 I briefly show Bresnan's (2001) treatment of English possessive DPs, as it partially motivated my new account.

2.1. Hungarian possessive constructions

2.1.1. A basic assumption

It is a fairly generally accepted assumption that it is feasible to distinguish the Poss and the Agr morphemes (although they are often "fused"), cf. Szabolcsi (1994), Komlósy (1998, 2002), Bartos (2000), É. Kiss (2002). In my previous work, e.g. in Laczkó (1995, 2000), I did not adopt this assumption, neither did Chisarik and Payne (2003). On the basis of some new data, in my current analysis I also subscribe to this separation view. The standard argument for the separation is that in certain cases there is a morpheme intervening between the Poss morpheme and the Agr morpheme, cf. (1a), in which the intervening morpheme encodes the plurality of the possessed noun. In (1b) the Agr morph also encodes what under ordinary circumstances Poss expresses (in addition to the always unmarked singularity of the possessed noun). In (1c), by contrast, according to several analyses, the Poss morph also encodes 3SG (Agr) (again, in addition to the always unmarked singularity of the possessed noun).

(1)   a. (az én)   kalap-ja-i-m
            the I   hat-*Poss*-PL-*1SG*
            'my hats'

        b. (az én)   kalap-om
            the I   hat-*Poss*.SG.*1SG*
            'my hat'

c. (az ő)   kalap-ja
   the he   hat-*Poss*.SG.*3SG*
   'his hat'

In addition to the widely cited case in (1a), I have found a new and very strong argument for this separation: the use of emphatic pronouns in possessive constructions. The crucial point here is that when the possessor is an emphatic pronoun, the presence of the Agr morpheme on the possessed noun is strictly prohibited:

(2)   (emph.)pronoun-Agr   +   N-Poss(*-Agr)   /   N-Poss(*.Agr)

It is always the emphatic pronoun that is marked for agreement, and agreement marking on the noun head either by a separate morph or by fusion leads to ungrammaticality. In this construction type, of the two morphemes in question, it is only Poss that can (and must) be present.
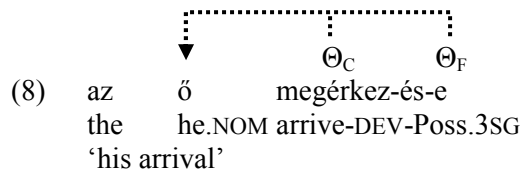
(3)   a. a   mag-am   diák-ja   (*diák-om)
           the   self-1SG   student-Poss   student-Poss.1SG
           'my own student'

        b. a   mag-atok   diák-ja   (*diák-otok)
           the   self-2PL   student-Poss   student-Poss.2PL
           'your own student'

Let me also point out in this connection that this construction type lends considerable support to the assumption that relational/deverbal nouns are also combined with the same Poss predicate in possessive constructions.

(4)   a. a   mag-am   elárul-ás-a   (*elárul-ás-om)
           the   self-1SG   betray-DEV-Poss   betray-DEV-Poss.1SG
           'my own betrayal'

        b. a   mag-atok   elárul-ás-a   (*elárul-ás-otok)
           the   self-2PL   betray-DEV-Poss   betray-DEV-Poss.2PL
           'your own betrayal'

This calls for a uniform analysis of possessive constructions with ordinary noun heads, on the one hand, and relational/deverbal noun heads, on the other hand.

2.1.2. Szabolcsi (1994)

In Szabolcsi's (1994) classical GB analysis the noun head and the Poss make up a complex predicate in the lexicon. The theta role assigner is the Poss. According to Szabolcsi, this is formal theta role assignment.

(5)   az   ő   kalap-ja
        the he.NOM hat-Poss.3SG
        'his hat'

Szabolcsi (1994: 197) provides the following interpretation for a possessive DP like (5).

(6) $\lambda x \lambda y [N(x)\ \&\ R(y,x)]$
        'the set of pairs where x is a N and bears some relation R to y, and the range of y is restricted by the agr features'

As a rule, in these possessive constructions Poss equals R, and in the case of (5) N equals *hat*.

In my opinion the problem with the formula in (6) is that it does not satisfactorily capture the fact that the Poss, although it is assumed to be, and it is represented as, a copredicate in the complex lexical predicate, is subordinate to the noun head copredicate, cf.:

(7)   a. *'the possession of the hat by him'

       b. 'the hat that is possessed by him'

This is the first general problem I set out to solve here. It is characteristic of all Chomskyan approaches to Hungarian possessive DPs that adopt Szabolcsi's complex predicate analysis (whether this complex predicate is created in the lexicon, cf. Szabolcsi (1994), or in the syntax, cf. Bartos (2000) and É. Kiss (2002)) and it is equally characteristic of my previous LFG accounts, cf. Laczkó (1995, 2000).

