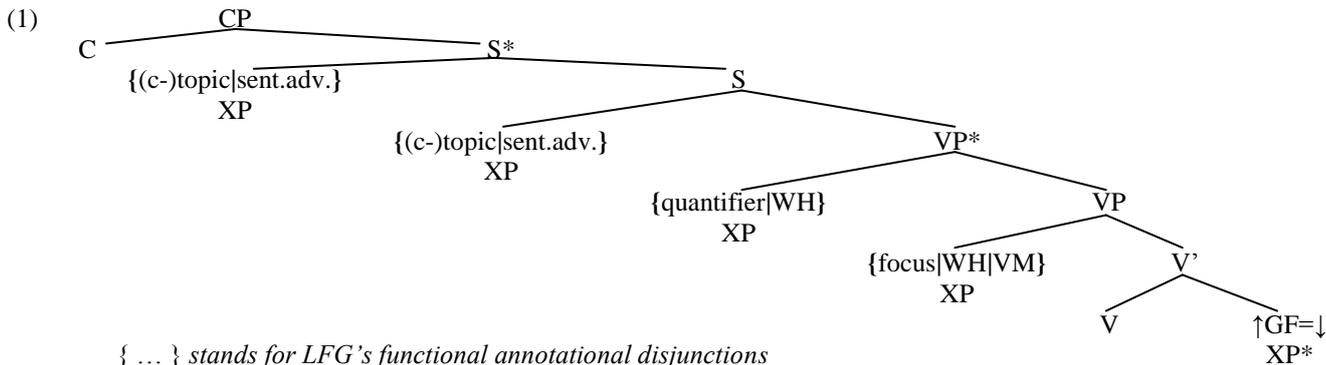


FOCUS AND VERBAL MODIFIERS IN HUNGARIAN FROM AN LFG PERSPECTIVE

1. Introduction

Elsewhere we have developed the first detailed and comprehensive LFG analysis of Hungarian finite clauses, motivated by É. Kiss’ (1992, 1994) GB analysis. The overall structure we assume is as follows.



We assume that focussed constituents, ‘WH’-phrases and a whole range of elements (verbal prefixes, reduced or maximally projected, designated arguments, idiom chunks, etc.) collectively called verbal modifiers (VMs) are in complementary distribution in the Spec,VP position. In the talk we will develop a detailed LFG analysis of a range of elements in the Spec,VP position we postulate in (1), except for ‘WH’-phrases, because we will analyze (multiple) ‘WH’-questions elsewhere. (We will also argue against Gazdik (2012), among others, who assumes separate focus and VM positions.) Consider the following sentences exemplifying the types of constituents we will concentrate on.

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|-----|--|--|
| (2) | Ma Péter fel hívta a barátját.
today Peter.NOM up called the friend.his-ACC
‘Today Peter called up his friend.’ | verbal particle (coverb) |
| (3) | Ma Péter A BARÁTJÁ-T hívta fel.
today Peter.NOM the friend.his-ACC called up
‘Today Peter called up HIS FRIEND.’ | focussed constituent |
| (4) | Ma Péter újság-ot olvasott.
today Peter.NOM newspaper-ACC read.PAST
‘Today Peter read a newspaper / newspapers (= did newspaper-reading).’ | bare (object)
nominal argument |
| (5) | Ma Péter a városunk-ba érkezett.
today Peter.NOM the city.our-into arrived
‘Today Peter arrived in our city.’ | (unfocussed) designated
(oblique) XP argument |
| (6) | Ma Péter A VÁROSUNK-BA érkezett.
today Peter.NOM the city.our-into arrived
‘Today Peter arrived IN OUR CITY.’ | focussed designated
(oblique) XP argument |
| (7) | Ma Péter pali-ra vette János-t.
today Peter.NOM paul-onto took John-ACC
‘Today Peter made a dupe of John.’ | idiom chunk
(pali ‘Paul’ = dupe) |

2. Fundamental empirical generalizations

- Basically, any argument or adjunct of the predicate can be focussed, in which case this element occupies the preverbal (Spec,VP) position, and it receives very heavy stress (and the following elements lose even their ordinary phrase/word-initial stress). An example is given in (3).
- If there is no such focussed constituent (i.e., in a neutral sentence), various types of predicates can require a particular element to occur in the Spec,VP position.
- When the verb is part of a particle-verb-construction, it requires the particle to occupy this position, see (2) and compare it with (3).
- A great number of various types of verbs can (optionally) require that one of their designated arguments should occur in Spec,VP in its “reduced” (non-XP) form, see (4), which contains an object expressed by a bare noun.
- Certain other types of verbs require one of their designated (typically oblique) arguments to occupy the Spec,VP position in a neutral sentence in their maximally projected (XP) form, see (5).
- This designated argument (just like any other constituent in this position) can receive heavy stress and focus interpretation, see (6), and compare it with (5). (Note that the very same focussing possibility holds for reduced arguments like the one exemplified in (4).)
- The verb of an idiomatic expression may require the idiom chunk to occupy the Spec,VP position, see (7).

