

REPORT

Department of Theoretical and Experimental Linguistics

I. MAIN TASKS IN 2009

THEORY OF GRAMMAR, DESCRIPTIVE LINGUISTICS

Syntax

Further research into symmetries in syntax and their significance

Completing project 49873 of OTKA, the Hungarian National Research Fund, on the syntax and semantics of adverbials; finalizing the manuscript of the volume summarizing its results, to be published by Mouton de Gruyter.

Lanching project NK 78074 of OTKA, entitled 'Hungarian generative diachronic syntax', organizing the research team and the research process. Starting the establishment of the Old Hungarian data base, analyzing the syntax of Old Hungarian texts, formulating theoretically relevant hypotheses on the nature of linguistic change. Discussion groups to study the generative theoretical and methodological approaches modeling language change; reading and analyzing Old Hungarian texts, as well as discussing the problems and methods concerning the development of the electronic database

The goal of the *A Minimalist Approach to Syntactic Locality* project is to give a model based explanation for locality phenomena in natural language syntax, drawing on recent results of the transformational generative theory of language. We seek to uncover the division of labor between different linguistic subsystems. In 2009 the project members investigated the opacity of complement clauses, and of subject and object nominal phrases, the layered syntactic domains of causative verbal predicates, as well as the triggers and conditions of the displacement of focused expressions, verbal particles and other particle-like elements.

Study on the syntax of negation, The nature of the word.

Investigating theoretical problems of the notion of 'case' in different theories of grammar. Issues in typifying case systems. Ways in building lexical representations for and in syntactic handling of various case types (grammatical, oblique, "structural", "inherent", "quirky", semantic, aspect-marking, etc.) in the framework of LFG.

Study on syntactic structures determined by information structure. Presentational constructions and nominal sentences

Semantics

Representing the meaning contribution of Hungarian Focus in a dynamic setting. Initial work hypothesis:

The study of the interactions between discourse structure, intonation, and the interpretation of sentences in Hungarian.

Participation in the preparation of the 88th volume of the narrative bibliography *The Year's Work in English Studies*.

Phonology and morphology

To extend the aerodynamic phonetically-based phonological model to the study of the phonological and phonotactic properties of other voiced fricatives (*z* and *zh*)

To test the adaptability of analogical models to other languages, especially Slovak a language well-known for its complex word-initial phonotaxis

Participation in the OTKA (HNSF) project about analogy (concluding the project);

Finishing two papers (one with co-authors), writing a shorter paper; editing vol. 56 of *Acta Linguistica Hungarica* (480 pages, in English). Talks at Budapest Phonological Circle and Linguistic Discussion Group (BuPhoC) and at the conference on the 60th anniversary of the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; participation at Government Phonology Round Table '09 and at the 9th International Conference on the Structure of Hungarian.

EXPERIMENTAL LINGUISTICS

Neurolinguistics

An interdisciplinary study of recursion in language: evaluation and interpretation of the tests that was produced by by aphasic patients, controll subjects and Alzheimer-paients.

Continuing collection of data containing deviances of phonological sequence structuring from aphasic and Alzheimer Disease subjects, lapses, and old-age mistakes.

Psycholinguistics

The research on acquisition of relative clauses has concentrated on sentence comprehension patterns in typical language development.

Studying the comprehension and production of aspect in preschool and school-aged children with language impairment.

Examining the association of language impairment and nonlinguistic abilities through testing oral and hand movement organization.

Studying the figurative language comprehension in Children: tests producing, conducting.

Studies on linguistic minorities. Research Center for Multilingualism

Representatives of the Research Center for Multilingualism (RIL, HAS) adds their expertise and experience in the field of linguistic minority research. Supporting the recognition of sign language and provision of bilingual education in Hungary.

The examination of linguistic ideologies which are based on the differentiation of beas and romani language in the Hungarian Roma communities and the completion of preparations and the studying of the theme's literature

Finishing, editing and publishing the book entitled *Beás nyelvtan* [Grammar of Baiash].

To submit the PhD thesis, and to defend it (/Curse, conditional curse and gender in linguistic ideologies and practices of Transylvanian Roma communities, 246 p)

Web-based reference database for the humanities

Planning a pilot study for creating a reference database for the humanities and social sciences.

