Case study: Hungarian

☞ "On *wh*-movement" FAQ document on website.

1   Hungarian 101

(1)   **Traditionally described as non-configurational:**   (É Kiss, 1994, p. 1)

    a.   ✓ Mari meg-látogatta Évá-t
        Mary VM-visited   Eve-ACC

        'Mary visited Eve.'

    b.   ✓ Évát meg-látogatta Mari
    c.   ✓ Évát Mari meg-látogatta
    d.   ✓ Mari Évát meg-látogatta
    e.   ✓ Meg-látogatta Évát Mari
    f.   ✓ Meg-látogatta Mari Évát

☞ In reality, a flat (non-configurational) post-verbal field and strict left periphery of $\overline{\text{A}}$-positions. (VM = "verbal modifier")

> **The Hungarian sentence:**
> S = Topic* Quantifier* Focus V ...
> *or* Topic* Quantifier* VM V ...

(2)   **Structure in É Kiss (1994):**
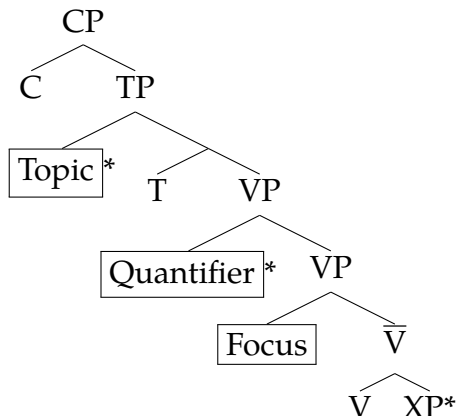
1.1 Topic position

- Must be referential and specific. Generics are okay too.

- There can be multiple (É Kiss, 1994, p. 14).

1.2 Quantifier position

- There can be multiple.

  - Quantifiers always take surface scope.

- Always takes scope over focus position and post-verbal material.

1.3 Post-verbal XPs all sister to V

- Preferred order puts human and specific things to the left, heavy things to the right.

- Anaphors care about thematic hierarchy, not linear order. (É Kiss, 2002, p. 35–49)

1.4 The verbal prefix (VM)

- Native speakers intuit that they form a compound with the verb. Written that way when preverbal.

- Prefixes often introduce perfectivity (É Kiss, 2002, p. 62).

- Many are compositional, but there are also idiomatic compounds with verbs: *olvas* 'read,' *elolvas* 'read, finish reading,' *átolvas* 'read through, skim,' *felolvas* 'read aloud,' *megolvas* 'count (money),' *beolvas* 'tell off,' *ráolvas* 'heal by words,'...(É Kiss, 2002, p. 56)

(3) **If there's a focus or negation, "prefix" becomes post-verbal** (É Kiss, 2002, p. 56–57)
   a. János fel-olvasta a   verseit
      John VM-read   his poems
      'John read out his poems.'
   b. János TEGNAP olvasta fel   a   verseit
      John   yesterday read   VM his poems
      'It was yesterday that John read out his poems.'
   c. János nem olvasta őket fel
      John not   read   them VM
      'John didn't read them out.'

Thus the verbal prefix helps identify the focus position.

2   Useful ingredients

We'll use the following ingredients (from previous weeks) to attempt to model Hungarian.

(4)   **The meaning of (constituent) *only* (?):**
$\llbracket only \rrbracket_{\langle e, \langle \langle e,t \rangle, t \rangle \rangle} = \lambda x_e . \lambda P_{\langle e,t \rangle}. \forall y_e. (P(y) \to y = x)$

(5)   **The meaning of *who* is a set of individuals:**[1]
$\llbracket who \rrbracket = \{x \in D_e : x \text{ is human}\}$
$\llbracket what \rrbracket = \{x \in D_e : x \text{ is not human}\}$

