

Abstractness meets explanation

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MaSzAT, December 20, 2012

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English *a/an* alternation

- „underlying” /a⟨n⟩/
- rule eliminating the angle brackets between vowels (quasi-universal)

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3SGINDEF	3SGCONJDEF	GLOSS
[rak]	~ [rakja]	'put'
[ba:n]	~ [ba:n:a]	'feel sorry'
[la:t]	~ [la:f:a]	'see'
[ta:t]	~ [ta:tf:a]	'open mouth wide'
[halast]	~ [halas:a]	'postpone'
[ad]	~ [a:f:a]	'give'
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- 3 „Psychological reality”: economy of listing surface forms does not necessarily mean economy of accounting for acquisition/aphasia data, performance data etc.

Abstractness in semantics

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Definitions of some senses of the verb *push*

- 1 exert force on (someone or something) in order to move them away from oneself;
 - 2 move one's body or a part of it into a specified position with effort;
 - 3 compel or urge (someone) to do something, especially to work hard;
- ...

Definitions of some senses of the verb *press*

- 1 move or cause to move into a position of contact with something by exerting continuous physical force;
 - 2 apply pressure to (something) to flatten, shape, or smooth it, typically by ironing;
 - 3 make strong efforts to persuade or force (someone) to do something;
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- they are accompanied by very particular sub-cases and usage examples in order to illustrate typical usage situations, co-occurring expression types etc.

Example: *push*

- ④ exert force on (someone or something) in order to move them away from oneself: *she pushed her glass towards him, Lydia pushed the door shut, he pushed at the skylight, but it wouldn't budge*
 - hold and exert force on (something) so as to cause it to move in front of one: *a woman was pushing a pram*
 - move one's body or a part of it into a specified position with effort: *she pushed her hands into her pockets*
 - press (a part of a machine or other device): *the lift boy pushed the button for the twentieth floor*
 - cause to reach a particular level or state: *competition in the retail sector will push down prices, the political chaos could push the country into recession*
- ④ move forward by using force to pass people or cause them to move aside: *she pushed her way through the crowded streets, he pushed past an old woman in his haste*
 - (of an army) advance over territory: *the guerrillas have pushed south to within 100 miles of the capital*
 - exert oneself to attain something or surpass others: *I was pushing hard until about 10 laps from the finish*
 - (be pushing) informal be nearly (a particular age or amount): *she must be pushing forty, but she's still a good looker*
- ④ compel or urge (someone) to do something, especially to work hard: *she believed he was pushing their daughter too hard*
 - (push for) demand persistently: *the council continued to push for the better management of water resources*
 - (be pushed) informal have very little of something, especially time: *I'm a bit pushed for time at the moment*
 - (be pushed to do something) informal find it difficult to achieve something: *he will be pushed to retain the title as his form this season has been below par*
- ④ (informal) promote the use, sale, or acceptance of: *the company has been pushing a document management system*
 - sell (a narcotic drug) illegally: *she was arrested for pushing hard drugs*
- ④ (computing) prepare (a stack) to receive a piece of data on the top.
 - transfer (data) to the top of a stack.
- ④ (photography) develop (a film) so as to compensate for deliberate underexposure: *some films can be pushed during processing*

