Focussing as Predication

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Abstract

The paper argues for a new approach to structural focus, which eliminates the problems raised by the standard F(ocus)P theory. The starting point of the analysis is the claim that the Hungarian sentence contains a PredP projection above VP, harboring the verbal particle functioning as a resultative, terminative, or locative secondary predicate. It is claimed that the focus constituent, which appears preverbally in the Hungarian sentence, is an alternative filler of the Spec,PredP position. The 'exhaustive listing', or 'exhaustive identification' interpretation associated with the focus arises when the constituent raised to Spec,PredP is a definite or a specific indefinite noun phrase, which receives a specificational reading in predicate position. In the theory of Higgins (1973) and S. Huber (2000), a specificational predicate serves to referentially characterize the set denoted by the subject of predication, in other words, to exhaustively list its referential content. The Spec,PredP position is also the prosodically most prominent position of the sentence, hence its filler – whether a verbal particle or a specificational predicate - is interpreted as the information focus.

1. Introduction

This paper proposes a new approach to structural focus expressing exhaustive identification. After showing that the current theory of structural focus, originating in Brody (1990; 1995), raises various theoretical and empirical problems, it presents an alternative account of focus which can derive a wider range of facts in a more economical way, by a division of labor among existing, independently motivated syntactic, semantic and phonological means of grammar. It will be argued that the focus occupies the specifier of a predicative projection (PredP), where it is interpreted as a nominal predicate expressing specification. The exhaustive identification associated with structural focus is a function of specificational predication, as shown by Higgins (1973) and S. Huber (2000). The stress of the focus is

assigned by the regular Nuclear Stress Rule, in accordance with Reinhart (1995).

The data to be discussed are mainly from Hungarian. Section 2 of the paper describes Hungarian preverbal focus and its syntactic interaction with the verbal particle, and introduces Brody's focus theory (Brody 1990, 1995), designed to account for the apparently complementary distribution of the focus and the verbal particle in preverbal position. Section 3, on the other hand, discusses various focus-related phenomena which cannot be derived in a straightforward way from Brody's theory. Section 4 demonstrates that the assumptions that the preverbal focus and the preverbal particle occupy different structural positions, and their apparent complementary distribution is a result of verb raising, are based on an erroneous analysis of the verbal particle. It will be claimed that the verbal particle is a secondary predicate occupying the specifier of a PredP, rather than an aspectual operator sitting in Spec,AspP. Section 5 argues that the focus constituent is an alternative filler of Spec,PredP, where it is interpreted as a nominal predicate expressing specification. Section 6 demonstrates that the problems raised by Brody's focus theory, surveyed in section 3, receive a natural solution in the framework adopted. Section 7 is a brief summary of results.

2. Hungarian structural focus, and Brody's theory of F projection

The Hungarian sentence is known to have an immediately preverbal focus position, open to a single argument or adjunct, which expresses exhaustive identification, and bears a primary stress (and has the subsequent verb destressed). This identificational focus is in complementary distribution preverbally with the so-called verb modifier (represented by a verbal particle or a bare nominal complement). The preverbal position of the sentence in (1a) contains a verbal particle, and that of (2a) contains a bare nominal complement. In (1b,c) and (2b), the presence of a focus in the preverbal slot keeps the particle and the bare nominal behind the verb:

(1)a. *Péter szét*   *tépte a   levelet.*
        Peter apart   tore   the letter   'Peter tore the letter apart.'
   b. *Péter A LEVELET*   *tépte szét.*
        Peter the letter-ACC   tore   apart 'It was the letter that P. tore apart.'
   c. *A levelet PÉTER*   *tépte szét .*
        the letter Peter   tore   apart 'It was P. who tore the letter apart.'
(2)a. *Péter   levelet*   *ír.*
        Peter   letter-ACC writes   'Peter is letter-writing.'

b. **PÉTER** *ír*   *levelet.*
  Peter   writes   letter-ACC   'It is Peter who is letter-
writing.'

The most natural explanation of the complementarity of the focus and the verbal particle/bare nominal complement is the assumption that they are alternative fillers of the same structural position. This view, represented e.g. by É. Kiss (1987) and (1994), nevertheless, has appeared to be problematic because no shared element has been found in the semantic function of the focus and that of the verbal particle/bare nominal complement. The focus has been analyzed as the value of an operator expressing exhaustive identification (identifying the subset of a relevant set of alternatives for which the predicate exclusively holds). The verbal particle, on the other hand, has been analyzed as a perfectivizer, i.e., an aspectual operator. The bare nominal complement has been grouped together with the verbal particle under the term 'verb modifier', even though it has been acknowledged that its aspectual role, if any, is much less systematic than that of the verbal particle. Thus in this framework of É. Kiss (1987; 1994) the preverbal position has no invariant semantic content.