The second general problem with Szabolcsi's and several other authors' approach (cf., again, Bartos (2000) and É. Kiss (2002), for instance) is related to possessive DPs with relational/deverbal noun heads. In these cases Szabolcsi postulates that both elements of the complex predicate assign their respective theta roles to one and the same constituent, the possessor. Again, the Poss predicate has its formal role to assign, while the argument-taking noun head is taken to assign a contentful role. In (8), for example, the

deverbal head assigns the theme role it has inherited from the input verbal predicate.

(8) az   ő   megérkez-és-e
     the   he.NOM arrive-DEV-Poss.3SG
     'his arrival'

with diagram showing Θ_C and Θ_F above megérkez-és-e

Obviously, this is a rather marked theta theoretical scenario. If the assignment of the formal role by itself can satisfy Theta Theory in the case of ordinary noun heads, cf. (7), then in the case of relational/deverbal heads the classical version of the Theta Criterion is inevitably violated. Naturally, the criterion can be, and it has been, loosened, cf. É. Kiss and Szabolcsi (1992), for instance, but the unquestionably marked aspect of this solution remains. My new analysis to be presented in this paper eliminates this problem as well.

It is also noteworthy that the semantic subordination of Poss to the noun head is even more surprising in the light of this dual theta role assignment mechanism. Szabolcsi claims that formal theta role assignment by Poss is instrumental in contentful theta role assignment by relational/deverbal nouns, that is, the latter is formally dependent on the former. In this respect, of the two copredicates one would expect Poss to be superior to, or at least equal to, but definitely not subordinate to, the relational/deverbal noun head.

2.1.3. Laczkó (2000)

In my LFG analysis in Laczkó (2000) I do not separate Poss and Agr and in this respect I assume complex possession morphology. In addition, I postulate that this possessive morphological complex does not behave in a uniform fashion.

(A) When it attaches to ordinary noun heads, it encodes agreement features, on the one hand, and it introduces an argument taking predicate (π) expressing extrinsic possession in the terminology of Barker (1995), or a general R-relation, cf., for instance, Szabolcsi (1994). The sole argument of this predicate has the "extrinsic possessor" (Π_e) semantic role, cf.:

(9)   a. *kalap*, N PRED = 'HAT'

    b. *-(j)A₁*, [N__]ₙ '$\pi <\Pi_e>$'
                         (POSS)
      ($\uparrow$POSS PERS) = 3
      ($\uparrow$POSS NUM) = SG
      (($\uparrow$POSS PRED) = 'pro')

    c. *kalap-ja*, N PRED = 'HAT-$\pi <\Pi_e>$'
                                   (POSS)
      ($\uparrow$POSS PERS) = 3
      ($\uparrow$POSS NUM) = SG
      (($\uparrow$POSS PRED) = 'pro')

(B) When the possessive morphological complex attaches to a relational noun, which is an argument taking predicate, and it expresses intrinsic possession in the sense of Barker (1995), then this complex only encodes agreement features, and does not introduce a predicate. Compare (9b) and (10b).

(10)   a. *apa*, N PRED = 'FATHER $< \Pi_i >$'
                            (POSS)

    b. *-(j)A₂*, [N__]ₙ
      ($\uparrow$POSS PERS) = 3
      ($\uparrow$POSS NUM) = SG
      (($\uparrow$POSS PRED) = 'pro')

    c. *ap-ja*, N PRED = 'FATHER $<\Pi_i>$'
                            (POSS)
      ($\uparrow$POSS PERS) = 3
      ($\uparrow$POSS NUM) = SG
      (($\uparrow$POSS PRED) = 'pro')

I treat possessive constructions with an argument taking deverbal noun head in a similar fashion.

This approach also faces the first general problem I pointed out in section 2.1.2. It can only capture the embedded nature of the possession relationship in a brute force way when the possessive morphological complex attaches to an ordinary noun head, because here, too, the two elements are taken to be on a par ("predicate composition" is assumed to take place).

The second general problem does not arise in this analysis, that is, there is no LFG style "dual" theta role assignment, because when the possessive morphological complex attaches to an argument taking noun head then it has no argument. Thus, the possessor is only an argument of the noun head. However, the cost of this is that this account cannot provide a uniform treatment of possessive constructions with either ordinary or relational/deverbal noun heads.

2.1.4. Komlósy (1998)

Komlósy's (1998) LFG analysis has the following major aspects to it. He separates Poss and Agr (of course, he also has to deal with cases of fusion). However, according to him Poss never encodes a predicate: in all its uses, it only introduces an existential constraint to the effect that there must be a (POSS) grammatical function in the construction. For the sake of easy comparison between Komlósy (1998) and Laczkó (2000), below I represent the version of the *-(j)A* morph in Komlósy's system that also carries agreement features.

(11) *-(j)A:* [N__]$_N$
       (↑POSS)
       (↑POSS PERS)= 3
       (↑POSS NUM)= SG
       ((↑POSS PRED)= 'pro')

Possessive constructions with relational/deverbal noun heads can be analyzed along these lines in a straightforward and principled manner. Poss introduces the (POSS) function, and this function is assigned to an argument of the relational/deverbal noun.