(6)   **The meaning of a *which*-NP phrase is the same as NP itself:**
$\llbracket which \text{ book} \rrbracket = \llbracket \text{book} \rrbracket$ = { War & Peace, Moby Dick, Oliver Twist, ... }
$\llbracket which \text{ books} \rrbracket = \llbracket \text{books} \rrbracket$ = { War & Peace, Moby Dick, Oliver Twist, War & Peace and Moby Dick, War & Peace and Oliver Twist,... }

(7)   ***Wh*-composition:**
$$\left\llbracket \overset{\alpha}{\overset{\frown}{wh \quad \beta \langle e,t \rangle}} \right\rrbracket = \{ \llbracket \beta \rrbracket (x) : x \in \llbracket wh \rrbracket \}$$

3   Movement to the focus position

3.1   *Only-* and *wh*-movement

Only- and *wh*-phrases must move to the focus position[2]...   (É Kiss, 2002, p. 90)

(8)   a.   * János be-mutatott   kit   Marinak?
               John VM-introduced whom Mary-DAT

               'Whom did John introduce to Mary?'

        b.   János KIT mutatott be Marinak?

(9)   a.   * János be-mutatott   csak Pétert   Marinak.
               John VM-introduced only Peter-ACC Mary-DAT

               'John introduced only Peter to Mary.'

        b.   János CSAK PÉTERT mutatott be Marinak.

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[1]With possible domain restriction, which we will ignore here.
[2]also negative existential quantifiers ('few...'), negative adverbs of degree ('hardly,' 'seldom,'...), and negative adverbs of manner ('badly').

But if there's more than one:

(10) **Only one *only*-phrase moves;** unambiguous scope (É Kiss, 2002, p. 91)
    a. CSAK MARI kapott   CSAK KÉT TÁRGYBÓL jelest
       only   Mary received only   two subject-from A+

       only M > only two: 'It was only Mary who got an A+ only in two subjects.'
    b. CSAK KÉT TÁRGYBÓL kapott   CSAK MARI jelest
       only   two subject-from received only   Mary A+

       only two > only M: 'It was only in two subjects in which only Mary got an A+.'

If there's a *wh* and an *only*:

(11) **Move the *wh*-phrase** (É Kiss, 2002, p. 91)
    a.   KI   látta CSAK PÉTERT?
        who saw only   Peter-ACC

        'who saw only Peter?'
    b.   * CSAK PÉTERT látta KI?

☞   There is exactly one focus position per clause.

If there's a *wh* and two *only*-phrases:

(12) **Move *wh*, the two *only*s' relative scope is ambiguous** (É Kiss, 2002, p. 92)
    a. MELYIK FÉLÉVBEN kapott   CSAK HÁROM LÁNY CSAK KÉT
       which   term-in   received only   three   girl   only   two
       TÁRGYBÓL jelest
       subject-from A+

       only three girls > only two subjects: 'In which term was it only three girls who received an A+ only in two subjects?'

       only two subjects > only three girls: 'In which term was it in only two subjects that only three girls received an A+?'
    b. MELYIK FÉLÉVBEN kapott   CSAK KÉT TÁRGYBÓL CSAK HÁROM
       which   term-in   received only   two subject-from only   three
       LÁNY jelest
       girl   A+
       = (a), both readings

Csak can associate with the *wh*-word itself. In this case, *csak* forms a constituent with the *wh*-word and this constituent fronts (data from Liz Smeets, p.c.).[3]

(13) ***Only* can form constituent with *wh*-phrase, move together**
   a. Csak MIT adott (oda) Zsuzsi Marinak?
      only what gave (VM) Sue   Mary-ᴀᴄᴄ
      'What was the only thing that Sue gave to Mary?'
   b. Csak KI   adott sajtot Marinak?
      only who gave cheese Mary-ᴀᴄᴄ
      'Who was the only one that gave cheese to Mary?'

