

Pseudoclefts in Hungarian and German

AIM: We argue that pseudocleft sentences in Hungarian and German, cf. (1) and (2), are best analysed as a subclass of specificational copular clauses (see Higgins 1979). We argue that in pseudoclefts, the subject of predication is the clefted constituent, whereas the *wh*-clause is the underlying predicate in the PrP. The specificational reading arises because the subject of predication (i.e. the underlying specifier in the PrP) is focused. Note that the notion of pseudoclefts as used here excludes regular predicational clauses with a free relative as subject, illustrated in (3).

- (1) Akit a szintaxis érdekelte, ??(az) JÁNOS volt.
 who.ACC the syntax.NOM interested.3SG (that) JOHN.NOM was
 ‘Who was interested in syntax was John.’
- (2) Was ich gekauft habe, ist ein rotes T-shirt und eine blaue Hose.
 what I bought have is a red T-shirt and a blue trousers
- (3) a. Akit a szintaxis érdekelte, (az) okos volt.
 who.ACC the syntax.NOM interested.3SG (that) clever was
 ‘Who was interested in syntax was smart.’
 b. Wer ein solches T-shirt kauft ist dumm/ ein Trottel.
 who a such T-shirt buys is stupid/ a fool.
 ‘Who buys such a T-shirt is stupid/a fool’

STARTING POINT: Following Bowers (2001), we assume that all copula clauses have an underlying PrP structure (analogous to den Dikken’s (2006a) RelP). The subject of predication is base-generated in Spec,Pr, and the predicate as the complement of Pr. The specificational interpretation is derived by focusing the subject of predication (i.e., specification is a subclass of focus, the inverse of the view expressed in É. Kiss 2006) both in specificational copular clauses and in pseudoclefts. In English and German, focus is normally obtained in specificational copular structures by raising the predicate, leaving behind the subject of predication, causing the latter to end up in a post-verbal surface position (see the inversion analysis of specificational copular clauses in Heggie 1988, Moro 1997, den Dikken 2006b). A different derivation underlies (13) below, where the clefted constituent gets preposed. In Hungarian the subject of the base-structure predication formed in PrP moves to the focus position.

ANALYSIS: We analyze the structure of pseudoclefts in Hungarian and German as in (4), which is supported by the following evidence. **(A)** The subject of the underlying predication is the clefted DP: In both Hungarian and German, the copula agrees in specificational copular clauses with the clefted DP, cf. (5) (and not with the inverted predicate as in English). In pseudoclefts too the copula agrees with the clefted constituent, cf. (6). **(B)** The *wh*-clause is the underlying predicate (complement of Pr⁰): (i) the *wh*-clause in pseudoclefts can only be associated with a demonstrative pronoun, while the *wh*-clause in predicational copular clauses allows both for the demonstrative and for 3rd person personal pronouns, cf. (7a) vs. (8). This is significant because the demonstrative pronoun functions as the associate of left-dislocated predicative phrases (7b) (cf. Mikkelsen 2004, 2005). **(C)** The *wh*-clause is a free relative (and not a question, cf. Ross 2000, den Dikken et al. 2000, Schlenker 2003): (i) In Hungarian, the initial pronoun of the *wh*-clause (e.g., *ami* ‘what’) is morphologically a relative pronoun, rather than an interrogative pronoun (e.g., *mi* ‘what’). (ii) In Hungarian, both pseudoclefts and free relatives allow for complex *wh*-phrases, cf. (9). In German, neither free relatives nor pseudoclefts do. (iii) Aggressively non-D-linked phrases are impossible with free relatives and pseudoclefts, cf. (10) for German; the same holds for Hungarian. Further evidence in favour of this position (=C) will be discussed (on the basis of den Dikken 2006b).

- (4) a. Hungarian: [_{LD} *wh*-clause_i [_{TopP} DEM_i Top [_{FocP} clefted-DP Foc ... [_{PrP} t_{DP} Pr [_{Pr} t_{wh-clause}]]]]]
 b. German [_{CP} *wh*-clause [_C verb] ... [_{VP} [_{PrP} clefted-DP [_{Pr} Pr t_{wh-clause}] verb]]]
- (5) a. Seine beste Freundin bin/*ist ich
 his best friend.FEM am/*is I.NOM
 b. Die Ursache des Feuers waren/*war brennende Kerzen
 the cause the.GEN Feuer.Gen were/was burning candles
 c. A legjobb barátja ÉN voltam / *volt
 the best friend.NOM I.NOM was.1SG / was.3SG
 d. A tűz kiváltó oka A GYERTYÁK voltak / *volt
 the fire triggering cause.NOM the candles.NOM were / was
- (6) a. Was das Feuer verursachte waren/*war brennende Kerzen.