(12) *kocogás-a:*   N, (↑PRED)= 'JOGGING < (↑POSS) >'
       (↑POSS PERS)= 3
       (↑POSS NUM)= SG
       ((↑POSS PRED)= 'pro')

It is easy to see that this solution, too, avoids the second general problem discussed in section 2.1.2: there is no "dual theta role assignment" here, either.

When Komlósy's Poss (without any argument structure) attaches to an ordinary noun head, the following lexical form is created. (For the sake of easy comparison, here, too, the version of the *-ja* morph is represented that also encodes 3SG agreement features.)

(13) *kalap-ja:* N, (↑PRED)= 'KALAP'
    (↑POSS)
    (↑POSS PERS)= 3
    (↑POSS NUM)= SG
    ((↑POSS PRED)= 'pro')

On the face of it, it seems that this approach solves, in a trivial way, the first general problem discussed in section 2.1.2, the need for capturing the embedded nature of the possession relationship: such a semantic relationship is simply not introduced.

There are, however, three major problems with this analysis.

(A) In the case of ordinary noun heads coherence is violated. The (meaningful) possessor constituent in such constructions has the subcategorized (POSS) function; however, it is not a semantic argument of any predicate.

(B) Given that the (POSS) grammatical function is subcategorizable on Komlósy's account, too, but it is nonsemantic, cf. point (A), Komlósy is bound to state that the proper interpretation of the constituent receiving this function is adjunct-like in possessive constructions with ordinary noun heads. Thus, in addition to the coherence violation, the analysis has to face the problem of adjunct-like interpretation of the possessor in DPs with ordinary noun heads vs. argument-like interpretation of the possessor in DPs with relational/deverbal heads.

(C) This approach cannot capture the fact that (POSS) cannot be assigned to expletive elements in either Hungarian or English. This is especially significant in the case of deverbal noun heads. Poss introduces the (POSS) grammatical function, which on this account is always nonsemantic, and it is puzzling why a noun derived from a verb allowing an expletive subject or object is not compatible with an expletive possessor in either of these two languages.

2.2. Possessors in English: Bresnan (2001)

The essence of Bresnan's (2001) account of English possessive constructions is as follows. The lexical form of an ordinary noun without a predicate argument structure is augmented with a lexical predication template introducing a "subject" of predication, hence the term predication template.

(14) a. *hat₁*, N 'HAT < >'   →   b. *hat₂*, N 'HAT-OF <(↑POSS)>'

In effect, a lexical conversion process creates a relational noun from an ordinary, nonrelational one. The newly introduced argument is assumed to have subject-like properties.

In my new analysis to be proposed in the next section, I apply a conversion process similar to this in spirit; however, there are significant differences as far as the details are concerned.

3. The new approach

Contrary to my earlier view, in this new analysis I separate Poss and Agr, cf. the discussion in section 2.1.1. I set out to solve the two general problems of (i) modelling the "embedded" nature of the possession relationship and (ii) avoiding dual (parallel) theta role assignment. In addition, I aim at developing a uniform treatment of possessive constructions with either ordinary or argument taking (relational/derived) noun heads.

3.1. Ordinary nouns and possession

It is a generally held view that possession is a predicative relationship, cf. Szabolcsi (1994), den Dikken (1999), Laczkó (2000), Bresnan (2001), Chisarik and Payne (2003). In my new account I capture this relationship in an explicit morphosyntactic fashion that directly feeds semantics: the predicate of this possession relationship is Poss, which has one argument that receives the semantically unrestricted (POSS) grammatical function, cf.:

(15) -*(j)A*, [N__]$_N$ 'π | x is related to y | < (↑POSS) >'
$$y$$

This analysis is similar to that of attributive "relational" adjectives according to which these adjectives (and attributive adjectives in general) have no subject argument in their predicate argument structure, cf.:

(16) *proud*, A 'x is proud of y < (↑OBL) >'
$$y$$

Let me point out in this connection that technically a subject argument approach could also be applied, compare (15) and (16), on the one hand, and (17) and (18), on the other hand.

(17) *proud*, A 'x is proud of y < (↑SUBJ) (↑OBL) >'
$$x \qquad y$$
$$\text{'pro'}$$

(18) -*(j)A*, [N__]$_N$ 'π | x is related to y | < (↑SUBJ) (↑POSS) >'
$$x \qquad y$$
$$\text{'pro'}$$

For lack of space, here I cannot discuss the motivation for choosing the morphosyntactically simpler treatment shown in (15).

The two crucial aspects of the new account are the following.

(i) In Bresnan's (2001) predication template manner I postulate a lexical redundancy rule that converts an ordinary noun without an argument structure into a one-place nominal predicate.

(ii) This nominal predicate is a raising predicate, just like the verb *seem*.

Consider (19) illustrating this conversion process.