The theory of Brody (1990; 1995) accounts for the different semantic functions of the various types of preverbal elements by placing them into different projections, and it derives their apparent complementarity in preverbal position via V raising. In Brody (1990), the verbal particle is base-generated as a sister to the V under a node labelled V+. Current descriptions adopting Brody's basic framework (and updating some of his solutions), e.g. É. Kiss (2002a), and den Dikken (2004), assume that the verbal particle/bare nominal complement occupies the specifier of an AspP projection dominating VP.[1] (In a version of this theory, Olsvay (2000) places the verbal particle into Spec,TenseP.) The V is assumed to move to Asp, as follows:

(3) $[_{TopP}$ *Péter*$_k$ $[_{AspP}$ *szét*$_j$ $[_{Asp'}$ *tépte*$_i$ $[_{VP}$ t$_i$ t$_j$ *a   levelet* t$_k$]]]]
         Peter   apart   tore   the letter

The focus, on the other hand, sits in the specifier of an F head, and its immediately preverbal position is a consequence of the fact that F attracts the V, which moves to F crossing the verbal particle or bare nominal complement in Spec,AspP:

(4)a. $[_{TopP}$ *Péter*$_l$ $[_{FP}$ *A LEVELET*$_k$ $[_{F'}$ *tépte*$_i$ $[_{AspP}$ *szét*$_j$ $[_{Asp'}$ t$_i$ $[_{VP}$ t$_i$ t$_j$ t$_k$ t$_l$]]]]]]
         Peter   the letter-ACC   tore   apart
       'It was the letter that Peter tore apart.'

b.   [FP *PÉTER*k [F' *ír*i [AspP *levelet*j [Asp' ti [VP ti tj tk]]]]]
        Peter   writes   letter
     'It is Peter who is letter-writing.'

3. Problems with the FP theory

Brody's focus theory (Brody 1990; 1995) can account both for the word order variation illustrated in (1)-(4), and the different interpretations associated with the different word order variants. At the same time, neither Brody's proposal, nor its extensions that have evolved in the past decade predict all the facts attested in the preverbal section of the Hungarian sentence. Here is a list of some of the facts that are problematic for the FP theory:

(i) Brody (1990) and the theories evolved from it predict that in sentences containing both a focus and a verbal particle/bare nominal complement, the particle/bare nominal complement surfaces right after the verb. (Brody (1995) assumes an AgrO projection between the VP dominating the Particle+V complex and the FP, thereby allowing an intervening object.) In fact, the verbal particle can appear anywhere postverbally in a focus construction. The heavier the particle is phonetically, the better it sounds separated from the verb. Observe the constituents intervening between the V raised to F and the particle/bare nominal complement in Spec,AspP, unaccounted for in the FP framework:

(5)a. [FP *A*   *LEVELET* [F' *tépte*i *Péter* [AspP *szét* [Asp' ti [VP ti]]]]]
        the   letter-ACC   tore   Peter   apart
     'It was the letter that Peter tore apart.'
   b. [FP *PÉTER* [F' *írt*i   *tegnap*   *Máriának* [AspP *levelet* [Asp' ti [VP ti]]]]]
        Peter   wrote yesterday Mary-DAT   letter
     'It was Peter who wrote a letter to Mary yesterday.'

(ii) In negative sentences, the negative particle appears immediately before the V, with the verbal particle/bare nominal complement staying behind. In the framework under discussion, the V Prt order is indicative of V movement across the particle. The problem is that instead of the 'V Neg Prt...' order arising from V-to-Neg movement, we attest a 'Neg V Prt...' (or a 'Neg V... Prt...') order - see (6a). It cannot be the case that the negative particle occupies Spec,NegP, and the V is left-adjoined to a phonetically empty Neg operator, because if a focus is also added to the sentence, it is the Neg+V complex that is raised to F - see (6b).

(6)a. [$_{NegP}$ [$_{Neg'}$ *Nem téptem*$_i$ [$_{AspP}$ *szét* [$_{Asp'}$ t$_i$ [$_{VP}$ t$_i$ *a   levelet*]]]]]]
              not   tore-I   apart   the letter
      'I did not tear the letter apart.'
    b. [$_{FP}$ *CSAK ÉVA LEVELÉT* [$_{F'}$ [*nem téptem*$_i$]$_j$ [$_{NegP}$ t$_j$ [$_{Asp'}$ *szét* [$_{VP}$ t$_i$ t$_i$]]]]]]
            only Eve's letter   not tore-I   apart
        'It was only Eve's letter that I did not tear apart.'

The derivation in (6b) involves an illegitimate step: the right-adjunction of
the V to the Neg head.
(iii) Negation also involves a further problem. In the Hungarian sentence, not
only AspP but also FP can be dominated by a NegP projection. Both AspP-
negation and FP-negation represent sentential negation, which is indicated,
among others, by the fact that both of them trigger the negative concord of
universal pronouns, as illustrated in (7a,b). (DistP stands for Distributive
Phrase, the projection harboring distributive quantifiers.)

(7)a. [$_{DistP}$ *Senki* [$_{NegP}$ **nem** *hívta*$_i$ [$_{AspP}$ meg t$_i$ [$_{VP}$ t$_i$ Évát]]]]
          nobody   not invited   PRT   Eve-ACC
      'Nobody invited Eve.'
    b. [$_{DistP}$ *Senki* [$_{NegP}$ **nem** [$_{FP}$ *ÉVÁT*   *hívta*$_i$ [$_{AspP}$ *meg* t$_i$ [$_{VP}$ t$_i$]]]]]]
          nobody   not   Eve-ACC invited   PRT
        'For nobody was it Eve that he invited.'

