

Clitic vs. Agreement in Hungarian

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Two subject-verb agreement paradigms

indefinite paradigm (present tense)

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1	-ok/-ek/-ök	-unk/-ünk
2	-(a)sz/-(e)sz or -ol/-el/-öl	-(o)tok/-(e)tek/-(ö)tök
3	∅	-(a)nak/-(e)nek

definite paradigm (present tense)

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1	-om/-em/-öm	-juk/-jök
2	-od/-ed/-öd	-játok/-itek
3	-ja/-i	-ják/-ik

Basic distribution of the (in)definite conjugation

Verb is indefinite with indefinite determiner *egy*:

Lát-**ok** egy madar-at
see-1.SG.I an bird-ACC
'I see a bird'

Definite with definite determiner *a/az*:

Lát-**om** a madar-at
see-1.SG.D the bird-ACC
'I see the bird'

Basic distribution of the (in)definite conjugation

Verb is indefinite when the verb is intransitive:

Vár-**ok**

wait-1SG.I

'I'm waiting'

Definite with a non-overt, implied object:

Lát-**om**

see-1.SG.D

'I see it'

Basic distribution of the (in)definite conjugation

Verb is definite with third person pronouns:

Lát-**ják** őt/őket
see-3.PL.D it/them
'They see it/them'

But indefinite with first/second person pronouns (!):

Lát-**nak** engem/téged/minket/...
see-3PL.I me/you/us/...
'They see me/you/us'

Full distribution of the definite conjugation

Forms that trigger the definite conjugation:

- ▶ *a/az* 'the'
- ▶ (null) third person pronouns
- ▶ demonstratives *ez* 'this' or *az* 'that'
- ▶ proper names
- ▶ possessive suffixes as in *ház-ad-at* 'your house [ACC]'
- ▶ reflexive and reciprocal pronouns
- ▶ *-ik* determiners such as *mely-ik* 'which'

(Rounds 2001)

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Two analyses

Agreement analysis

Finite verbs agree in [+def] with their object.

(Bartos 1997; É. Kiss 2002)

Pronoun analysis

The definite conjugation contains an incorporated third person object clitic pronoun.

(Szamosi 1974; den Dikken 2006)

Roadmap

- ▶ We will present new arguments for the agreement analysis, and conclude in favor of it.
- ▶ But first, some attractive features of the pronoun analysis.

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Object *pro*-drop predicted

In *pro*-drop sentences, the object would be the clitic:

Lát-om

see-1.SG.D

'I see it'

Sensitivity to definiteness

“The link between ... the use of a third person object clitic ... and the definiteness ... of the object (here, the noun phrase that the clitic doubles) ties in with the fact that object clitic doubling is generally known to impose definiteness ... restrictions.”

(den Dikken 2006:13)

Spanish clitics and definiteness

Clitic doubling OK with definite objects:

La oían a Paca/ a la niña/ a la gata.
 CL listen.3PL.PAST to Paca/ to the girl/ to the cat
 'They listened to Paca/ to the girl/ to the cat.'

Not indefinite objects:

No (*lo) oyeron a ningún ladrón.
 not CL hear.3PL.PAST to any thief
 'They didn't hear any thieves.'

(Suñer 1988)

Clitic climbing in Spanish

Clitics can 'climb' in Spanish:

Quiero poder ver^{la} a esa muchacha
want be.able see.INF:CL a this girl
'I want to be able to see this girl.'

La quiero poder ver a esa muchacha
CL want be.able see.INF a this girl
'I want to be able to see this girl.'

Szamosi (1974): Clitic climbing in Hungarian?

Akar-**om** tud-ni lát-ni a lány-t
 want-1.SG.D be.able-INF see-INF the girl-ACC
 'I want to be able to see the girl'

Akar-**ok** tud-ni lát-ni egy lányt
 want-1SG.I be.able-INF see-INF a girl-ACC
 'I want to be able to see a girl'

Like in Spanish, restricted to direct complements.

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Summary

Some attractive features of the pronoun analysis:

- ▶ Possibility of *pro*-drop follows automatically
- ▶ Explains sensitivity to definiteness
 - ▶ No need for a [+def] feature
 - ▶ No need for stipulations marking certain forms [+def]
- ▶ Definite conjugation 'climbs' like a clitic

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Outline

Specifics

Non-referential 'definites'

Complex QNPs

Binding

Islands

Some clitics may double specific indefinites

Porteño Spanish:

Diariamente, **la** escuchaba a una mujer que cantaba tangos.
daily her listened.3SG to a woman who sang tangos
'Every day they listened to a woman who sang tangos.'

(Suñer 1988)

⇒ Possibility of clitic doubling not predictable based on form of doubled object.

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Specific indefinite objects in Hungarian

Even when specific, indefinites trigger the indefinite conjugation in Hungarian:

Minden nap egy görög énekes-t hallgatt-ak/*-ák.
 every day a Greek singer-ACC listened-3PL.I/-3PL.D
 'Every day, they listened to a Greek singer.'

... Máriá-nak hív-ják.
 ... Maria-DAT call-3PL.D
 '...Her name is Maria. [lit. They call her Maria]'

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Possessed QNPs

QNPs trigger **indefinite** conjugation:

Ismer-**ek**/*Ismer-**em** minden titk-ot
 know-1SG.I/know-1SG.D every secret-ACC
 'I know every secret.'

unless they are possessed (Bartos 1997):

Ismer-**em**/*Ismer-**ek** minden titk-**od-at**.
 know-1SG.D/know-1SG.I every secret-**2SG-ACC**
 'I know your every secret.'