(19) a. *kalap₁*, N 'HAT $< >$' $\rightarrow$

b. *kalap₂*, N 'HAT $<$ ($\uparrow$XCOMP) $>$' ($\uparrow$POSS)
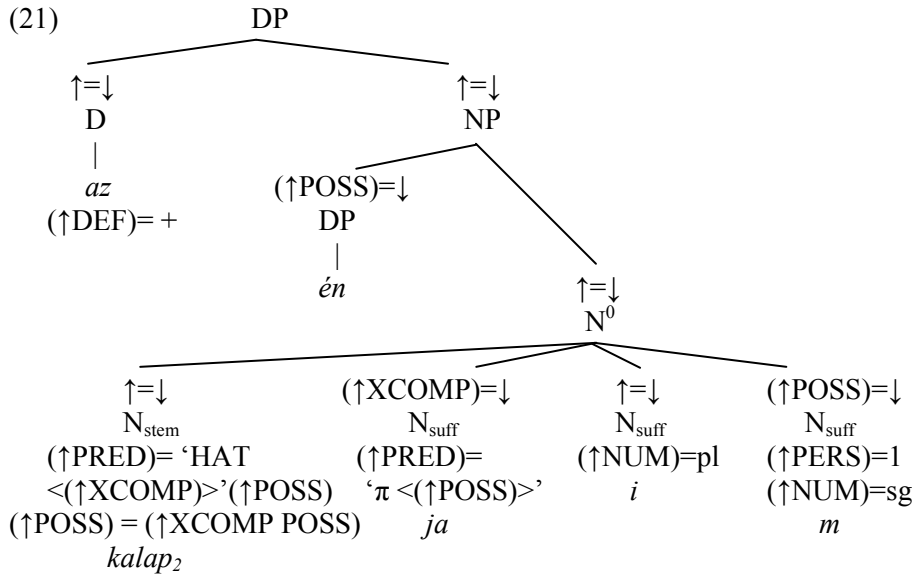($\uparrow$POSS)= ($\uparrow$XCOMP POSS)

Thus, the fundamental difference between Bresnan's (2001) template and mine is that the former simply introduces an argument structure with a possessor argument, while the latter introduces an argument structure with a propositional argument mapped onto (XCOMP), and also associated with a nonsemantic (POSS) function. The propositonal (XCOMP) requirement is, as a rule, satisfied by Poss attaching the the *kalap₂* type noun head.

For the purposes of the presentation of my new analysis in this paper, I assume that in the nominal domain, in terms of semantically unrestricted functions, nominal predicates can only have (POSS) at their disposal, and this function is always introduced by the predication template. (This assumption is highly relevant in the case of possessive constructions with relational/deverbal noun heads.)

Let us now see the new account of a possessive construction like (1a), repeated here as (20) for convenience.

(20) (az   én)   kalap-ja-i-m
the   I   hat-*Poss*-PL-*1SG*
'my hats'

I show the c-structure of (20) in (21). For expository purposes I also include sublexical representation so that the f-structure contribution of each morph should be easily detectable. The lexical form of the complex noun head as used in this particular case is given in (22). I present the simplified f-structure of (20) in (23).

(21)

$$\begin{array}{c}\text{DP}\end{array}$$

Tree diagram:

DP
- $\uparrow=\downarrow$ / D / az / $(\uparrow\text{DEF})=+$
- $\uparrow=\downarrow$ / NP
  - $(\uparrow\text{POSS})=\downarrow$ / DP / $\acute{e}n$
  - $\uparrow=\downarrow$ / N^0
    - $\uparrow=\downarrow$ / N$_{\text{stem}}$ / $(\uparrow\text{PRED})=$ 'HAT $<(\uparrow\text{XCOMP})>$'$(\uparrow\text{POSS})$ / $(\uparrow\text{POSS})=(\uparrow\text{XCOMP POSS})$ / $kalap_2$
    - $(\uparrow\text{XCOMP})=\downarrow$ / N$_{\text{suff}}$ / $(\uparrow\text{PRED})=$ '$\pi<(\uparrow\text{POSS})>$' / ja
    - $\uparrow=\downarrow$ / N$_{\text{suff}}$ / $(\uparrow\text{NUM})=$pl / i
    - $(\uparrow\text{POSS})=\downarrow$ / N$_{\text{suff}}$ / $(\uparrow\text{PERS})=1$ / $(\uparrow\text{NUM})=$sg / m

(22)   kalapjaim, N $(\uparrow\text{PRED})=$ 'HAT $<(\uparrow\text{XCOMP})>$' $(\uparrow\text{POSS})$
$(\uparrow\text{POSS})=(\uparrow\text{XCOMP POSS})$
$(\uparrow\text{XCOMP PRED})=$ '$\pi<(\uparrow\text{POSS})>$'
$(\uparrow\text{NUM})=$pl
$(\uparrow\text{POSS PERS})=1$
$(\uparrow\text{POSS NUM})=$sg