The problem is that the negative head dominating AspP does, whereas the
negative head dominating FP does not, attract the V, which is a fact
unaccounted for in the framework under consideration. Compare the
positions of the V in the two derivations:

(8)a. [$_{DistP}$ [$_{NegP}$ [$_{Neg}$ nem+V$_i$] [$_{AspP}$ [$_{Asp}$ t$_i$] [$_{VP}$ t$_i$ …]]]]]
    b. [$_{DistP}$ [$_{NegP}$ [$_{Neg}$ nem] [$_{FP}$ XP [$_F$ V$_i$] [$_{AspP}$ [$_{Asp}$ t$_i$] [$_{VP}$ t$_i$ …]]]]]

(iv) The framework under discussion introduces an F head and an FP
projection, and employs XP movement to Spec,FP, and V movement to F,
thereby enlarging the machinery of generative grammar. Furthermore, the
[+F] feature embodied by the F head has a rather peculiar interpretation,
meaning roughly 'from among a set of alternatives in the domain of
discourse for which the predicate can potentially hold, this is the subset for
which the predicate exclusively holds'.
(v) The theory of focus under discussion cannot account for an interesting
pattern of variation found in the interpretation of foci. A focussed singular or

plural indefinite noun phrase in a sentence containing no verbal particle does not necessarily express exhaustive identification, the hallmark of structural focus. A focussed definite noun phrase, on the other hand, must be interpreted exhaustively. Interestingly, in a sentence containing a verbal particle, on the other hand, a focussed noun phrase, whether indefinte or definite, always expresses exhaustive identification. The [+/-exhaustive] feature of focus will be demonstrated by a test adopted from Szabolcsi (1981). The test sentences have two versions: in one version the focussed element is a coordinate noun phrase, whereas in the other version one member of the coordinate phrase is dropped. If the latter version is a logical consequence (denoted by the symbol   –>) of the former version, no exhaustivity is involved. If, on the other hand, the latter version is not a logical consequence of the first one (denoted by the symbol –/–>) but contradicts the first version, then the focussed phrase is [+exhaustive]. Compare:

 (9)a. *János KÖNYVEKET ÉS CD-KET vett* –> *János KÖNYVEKET vett.*
        John books   and CD's   bought John books   bought
        'John bought BOOKS AND CD'S.'   –> 'John bought BOOKS.'
     b. *János EGY KÖNYVET ÉS EGY CD-T vett.* –> *János EGY*
        John a   book   and a   CD bought John   a
        KÖNYVET vett.
        book   bought
        'John bought A BOOK AND A CD.'   –> 'John bought A BOOK.'
     c. *János A   KÖNYVET ÉS A   CD-T vette*   –/–>*János A KÖNYVET*
        John the book   and the CD   bought   John the book
        vette.
        bought
        'It was the book and the CD that John bought.'–/–> 'It was the book
        that John bought.'

(10)a.?*János KÖNYVEKET ÉS CD-KET vett   meg* –/–> *János*
        John books   and CD's   bought up   John

        KÖNYVEKET vett   meg.
        books   bought up
        'It was books and CD's that John bought up.' –/–> 'It was books that
        John bought up.'
     b. *János EGY KÖNYVET ÉS EGY CD-T vett   meg* –/–> *János EGY*
        John a   book   and a   CD bought up   John   a
        KÖNYVET vett   meg

book   bought up
'It was a book and a CD that John bought up.' –/–> 'It was a book that
John bought up.'
  c. *János A   KÖNYVET ÉS   A   CD-T vette   meg. –/–>János A*
    John   the book   and the CD   bought up   John   the
        KÖNYVET vette   meg
    book   bought up
    'It was the book and the CD that John bought up.' –/–> 'It was the
    book that John bought up.'

The two members of the sentence pairs in (9a) and (9b) can be
simultaneously true; that is, if John bought books and CDs, then it follows
that he bought books. The two members of the sentence pairs in (9c) and
(10a-c), on the other hand, cannot be true in the same world, that is, for
example, if it was the book and the CD that John bought, then it is not true
that it was the book that he bought. The contradiction arises between the
sentence variants because of the [+exhaustive] feature associated with the
focussed element. In the framework under discussion, the preverbal
constituent is analyzed as a focus sitting in Spec,FP in all of these sentence.
(None of them is a bare noun phrase to be placed into Spec, AspP.
According to Bartos (2000), the plural indefinites in (9a) and (10a) are not
bare NPs but NumPs, with Num realized as a plural suffix.) If all the
preverbal constituents occupy Spec,FP, then they should be associated with
the same focus interpretation, i.e., it is unclear what causes the lack of
exhaustivity in some of the cases.

4. The proper analysis of the verbal particle

An important element of the theory under discussion, involving an FP
projection and V movement to F, is the assumption that the verbal particle is
a perfectivizer, i.e., an aspectual operator sitting in the specifier of an AspP
projection - cf. e.g. den Dikken (2004), É. Kiss (2002a), and Alberti (2004).
(Piñon (1995) and Olsvay (2000) place the verbal particle under TenseP.) A
recent extensive, systematic analysis of the verbal particle (É. Kiss 2002b;
2004), however, has shown that the verbal particle is not an aspectual
operator but a secondary predicate predicated of the theme. Verbal particles
fall into three major classes. In sentences expressing a change of state of the
theme, the verbal particle functions as a resultative secondary predicate
predicating the end state of the theme - see (11a). It is equivalent to a

resultative nominal (11b). A resultative particle and a resultative nominal can also cooccur in a clitic-doubling-like construction (11c).

