

Object Agreement in Hungarian

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Introduction

This paper investigates the distribution and significance of object morphology in Hungarian. Hungarian direct objects exhibit two morphological properties: they bear accusative case, and they trigger object agreement with the finite verb in their clause. But these “coding properties” are to be distinguished from “behavioral properties” of objects, as Keenan (1976) argued in relation to subjects. As Keenan’s and studies such as the ones involving dative subjects in Hindi and Icelandic have argued, subject coding does not imply subject behavior. I will argue for an analogous proposition for objects in Hungarian: though certain object-coded nominals look like objects, they don’t act like objects.

The characterization of Hungarian object morphology that can be found in grammars and textbooks is described in §1. This characterization is stated in terms of objecthood, which I find problematic for the reasons stated in §2, where I argue that focus-raising constructions exhibit object agreement between a verb and an accusative nominal in the same clause that is not its object. §3 is devoted to showing that verbs do not always agree with the accusative nominals in their clause; rather, verbs only agree with nominals to which they *assign* accusative case. This constitutes the main thesis of the paper; possible problems and extensions are discussed in the appendices.

1 “Object” agreement

In Hungarian, verbs agree in person and number with their subject, and manifest object agreement of two types as well. The first type is sensitive to the definiteness of the direct object. There are two verb conjugation patterns, in Hungarian called the *alanyi ragozás* ‘subjective conjugation’ and the *tárgyas ragozás* ‘objective conjugation’. These are also known as the *indefinite* and *definite* conjugations, respectively. The present tense indefinite paradigm is in (1); the present tense definite paradigm is in (2). (*V* stands for “vowel”; it represents the appropriate vowel according to vowel harmony.)

(1) *indefinite paradigm* (present tense)

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1	-Vk	-unk/-ünk
2	-sz/-Vl	-tok/-tek/-tök
3	-∅	-nak/nek

(2) *definite paradigm* (present tense)

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1	-Vm	-juk/-jük
2	-Vd	-játok/-itek
3	-ja/i	-ják/-ik

The definite conjugation is used in the presence of a definite direct object. (Indefinite verbal endings and indefinite noun phrases will be indicated in *italics*, as will the *-lak/-lek* suffix. Definite verbal endings and definite noun phrases will be indicated in **bold**.)

- (3) Lát-**om** **a** **madar-at**.
 see-1.SG.DEF the bird-ACC
 ‘I see the bird’

Finite CP complements count as definite objects, too (or so it would appear; see É. Kiss (1991) for an analysis of this fact using a null, definite, accuative correlative pronoun serving as the target of agreement):

- (4) Hiába mond-t-**a**, [CP **hogy jobban meg akar** **ismer-ni**]
 in:vain say-PAST-3SG.DEF COMP better PERF want.3SG.INDEF know-INF
 ‘It was in vain that he said he wanted to get to know me better.’

The indefinite conjugation is used when the object is indefinite, and in intransitive sentences.

- (5) Lát-*ok* *egy madar-at*.
 see-1.SG.INDEF an bird-ACC
 ‘I see an bird’
- (6) Vár-*ok*.
 wait-1SG.INDEF
 ‘I’m waiting.’

The indefinite conjugation is also used with first and second person objects:

- (7) Lát-*ott* *eng-em/* *tég-ed/* *mi-nk-et/* *ti-tek-et*
 see-3SG.INDEF me-POSS:1SG you-POSS:2SG 1PL-POSS:1PL-ACC 2PL-POSS:2PL-ACC
 ‘He saw me/you(SG)/us/you(PL).’

Since local pronouns are semantically definite, the alternation between the “definite” and “indefinite” endings is somewhat inappropriately termed “definiteness agreement”, but I will refer to it this way anyway.¹ In fact, there are even more complications in the semantic characterization of “definiteness agreement”; it appears to be a mixture of definiteness and specificity, with some exceptions. See Bartos (1997) for a detailed discussion of these issues.

Beyond definiteness agreement, there is one other type of object agreement in Hungarian. When the subject is first person singular and the object is second person (singular or plural), then a special ending, which surfaces as *-lak* or *-lek* depending on vowel harmony, is used.