(23)

$$\begin{bmatrix}
\text{PRED} & \text{'HAT} <(\uparrow\text{XCOMP})>\text{'}(\uparrow\text{POSS}) \\
\text{NUM} & \text{pl} \\
\text{DEF} & + \\
\text{CASE} & \text{nom} \\
\text{POSS} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'pro'} \\ \text{PERS} & 1 \\ \text{NUM} & \text{sg} \\ \text{CASE} & \text{nom} \end{bmatrix} \\
\text{XCOMP} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'}\pi<(\uparrow\text{POSS})>\text{'} \\ \text{POSS} & \text{------} \end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix}$$
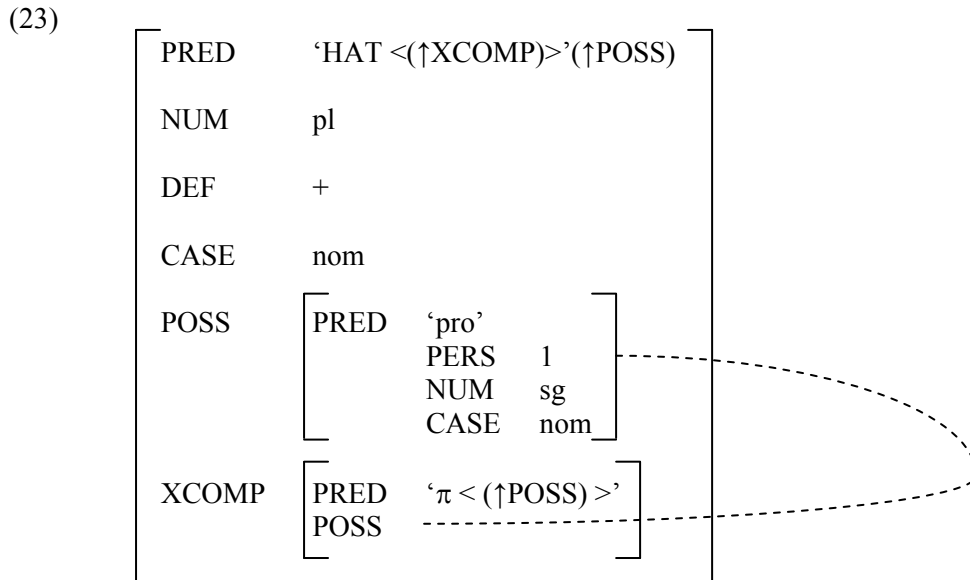
As this f-structure representation shows, my new account provides a principled solution to the first general problem: modelling the embedded nature of the possessive relationship. The noun head selects this relationship as its propositional argument carrying the (XCOMP) function, in other words, possession is subordinate to the noun head.

3.2. Argument taking nouns in possessive constructions

The new account can be extended to argument taking nouns in a principled manner, and, thus, it makes a uniform analysis of possessive constructions with ordinary and argument taking predicates possible. I assume that an argument taking noun undergoes the same conversion process, that is, the same lexical predication template applies to it, introducing the propositional argument expressing the possessive relationship. The minimal contrast is that the (POSS) function introduced by this conversion is assigned to the argument (or one of the arguments) of the relational/deverbal noun, in other words: the conversion makes argument taking nouns equi (rather than raising) predicates.

(24)   a. $h\acute{u}g_1$, N 'YOUNGER-SISTER-OF $< \Theta >$'

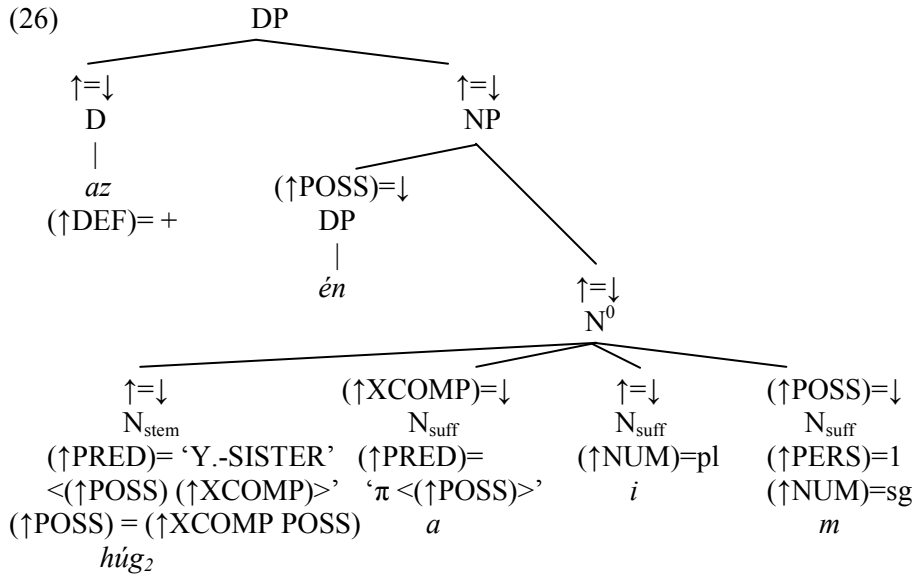   b. $h\acute{u}g_2$, N 'YOUNGER-SISTER-OF $< (\uparrow POSS) (\uparrow XCOMP) >$'
                        $(\uparrow POSS) = (\uparrow XCOMP\ POSS)$

