

## Revisiting Hungarian Sentence Structure from an LFG Perspective

### 1. Introduction

Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG) is a non-transformational generative theory (Bresnan 2001). It is a representational and modular model that simultaneously assigns parallel structures to a sentence. These representations are related to one another by special linking rules. From our perspective, the four most important levels of representation are as follows: (i) constituent structure (c-structure) (ii) functional structure (f-structure) (iii) prosodic structure (p-structure) (iv) information structure (i-structure). So far relatively few works have discussed (certain aspects of) Hungarian syntax from an LFG perspective, e.g., Börjars et al. (1999), Mycock (2006) and Laczkó & Rákosi (2011). Gazdik (2012) makes the first attempt at developing (at least the outlines of) a comprehensive LFG syntax of Hungarian. In the talk, we will offer a critical overview of Gazdik's (2012) approach (section 2 below), and then we will present the most important ingredients of our alternative analysis, claiming that this alternative has several theory-neutral and theory-internal advantages (section 3 below).

### 2. On Gazdik (2012)

1. Following general LFG principles and assumptions, Gazdik rejects the configurational encoding of (central) grammatical functions (subject and object) in languages like Hungarian.
2. She rejects the configurational (i.e. functional projectional) encoding of discourse functions like topic and focus in c-structure in languages like Hungarian. She proposes, following a mainstream LFG view, that these functions should be represented in i-structure, and the linking between constituents in c-structure and the corresponding elements in i-structure should be provided by standard LFG style annotations associated with the relevant nodes in c-structure.
3. She assumes that Hungarian sentence structure is exocentric, dominated by the S symbol.
4. Following (and extending) recent LFG approaches to discourse functions, she breaks them down into feature values. We will discuss this dimension of her analysis in the talk (by also commenting on her treatment of the "hocus" function, see Kálmán (2001)), but in this abstract we can only concentrate on the c-structural dimension.
5. She claims that Hungarian sentences do not even have a VP constituent; however, rather surprisingly she does admit a V' constituent, see 7(B) below.
6. Relying heavily on Kálmán's (2001) descriptive characterization of word order in Hungarian sentences, she distinguishes two sentence structure types, and she assumes that both structures are available to both neutral and non-neutral sentences distinguished by their different prosodic behaviours represented in the p-structure module of the theory. Her phrase structure rules are as follows, in a simplified representation, where XP\*(T) stands for the topic field, XP\*(Q) for the quantifier field, and XP(F) is the single designated focus (and hocus) position.

(1)  $S \rightarrow XP^*(T) XP^*(Q) XP(F) V XP^*$

(2a)  $S \rightarrow XP^*(T) XP^*(Q) V' XP^*$       (2b)  $V' \rightarrow VM V$

(Note that in LFG, c-structure nodes are obligatorily associated with annotations which link them to corresponding elements in other (parallel) representations: grammatical functional annotations of this general format:  $(\uparrow GF)=\downarrow$  map constituents into f-structure, and discourse functional annotations of this general format:  $(\uparrow \sigma DF)=\downarrow$  map constituents into i-structure.)

7. Our most important critical remarks are as follows. (A) Given that Gazdik proposes two sentence structures in complementary distribution, and, as (1) and (2) show, in her system the focus (and hocus) position and the VM position are two distinct positions, she could only



stipulate that the two positions cannot be filled simultaneously (although she doesn't formulate this constraint at all). (B) On the basis of some LFG-internal considerations (which we will argue against in the talk), Gazdik rejects the use of a (full) VP projection. At the same time, she does use a V' projection (without projecting it any further), which is definitely an "unorthodox" move even in the flexible LFG approach to phrase structure representation. (C) We claim that it is a serious shortcoming of Gazdik (2012), even if it is just a sketch of an account to be fully developed later, that it simply borrows Kálmán's (2001) descriptive umbrella term VM, comprising a whole set of radically different types of constituents, and it doesn't even hint at the way in which the treatment of these various constituents is envisaged in this approach.

### 3. Our alternative proposal

We fundamentally adapt É. Kiss' (1992) "unorthodox" GB approach in our LFG framework. (Her approach is unorthodox from a GB/MP perspective, because (i) her structure is exocentric (ii) it does not employ discourse functional projections (FocP, TopP). At the same time it is a serious shortcoming that she "collapses" the focus and the VM positions/functions inappropriately in her system.) We propose the following major phrase structure rules.

(3a)  $S \rightarrow XP^*(T) \quad XP^*(Q) \quad VP$       (3b)  $VP \rightarrow XP(\pm F) \quad V'$       (3c)  $V' \rightarrow V \quad XP^*$

This proposal is tenable and principled: (i) in LFG, exocentricity (especially at the sentence structure level) is part and parcel of parametric variation in UG; (ii) the rejection of discourse functional phrasal projections (FocP and TopP) in languages like Hungarian is still motivated and generally accepted in this theory; (iii) in LFG, the complementarity of ordinary VMs and focused constituents in the same syntactic (preverbal) position can be captured straightforwardly by the help of appropriate (discourse) functional annotations. In the talk we will present a fully developed system of the necessary disjunctive annotations coupled with appropriate specifications in the lexical entries of the categories involved and with the relevant information encoded in p-structure. We will propose a coherent formal treatment of various VM types (particles, bare nouns, XPs). Here we only have space for a single example. The Hungarian verb *él* 'live' requires that in a neutral sentence (i.e. without a preverbal focused constituent) its locative OBL argument should occupy the preverbal VM position; however, this OBL itself can be (but it isn't necessarily) the focused constituent, occupying the same [Spec,VP] position. This is encoded in the lexical form of the verb as in (6). The annotations in (4) are associated with the OBL argument when it is focused preverbally, and the annotations in (5) are associated with the OBL when it occupies the same preverbal position in a neutral sentence.

(4) $(\uparrow \text{OBL}) = \downarrow$ $(\uparrow \sigma \text{ FOC}) = \downarrow$	(5) $(\uparrow \text{OBL}) = \downarrow$ $\sim (\uparrow \sigma \text{ FOC})$ $(\downarrow \text{CHECK\_PV}) = +$	(6) <i>él</i> , V 'LIVE < $(\uparrow \text{SUBJ}) (\uparrow \text{OBL}) >$ ' $\{ (\uparrow \sigma \text{ FOC}) (\uparrow \text{OBL})$ $ \sim (\uparrow \sigma \text{ FOC}) (\uparrow \text{OBL CHECK\_PV}) = c + \}$
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#### REFERENCES

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