- (8) Lát-*lak* (*téged*).
 see-2-1SG you.SG.ACC
 ‘I see you’

Following den Dikken (1999), I will call this “person agreement”, as it is sensitive to the person features of the agreement target.

The traditional characterization of object agreement ignores any contrast between definiteness agreement and person agreement, and can be summarized as in (9).

¹den Dikken (1999) has recently proposed an explanation for the fact that local pronouns trigger indefinite agreement, related to the possessive morphology carried by these pronouns. His account happens to be described in more detail in §D.

(9) **Object Agreement Rule (traditional)**

- If the object is second person and the subject is first person singular, then use the *-lak/-lek* form.
- If the verb has a definite third person object, then conjugate the verb using the definite paradigm.
- Otherwise use the indefinite paradigm.

Supposing we took the formulation in (9) very seriously, giving theoretical status to the notion of “object”, we could express (9) in Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG) with constraints on the distribution of verb forms based on properties of their OBJ (if any).

Let us sketch that analysis, focussing on definiteness agreement. Definiteness is a privative opposition, judging by the fact that the indefinite conjugation occurs not only with indefinite objects, but also in the absence of any object. Therefore, the grammar should encode a privative distinction. This may be done in the following way. Definite verb forms constrain their objects to bear [DEF +], and indefinite verb forms require that there is no DEF object (rather than requiring [DEF -] on their objects; this is how privativity can be encoded).² The present tense, first person singular, definite ending *-om/-em/-öm*, bears the following lexical specification:

$$(10) \quad -Vm \quad V_{infl} \quad (\uparrow\text{OBJ DEF})=c \quad +$$

(V_{infl} is the syntactic category of the verb ending, “verb inflection”.) This requires the object nominal to construct the definiteness feature. Since object pro-drop is also possible, we should make sure that the definiteness feature of the dropped object may be constructed whenever the verb provides the object’s PRED feature (I will use curly braces to indicate optionality, rather than parentheses). Let’s add that in, for the sake of completeness.

$$(11) \quad -Vm \quad V_{infl} \quad (\uparrow\text{OBJ DEF})=c \quad + \\ \{(\uparrow\text{OBJ PRED})=\text{'pro'} \wedge (\uparrow\text{OBJ DEF})=+\}$$

Indefinite verb forms require the absence of any DEF feature. For example, the first person singular indefinite verb form bears the following specification:³

$$(12) \quad -Vk \quad V_{infl} \quad \neg(\uparrow\text{OBJ DEF})$$

Definite nominals such as proper names (e.g. *János* ‘John’) and noun phrases containing the definite article (*az* ‘the’) would construct the definiteness feature that the definite verb form requires and that the indefinite verb form forbids.

$$(13) \quad \textit{János} \quad D \quad (\uparrow\text{DEF})=+$$

$$(14) \quad \textit{az} \quad D \quad (\uparrow\text{DEF})=+$$

²The reason for using the ‘+’ value, rather than using a truly privative DEF feature, is that the distinction between constraining equations and defining equations is not available for privative features, and this is a contrast that my analysis relies on.

³Technically, too ensure that this first person singular suffix is not used with a second person object, we would also have to specify a constraint against that:

$$-Vk \quad V_{infl} \quad \neg(\uparrow\text{OBJ DEF}) \\ (\uparrow\text{SUBJ PERS})=1 \\ (\uparrow\text{SUBJ NUM})=\text{SG} \\ (\uparrow\text{OBJ})\Rightarrow (\uparrow\text{OBJ PERS}) \neq 2$$

Indefinite nominals will not construct any such feature. (Notice that the privative analysis makes the fact that determinerless nominals take indefinite agreement very easy to account for; if the DEF feature were binary-valued, we'd have to find something that would construct [DEF -] in the absence of a direct object.)

Because the OBJ function has behavioral properties associated with it other than definiteness agreement, this analysis predicts that any noun phrase agreeing in definiteness with some verb should show other behavioral properties of objects. The following section is devoted to illustrating that this is not exactly the case.