Higher education:

Functioning Theoretical Linguistics BA, MA and PhD programme

II. OUTSTANDING RESEARCH AND OTHER RESULTS, AND THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT IN 2009

THEORY OF GRAMMAR, DESCRIPTIVE LINGUISTICS

Syntax

In cooperation with Kriszta Szendrői we succeeded, in the mirror symmetric framework of the question-answer relation, in providing a new analysis and understanding of the characteristic exhaustive listing type focus structures of Hungarian and universal grammar (Brody and Szendrői 2009).

Understanding the syntactic and semantic behavior of adverbial modifiers; formulating the principles and constraints that they are subject to. These results are significant both for linguistic theory, and for applied linguistics (e.g., language technology involving Hungarian, and the teaching of Hungarian).

Hungarian Generative Diachronic Syntax project: The study of Hungarian generative diachronic syntax represents basic research; it contributes to the understanding of the causes, the direction, and the process of linguistic change. Changes documented in the past 800 years of Hungarian have turned out to be often parallel with the changes of various Indo-European languages, which raises the question whether changes are determined by universal principles, or are subject to areal influence.

The main results of the project *A Minimalist Approach to Syntactic Locality* include a refined model of the opacity of some subject or object nominal expressions to subextraction, a detailed cartography of the layered syntactic domains of causative verbal predicates, and the mapping of the division of labor between syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and prosodic factors in regulating the syntactic displacement of identificational focus expressions, verbal particles and particle-like elements, as well as subextraction from clausal complements of factive verbs.

The special issue on Noam Chomsky for the journal *Magyar Tudomány* was edited. The papers were based on the 2009 conference at the Institute.

A special issue of *Lingua* (Elsevier) was published from the articles of a Dutch-Hungarian research group on *New perspectives on the Hungarian left periphery*. Papers were on the relationship between focus and negation in Hungarian.

Preparations were made for a study on the nature of word and word-classes, working out an abstract for a paper to be presented at the 14th International Morphology Meeting in 2010.

Phonology and morphology

In the vowel harmony system of Hungarian certain unnatural (arbitrary, non-UG-based) data patterns can be observed. With experimental testing and computational modelling of such

patterns, the hypothesis that unnatural constraints are not unlearnable but are disfavoured by language learners can be confirmed.

An *ontology editor* was finished in the framework of the OTKA (HNSF) grant about analogy. The ontology editor was used for creating the Hungarian morphology database; participated in preparing the morphology database.

As an extension of the OTKA (HNSF) grant about analogy, he developed an associative memory model, capable of modelling analogical reasoning. Implemented the model, gave presentations about it, started preparing publications on the topic.

A project proposal was made for creating a reference database for the humanities and social sciences.

Semantics

New arguments were presented to support the claim that the exhaustivity of Hungarian focus is a semantic and not pragmatic, property. New data and arguments support the hypothesis that Information Structure in Hungarian is recursive. The data involve a kataphoric, propositional demonstrative in matrix Focus position. A formal semantic analysis of resultative constructions is introduced.

A monograph and a journal article were published on the semantic-pragmatic properties of contrastive topics in Hungarian, and the conditions under which quantificational expressions can appear in this role. Among Hungarian discourse-particles the semantic-pragmatic properties of *csak*, *ugye*, and *vajon* were described.

EXPERIMENTAL LINGUISTICS

Neurolinguistics

An interdisciplinary study of recursion in language: In some tests agrammatic aphasics produced semantic-pragmatic operations with 'theory of mind' type embeddings instead of syntactic structural recursion. The results of tests showed, that aphasics tend to exploit the parallel between theory of mind embeddings and syntactic-structural embeddings in order to avoid formal structural recursion. Formal structural recursion may be more impaired in Broca's aphasia, than in Wernicke's aphasia. The results yield arguments supporting the claim that, along with formal structural recursivity, the semantics of a language should also be seen as a source of recursion and that semantic recursivity may remain selectively unimpaired in certain types of aphasia.

The results of the examinations of the deviances of phonological sequence carried out verify (1) that both vocalic overharmonisation and consonantic overassimilation in phonological deviances can be led back to the overgeneralization of assimilation rules in consonants (clusters), spreading of distinctive feature and (2) they help identifying several types of operations in the (phonological) processing of speech that are significantly characteristic of different degrees of the severity of Broca aphasia.