The following legitimate question could be raised in connection with (24a): Why does such a predicate need the lexical predication template? Why does it not assign the (POSS) function to its argument in a direct manner? My answer is this. I assume that nouns in general, whether ordinary or argument taking, are incapable of assigning this function. In the nominal domain mapping of an argument onto the (POSS) function is exclusively licensed by the predication template.
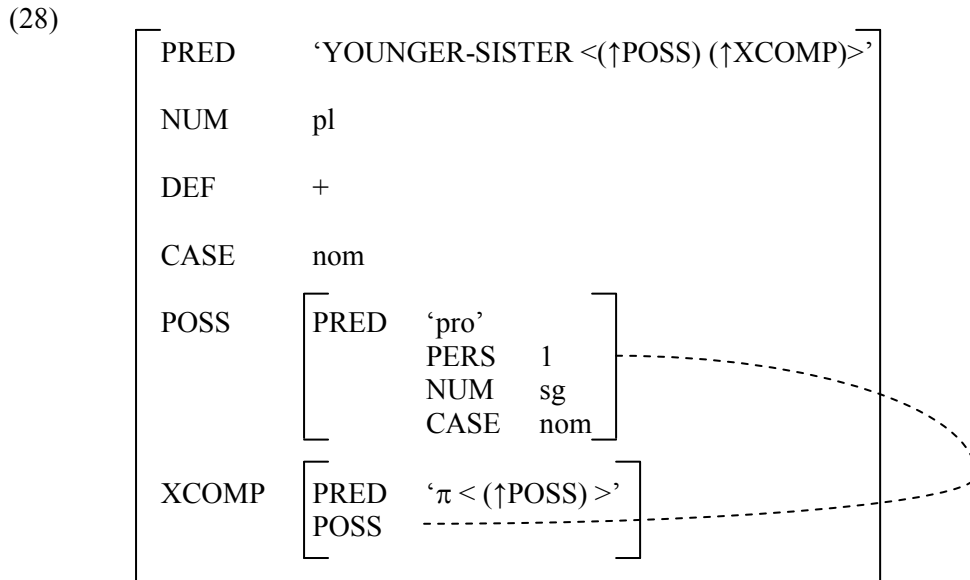
Let us now see the details of the new analysis of relational nouns through the example of (25).

(25)   (az   én)   húg-a-i-m
        the   I   younger.sister-*Poss*-PL-*1SG*
        'my younger sisters'

I show the c-structure of (25) in (26). For expository purposes I also include sublexical representation so that the f-structure contribution of each morph should be easy detectable. The lexical form of the complex noun head as used in this particular case is given in (27). I present the simplified f-structure of (25) in (28).