2 When verbs agree with non-objects

2.1 Focus-raising: Background

In Hungarian *wh* questions, the question word is fronted to the matrix focus position (immediately to the left of the matrix verb, as in (15)). Non-*wh* phrases like *holnap* ‘tomorrow’ may front from an embedded clause to the same position, as shown in (16). (The fronted constituent is indicated in small capital letters.)

(15) MIKOR mond-ott, hogy jön?
 when say-PAST.3SG COMP come.3SG
 ‘When did he say he would come?’

(16) HOLNAP mond-ott, hogy jön.
 tomorrow say-PAST.3SG COMP come.3SG
 ‘He said that he would come *tomorrow*.’

The phenomenon shown in (16) is often called *focus raising*, and has been analyzed in numerous works, including Zolnay (1926), Marác (1989), É. Kiss (1987, 1990), Kenesei (1994), Horvath (1986, 1995, 1998), Lipták (2001), and Gervain (2002).

The focus-raising construction shares many properties with the *wh* question construction in Hungarian. In both constructions, the fronted element is expressed in the focus position of the matrix clause, immediately preceding the verb. In addition, the extraction path may cross several finite clause boundaries; the long-distance nature of focus-raising is shown in (17), where *ket dolgot* ‘two things’ fronts across two CPs (É. Kiss, 1987, p. 125).

(17) KÉT DOLGOT hall-ott-am, [CP hogy János megígért Máriának, [CP hogy megtesz]]
 two thing.ACC hear-PAST-1.SG COMP John promised Mary.DAT COMP does
 ‘It was two things that I heard that John promised Mary that he would do.’

Moreover, when the matrix predicate in a focus-raising or question construction is a verb, it must be a *bridge verb*, such as the translational equivalents of *want* and *say*. As shown in (19), extraction may not cross the complement to a non-bridge verb such as *figyel* ‘warn’ (É. Kiss, 2002).⁴

⁴Focus-raising may also cross adjectival predicates with clausal complements, however (Kenesei, 1994, p. 317):

(18) EMMÁ-T fontos hogy meglátogás-s-ad
 Emma-ACC important COMP visit-SBJ-2SGDEF
 ‘It is Emma whom it is important that you visit.’

This variant is not analyzed here, because adjectival predicates do not assign case, and therefore no case-switch phenomena (see below) occur with it. This type of example should be accounted for in the theory of focus-raising in general, however.

- (19) * A kollég-áim EGY DIÁK figyelmeztet-t-ek hogy keres-ett
 the colleague-PL.3PL a student.NOM warn-PAST-3PL.INDEF COMP seek-3SG.PAST
 ‘My colleagues warned me that a student was looking for me.’

Wh-questions are subject to the same constraint:

- (20) * Ki(-t) figyelmeztet-t-ek hogy keres-ett?
 who(-ACC) warn-PAST-3PL.INDEF COMP seek-3SG.PAST
 ‘Who did they warn you that was looking for you?’

This type of constraint is familiar from English, where extraction from the complement of the non-bridge verb *warn* is similarly ungrammatical; the gloss of (20) exemplifies a violation of this constraint in English.

Those verbs which allow extraction, “bridge verbs”, are exactly those which show definiteness agreement with their complement (É. Kiss, 1987). Observe the parallel between the possibility of definiteness agreement in (21) and the possibility of extraction in (22).