(11)a. [TopP *Péter* [PredP *szét* [VP *tépte a   levelet*]]
     Peter   up tore the letter
  'John tore the letter up.'
  b. [TopP *Péter* [PredP *darabokra* [VP *tépte a   levelet*]]
      Peter   pieces-into   tore the letter
   'John tore the letter into pieces.'
  c. [TopP *Péter* [PredP *szét* [VP *tépte a   levelet darabokra*]]
      Peter   up   tore the letter pieces-into
   'John tore the letter up into pieces.'

In sentences expressing a change of location, the verbal particle refers to the end location of the moving theme (12a). This type of terminative particle, too, can be replaced by a terminative noun phrase (12b), and the terminative particle and the terminative noun phrase can also cooccur in a construction reminiscent of clitic-doubling (12c):

(12)a. *János* [PredP *be* [VP *gurította a   labdát*]]
    John   into rolled the ball
  'John rolled the ball in.'
  b. *János* [PredP *a   kapuba* [VP *gurította a   labdá*t]]
    John   the goal-into rolled the ball
   'John rolled the ball into the goal.'
  c. *János* [PredP *be* [VP *gurította a   labdát a   kapuba*]]
    John   into rolled the ball the goal-into
   'John rolled the ball into the goal.'

The third type of verbal particle has a locative meaning; it occurs in sentences expressing   existence or spatial configuration in a particular location. The locative particle, too, can be replaced, or can cooccur with, a locative noun phrase with a descriptive content:

(13)a. *János* [PredP *lent* [VP *tartja a   bort*]]
    John   down keeps the   wine
  'John keeps the wine down(stairs).'
  b. *János* [PredP *a   pincében* [VP *tartja a   bort*]]
    John   the cellar-in   keeps the wine
   'John keeps the wine in the cellar.'
  c. *János* [PredP *lent* [VP *tartja a   bort a   pincében*]]

John   down   keeps the wine the cellar-in
'John keeps the wine down in the cellar.'

Sentences containing a locative particle are always imperfective - hence the verbal particle cannot be a perfectivizer. A preverbal resultative or terminative particle, indeed, is usually indicative of the perfective aspect; however, there are also exceptions. For instance, verbs expressing a directed but non-terminated movement are not perfective in the presence of a verbal particle, either:

(14)a. *Péter két óra   hosszat **ki**   bámult az ablakon.*
        Peter two hour long   out gazed   the window-on
        'Peter was looking out of the window for two hours.'
    b. *A Duna   **bele** folyik a   Fekete-tengerbe.*
       the Danube into flows the Black sea-into
       'The Danube runs into the Black sea.'

Thus the different classes of verbal particles cannot be associated with an invariant aspectual role. In the case of bare nominals, which are also placed in the specifier of AspP in the framework under discussion, it is even less predictable what role, if any, they play in the determination of the aspect of the sentence. Compare:

 (15)a. *Éva **könyvet**   olvasott.*
        Eve book-ACC read
        'Eve was book-reading.'
    b. *Éva **kávét**   főzött.*
       Eve coffee-ACC cooked
       'Eve (has) made/was making coffee.'
    c. *Éva **csúcsot**   döntött.*
       Eve record-ACC beat
       'Eve beat a record.'

In (15a), the bare nominal + V complex is imperfective, in (15b) it is ambiguous aspectually, whereas in (15c) it is perfective.
    The grammatical function that is shared by all major types of verbal particles as well as bare nominals is not that of an aspectual operator but that of a secondary predicate. Evidence for the predicate status of the verbal prefix is provided by the fact that its logical subject, represented by the theme argument, must be specific in the sense of Enç (1991), that is, it must refer to an individual already present in the domain of discourse. The

following examples are ungrammatical because their theme is represented by a bare plural noun phrase, which has only a non-specific reading in Hungarian:

(16)a.*[TopP *Péter* [PredP *szét* [VP *tépett **leveleket***]]]
         Peter   up   tore   letters
    b.*[TopP *Péter* [PredP ***be*** [VP *gurított **labdákat** a   kapuba*]]]
            Peter   into   rolled balls   the goal-into
    c.*[TopP *Péter* [PredP ***lent*** [VP *tart   **síléceket** a pincében*]]]
            Peter   down   keeps skis   the cellar-in

The preverbal bare nominal is also claimed by Komlósy (1994) to function as a predicate predicated of an existentially bound variable incorporated into the V. According to É. Kiss (2002b, 2004), the verbal particle and the bare nominal occupy the specifier of a PredP projection, a projection identified in Dutch by Koster (1994), and proposed for Hungarian by Csirmaz (2004).

    If the preverbal position taken by the verbal particle is not an aspectual operator position but a predicative position, then it is not inconceivable any more that the focus is an alternative filler of the same slot – given that the focus also has predicative properties.

5. The focus as a specificational predicate

The Hungarian structural focus can be adequately translated into English by a cleft or a pseudo-cleft construction, in which the focus constituent appears as a nominal predicate complementing the copula:

(17)a. It was PETER who tore up the letter.
    b. Who tore up the letter was PETER.