3. The essential ingredients of our LFG analysis

1. The Spec,VP position, with the characteristic heavy-stress prosodic support, is unquestionably a standard (optional) focus position. In the talk, for the sake of easy exposition, we will represent the FOCUS discourse function as an f-structure entity (in the spirit of classical LFG). However, we will also point out that we have an informational structural representation in mind in general terms and in the long run, see Gazdik (2012) and the references therein.
2. The central idea of our approach, in the spirit of LFG's "what-you-see-is-what-you-get" principle-of-thumb, is that the complementarity of all these preverbal elements is to be captured by assuming that they compete for the same single preverbal position, and disjunctive functional annotations in c-structure (supported by prosodic features) and specific functional annotations in the relevant lexical forms take care of the "ranking" of the members of this competition.
3. Given that in this talk we exclude 'WH'-questions from our discussion, from a c-structural—annotational point of view, the following disjunction of functional annotations is appropriate. (Although note that the overall system would not be altered considerably for our present purposes: we would only need an additional 'WH'-question functional annotational disjunct – however, we leave this out, because (multiple) 'WH'-questions would generate farther reaching ramifications, which we cannot go into here.)

$$(8) \{ (\uparrow \text{GF}) = \downarrow \\ (\uparrow \text{FOCUS}) = \downarrow \\ | \uparrow = \downarrow \\ | (\uparrow \text{GF}) = \downarrow \\ (\downarrow \text{CHECK_VM}) = c + \}$$

In terms of c-structure annotations, this disjunction encodes three scenarios: (i) the phrase in Spec,VP (with its own GF) is a focussed constituent (and practically any constituent can acquire this status) (ii) the relevant element is a functional co-head (iii) the phrase has its own GF and (in a neutral, i.e. non-focussed, configuration) it has to occupy this designated position (this is guaranteed by the CHECK feature in the third disjunct in (8)).

4. The first annotational disjunct takes care of sentences with a focussed constituent, see (3) and (6).
5. The second disjunct is for the treatment of particle verb constructions, in the case of which the particle and the verb are functional coheads (for details of a compatible analysis we subscribe to, see Laczkó & Rákosi (2011)). This handles cases like (2).
6. The truly "mixed bag" is the third disjunct: if the sentence is neutral (i.e. it does not contain a focussed constituent) and if the predicate is not a particle verb construction, then a particular verbal predicate may impose its own requirements on one of its semantic or formal arguments. The main instances of this are spelt out below.
7. A verb like *olvas* 'read' optionally allows (or, rather, requires) its object to be expressed by a bare noun in neutral sentences. This has to be encoded in the lexical form of such a predicate, by means of a set of optional annotations, as in (9).

$$(9) \quad (\uparrow \text{OBJ NUMBER}) = \text{SG} \\ \sim (\uparrow \text{OBJ INDEX}) \\ \{ (\uparrow \text{FOCUS}) \\ | (\uparrow \text{OBJ CHECK_VM}) = + \}$$

This set of optional annotations encodes the following. The predicate allows for a "reduced" (= bare nominal) object argument. The morphological form of its object is singular obligatorily: $(\uparrow \text{OBJ NUMBER}) = \text{SG}$ and it is unspecified for "semantic" number; and, therefore, it is non-referential (see the English translation of (4). This is captured by the following (negative) existential constraint: $\sim (\uparrow \text{OBJ INDEX})$. (In the talk I will show that this requirement can only be satisfied if the argument is reduced, and it is not expressed by a DP.) This reduced argument must occur in the Spec,VP position: $(\uparrow \text{OBJ CHECK_VM}) = +$, unless the sentence contains a focussed constituent, which can be any phrase (including the reduced argument itself). The reason why the (additional alternative) lexical specification is needed is twofold. (A) It is only (a definable) set of verbs that can have this option. (B) The reduced argument can occur anywhere in a non-neutral sentence, so its special form and interpretation cannot be appropriately captured solely by c-structural (positional and annotational) means.

8. A verb like *érkezik* 'arrive' requires its maximally projected (XP) oblique argument to occupy the Spec,VP position in neutral sentences (and in non-neutral sentences, any phrase, including this oblique argument, can occur in Spec,VP as a focussed constituent). The following lexical form encodes all this.

$$(10) \quad \text{érkezik, V } (\uparrow \text{PRED}) = \text{'arrive } \langle (\uparrow \text{SUBJ}) (\uparrow \text{OBL}) \rangle \text{' } \\ \{ (\uparrow \text{FOCUS}) | (\uparrow \text{OBL CHECK_VM}) = + \}$$

9. The predicate of an idiomatic expression may impose a similar constraint on its idiom chunk, see the example in (7). The lexical form for the verb in this idiomatic use can be given as follows.

$$(11) \quad \text{vesz, V } (\uparrow \text{PRED}) = \text{'make-a-dupe-of } \langle (\uparrow \text{SUBJ}) (\uparrow \text{OBJ}) \rangle \text{' } (\uparrow \text{OBL}) \\ (\uparrow \text{OBL FORM}) = \text{PALIRA} \quad \{ (\uparrow \text{FOCUS}) | (\uparrow \text{OBL CHECK_VM}) = + \}$$

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