

Grammatical encoding of referentiality in the history of Hungarian

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1 Introduction

The *Hungarian Generative Diachronic Syntax* Project (National Research Fund No. 78074)

Table 1. Language stages of Hungarian

Early Hungarian	1000 BC – 896 AD	A kind of Proto-Hungarian, no written documents, reconstructed
Old Hungarian	896-1526	Manuscripts, mainly codices
Middle Hungarian	1526-1772	Book printing New secular genres
Modern Hungarian	1772- present day	

Table 2. Types of sources from the Old Hungarian Period

Early Old Hungarian	The age of the Árpád dynasty	Sporadic records, glosses, a few short texts, e. g. <i>Funeral Sermon and Prayer</i> (ca.1195)
Late Old Hungarian	From around 1370 (time of compilation of Codex Jókai)	Codices containing translations of Latin religious literature + original Hungarian compositions such as documents, poems and letters

2. The first attestations of definite article: is it an article at all?

Modern Hungarian

- (1) ez a könyv (2) az én könyvem (3) a szerzeteseknek a könyve
 this the book the my book-POSS.1SG the monks-DAT the book-POSS.3SG
 ‘this book’ ‘my book’ ‘the book of the monks’

Old Hungarian

- (4) ez könyv (5) én könyvem (6) a szerzeteseknek könyve
 this book my book-POSS.1SG the monks-DAT book-POSS.3SG
 ‘this book’ ‘my book’ ‘the book of the monks’

First attestations of the definite article in traditional grammars: pre-articles; transitional word-class; dual nature: “pronoun-article”. (Bakró-Nagy 1999: 7; I. Galassy 1992: 721-722)

The source of the problem: formal and positional equivalence and functional overlap (anaphoric use) with the demonstrative modifier

3. Determinerless definite descriptions in the first half of the Late Old Hungarian period

What is definiteness?

(Lyons 1999, Alexiadou 2007: 51-157. For the different approaches and concepts to characterize definite descriptions, see also Abbott 2004)

Identifiability: the speaker signals that the hearer is able to assign a referent for a certain DP. (Another related interpretative component of definite DPs is familiarity, when the entity referred to by a certain definite DP is assumed to be part of the speakers' shared knowledge)

Definite article = grammaticalization of the semantic and pragmatic concept of definiteness.

OH def.art. appeared when the referent of the noun phrase not anchored in another way!

The time-span of the research:

the first half of the Late Old Hungarian Period (end of 14th c. – first half of the 15th c.)

The first continuous texts from Early Old Hungarian

(11) Funeral Sermon and Prayer (ca.1195, Codex Pray)

The Königsberg Fragment and its Ribbons (end of 12th c – beginning of 13th c.)

The Old Hungarian Lament of Mary (religious poetry; (beginning of 13th c.)

Gyulafehérvár Lines (second half of 13th c.)

First codices (dating to the first half of the Late OH Period)

(12) Codex Jókai:

The first extant, hand-written book in Hungarian about the life and deeds of Saint Francis of Assisi. A 15th century copy of the original translation from around 1370.

The Hussite Bible (3 codices)

The first Bible translations made between 1416 and 1441.

Vienna Codex (survived copy from 1450) books from the Old Testament and the twelve smaller prophets

Munich Codex (survived copy from 1466) four gospels of the New Testament

Apor Codex (around 1490) psalms

Corpus of the present survey: the *Gospel of Matthew from the Munich Codex*

→ regular absence of definite articles

(13) Ø Mennyeknek országa hasonlatik Ø mustármaghoz,

heavens-DAT land-POSS.3SG resembles mustard-seed

kit vevén Ø ember, vet Ø ő szántásába [Matt 13:31]

which taking man plants his plough-land-ILL

‘The kingdom of heavens resembles to the mustard-seed that the man plants to his plough.’

4. Absence of article: major types

4.1 Proper names

Nouns with special lexical properties → inherently referential

Rigid designators (Kripke 1972): they pick out particular individuals in the world, regardless of their attributes.

The N-to-D head-raising hypothesis of Longobardi (1994, 2001)

Syntactic formulation for a generalization of proper names: if N overtly moves to a phonetically empty D then it will be object-referring. (Longobardi 2001: 589)

A group of lexemes that seem to behave as proper names in OH.

→ prototypically unique referent, e.g. lord, father (referring to God), devil, king, queen, prophet, virgin, heaven, etc.

→ if modified by an adjective, they tend to have a definite article more frequently than canonical proper names such as personal and place names. (Imre Samu 1953: 357).