- (21) a. A fiú-k $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{mond-t-ák} \\ * \text{mond-t-ak} \end{array} \right\}$, [hogy vár-j-ák Évát]
 the boy-PL $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{say-PAST-3PL.DEF} \\ \text{say-PAST-3PL.INDEF} \end{array} \right\}$ COMP wait-SBJ-3PL.DEF Eve-ACC
 ‘The boys said that they expected Eve.’
- b. A fiú-k $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} ? \text{telefonál-t-ák} \\ \text{telefonál-t-ak} \end{array} \right\}$, [hogy vár-j-ák Évát]
 the boy-PL $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{telephone-PAST-3PL.DEF} \\ \text{telephone-PAST-3PL.INDEF} \end{array} \right\}$ COMP wait-SBJ-3PL.DEF Eve-ACC
 ‘The boys telephoned that they expected Eve.’
- c. A fiú-k $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} * \text{dicseked-t-ék} \\ \text{dicseked-t-ek} \end{array} \right\}$, [hogy vár-j-ák Évát]
 the boy-PL $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{brag-PAST-3PL.DEF} \\ \text{brag-PAST-3PL.INDEF} \end{array} \right\}$ COMP wait-SBJ-3PL.DEF Eve-ACC
 ‘The boys were bragging that they expected Eve.’
- (22) a. A fiú-k **Évá-t** mond-t-ák, hogy vár-j-ák
 the boy-PL.NOM Eve-ACC say-PAST-3PL.DEF COMP wait-SBJ-3PL.DEF
 ‘The boys said that they expected *Eve*.’
- b. ? A fiú-k **Évá-t** telefonál-t-ák, hogy vár-j-ák
 the boy-PL.NOM Eve-ACC telephone-PAST-3PL.DEF COMP wait-SBJ-3PL.DEF
 ‘The boys telephoned that they expected *Eve*.’
- c. * A fiú-k **Évá-t** dicseked-t-ék, hogy vár-j-ák
 the boy-PL.NOM Eve-ACC brag-PAST-3PL.DEF COMP wait-SBJ-3PL.DEF
 ‘The boys were bragging that they expected *Eve*.’

(The examples in (22) are all ungrammatical with the matrix verb in the indefinite conjugation.) In (21a), the matrix verb *mond* ‘say’ must bear the definite suffix, *-ák*, to agree with the complement clause. In (21b), the matrix verb *telefonál* ‘telephone’ is better in the indefinite conjugation, suggesting that it can only barely be seen as taking the clause as a direct object. In (21c), the matrix verb *dicsekszik* ‘brag’ may not appear in the definite conjugation, suggesting that a clause

following this verb cannot be interpreted as a direct object. Thus it appears that long-distance focus movement may only cross direct object clause boundaries, and this restriction holds for questions, as well.

For the final parallel between focus raising and question formation, they are both sensitive to island constraints, such as the Complex Noun Phrase Constraint (É. Kiss, 1987). For example, (23b) is ungrammatical because extraction may not cross the complex noun phrase *azt, hogy holnap érkezik* ‘it, that he would arrive tomorrow’.

- (23) a. János mondta [azt, [hogy holnap érkezik]]
 John said it-ACC COMP tomorrow arrives
 ‘It John who said it, that he would arrive tomorrow.’
- b. *János HOLNAP mondta [azt, [hogy érkezik]]
 John tomorrow said it-ACC COMP arrives
 ‘It was tomorrow that John said it, that he would arrive.’

The idea that the phrase *azt, hogy érkezik* is a complex noun phrase was argued for by É. Kiss (1987), based on the distribution of clauses and correlative pronouns. A clause may either follow its correlative pronoun or appear at the end of the sentence, as the pattern below shows.

- (24) a. A fiú-k [az-t, [hogy érkezik]] Mária-tól hall-ott-ák
 the boy-PL it-ACC COMP arrive.3SG.INDEF Mary-from hear-PAST-3PL.DEF
 ‘The boys heard it from Mary that John is studying linguistics.’
- b. * A fiú-k hall-ott-ák [hogy érkezik] az-t Mária-tól
 the boy-PL hear-PAST-3PL.DEF COMP arrive.3SG.INDEF it-ACC Mary-from
- c. * **Az-t** the fiú-k hall-ott-ák [hogy érkezik] Mária-tól
 it-ACC the boy-PL hear-PAST-3PL.DEF COMP arrive.3SG.INDEF Mary-from
- d. But:
Az-t the fiú-k Mária-tól hall-ott-ák [hogy érkezik]
 it-ACC the boy-PL Mary-from hear-PAST-3PL.DEF COMP arrive.3SG.INDEF

This supports the idea that when the clause [*hogy érkezik*] occurs at the end of a sentence, it is extraposed from within the complex noun phrase. Thus when the correlative pronoun is present, the clause is part of a complex noun phrase, and extraction out of it is impossible, both in focus-raising and in question formation.