Hungarian native-speakers with Alzheimer's disease and normal controls were tested. The following parameters of speech were measured in articulation rate, speech tempo, hesitation ratio, and rate of grammatical errors. Results showed significant differences in most of these speech parameters among the three Alzheimer's disease groups. This parameter of speech may have diagnostic value for mild-stage Alzheimer's disease and therefore could be a useful aid in medical practice.

3 patients group with Alzheimer's disease: were tested by measuring verbal working memory, phonological short-term memory, and verbal fluency. The results show impaired verbal working memory from the moderate stages of Alzheimer's disease. The verbal fluency showed significant impairment from the mild stages of Alzheimer's disease.

Psycholinguistics

Children with language impairment do not have problems with the comprehension of perfectivity, but encoding aspect in production shows significant delays. Language impairment is often accompanied by deficits in the organization of hand- and (primarily speech-related) oral movements.

The research on acquisition of relative clauses has concentrated on sentence comprehension patterns in typical language development. The structural properties causing difficulties in comprehension were subject-headedness, interruption of main clauses, accusative case of relative pronouns and OS word order in main clauses. Sentence types showed the OS, SS, OO < SO order of difficulty.

The research on comprehension of sentences with focussed constituents showed that the exclusionary interpretation of focus sentences is not fully developed in children between 4 and 7. School-age children with language disorder are still not able to consistently make fine-grained semantic distinctions that are governed by surface structural factors of focus.

In the adaptation of the MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventories (CDI) the final form of the questionnaire that measures early language development through parent report has been shaped.

Idiom comprehension in children: According to the results, the presence of context greatly contributes to the comprehension, showing that context has a significant effect on idiom comprehension in both age groups. The linguistic type of the idiom has a significant effect on comprehension. In context the difference is significant only between idioms having abstract meaning only and transparent idioms. The correlation between the metalinguistic skills of the children and idiom comprehension is weak.

Studies on linguistic minorities. Research Center for Multilingualism

Representatives of the Research Center for Multilingualism (RIL, HAS) adds their expertise and experience in the field of linguistic minority research. Their role range from organizing local events to participating in conferences and workshops organized in and out of their native country. They also participate in the networking and dissemination activities of the project. When organizing local events the role of the Center oversteps pure organizational duties, researchers wish to provide professional expertise too. They also play an important multiplier role: through their extensive professional contacts they can get knowledge and information

through to other colleagues and relevant institutions of the ECE region including professionals and stake-holders alike.

The pragmatic and social functions of two frequently used Romani discursive forms were examined (ie. curse and conditional curse). Analysis of the speakers' own language ideologies of these discursive forms, with special attention to the gendered issues of their meaning and usage.

A conference was organised on the impact of Slovak language law at HAS on *Language use and legal regulations* and a special issue of *Magyar Tudomány* was published on the topic.

The entitled *Beás nyelvtan* [Grammar of Baiash] was finished and typeset. The book has appeared. The grammar of Beas describes a language that is increasingly sidelined from the use of living language. The reason for this are the globalization and modernization. Put down in writing the Roma languages is a cultural evidence saving, the preservation of an important value from a linguistical point of view too.

Mother tongue education

A curriculum and program package were prepared for higher education about competence-based linguistic education at school.

Higher education

Theoretical Linguistics BA, MA and PhD programme was functioning.

III. PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

National relations

Conferences, workshops

Tenth Symposium on Logic and Language (2009. augusztus 26-29.)

Phonology camp (2009. március, Balatonszemes)

Semantics camp

Erasmus-College workshop a Nyelvtudományi Intézetben (Kálmán László)

Minimalist Approaches to Syntactic Locality konferencia (2009. augusztus 26-28.) (Surányi Balázs)

Workshop on Head Movement and Locality (2009. augusztus 28.) (Surányi Balázs)

Second Budapest Generative Syntax Workshop (2009. június 19.) (Surányi Balázs)

Government Phonology Round Table, Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Piliscsaba, 25 April 2009.

Cooperations

Research collaboration with Zölderdő Kindergarten and ELTE Special Kindergarten and the Dr. Nagy László Special Education Institute in Kőszeg.