(14) Mendez kedig lótt, hogy betelyesednék, mely mondatott Ø Úrtól
all-this PRT became that be-fulfilled which was-said lord-ABL
Ø próféta miatt, mondván: Íme Ø szűz vall fiat ő méhében, és szül
Prophet through saying behold virgin has son-ACC her womb-INE and brings-forth
'All this happened to fulfill what had been said by the Lord through the prophet, saying:
Behold, the virgin has a son in her womb, and will give birth...' [Matt 1:22-23]

(15) Az napot kedig és az időt senki nem tudja,
that day-ACC PRT and that time-ACC nobody not knows
sem Ø mennynek angyali, sem Ø Fiú, hanemcsak Ø Atya [Matt 24:36]
neither heaven-DAT angels-PL.POSS nor son but-only father
'Nobody knows the day and the time, not even the angels of heaven nor the Son, but only
the Father.'

4.2 Modified by a demonstrative

Demonstratives encode directly accessible reference → necessarily definite

Lyons (1999: 20-21): a kind of 'matching constraint', the hearer is instructed to match the referent of the DP with some object which is either identifiable/visible in the context, or which is known on the basis of previous discourse

About the syntax and semantics of demonstratives: Alexiadou 2007: 93-130 and Lyons 1999

(16) mondj, hogy e kövek legyenek kenyerekké [Matt 4:3]
Tell that this stones become-3PL breads-FAC
'Tell these stones to become bread'

(17) Az napokban jövő Jánus baptista prédikálván Júdeának kietlenében
that days-INE came John Baptiste preaching Judea-DAT desolation-POSS.3SG-INE
'In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea' [Matt 3:1]
(In Latin: in diebus illis)

4.3 Generics

Generic noun phrase: reference is made to the entire class of entities of which the denotatum of the noun is a member. (Alexiadou 2007: 175, for general discussion: Carlson and Pelletier 1995)

Generics ~ proper names

If N does not have to move overtly to D-head because of the weak-parameter setting for D \Rightarrow the language may have kind-referring (generic) bare nouns. (2001: 595 and 1994, reference to the strength parameter in the latter only on pp.659-662)

- (18) Tahát felkelvén parancsola **az** szeleknek és **az** tengernek,
so up-getting commanded the winds-DAT and the sea-DAT
és lőtt vala nagy csendesség.
and became big silence
Bizony **az** emberek csudálkodnak vala, mondván:
verily the men were-amazed saying
Minemő ez, mert \emptyset szelek és \emptyset tenger engednek neki? [Matt 8:26-27]
what-kind this because winds and sea obey-3PL to-him
'So he got up and commanded the winds and the sea, and it turned very calm. The men were amazed, saying: "What kind (of man) is this, that the winds and the sea obey him!"'
- (19) Látván kedig az gyölekezetek, félemének és dicsővejték Istent,
seeing PRT the assembled-PL awed-3PL and praised-3PL God
ki adott ilyen hatalmat \emptyset embereknek. [Matt 9:8]
who gave such power-ACC men-DAT
'When the crowd saw this, they were awed and praised God, who had given such authority to men'
- (20) Elég \emptyset tanejtványnak, hogy legyen, miként ő mestere,
enough student-DAT that be-3SG like his master-POSS.3SG
és \emptyset szolgának, hogy legyen, miként ő ura. [Matt 10:25]
and servant-DAT that be-3SG like his lord-POSS.3SG
'It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his lord'

4.4 Possessive structures

4.4.1 Pronominal possessor

No definite article [Imre (1953: 354-355) statistics of counter-examples show a ratio of 294:2 for 25 pages of Codex Vienna]

- (21) És elhozaték egy tálnyéron \emptyset ő feje, és az lánynak adaték:
and was-brought a platter-SUP his head and the girl-dat was given
és vivé \emptyset ő anyjának [Matt 14:11]
and carried-3sg her mother-dat
'And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she carried it to her mother'

4.4.2 Nominal possessives (case marked by NOM or DAT)

- (22) az gyermeknek lelkét [Matt 2,20] (23) az papok fedelmihez [Matt 26:57]
the child-DAT soul-POSS.3SG-ACC the priests chiefs-POSS.PL-ALL
'the soul of the child' 'the chiefs of priests'
- (24) kecskekígyóknak nemzeti [Matt 3:7]
goat-snakes-DAT races-POSS.PL
'You races of vipers'