These parallelisms indicate that Hungarian focus-raising and question formation constitute a single phenomenon. This phenomenon provides us of examples of definiteness agreement between a verb and an accusative nominal that is not its object, as I will argue.

2.2 Object focus raising

An intuitively clear example in which definiteness agreement takes place between a verb and a nominal that is not its object involves object focus-raising. When objects of the embedded clause focus-raise, they also may agree in definiteness with the matrix verb, although this agreement is optional (É. Kiss, 1987):

- (25) a. *Két lány-t* mond-t-ál hogy Zoli fel-hiv-ott
 two girl-ACC say-PAST-2SG.INDEF COMP Zoli.NOM up-call-PAST.3SG.INDEF
 ‘You said that Zoli invited *two girls*.’

- b. *Két lány-t* mond-t-ad hogy Zoli fel-hiv-ott
 two girl-ACC say-PAST-2SG.DEF COMP Zoli.NOM up-call-PAST.3SG.INDEF
 ‘You said that Zoli invited *two girls*.’

The optionality of agreement indicates that when objects of the embedded clause focus-raise, they do not end up as matrix objects. And yet the *possibility* of agreement shows that it is possible for a verb to agree in definiteness with a noun phrase that is not its object.

2.3 Subject focus raising: Background

NPs bearing a variety of grammatical functions in an embedded clause may undergo focus raising, as shown in (26), where a dative argument, an inessive adjunct, and a direct object, respectively, are shown fronted via focus-raising.

- (26) a. Mária JÁNOS-NAK akarta, hogy a csomag-ot kézbesítsék
 Mary John-DAT wanted COMP the parcel-ACC deliver.3PL
 ‘As for Mary, it was John that she wanted the parcel to be delivered to.’
- b. Legjobban EB-BEN A KÉRDES-BEN szeretném, hogy megegyezz-ünk
 most this-in the question-in would:like.1SG COMP agree.SBJ-1PL
 ‘It is on this question that I would like most that we agree.’
- c. Mindenki MÁRIÁ-T várta, hogy megválasztják
 everyone Mary-ACC waited COMP elect.3PL
 ‘It was Mary that everybody expected that they elect.’

Usually, the fronted element bears the morphological case that it would bear if it were expressed in the lower clause. Thus, the non-fronted version of (26a) is as in (27), where the dative noun phrase *Jánosnak* still bears dative case.

- (27) Mária akar-t-a, hogy a csomag-ot János-nak kézbesit-s-ék.
 Mary want-PAST-3SG.DEF COMP the parcel-ACC John-DAT deliver-SBJ-3PL.DEF
 ‘As for Mary, it was John that she wanted the parcel to be delivered to.’

However, there is one class of exceptions to this general pattern, both in focus-raising and in question formation. When the subject of the embedded clause raises to the matrix focus position, the fronted phrase may bear accusative case:

- (28) PÉTER-T mond-t-a, hogy jön
 Péter-ACC say-PAST-3SG.DEF COMP come.3SG
 ‘It is Peter who he/she said is coming.’

Péter would of course get nominative, not accusative, downstairs:

- (29) János mond-t-a, hogy Péter jön
 John.NOM say-PAST-3SG.DEF COMP Peter.NOM come.3SG
 ‘John said that Peter is coming’

Gervain (2002) pointed out disagreement in the literature over the obligatoriness of the accusative marker *-t* on focus-raised subjects, and performed a survey of 26 Hungarian speakers to investigate the variation. Based on her survey, there appear to be two (micro-)dialects of Hungarian, which I will call A and B.⁵ Dialect A allows a focus-raised subject to be either nominative

⁵Dialect A corresponds to Gervain’s “Group 2” and dialect B corresponds to Gervain’s “Group 1”. I am renaming the groups because I am treating dialect A as primary.

or accusative, thus accepts either (30a) or (30b). Dialect B requires focus-raised subjects to be accusative-marked; thus it allows only (30a) and rules out (30b).