An old remark of Szabolcsi (1981) also reflects the predicative nature of structural focus. As she observed, a noun phrase in the preverbal focus position allows a non-referential, "qualitative" interpretation - see (18a), in which the contrasted noun phrases can have the same referent. Crucially, in no other position is such an interpretation possible - see (18b,c):

(18)a. AZ ÖREGEMBERNEK$_i$ adtam át   a   helyem, nem A
      the old-man-to   gave-I over my seat   not the
      PROFESSZORNAK$_i$.
      professor-to

'It was to the old man that I gave my seat, and not to the professor.'

cf. b.*[TopP *Az öregembernek*i [PredP *át* [VP *adtam a helyem*]]], *a professzornak*i *nem.*

'To the old man, I gave my seat; to the professor, I did not.'

c.*[PredP *Át* [VP *adtam a helyem az öregembernek*i]], *de nem adtam át a professzornak*i.

'I gave my seat to the old man, but I did not give it to the professor.'

The analysis of the pseudo-cleft construction by Higgins (1973), and the analysis of the cleft construction by S. Huber (2000) have demonstrated that the focus interpretation of the pseudo-cleft and cleft constituents is, in fact, a consequence of their predicative function.

Higgins, analyzing English pseudo-cleft sentences, claims that sentences consisting of a subject, a copula, and a predicative complement are of three types: they can express predication (e.g. (19a)), identification (19b), and specification (19c).

(19)a. Mary is beautiful./Mary is a teacher.
    b. That is Mary Brown.
    c. The winner is MY BROTHER.

Predicational copular sentences contain a referential subject, which they predicate a property about. Their predicate (in syntactic terms, their predicative complement) is usually represented by an adjective phrase or an indefinite noun phrase. Identificational sentences also have a referential subject, and their predicate serves to teach its name.

Specificational sentences can be easily recognized in English: their subject and predicate can be exchanged:

(20) MY BROTHER is the winner.

In the case of specificational sentences, neither the subject, nor the nominal predicate is referential. The subject functions as a superscript of a table, the heading of a list, whereas the predicate specifies what makes up the list. In other words, the subject delimits a domain, and the specificational predicate identifies the particular members of that domain. A specificational predicate implies exhaustivity, which, however, can be cancelled, as happens in (21):

(21) What I bought was a pen and a pencil, among other things.

If a specificational predicate is negated, a continuation with a *but* phrase of the negated predicate is expected:

(22) What John is isn't proud of himself (but...

As Higgins demonstrates, pseudo-cleft sentences are specificational copular sentences, with the *What*...-clause functioning as the subject, and the constituent external to it functioning as the specificational predicate. Its focus-interpretation, i.e., its list reading and its exhaustivity, is a function of its specificational role.

   S. Huber (2000) reformulates Higgins's theory of specification in a less metaphorical, more explicit terminology. He argues that in specificational sentences the subject denotes a set, which the predicate characterizes through another set, by listing the individuals that make it up. A specificational predicate implies that its specification of the individuals that make up the set denoted by the subject is exhaustive, that is, other alternatives are excluded. The subject of predication is associated with an existential presupposition - because only the content of an existing set can be listed. In Huber's analysis, the focus properties of the cleft constituent are the properties of a specificational predicate.

   Since the interpretation of the Hungarian structural focus is identical with that of a cleft and a pseudo-cleft constituent, it is plausible to assume that it has the same source: it falls out from the specificational predicate status of the focus constituent. So let us assume that the Hungarian focus constituent occupies a predicative position; it is an alternative filler of the specifier of the PredP harboring the verbal particle and the bare nominal complement. Under this assumption, a sentence with a structural focus has a structure like that in (23):

(23) [$_{PredP}$ *PÉTER*$_i$ [$_{VP}$ *olvasta el   a   levelet* t$_i$]]
          Peter   read   through the letter
      'It was Peter who read the letter.'

The filler of Spec,PredP must be interpreted as a predicate. Since *Peter*, a definite, referential noun phrase, is incapable of predicating a property, it can only be understood as a specificational predicate. As such, it requires an open sentence as its subject, which is provided by the VP. That is, (23) expresses that the set of individuals that read the letter includes Peter and no one else. The exhaustive listing interpretation of *Peter* is a consequence of its specificational role.

In a derivational framework, it also has to be clarified what triggers the movement of *Peter* into Spec,PredP. Szendrői (2003) argues that movement to Spec,PredP, the prosodically most emphatic position of the sentence, is movement for stress. In the Hungarian sentence, consisting of a topic part and a predicate part, in other words, an external argument and a VP extended into a PredP, the stress rule assigns the highest stress to the left edge of the predicate part, i.e., to the filler of Spec,PredP.[2] According to the Stress-focus correspondence principle of Reinhart (1995), the focus of a clause is any constituent containing the main stress of the intonational phrase, as determined by the stress rule. Szendrői claims that in Hungarian, movement of a constituent to the left-pheriphery is triggered by the requirement that the given constituent be stressed i.e., that it assume an information focus status. In the framework proposed in this paper, the specificational interpretation of the preposed constituent is a consequence of the fact that its landing site is a predicative position.