3.2 Complications

(14) ***Csak* can optionally be stranded...**   (É Kiss, 2002, p. 94)
   a. János PÉTERT mutatott   be   csak # Marinak.
       John Peter-ᴀᴄᴄ introduced VM only   Mary-ᴅᴀᴛ
       'John introduced only Peter to Mary.'   (= 9b)
   b. ✓ János PÉTERT mutatta   csak be   CSAK MARINAK
       John Peter-ᴀᴄᴄ introduced only VM only   Mary-ᴅᴀᴛ
       'As for John, it was only Peter that he introduced only to Mary.'
   c. ✓ János PÉTERT mutatta   be   csak # CSAK MARINAK
       John Peter-ᴀᴄᴄ introduced VM only   only   Mary-ᴅᴀᴛ
       'As for John, it was only Peter that he introduced only to Mary.'

(15) **The focus can be a subpart of the focus position:**   (É Kiss, 2002, p. 87–88)
   a. Péternek   HÁROM lányt   kellett elszállásolnia
      Peter-DAT three   girl-ACC needed put.up
      'Peter had to put up THREE girls.' (...not one girl, not two girls, etc.)
   b. Péternek három LÁNYT kellett elszállásolnia
      'Peter had to put up three GIRLS.' (...not three men, not three children, etc.)
   c. Péternek HÁROM LÁNYT kellett elszállásolnia
      'Peter had to put up THREE GIRLS.'

(16) cf English:
   a. Peter only met JOHN's sister.
   b. Peter only met John's SISTER.

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[3]This may become relevant again when we talk about *focus intervention effects*, later in the class.

3.3 Multiple questions

In a multiple question, the syntax is different for single-pair and pair-list readings of the question.

(17) **Only one *wh* is raised in a multiple question with a single-pair reading**[4]

    a. KI   vesz   el   *kit*   a   regény végén?
       who marries VM whom the novel's end-at

       'Who marries whom at the end of the novel?'

    b. KIT   vesz   el   *ki*   a   regény végén?
       whom marries VM who-NOM the novel's end-at

       'Who marries whom at the end of the novel?'

(18) **Both *wh*-phrases raise in a multiple question with a pair-list reading**;
with consequences for interpretation: higher *wh* is quantified over universally

    a. KI   MELYIK AJÁNDÉKOT választotta?
       who which   present-ACC   chose

       'Who chose which present?'
       ≈ For each person, which present did they choose?

    b. MELYIK AJÁNDÉKOT KI   választotta?
       which   present-ACC   who chose

       'Who chose which present?'
       ≈ For each present, which person chose it?

É Kiss (2002) argues that the lowest *wh*-phrase is in the focus position. Higher *wh*-phrases are said to be in DistP position and are quantified over universally.

A question with an overt universal quantifier can only have a *wh > every* reading (the pair-list reading is ruled out).

(19) **Wide scope for the *wh* over universal quantifier**

    Mindenki MELYIK AJÁNDÉKOT választotta?
    everybody which   present-ACC   chose

    'Which present did everybody choose?'
    (cf *'For each person, which present did they choose?')

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[4]É Kiss (2002) notes other multiple questions which are ungrammatical because they 'are unlikely to bind variables in a shared domain,' e.g. *who said what* and *who arrived by which train*. It seems easier to believe that these questions don't have a clear single-pair reading and this is what leads to the ungrammaticality. However, this is left vague and is not discussed any further.

4 Semantics of the focus position

☞ Constituents that are not *wh*-phrases nor *only*-marked can also be fronted to the focus position. The focus exhaustively identifies the values for which the predicate holds.

(20) **Conjunction test (Szabolcsi, 1981):**
  a. (i) $\Rightarrow$ (ii)
    i. János bemutatta Marinak Pétert és Zoltánt
      John introduced Mary-DAT Peter-ACC and Zoltan-ACC
      'John introduced Peter and Zoltan to Mary.'
    ii. János bemutatta Marinak Pétert
      John introduced Mary-DAT Peter-ACC
      'John introduced Peter to Mary.'
  b. (i) $\not\Rightarrow$ (ii)
    i. János PÉTERT ÉS ZOLTÁNT bemutatta Marinak
      John Peter-ACC and Zoltan-ACC introduced Mary-DAT
      'It was Peter and Zoltan that John introduced to Mary.'
    ii. János PÉTERT bemutatta Marinak
      John Peter-ACC introduced Mary-DAT
      'It was Peter that John introduced to Mary.'