- (30) a. Péter-t mond-t-am, hogy jön
 Péter-ACC say-PAST-1SG COMP come.3SG
- b. Péter mond-t-am, hogy jön
 Péter.NOM say-PAST-1SG COMP come.3SG

Interestingly, the speakers who allow nominative case on *Péter* in addition to accusative case (Group A) are more conservative than the others (Group B) in another respect: they require the focus-raised accusative nominal to agree in person and number with the embedded verb.

This can be seen using numerically quantified noun phrases, which are grammatically singular despite being semantically plural; it is correct to say *négy fiú* (lit. ‘four boy’) rather than **négy fiúk* (lit. ‘four boys’). This type of noun phrase agrees with singular verbs, as shown in (31).

- (31) a. Két fiú jön
 two boy come.3SG
 ‘Two boys are coming.’
- b. *Két fiú jön-nek
 two boy come-3PL
 ‘Two boys are coming.’

Although numerically quantified NP’s are grammatically singular, they cannot be the discourse antecedent of a singular pronoun, as in (32). Only a plural pronoun can be used to refer back to them in discourse, as in (33):

- (32) Két fiú jön. *Ő fiatal.
 two boy.SGNOM come.3.SG pro-3.SG young.SG
 ‘Two boys are coming. They are young.’
- (33) Két fiú jön. Ők fiatalak.
 two boy.SGNOM come.3.SG pro-3.PL young.PL
 ‘Two boys are coming. They are young.’

It is possible, however, for a singular pronoun to have a numerically quantified NP as an antecedent, on a distributive interpretation:

- (34) [Két fiú]_i hiszi azt, hogy Mária szereti őt_i.
 two boy think.3.SG it.ACC that Mary.NOM love.3.SG.DEF pro.3.SG.ACC
 ‘There are two boys each of whom thinks that Mary loves him.’

Universally quantified nominals, such as *az összes lány* ‘all the girls’ behave the same way; they have singular agreement, but license only plural anaphora in discourse. They can also bind singular pronouns, giving rise to a distributive interpretation (Gervain, 2003).

Gervain’s (2002) study showed that Hungarian speakers fall into two basic patterns, shown below. The speakers who allow both nominative case and accusative case (dialect A) require number agreement between the focus-raised constituent and the embedded verb; they accept both examples in (35) and reject both examples in (36).⁶

⁶In fact, the judgements were given on a 5-point scale; I have simplified ‘?’ to unmarked, and ‘????’ to ‘*’.

Dialect A

- (35) a. Az összes lány-t mond-t-ad, hogy jön
the all girl-ACC say-PAST-2SG COMP come.3SG
b. Az összes lány mond-t-ad, hogy jön
the all girl.NOM say-PAST-2SG COMP come.3SG
'You said that all the girls were coming.'
- (36) a. *Az összes lány-t mond-t-ad, hogy jön-nek
the all girl-ACC say-PAST-2SG COMP come-3PL
b. *Az összes lány mond-t-ad, hogy jön-nek
the all girl.NOM say-PAST-2SG COMP come-3PL

In contrast, the speakers who require accusative case on the focus-raised constituent (dialect B) allow number disagreement between the focus-raised constituent and the embedded verb, as shown in (38a).

Dialect B

- (37) a. Az összes lány-t mond-t-ad, hogy jön (cf. (35a))
the all girl-ACC say-PAST-2SG COMP come.3SG
b. *Az összes lány mond-t-ad, hogy jön (cf. (35b))
the all girl.NOM say-PAST-2SG COMP come.3SG
- (38) a. Az összes lány-t mond-t-ad, hogy jön-nek (cf. (36a))
the all girl-ACC say-PAST-2SG COMP come-3PL
b. *Az összes lány mond-t-ad, hogy jön-nek (cf. (36b))
the all girl.NOM say-PAST-2SG COMP come-3PL

Although dialect B requires focus-raised subjects to be in accusative case, it allows the embedded verb to be either plural or singular (as long as the focus-raised nominal is semantically plural and grammatically singular). Hence example (38a) is fine for them. In contrast, dialect A doesn't mind if the focus-raised constituent is in nominative case, as in example (35b). However, dialect A requires that the embedded verb agree in (grammatical) number with the focus-raised constituent, i.e., that the embedded verb be singular. Hence dialect A dislikes (36a) and (36b), where the embedded verb is plural.