(26)

```
                              DP
                ┌─────────────┴──────────────┐
              ↑=↓                           ↑=↓
               D                            NP
               │                    ┌────────┴──────────┐
              az                (↑POSS)=↓                │
          (↑DEF)= +                DP                    │
                                   │                    ↑=↓
                                  én                    N⁰
                       ┌──────────────┬────────┴──────┬─────────────┐
                      ↑=↓         (↑XCOMP)=↓          ↑=↓        (↑POSS)=↓
                     N_stem        N_suff            N_suff        N_suff
              (↑PRED)= 'Y.-SISTER'  (↑PRED)=       (↑NUM)=pl    (↑PERS)=1
              <(↑POSS) (↑XCOMP)>'  'π <(↑POSS)>'      i         (↑NUM)=sg
         (↑POSS) = (↑XCOMP POSS)       a                            m
                  húg₂
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(27) húgaim, N (↑PRED)= 'YOUNGER-SISTER < (↑POSS) (↑XCOMP) >'
                    (↑POSS)= (↑XCOMP POSS)
                    (↑XCOMP PRED)= 'π <(↑POSS)>'
                    (↑NUM)=pl
                    (↑POSS PERS)=1
                    (↑POSS NUM)=sg

(28)

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┌                                                              ┐
│ PRED      'YOUNGER-SISTER <(↑POSS) (↑XCOMP)>'                 │
│                                                              │
│ NUM       pl                                                 │
│                                                              │
│ DEF       +                                                  │
│                                                              │
│ CASE      nom                                                │
│           ┌                      ┐                           │
│ POSS      │ PRED    'pro'        │                           │
│           │ PERS    1            │·······                    │
│           │ NUM     sg                  ·                    │
│           │ CASE    nom          │       ·                   │
│           └                      ┘       ·                   │
│           ┌                      ┐       ·                   │
│ XCOMP     │ PRED    'π < (↑POSS) >'      ·                   │
│           │ POSS    ············        ·                    │
│           └                      ┘                           │
└                                                              ┘
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$$\pi < (\uparrow POSS) >$$

It is a major advantage of this new approach that it also solves the second general problem discussed in section 2.1.2: that of "dual theta role assignment". The relational/deverbal noun has a (POSS) argument and the Poss predicate (the PRED of XCOMP) also has an "open" (POSS) argument and the former functionally controls the latter (a typical LFG style equi scenario). That is, there are two arguments bearing the (POSS) function and there are two predicates each of which takes only one of the two arguments. This contrasts with the scenario in the majority of previous analyses, in which there are two predicates taking one and the same element as an argument.

As far as I can see, there is only one potential (and possibly apparent) problem with this new approach, which requires further investigation. In the case of deverbal nouns, if the input verb already has an (XCOMP) argument then as a result of the conversion process there will be two (XCOMP)s in the argument structure of such a deverbal noun. This seems to be a violation of biuniqueness. Consider the following example.

(29) a. a kerítés   (Péter által-i) zöld-re   fest-és-e
          the fence.NOM   Peter by-AFF   green-SUBL paint-DEV-Poss.3SG
          'the painting of the fence green'

      b. festése, N (↑PRED)=
         'PAINTING < ((↑OBL)$_{AG}$), (↑POSS), (↑XCOMP$_1$) (↑XCOMP$_2$) >'
                              (↑POSS) = (↑XCOMP$_1$ SUBJ)
                              (↑POSS) = (↑XCOMP$_2$ POSS)
                              (↑XCOMP$_2$ PRED)= 'π < (↑POSS) >'
                              (↑NUM)=sg
                              (↑CASE)=nom
                              (↑POSS PERS)=3
                              (↑POSS NUM)=sg

It appears to me that there are at least the following two plausible avenues for exploring a solution to this problem.

(A) In classical LFG, too, there were several kinds of (XCOMP)s (on a fundamentally categorical basis): (VCOMP), (NCOMP), etc. It can be argued that predicates of different categories (V, N, etc.) denote (partially) different kinds of propositions: (XCOMP)$_\Theta$. Compare this with various versions of the oblique function: (OBL)$_\Theta$. It is also noteworthy in this connection that the status original (OBJ2) grammatical function in classical LFG has also been reconsidered, and now we have OBJ)$_\Theta$ instead. (Thanks to Tracy H. King for calling my attention to this additional factor.)

(B) Another possible solution could be based on the nature of the "open" grammatical function of the (XCOMP). It may be feasible or useful to distinguish between an (XCOMP) with the (SUBJ) open function and an

(XCOMP) with the (POSS) open function: (XCOMP)$_{SUBJ}$ vs. (XCOMP)$_{POSS}$. Naturally, for this distinction to be strongly motivated one would need some independent evidence. I leave this issue to future research.

3.3. On significant and favourable aspects of the new approach

3.3.1. Semantics is happy

The new account feeds semantics in an explicit and principled fashion. As I have already pointed out, the asymmetrical relationship between the noun head and Poss is plausibly captured by absolutely ordinary morphosyntactic means. The raising analysis ensures that the ordinary noun head assigns its nonthematic (POSS) function to the possessor constituent, which thus appears at the "highest" level in f-structure, formally linked to the noun head, while through the usual functional control mechanism this possessor constituent is the semantic argument of the "embedded" Poss predicate.

3.3.2. The subject-like nature of the possessor is retained

The classical "clause level subject in English — NP/DP level possessor in Hungarian" parallel as observed by Szabolcsi (1994) can be retained in a principled manner. The most important aspects of this parallelism are as follows.

(a) designated structural position: [SPEC, IP] — [SPEC, NP]
(b) agreement: subject~verb — possessor~possessed noun
(c) pro-drop: subject pronoun — possessor pronoun
(d) extractability: via [SPEC, CP] — [SPEC, DP]