Participation and membership in the Management Committee of COST (European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research) project IS0804, titled Language Impairment in a Multilingual Society: Linguistic Patterns and the Road to Assessment.

Participation in TÁMOP 5.2.1. Children's Chance Project

Cooperation with University of Debrecen, Department of General and Applied Linguistics and Research Institute for Psychology of HAS in framework of the *An interdisciplinary study of recursion in language no NK 72461 OTKA (HSNF)*

Committee membership

Linguistics Committee of HAS

Hungarian Language Committee of HAS

Doctoral Council, Pázmány Péter Catholic University

Habilitation Committee, Pázmány Péter Catholic University

Editorial Board of *Magyar Nyelv*

Editorial Board of *Beszédkutatás*

Society of Hungarian Linguists

International relations

The Hungarian generative diachronic syntax project has established connections with DIGS (Diachronic Generative Syntax), the international network of similar projects. The principal investigator, K. É. Kiss will be an invited speaker at the next DIGS conference in 2010 at Cambridge, and the members of her team will also send in abstracts. In the summer of 2009 the founder of this research area, Prof. David Lightfoot (Georgetown University, and NSF), gave an intensive course together with Prof. Betty Tuller, University of Florida, to the participants of the team in Budapest.

Members of the Hungarian generative diachronic syntax project gave 5 presentations at the 2009 Hungarian historical linguistics conference at Szeged. The internal seminars of the project have been attended by some PhD students of Pázmány Péter University.

A research project entitled *A Minimalist Approaches to Syntactic Locality* has continued relations with the University of Potsdam, and the University of Tübingen.

Studies of language impairment are part of a continuing cooperation with professor Lawrence B. Leonard at Purdue University.

Research topic: Modalpartikeln und Satztypen im Sprachvergleich Deutsch-Ungarisch (Modal particles and sentence types: a contrastive study of German and Hungarian)

Framework: research project financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).tner)

Participation, on the 11th occasion, in the preparation of the narrative bibliography *Year's Work in English Studies*, published in a journal of Oxford University Press.

Informal cooperations without outside financial support

with University of Maryland on the following topic: The influence of syntactic position and prosody on the scope of Hungarian quantifiers.

with ZAS, (Berlin) on the formal and interpretational properties of Hungarian interrogatives, on the interpretation of the particle *vajon*

with LMU (München) on the prosodic characterisation of information structural categories.

Participant in the international project *Natural and unnatural constraints in Hungarian vowel harmony*, University of California, Los Angeles, USA.

Expert for the Ministry of Development, General Secretariat for Research and Technology, Greece.

Organising a joint conference on language rights with the Mercator Research Centre, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands.

Academic exchange visit to Romania. (Institute for Linguistics, Romanian Academy of Sciences, Cluj, and Babeş-Bolyai University, Department of General and Hungarian Linguistics, Cluj.) Linguistic anthropological fieldwork in Romani communities in Cluj and in Mureş counties.

Committe Membership

EFNIL Assembly, Dublin, 2009; member of the board formulating the final resolution.

ESFRI SSH Thematic Working Group, Hungarian delegate.

National Board for the Development of Research Infrastructures, member of the board, chair of Working group in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Organizing Committee of 14th International Morphology Meeting

Refereeing a book manuscript for Blackwell.

Referee for the journals *Általános Nyelvészeti Tanulmányok* and *Acta Linguistica Hungarica*, and for the conferences Speech Research 2009 and LingDok13.

Section chair at Speech Research 2009, Budapest, 16–17 October 2009.

Section chair at the Thirteenth National Conference of Doctoral Students, Szeged, 25–26 November 2009.

International Conferences

6th Old World Conference in Phonology,

Workshop on Privativity, 2009 január, Edinburgh.

32th GLOW Symposium, 2009 április, Nantes,

9th International Conference on the Structure of Hungarian, 2009 augusztus-szeptember, Debrecen,

Social and Religious Development of Egypt in the First Millenium BCE. 2009. szeptember 1. Prága,

Crossroads IV. Fourth International Conference on Egyptian Grammar. 2009. március 19-22. Basel, Svájc (Ägyptologisches Seminar der Universität Basel)

LAGB Fiftieth Anniversary Golden Jubilee Meeting, University of Edinburgh, UK. 6-9 September 2009.