Example: *press*

- ④ move or cause to move into a position of contact with something by exerting continuous physical force: *he pressed his face to the glass, her body pressed against his*
 - exert continuous physical force on (something), typically in order to operate a device: *he pressed a button and the doors slid open*
 - squeeze (someone's arm or hand) as a sign of affection: *Winnie pressed his hand*
 - move in a specified direction by pushing: *the mob was still pressing forward*
 - (of an enemy or opponent) attack persistently and fiercely: *their enemies pressed in on all sides*
 - (press on/ahead) continue in one's action: *he stubbornly pressed on with his work*
- ④ apply pressure to (something) to flatten, shape, or smooth it, typically by ironing: *she pressed her nicest blouse (as adjective pressed) immaculately pressed trousers*
 - apply pressure to (a flower or leaf) between sheets of paper in order to dry and preserve it.
 - extract (juice or oil) by crushing or squeezing fruit, vegetables, etc.: (as adjective pressed) *freshly pressed orange juice*
 - squeeze or crush (fruit, vegetables, etc.) to extract the juice or oil: *the small seeds of sesame are chiefly pressed for their oil*
 - manufacture (something, especially a record) by moulding under pressure: *the record was pressed in two runs of 500 copies*
- ④ forcefully put forward (an opinion, claim, or course of action): *Rose did not press the point*
 - make strong efforts to persuade or force (someone) to do something: *when I pressed him for precise figures he evaded the subject, the marketing directors were pressed to justify their expenditure, they continued to press for changes in legislation*
 - (press something on/upon) insist that (someone) accepts an offer or gift: *he pressed dinner invitations on her*
 - (of time) be in short supply, necessitating immediate action: *she was almost 45 years old and time was pressing*
 - (be pressed) have barely enough of something, especially time: *I'm terribly pressed for time*
 - (be pressed to do something) have difficulty doing or achieving something: *they may be hard pressed to keep their promise*
- ④ (weightlifting) raise (a specified weight) by lifting it to shoulder height and then gradually pushing it upwards above the head.
- ④ (golf) try too hard to achieve distance with a shot, at the risk of inaccuracy.

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- they are accompanied by very particular sub-cases and usage examples in order to illustrate typical usage situations, co-occurring expression types etc.
- with lexical/literal meanings vs. actual uses, the situation seems even worse than with underlying phonological representations vs. surface forms (lexical semantics lacks elaborate rule systems)

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now we must look into some of the consequences of this...

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What the uses of these have in common is at least as problematic as in the case of lexical entries.

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- language use is inherently **metaphorical** in the sense that speakers use their judgments of similarity to decide on what situation belongs to which cloud, and what linguistic entity can evoke it best
- abstract properties of uses arise (**emerge**) from similarities of frequent individual uses, if at all — just the opposite of what is usually assumed

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- what should an 'underspecified' literal meaning be, and how should it be disambiguated?

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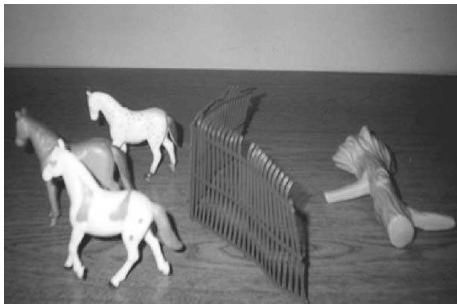
There is no independent reason whatsoever to postulate such a difference between English and Hungarian syntax.

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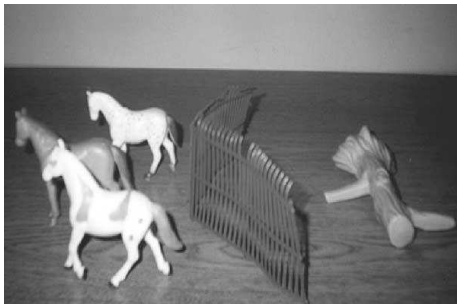
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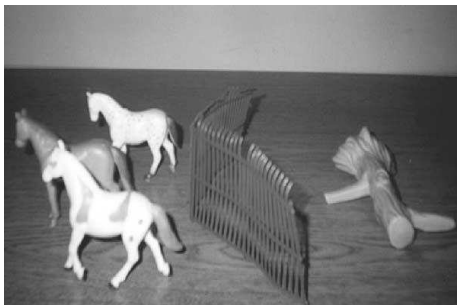


a. *Some of the horses jumped over the fence:* 92 % **false**

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- a. *Some of the horses jumped over the fence:* 92 % **false**
- b. *Two of the horses jumped over the fence:* 100 % **false**

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Towards a new type of models

- principle of **analogy**: assume that interpretation is most similar to that of most similar expressions in earlier experience
- what is needed for this is an **associative memory model** storing information on associations of sensori-motor experience **including linguistic experience** (may include **endogenous** experience)
- if you insist on using the word *meaning*, let it refer to **memory traces of earlier understanding events** (in the sense of stimuli including linguistic ones with their mental response)