All these generalizations can be kept, as the possessor occupies the usual, that is highest, c-structural (and f-structural) position, whether it is only formally linked to the noun head (in the case of ordinary noun heads) or it is also semantically linked to the head (in the case of relational/deverbal nouns). In Laczkó (1995, 2000) I adopt (a)-(c) in my LFG framework; (d) has to be treated diffferently in an LFG model: by using functional uncertainty. All these aspects of that analysis can be kept in the context of my new proposal.

3.3.3. Possession as a predication relationship

In section 3.1 I mentioned that it is a widely accepted view that possessive relationships are predicative in nature. In my opinion it is a further advantage of my novel analysis that it captures this generalization by ordinary morphosyntactic means. It employs the Poss predicate to introduce this

relation into the possessive construction. Moreover, this account is a more explicit version of a Bresnan (2001) style predication template approach, too.

3.3.4. The (POSS) function is semantically unrestricted

The assumption that (POSS) is semantically unrestricted is essential for my new analysis. The reason for this is that it employs LFG style raising and equi devices, which involve functional control, and it is a basic generalization that only [–r] functions can participate in this kind of control relationship. However, this is not a problem at all. The [–r] status of (POSS) has been independently argued for: by Laczkó (1995, 2000), Komlósy (1998, 2002), and Chisarik and Payne (2003) for Hungarian; by Markantonatou (1995) for Modern Greek; by Ørsnes (1995) for Danish; by Laczkó (1995) and Chisarik and Payne (2003) for English. Furthermore, although Bresnan (2001) does not elaborate on the status of (POSS) in English, her assumptions about the predication template (cf. "subject of predication"), on the one hand, and her treatment of verbal gerunds, according to which there is a functional control relation between the (POSS) of the DP and the (SUBJ) of the gerundive predicate, on the other hand, seem to suggest that she also needs to subscribe to the [–r] view of (POSS).

3.3.5. Explanation for the lack of expletive possessors

If the (POSS) grammatical function is considered semantically unrestricted, it has to be explained why it is incompatible with expletive elements, unlike (SUBJ) and (OBJ), which are readily compatible with expletives. The general factors and the essence of the explanation are as follows.

(a) The (POSS) function is assigned by two predicates: the noun head and Poss.
(b) For an ordinary (non-argument-taking) noun this (POSS) is nonthematic, so in theory it could be associated with an expletive element.
(c) However, the Poss predicate always assigns it to a semantic argument, and the two (POSS)'s are functionally identified by LFG's control mechanism.
(d) If (POSS) was assigned to an expletive element (by the noun head), this would inevitably lead to a violation of completeness, given that, as a result of functional control, the same expletive element would be required to satisfy the semantic argument need of the Poss predicate, which it would be unable to perform. Completeness would be violated.

3.3.6. The analysis can be extended to English

Although English is dependent marking (it has no Poss morpheme), at this stage of the investigation it seems worthwhile extending the new account to this language (and dependent marking languages in general). Technically this is very simple: Bresnan's (2001) predication template has to be replaced by my predication template.

(30)   a. *hat₁*, N 'HAT $<$ $>$'   →   b. *hat₂*, N 'HAT-OF $<($↑POSS$)>$'

(31)   *hat₂*, N 'HAT-OF $<($↑XCOMP$)>$' (↑POSS)
            (↑POSS) = (↑XCOMP POSS)
            (↑XCOMP PRED)= 'π $<($↑POSS$)>$'

The only difference between Hungarian and English is that in the latter the π predicate is always introduced by the template (and never by a morph(eme)), which is not at all an unusual or unprincipled solution in LFG.

I intend to explore the advantages and consequences of this extension in future work. Here I confine myself to briefly mentioning what advantages I envisage at this point.

(A) Just like in the case of Hungarian possessive DPs, this new analysis of English possessive DPs makes it possible to feed semantics more explicitly and in a more straightforward way.

(B) It can offer the same principled explanation for why (POSS) is incompatible with expletives in English possessive DPs, too. Consider Bresnan's (2001:293) examples.

(32)   a. There appears to be a reindeer on the roof.

       b. **There's* appearing to be a reindeer on the roof is an illusion.

       c. It appears that there's a reindeer on the roof.

       d. ??*Its* appearing that there's a reindeer on the roof is an illusion.

(C) In this new approach possessive constructions in head marking and dependent marking languages can be treated in a uniform way.

3.3.7. The new account can be adopted in GB/MP

The treatment of raising and equi constructions is commonplace in GB/MP; thus the analysis can, in theory, be easily translated into these Chomskyan models. The parallels between LFG and GB/MP with respect to these phenomena are straightforward.

A general remark is in order in this connection. If an account can be implemented in various frameworks, then this can often be regarded as a

favourable aspect: it may suggest that correct theory-neutral generalizations have been made and a valid analysis has been developed.

4. Conclusion

Below I reiterate the most significant points of this paper.

1. I have proposed a new and more principled LFG treatment of Hungarian possessive constructions.
2. The gist of the analysis is that a lexical conversion process creates a raising predicate from an ordinary noun and an equi predicate from a relational/deverbal noun, and the Poss morpheme functions as the PRED of their (XCOMP) propositional argument.
3. This approach solves two classical problems: (i) modelling the "embedded" nature of the possessive relation and (ii) avoiding dual theta role assignment.
4. It makes a uniform analysis of all kinds of noun heads in Hungarian possessive constructions possible.
5. It can be extended to English; thus head-marking and dependent-marking languages can be treated in a uniform fashion.
6. It offers an explanation for why expletive elements cannot be possessors either in Hungarian or in English.
7. It can be translated into GB/MP in a principled manner.
8. There is one issue that requires further investigation: the nature of (XCOMP), or rather, exploring the possibility of postulating more than one (XCOMP) in the same argument structure: $(XCOMP)_\Theta$.

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