In most Hungarian sentence types, except those expressing an activity or a state, Spec,PredP must be filled. In the framework under consideration, this fact of Hungarian could be derived from the assumption that every sentence type corresponding to a particular kind of event has a designated constituent functioning as the default information focus, marked by the feature [+F].[3] In sentences describing a delimited change of state or change of location, the default information focus is the verbal particle, which predicates the resulting state or resulting location of the theme. In sentences expressing existence or spatial configuration in a particular location, the default information focus is the verbal particle predicating the location of the theme. In sentences expressing a process or a state, the default information focus is the verb itself. If no constituent is marked as [+F] in the numeration, a default [+F] feature will be associated with the designated constituent. In sentences expressing an activity or a state, in which the carrier of [+F] is the V at the left edge of the VP, the focus rule of Reinhart will block the filling of Spec,PredP. In other sentence types, the focus rule will trigger movement to Spec,PredP. (In negated sentences, the main stress associated with the carrier of the feature {+F} is shifted to the negative particle preceding it.)

Consider the examples in (24). In sentences describing a delimited change, the default carrier of the [+F] feature is the delimiter, i.e., the resultative verbal particle. (24a) instantiates this default case. In sentences expressing a process, the default carrier of the main news is the verb. This is what we attest in (24b). In (24c), the feature [+F] is associated with the agent-subject, which is a constituent other than the default carrier of the information focus. The [+F] feature causes the agent to move to Spec,PredP, where it not only receives main stress, but is also associated with a

predicative interpretation. The type of predicative interpretation that a proper name can receive is a specificational reading, expressing exhaustivity.

(24)a. [TopP *János* [PredP **fel** [VP *hívta   Évát*]]]
        John   up   called Eve-ACC
    'John called up Eve.'
   b. [TopP *János* [VP **hívta**   *Évát*]]
        John   phoned Eve-ACC
    'John was calling Eve.'
   c. [TopP *János* [PredP *ÉVÁT* [VP *hívta fel*]]]
        John   Eve-ACC called up
    'It was Eve that John called up.'

As is well-known, certain types of constituents, for example, phrases involving a monotone decreasing quantifier such as *kevés* 'few', or wh-phrases, are obligatorily "focussed". In the framework under consideration, these types of constituents must be assumed to have an intrinsic [+F] 'information focus' feature. If a sentence happens to contain more than one [+F] constituent, some auxiliary principle will decide which of them moves to the specifier of PredP. For example, in a sentence containing both a monotone decreasing quantifier and an interrogative phrase, the interrogative phrase will take precedence over the quantifier because of a principle requiring that in a question the V and its arguments be in the scope of an interrogative operator.
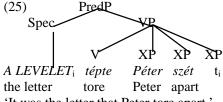
6. The problems of the FP theory revisited

In the proposed framework, the focus is an alternative filler of Spec,PredP, the position occupied by the verbal particle or the bare nominal complement of the V in the unmarked case. This framework, involving no FP projection, no focus movement, and no V-to-F raising, is exempt from the difficulties raised by the FP theory. Let us revisit the problems discussed in section 3.
i) In the framework of the FP theory, the verbal particle in a focus construction is predicted to occupy an immediately postverbal position (Spec,AspP in most versions of the theory), contrary to fact - see (5a,b). In the proposed framework, on the other hand, the verbal particle of a focus construction remains inside the VP, where the order of postverbal elements is assumed to be free, hence the immediately postverbal position of the particle is not necessary (even if a phonological constraint observed by Varga (1981) often favors an immediately postverbal particle. As Varga
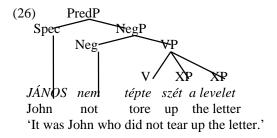
noticed, the postverbal, free-word-order section of a Hungarian sentence sounds best if the unstressed constituents precede the stressed ones.The shorter a particle is, the more likely it is to be unstressed, and to be cliticized to the V.) This is the structure assigned to the grammatical (5a) under the present assumptions:

(25)

PredP
Spec   VP
          V   XP   XP   XP

*A LEVELET*ᵢ *tépte*   *Péter szét*   tᵢ
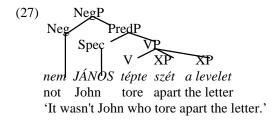the letter   tore   Peter apart
'It was the letter that Peter tore apart.'

(ii)-(iii) In the framework of the FP theory, the sentence structure containing a 'focus, negative particle, V' string cannot be derived legitimately. In Olsvay (2000), the negative particle+verb complex raised to F is derived by right-adjoining the V to the negative particle - as shown in (6b). Furthermore, the FP theory cannot explain why the head of a NegP dominating AspP attracts the V, whereas the head of a NegP dominating FP does not attract it.

In the framework proposed in this paper, both predicative layers of the sentence, i.e., both VP and PredP, are allowed to be dominated by a NegP, and neither Neg head attracts the V. Compare:

(26)

PredP
Spec   NegP
     Neg   VP
              V   XP   XP

JÁNOS   nem   tépte   szét a levelet
John   not   tore   up   the letter
'It was John who did not tear up the letter.'

(27)

NegP
Neg   PredP
     Spec   VP
              V   XP   XP

nem JÁNOS tépte szét   a levelet
not   John   tore   apart the letter
'It wasn't John who tore apart the letter.'

What requires an explanation in the proposed framework is why construction (26), with PredP dominating NegP, is only used when the specifier of PredP is occupied by a specificational predicate; why it is ungrammatical (or marginally acceptable as an emotionally highly loaded statement) when Spec,PredP is taken by a verbal particle - see (28a). In the negated equivalent of a sentence containing a preverbal particle, the particle appears postverbally, as in (28b).