As I suggested in Coppock (2003), this pattern supports the idea that accusative focus-raised subjects are *functionally* identified with the embedded SUBJ function (via structure-sharing) for dialect A, but *anaphorically* identified (semantically co-indexed with a null 'pro') with the embedded SUBJ function for dialect B. The obligatoriness of grammatical agreement in dialect A follows immediately from the assumption that the accusative matrix FOCUS function is structure-shared with the embedded SUBJ function, as the embedded verb will impose agreement restrictions on its local SUBJ. When a focus-raised subject surfaces with nominative case, the embedded verb assigns nominative case directly to its subject. This supports an analysis of (35a) as in figure 1.

The optionality of grammatical agreement in dialect B suggests an analysis of the embedded subject as a resumptive pronoun, as Gervain (2002, 2003) has argued. When the embedded verb

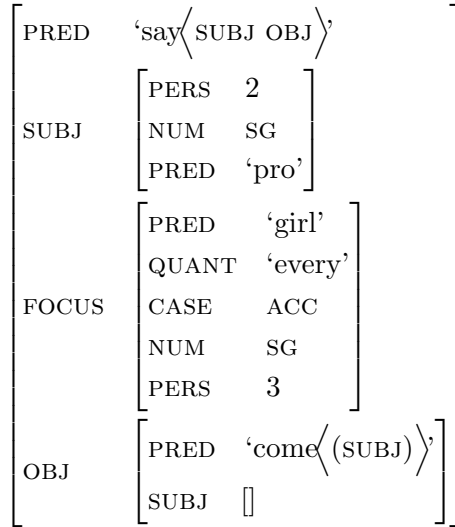


Figure 1: F-structure for (35a), Dialect A

shows plural agreement, a null plural resumptive pronoun occupies the embedded SUBJ position; this gives rise to a collective interpretation. When the embedded verb shows singular agreement, a null singular resumptive pronoun occupies the embedded SUBJ position; this has a distributive interpretation. Thus, for dialect B, focus-raising of subjects actually involves anaphoric binding from the matrix focus position into the embedded SUBJ position. This analysis also explains the case facts; the impossibility of nominative case follows from the fact that the matrix focus is not in a local (case-assignment) relationship to the embedded verb.

In both dialects, definiteness agreement between the matrix verb and the focus-raised subject occurs whenever the focus-raised subject receives accusative case. When a definite nominal such as the proper name *Péter* (accusative *Péter-t*) focus-raises and receives accusative case, the matrix verb appears in the definite conjugation (*mond-t-a* ‘say-PAST-3SG.DEF’), as in (28). In this case it is opaque whether the matrix verb agrees with the focus-raised phrase or with the clause, because bridge verbs show definite agreement with their object clauses; as illustrated with (4) and (22), bridge verbs show definite agreement with their complement clauses in the basic case, without any raising. However, noun phrases with plural numeric determiners such as *két fiu-t* in (39) and question words such as *ki-t* in (40) are indefinite, and the matrix verb goes in the indefinite conjugation (*mond-ott* ‘say-3SG.PAST.INDEF’) when these are focus-raised.

- (39) *Két fiu-t* *mond-ott* *hogy jön.*
 two boy-ACC say-3SG.INDEF.PAST COMP come.3SG
 ‘It was two boys that he/she said were coming.’

- (40) *Ki-t* *mond-ott,* *hogy jön?*
 who-ACC say-3SG.INDEF.PAST COMP come.3SG
 ‘Who did he/she say is coming?’