(21) **Discourse congruence test (É Kiss, 2002):**
  a. (A) $\not\cong$ (B)
    A. János bemutatta Marinak Pétert
      John introduced Mary-DAT Peter-ACC
      'John introduced Peter to Mary.'
    B. * Nem, Zoltánt is bemutatta neki
      no, Zoltan-ACC also introduced to.her
      'No, he also introduced Zoltan to her'
  b. (A) $\cong$ (B)
    A. János PÉTERT mutatta be Marinak
      John Peter-ACC introduced VM Mary-DAT
      'It was Peter that John introduced to Mary.'
    B. ✓ Nem, Zoltánt is bemutatta neki
      no, Zoltan-ACC also introduced to.her
      'No, he also introduced Zoltan to her'

How do you feel about the English narrow focus counterparts of these?

(22) **English narrow focus and exhaustivity**
   a. [ ] John introduced Peter and Zoltan to Mary
      ⇒ John introduced Peter to Mary.
   b. [ ] John introduced PETER AND ZÓLTAN to Mary
      ⇒ John introduced PETER to Mary.
   c. [ ] A: John introduced Peter to Mary.
      B: No, he also introduced ZÓLTAN to her.
   d. [ ] A: John introduced PÉTER to Mary.
      B: No, he also introduced ZÓLTAN to her.

☞ Non-DPs can be focused, too.

(23) János FOKOZATOSAN értette   meg a   problémát.
     John gradually   understood VM the problem-ACC
     'As for John, it was gradually that he understood the problem.'

(24) **Focus position gives numerals "exact" interpretation:** (É Kiss, 1994, p. 28)
   a. János el-költ   30 000 Ft-ot   egy hónapban
      John VM-spends 30,000 forints-ACC a   month
      'John spends at least 30,000 forints a month.'
   b. János 30 000 Ft-ot   költ   el   egy hónapban
      John 30,000 forints-ACC spends VM a   month
      'It's (exactly) 30,000 forints that John spends a month.'

(25) **Turns conditionals into biconditionals:**   (Szabolcsi, 1981)
   a. Fel-hívlak (akkor) ha János megérkezett
      VM-call   then   if John arrived
      'I will call you if John has arrived.'
   b. (Akkor) ha János megérkezett, fel-hívlak
      then   if John arrived   VM-call
      'I will call you if John has arrived.'
   c. AKKOR hívlak fel, ha János megérkezett
      then   call   VM if John arrived
      'I call you **if and only if** John has arrived.'

☞ Bare nominals, numerals, positive existential quantifiers 'many,' 'several,' 'more than
  n,' negative existential quantifiers 'few,' 'at most n,' 'exactly n' can appear in the focus
  position.

  Universal quantifiers and indefinites existential quantifiers cannot (*mindenkit* 'every-
  one', *mindkét fiút* 'both boys' *Pétert is* 'Peter, too, (or: also Peter),' *valakit* 'someone').

5   Even

Even also associates with focus, but the *even*-phrase *Még...is cannot* be moved to the focus position.

(26) a.   Mari   elkésett   még [AZ ESKÜVŐJÉRŐL]   is.
           Mary-NOM away-late-was yet   the wedding-her-from also
           'Mary was late even for HER WEDDING'

      b.   Mari   még [AZ ESKÜVŐJÉRŐL]   is   elkésett.
           Mary-NOM yet   the wedding-her-from also away-late-was
           'Mary was late even for HER THE WEDDING'

      c. * Mari   még [AZ ESKÜVŐJÉRŐL]   is   késett   el.
           Mary-NOM yet   the wedding-her-from also late-was away
           'Mary was late even for HER THE WEDDING'

Note that in (26b), the preverbal particle *el* is in the preverbal position, so the focus position is empty. Thus "even for her wedding" is in some other $\overline{\text{A}}$-position.

References

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