(28)a.?*[_{TopP} *János* [_{PredP} ***el*** [_{NegP} *nem* [_{VP} *olvasta a   levelet*]]]]
         John   through not   read   the letter
       'John didn't read the letter.'
   b. [_{TopP} *János* [_{NegP} *nem* [_{VP} *olvasta el a levelet*]]]

I will argue that (28a) and (26) differ in the respect of grammaticality because in (28a) the verb has to move up to Pred position, which is blocked by the intervening Neg head. In the case of (26), on the other hand, no V-to-Pred movement takes place. Coordination facts provide independent evidence for this assumption. Compare:

(29)a. [_{PredP} *JÁNOS* [_{VP} [_{VP} *tépte szét   a   levelet*] *és* [_{VP} *dobta   bele a*
         John   tore apart the letter   and   threw-it into the
       szemétkosárbal]]]
        trash-can
       'It was John who tore up the letter and threw it into the trash-can.'
   b.*[_{TopP} *János* [_{PredP} ***meg*** [_{Pred'} [_{Pred'} *találta a   levelet*] *és* [_{Pred'} *válaszolta*]]]]
         John   PRT   found the letter   and   answered-it
   c.*[_{TopP} *János* [_{PredP} ***ajándékot*** [_{Pred'} [_{Pred'} *vitt   Évának*] *és* [_{Pred'} *küldött*
         John   present-ACC   took Eve-DAT and   sent
       Marinak]]]]
        Mary-DAT

The ungrammaticality of coordination in (29b,c) – as opposed to the grammaticality of (29a) – falls out if the V-initial strings undergoing coordination are intermediate Pred' projections in (29b,c), and a maximal VP projection in (29a).

   The assumption that a verbal particle or a bare nominal in Spec,PredP attracts the V to Pred seems to be related to the fact that the verbal particle and the V, or the bare nominal and the V denote subsequent stages of one and the same complex event, or sometimes denote a complex, delimited event non-compositionally; i.e., they function as complex predicates in some sense. A focus, i.e., a specificational predicate, on the other hand, does not

merge semantically with the verb; on the contrary, the verb is part of the subject-of-predication of which the focus is predicated – that is why no local relation needs to be established between the focus and the V by V-to-Pred movement.

(iv) The proposed framework is more economical than the FP theory, because it needs to assume no F operator performing exhaustive identification from among a set of alternatives, no FP projection, no XP-movement to Spec,FP, and no V movement to F. Spec,PredP, the position harboring the focus constituent, has to be generated anyway, for independent reasons. The exhaustive interpretation of the focus constituent also falls out for free, as a consequence of its specificational predicate role.

(v) In the framework of the FP theory, preverbal constituents consisting of a bare noun or a bare adverb occupy Spec,AspP, whereas full phrases sit in Spec,FP. All constituents in Spec,FP are associated with a focus interpretation (characterized as exhaustive listing by Szabolcsi 1981, and É. Kiss 1987, 1994), therefore, it is a mystery why the focus interpretation expected is nevertheless blocked in the case of some indefinite noun phrases. In the present framework, on the other hand, the distribution of exhaustive listing interpretation is predictable, in the following way:

A preverbal constituent, whether simple or complex, occupies Spec,PredP, where it receives a predicate interpretation. As shown by Higgins (1973), a nominal can function as a predicational, identificational, or specificational predicate. Any type of noun phrase can express specification. Predication (in the narrow sense), on the other hand, can only be expressed by a bare nominal or a nonspecific indefinite noun phrase (or by an adjective phrase). The preverbal constituents of (9a,b), rewritten below as (30) and (31), are represented by a bare noun and an indefinite noun phrase, respectively, both of which can express either predication, or specification. Since the predicational reading implies no exhaustive listing, the inferences indicated by the arrows can hold, that is, the (b) sentences can be logical consequences of the (a) sentences:

(30)a. János KÖNYVEKET ÉS   CD-KET vett –>
    b. János KÖNYVEKET vett.
(31)a. János EGY KÖNYVET ÉS EGY CD-T vett. –>
    b. János EGY KÖNYVET vett.

If, on the other hand, the filler of Spec,PredP is a definite noun phrase, it cannot receive a predicational reading. The type of predicate that a definite noun phrase can represent is the specificational predicate.[4] The so-called

'exhaustive listing' or 'exhaustive identification' expressed by (9c), rewritten as (32), is a concomitant of specification:

(32)a. János A KÖNYVET ÉS A CD-T vette –/–>
    b. János A KÖNYVET vette.

Whereas a non-specific indefinite noun phrase patterns together with a bare noun in its ability of predicating a property, a specific indefinite noun phrase patterns with a definite noun phrase in its ability of specifying the referential content of a set. That is, a specific indefinite noun phrase in predicate position expresses specification. The indefinite noun phrase in (9b)/(31) is ambiguous between a specific and a non-specific reading. Interestingly, the 'exhaustive listing' interpretation becomes obligatory in the case of (10b), rewritten below as (33) - because the verbal particle blocks the non-specific reading of the theme object. (Recall that the particle functions as a secondary predicate predicated of the theme, and a constituent functioning as the logical subject of a predicate must be specific.)

(33)a. János EGY KÖNYVET ÉS   EGY CD-T vett   meg. –/–>
      John A   BOOK   AND A   CD   bought up
   b. János EGY KÖNYVET vett   meg
     John A   BOOK   bought up
     'It was a book and a CD that John bought up.' –/–>
     'It was a book that John bought up.'