10th Szklarska Poręba Workshop. 12-16 March 2009.

Workshop on Spatial Expressions, 2009. május 14-15., CASTL Tromsø

Workshop „Syntactic Constructions Focus and Meaning”, 2009. július 24., Universität Tübingen

Incontro di Grammatica Generativa 35. University of Siena (Olaszország)

The Third International Conference on the Linguistics of Contemporary English (ICLCE3).
University of London (Anglia)
Phonology Colloquium, Potsdami Egyetem
Linguistics Colloquium (PLC 33); Philadelphia, PA, USA. 2009. 03. 29.
CGG 19; Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain, 2009. 04. 03.
2nd Budapest Generative Syntax Workshop, Budapest. Hungary. 2009. 06. 19.
Workshop on Root Phenomena. ZAS, Berlin. 2009. 09. 02.
Chronos 9. Paris, France. 2009. 09. 03.
Sarajevo Linguistic Gathering 4 & Sinfonija 2. Sarajevo, BIH; 2009. 09. 26.
Academy of Aphasia 47th Meeting, Boston, USA, 2009 október 18-21.
2nd International Conference on Clinical Linguistics, Madrid, 2009 november 8-11.

IV. Brief evaluation of successful national and international grants

The national grant awarded to the research team:
OTKA NK 78074, Hungarian generative diachronic syntax
From April 1, 2009, for 4 years
Budget for 2009: 20, 767 million Ft.

Running project
2007 -- *Interpretation, discourse structure and intonation* project supported by the Hungarian National Research Fund (OTKA) (F68139)
Budget for 2009: 0.7 MFt

Results: Talks and papers have been prepared on the interpretation of the discourse particles *csak, vajon, ugye*.

Title: A Minimalist Approach to Syntactic Locality
Grant issued by: Hungarian National Science Fund (OTKA)
Grand No.: NF-73537
Start of grant: April 1, 2008

Results reached in 2009: The main results of the research project include a refined model of the opacity of some subject or object nominal expressions to subextraction, a detailed cartography of the layered syntactic domains of causative verbal predicates, and the mapping of the division of labor between syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and prosodic factors in regulating the syntactic displacement of identificational focus expressions, verbal particles and particle-like elements, as well as subextraction from clausal complements of factive verbs.

Evaluation of results:

We made considerable progress in the areas mentioned immediately above, and as witnessed by a number of our publications, some in print, some already appeared during 2009, in some key areas our results are of significance for current work carried out by the international research community.

Title:

Grant issued by: DAAD and MÖB

Grant No.: P-MÖB-851

Start of grant: January 1. 2009.

Funding received for 2009: HUF 795.000 + EUR 5865

Results reached in 2009: Completed pilot and first series of prosodic experiments with Shinichiro Ishihara, investigating the prosodic patterns of Hungarian sentential embedding constructions. Completed pilot and two series of prosodic experiments with Shinichiro Ishihara, investigating the interaction of focus in the syntax-prosody mapping in the Hungarian clause.

Evaluation of results: We found a lack of correlation between prosodic patterns and the opaqueness of the embedded clausal domains, which runs counter the predictions of some current approaches to factive islands. We found that nuclear pitch accent may appear on elements occupying positions distinct from the so-called 'focus position' of the Hungarian clause. This calls for a revision of a recent purely prosody-based theory of Hungarian focus movement.

Title:

An interdisciplinary study of recursion in language Hungarian National Science Fund (OTKA) NK 72461)

Start of grant: October 1 2007

Budget for 2009: 2, 8 MFt.

Evaluation of results:

Considerable progress was made. Some tests were conducted in that agrammatic aphasics and neurologically intact control subjects had to produce recursive syntactic structures. The results of tests showed, that aphasics tend to exploit the parallel between theory of mind embeddings and syntactic-structural embeddings in order to avoid formal structural recursion. Formal structural recursion may be more impaired in Broca's aphasia. than in Wernicke's aphasia. The results yield arguments supporting the claim that, along with formal structural recursivity, the semantics of a language should also be seen as a source of recursion and that semantic recursivity may remain selectively unimpaired in certain types of aphasia..

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