- What the fire caused were/*was burning candles
- b. Ami a tüzet okozni fogja, ?*(azok) a gyertyák lesznek
 what.NOM the fire.ACC cause.INF will.3SG those.NOM the candles will.be.3PL
- (7) a. Aki a legjobban megijed, ??ő / az JÁNOS (lesz)
 who.NOM the most get.frightened.3SG he.NOM / that.NOM John.NOM (will.be.3SG)
 ‘Who (will) get the most frightened is (will be) John.’
- b. Hülye az nem vagyok
 stupid that.NOM not be.1SG ‘As for being stupid, I am not stupid.’
- (8) Akik ott álltak a sarokban, ők / azok részegek (voltak)
 who.PL.NOM there stood.3PL the corner.in they.NOM / those.NOM drunk.PL (were)
 ‘Who were standing in the corner are (were) drunk.’
- (9) a. Amelyik könyvet ezek közül el kell olvasnotok, az A BARRIERS lesz
 which book.ACC these out.of PRT must read.INF.2PL, that the Barriers will.be
 ‘Which book you will have to read will be Barriers. (Pseudocleft)’
- b. Amelyik fiú utoljára érkezett, a házigazda mellett ül.
 which boy last arrived.3SG the host beside sit.3SG
 ‘Which boy arrived last is sitting next to the host.’ (Free relative)
- (10) a. Ich frage mich wen zum Teufel er angerufen hat.
 I ask REFL who to.the devil he called has
- b. *Ich erinnere mich wen zum Teufel er angerufen hat.
 I remember REFL who the hell he called has
- c. *Wen zum Teufel er angerufen hat, ist Peter
 Who the hell he called has is Peter.NOM

EXTENSIONS: In developing our analysis, we discuss the information structure of pseudoclefts, as well as the two different interpretations available to a preposed wh-clause in copular clauses: predicative versus individual denoting (“referential”) (for a recent defense of this view, see Partee 2010). **(A)** In pseudoclefts, a wh-clause with a singular wh-element is compatible with a plural demonstrative. In predicative copular clauses, a wh-clause with a singular wh-element is incompatible with a plural 3rd person personal pronoun. **(B)** In pseudoclefts, when the wh-clause is fronted, the appearance of *az* ‘that’ is strongly preferred in Hungarian, see (1). In predicational clauses, with the wh-clause as subject of predication (base-generated in Spec,Pr), *az* remains entirely optional, see (3a). (It is to be noted that the presence/absence of the demonstrative in the post-verbal domain is a matter entirely unrelated to topicalization (see Kenesei 1994, Lipták and Vicente 2009).) Following Lipták and Vicente (2009), the demonstrative double of the fronted constituent, a resumptive pronominal related to it by movement, sits in a topic position, while the fronted constituent is in a higher, left-dislocated (LD) position within the left periphery. For interpretive reasons, predicative elements in general cannot be (non-contrastive) topics, but can only be LD-ed. Overt demonstrative doubling in the topic position is preferred with non-contrastive LD of morphosyntactically definite predicative phrases (11). The difference between pseudoclefts (1) and predicational clauses (3a) w.r.t. the appearance of the demonstrative double is therefore reducible to the predicative interpretation of the wh-clause in the former clause type and its referential interpretation (compatible with an ordinary topic positions) in the latter. **(C)** The topicalization of the wh-clause predicate of PrP is optional in Hungarian. We liken this to analogous German (and English) data, where a contrastive interpretation of the DP is obligatory in the order DP > wh-clause, cf. (12), suggesting that the initial DP is in a CP (contrastive topic/focus) position, while the wh-clause predicate of PrP remains in situ.

- (11) Az osztály bohóca ??(az) JÁNOS volt nálunk
 the class clown.POSS.3SG that.NOM John.NOM was at.us
 ‘The clown of our class was John.’

- (12) a. His best speech ever is what John contributed to the conference.
 b. Die Kosten sind was sie kritisch sieht. (nicht das Konzept)
 The costs.ACC are what she critically sees (not the concept.ACC).

Finally, we will briefly explore to what extent the similarities of the wh-clause and questions (see Schlenker 2003) can be derived from the predicative status of the wh-clause. As part of this discussion, we expose the particular pattern of binding connectivity effects characterizing Hungarian pseudoclefts, as well as the absence of matching effects both in Hungarian and in German pseudoclefts that are expected under the analysis of the wh-clause as free relative.