QNPs are non-referential \Rightarrow semantically indefinite, regardless of whether they are possessed.

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Definite conjugation vs. Clitic doubling

Hungarian definite conjugation:

- ▶ predictable solely based on form

True clitic doubling:

- ▶ semantically determined

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Quantified NPs

QNP objects do *not* trigger the definite conjugation:

Ismer-ek/*-em minden titk-ot
 know-1SG.I/-1SG.D every secret-ACC
 'I know every secret.'

Nem ismer-ek/*-em semmi-t
 Not know-1SG.I/-1SG.D anything-ACC
 'I don't know anything.'

Rizzi's condition

Rizzi's condition:

A pronoun cannot be locally [A-bar] bound by a quantifier.

*Tutto, lo diro alla polizia
 everything CL say.1SG to.the police
 'Everything, I will say it to the police'

*Nessuno, lo conosco in questa citta
 nobody CL know.1SG in this city
 'Nobody, I know him in this city'

An exception to Rizzi's condition

Left-dislocated QNPs improve when richer in descriptive content (Rizzi 1986; Austin and Bresnan 1996:238).

??Every man, she tells him her life story.

Every man she meets, she tells him her life story.

An exception to Rizzi's condition

The same contrast holds in Italian:

??Ogni uomo, lei **gli** racconta la sua vita.
 every man, she to.him recount.3SG the her life
 'Every man, she tells him her life story.'

Ogni uomo che incontra, lei **gli** racconta la sua vita.
 every man that meet.3SG, she to.him recount.3SG the her life
 'Every man she meets, she tells him her life story.'

Descriptive content does not improve the def. conj.

Hungarian:

Tud minden titk-ot (amit nek-em mond-t-ál)
 know.3SG.I every secret-ACC which DAT-1SG say-PAST-2SG.I
 'He/she knows every secret (you told me)'

*Tud-ja minden titk-ot (amit nek-em mond-t-ál)
 know-3SG.D every secret-ACC which DAT-1SG say-PAST-2SG.I
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Disjoint reference with *pro*-drop:

Péter utál-**ja**
Peter.NOM hate-3SG.D
'Peter hates him/it/#himself'

Yet reflexive objects co-occur with definite conjugation:

Péter_i utál-**ja** önmagá-t_i
Peter.NOM hate-3SG.D himself-ACC
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Explaining the binding properties

Agreement analysis: Principle B, Principle A

Pronoun analysis: Binding facts mysterious

Péter utál-ja ~ Peter hate-him

Péter utál-ja önmagát ~ Peter hate-him himself

(Cf. Baker 1996 on Mohawk: Jelinek's (1984) 'Pronominal Argument Hypothesis' predicts absence of reflexives.)

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Azt creates islands (É. Kiss 1990)

János mond-t-a (az-t) [hogy *holnap* érkezik]
 John.NOM say-PAST-3SG.D it-ACC that tomorrow arrive.3SG.I
 'John said (it) that he is arriving tomorrow.'

János *holnap* mond-t-a (*az-t) [hogy - érkezik]
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Explaining the island effect

Agreement analysis: Adjunct is island; complement is not.

- ▶ verb it [that ...]
OBJ ADJUNCT
- ▶ verb [that ...]
COMPLEMENT

Pronoun analysis: No difference expected.

- ▶ verb -cl it [that ...]
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Conclusion

- ▶ Definite conjugation verbs do not contain a pronoun.
- ▶ Rather, they agree in definiteness with their trigger.

Now, for an analysis...

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Definite nominals are [+def]

Lexical specification

János D (\uparrow DEF)= +

Lexical specification

az D (\uparrow DEF)= +

(Indefinite nominals do not construct any such feature;
there is no '−' value for DEF.)

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Verbal endings: first approximation

Definite endings require [DEF +]:

Lexical specification

-om/-em/-öm V_{infl} $(\uparrow OBJ DEF) =_c +$

Indefinite endings require the absence of DEF:

Lexical specification

-ok/-ek/-ök V_{infl} $\neg(\uparrow OBJ DEF)$

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Domain of definiteness agreement

Verbs may agree in definiteness with non-objects:

- ▶ Focus-raised accusative subjects:

Péter-t mond-t-a, [hogy -jön]
 Péter-ACC say-PAST-3SG.D COMP - come.3SG
 'It is Peter who he/she said is coming.'

- ▶ Objects of infinitive complements (cf. 'clitic climbing'):

Akar-om tud-ni lát-ni a lány-t
 want-1.SG.D be.able-INF see-INF the girl-ACC
 'I want to be able to see the girl'

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Domain of definiteness agreement

Generalization

A finite verb agrees in definiteness with an accusative case argument within its minimal finite domain.

Key features of the analysis

- ▶ **Definite verbs do not contain object clitic pronouns.**
- ▶ Apparent objects are genuine objects, not adjuncts.
- ▶ DEF is a feature in Hungarian, associated with a particular set of forms.
- ▶ The definite conjugation requires [DEF +] on the relevant trigger; the indefinite conjugation requires lack of DEF.

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Thank you!

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