A bare nominal, which is intrinsically non-specific, cannot be predicated about; it cannot function as the theme of a sentence with a verbal particle in Spec,PredP. Cf.

(34)*[$_{TopP}$ *János* [$_{PredP}$ *meg* [$_{VP}$ *vett   könyveket és füzeteket*]]]
        John   up   bought books   and exercise-books

The question is why such sentences are marginally acceptable with the bare noun itself in Spec,PredP - see (10a), rewritten as (35).

(35)?*János KÖNYVEKET ÉS   CD-KET vett   meg. –/–>*
    John BOOKS   AND CD'S   bought up
    János KÖNYVEKET vett   meg.
    John   BOOKS   bought up
    'It was books and CD's that John bought up.' –/–>
    'It was books that John bought up.'

The bare nouns in (35) are presumably licensed by their specificational predicate function. That is, whereas they cannot be licensed as the logical subjects of the resultative particle, they are (somewhat marginally) acceptable as specificational predicates.

   In sum: a [+specific] noun phrase is associated with a specificational (exhaustive) reading in Spec,PredP. A non-specific noun phrase, on the other hand, primarily expresses predication in the narrow sense. In addition to that, a non-specific noun phrase can also be associated with a specificational reading. That is, a [-specific] noun phrase in Spec,PredP can be either predicational, or specificational.

(vi) There is also a further piece of evidence supporting the present proposal as opposed to the FP theory. In many languages in which there is a morphological focus marker, it is cognate with the copula. Such is e.g. Sumerian, a V-final language with a preverbal focus. Sumerian foci can optionally bear the focus marker *-àm*, which is identical with the copula - cf. Ch. Huber (1999). Observe a wh-focus in (36a), and a non-wh-focus in (36b):

(36)a. *éduba -a ana -0 -**àm**   e -ak*
       school-in what-ABS-COP you-did
       'WHAT did you do in school?'
   b. *munus -e   giš -0   šu -ani-a   li   -bí -n -DU*
       woman-ERG tree-ABS hand-her-LOC NEG-LOC-she-planted
       *gíri-ni -ta   -**àm** bi   -n -DU*
       leg -her-ABL-COP LOC-she-planted
       'The woman did not plant the tree with her hand, she planted it WITH HER FOOT.'

In Hausa, too, there is an optional focus marker *nee* (masc.)/*cee* (fem.)/*nee* (plural), which happens to be ideophonic with the copula. Compare the *nee* element in the copular sentence in (37a), and that in the focus construction in (37b). (The examples are from Hartmann (2002)).

(37)a. *Audu dogon mutum **nee**.*
       Audu big   man   is
       'Audu is a big man.'
   b. *Audu **nee** ya   ga dogon mutum*
       Audu F   3sg.REL.PERF see big   man
       'AUDU saw a big man.'

As Hartmann reports, the focus construction is generally analyzed to be monosentential because it is pronounced with an uninterrupted phonological downdrift.

In the framework of the FP theory, where the focus marker is an instantiation of the F head, the frequent identity of the focus-marking morpheme with the copula is a curious accident. In the present framework, on the other hand, the focus marker appears in the head position of a PredP. The copula is a plausible representative of the Pred head, establishing a predication relation between its specifier and its complement.

7. Summary

This paper has argued for a new approach to structural focus, which eliminates the problems raised by the standard FP theory. The starting point of the analysis is the claim of É. Kiss (2002, 2004) that the Hungarian sentence contains a PredP projection above VP, harboring the verbal particle functioning as a resultative, terminative, or locative secondary predicate. The paper has claimed that the focus constituent, which appears preverbally in the Hungarian sentence, is an alternative filler of the Spec,PredP position. The 'exhaustive listing', or 'exhaustive identification' interpretation associated with the focus arises when the constituent raised to Spec,PredP is a definite or a specific indefinite noun phrase, which receives a specificational reading in predicate position. A specificational predicate serves to referentially characterize the set denoted by the rest of the sentence, in other words, to exhaustively list its referential content - see Higgins (1973) and S. Huber (2000). The Spec,PredP position is also the prosodically most prominent position of the sentence, hence its filler - whether a verbal particle or a specificational predicate - is interpreted as the information focus.

Notes

1. Brody assumes no AspP projection. In Brody (1990) the 'Particle V' string is dominated by a V+ node. In Brody (1995) the label of the projection harboring the verbal particle is left unspecified.
2. A question not examined by Szendrői (2003) is the prosody of sentences containing one or more distributive quantifiers, which precede the constituent in Spec,PredP. Intuitively, their stress can be just as strong as the stress of the filler of the Spec,PredP position. I tentatively assume that distributive quantifiers

represent separate phonological phrases, i.e., separate cycles for the Nuclear Stress Rule. The information focus is the constituent associated with main stress within PredP.
3. This [+F] feature, similar to that used by Selkirk (1984), is different from the [+f] feature of Brody (1990, 1995). The former is a feature with prosodic and pragmatic consequences; the latter, on the other head, is a morphological feature projecting an FP, and triggering feature checking.
4. In fact, certain types of definite noun phrases can also express predication - e.g. the sentence *John is my brother* is ambiguous between a predicational and a specificational reading according to Higgins (1973).

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