- (25) mennyeknek országa [Matt 3:2; 4:17 and *passim*]
heavens-DAT land-POSS.3SG
'the land of heavens' (i.e. the kingdom of heaven)
- (26) te lábaidnak zsámolya [Matt 22:44]
your feet-POSS.2SG-DAT stool-POSS.3SG
'The stool of your feet'
- (27) Ø Istennek igéjét [Matt 13:20] (28) az országnak igéjét [Matt 13:19]
God-DAT word-POSS.3PL-ACC the kingdom-DAT word-POSS.3PL-ACC
'the word of God' 'the word of the kingdom'
- (29) Ø országának evangéliomát [Matt 4:23]
kingdom-POSS.3PL-DAT gospel-POSS.3PL-ACC
'the gospel of **his** kingdom'
- (30) az országnak evangélioma [Matt 24:14]
the kingdom-DAT gospel-POSS.3PL-NOM
'the gospel of the kingdom'

In possessive constructions: the referent of the possessed noun is identified via its relation to the referent of the possessor (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001: 964)

4.5 Non-arguments

Argumenthood: syntactic reflex of the concept of referentiality

It is the D position that turns a nominal expression into an argument; DPs can be arguments, NPs cannot. (Longobardi 1994: 620 and 628; also pointed out by Stowell 1989; first proposed in Szabolcsi 1983; Szabolcsi 1994 speaks about NP subordination)

4.5.1 Predicative constituents

Arguments in Modern Hungarian: i.) in post-head complement position, i.e. inside the VP or ii.) undergo topicalization (Alberti 1997)

A non-referential nominal expression → verb-modifier position (SpecPredP)

- (31) ki az elhagyottat vendi, törvényt tör [Matt 5:32]
who the left-one-ACC will-take law-ACC breaks
'anyone who marries a left (woman) runs counter to the law'
- (32) Holval levén kedig tanácsot tartanak mend az papi fejedelmek
morning being PRT council-ACC hold-3pl all the pristly chiefs
és az népeknek véni Jézus ellen, hogy őtet halálnak adnák
and the people-DAT elders-POSS.PL Jesus against that him death-DAT give-3PL
'In the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people held a consultation in order to give him to death (i.e. how to have Jesus executed)' [Matt 27:1]
- (33) ő étke kedig vala sáska és vad méz [Matt 3:4]
his food PRT was locust and wild honey
'His food was locusts and wild honey'

- (34) Bódogok, kik éheznek és szomjúhoznak **igazságot** [Matt 5:6]
happy-PL who-PL hunger-3PL and thirst-3PL righteousness-ACC
'blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness'
- (35) Én valóbizony keresztellek tütöket **vízben** penitenciára,
I verily baptize you-ACC water-INE repentance-SUB
Ki pedig jövendő énutánam (...) az keresztel tütöket **szent lélekben és tűzben**
who PRT coming after-me that batizes you-ACC holy spirit-INE and fire-INE
'I baptize you with water for repentance, But who comes after me (...) he will baptize you
with the Holy Spirit and fire.' [Matt 3:11]
- (36) Mendezeket beszéllé Jézus az gyülekezeteknek **példabeszédekben,**
all-these-ACC spoke Jesus the assembled-PL-DAT parables-INE
és példabeszéd nélkül nem beszél vala nekik [Matt 13:34]
and parable without not was-speaking to-them
'Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables, and he was not speaking to them
without (using) a parable'

4.5.2 *Non argument adjuncts*

- (37) Nem vetekedik, sem üvölt, sem hallja valaki ő szavát **Ø** utcákban
not quarrels and-not cries and-not hears someone his word-ACC streets-INE
'He will not quarrel or cry out, no one will hear his voice in the streets' [Matt 12:19]

5. Expansion in article use

Codex Jordánszky (compiled between 1516-1519):

→ a Dominican codex, parts of Old Testament, the 4 gospels, the Acts and other parts of NT

Expansion in article use: the most insistently with generic noun phrases

In the Middle Hungarian Period (From 16th century onward)

Definite article: – co-occurring with demonstratives and

– preceding a possessed noun with dative marked possessor

⇒ A substantial structural change in the left periphery of the noun phrase!

For the Modern Hungarian noun phrase structure, see *inter alia* Szabolcsi 1994, É. Kiss 2000
Demonstratives (*ez/az*) in SpecDP, dative-marked possessor Spec,TopP

Middle Hungarian data to illustrate the combination of demonstratives and possessives

- (38) Azok az Angliának nemesei
those the England-DAT nobleman-POSS.PL
'Those noblemen of England'
- (39) Arrul is az bibliának részéről
this-DEL PRT the Bible-DAT part-POSS.3SG-DEL
'About that part of the Bible'

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