Not only do matrix verbs agree in definiteness with accusative focus-raised subjects as just shown, they show person agreement with them as well, as illustrated in (41)

- (41) *Téged akar-l-ak, hogy jössz*
 you.ACC want-2-1SG COMP come.2SG.INDEF
 ‘I want you to come.’

Accusative focus-raised subjects therefore show all coding properties of objects, using Keenan’s (1976) terminology. This suggests, but does not necessitate, that they are objects in the matrix clause; the examples in §2.2 have already shown that it is possible to agree with a verb without being its object. To echo what was said at the end of §1, because the OBJ function has behavioral properties associated with it other than definiteness agreement, an object analysis of accusative focus-raised subjects would predict them to show other behavioral properties of objects. The next section is devoted to determining whether, in addition to being coded as objects, they also function as objects.

The answer to this question is not necessarily the same for both dialects, but I only have access to a Hungarian speaker whose judgements conform to dialect A (originally from Miskolc, Hungary). Therefore, the data that I report in the following sections will only bear on that dialect.

2.4 Do accusative focus-raised subjects function as matrix objects?

If accusative focus-raised subjects were objects of the matrix clause, then the subtype of focus-raising illustrated in (28), (39), and (40) would be a kind of control, or A-movement. This control relation would either be equi, where the controller is a thematic argument of the matrix verb, a thematic object, or raising, to a non-thematic position.

2.4.1 Against equi

The long-distance nature of focus-raising, and in particular subject focus-raising, as shown in (42) speaks against treatment of this construction as equi.

- (42) JÁNOS-T mond-t-am, [hogy hall-ott-am, [hogy jön]].
 John-ACC say-PAST-1SG COMP hear-PAST-1SG COMP come.3SG
 ‘It was John that I said that I heard was coming.’

It is odd to imagine that the accusative focus-raised subject is semantically selected (assigned a thematic role) by the matrix verb. If that were true, then all bridge verbs would have two different argument structures, one bivalent for the usual case in which the verb has just a subject and a complement clause, and one trivalent for the case of focus-raised subjects. Argument structures may be cheap, but the additional argument would only ever surface in its focus position, and it would always end up in that position through operator raising.⁷

A piece of empirical evidence against the thematic objecthood of accusative focus-raised subjects comes from incorporation. The verb *(meg)kér* takes an animate accusative object in addition to a

⁷For LFG, the treatment of long-distance focus-raising as equi would create the following undesirable situation: the matrix verb would have to contribute a lexical specification that would equate the raised object to an embedded subject, in the same way that a verb such as *try* contributes an equation between its subject and the subject of its XCOMP. The lexical specification linking the matrix focus to the embedded subject function would have to be a functional uncertainty equation, passing through an unbounded series of complement functions, since focus-raising is long-distance. But the possible extraction paths for focus-raising mirror precisely the possible extraction paths for *wh* questions. This parallelism suggests that the range of possible dependencies in focus-raising constructions is not determined lexically, by bridge verbs, but by the aspect of the grammar that regulates long-distance dependencies. Supposing that bridge verbs semantically select for accusative-marked focus-raised subjects requires us to impose the dependency lexically, though a stipulation, akin to the one made in the lexical entry for equi verbs, between the controller and the controllee.

subjunctive complement clause, and the animate accusative is a thematic object of that verb. For example:

- (43) A tolmács-ot kér-t-em, [hogy lefordít-s-a a cikk-et]
 the translator-ACC ask-PAST-1SG.DEF COMP translate-SBJ-3SG.DEF the article
 ‘I asked the translator to translate the article’

The object of *kér* can occur as a bare nominal with *kér* in the infinitive as in (44).

- (44) Nem szabad tolmács-ot kér-ni, hogy lefordítsa.
 not allowed translator-ACC request-INF COMP translate.SBJ
 ‘It is forbidden to ask a translator to translate.’

In contrast, focus-raised accusative subjects cannot occur as bare nominals with infinitives.

- (45) *Nem szabad nő-t mond-ani, hogy csunya.
 not allowed woman-ACC say-INF COMP ugly
 ‘It is forbidden to say that women are ugly.’

Bare (determinerless, non-plural, but potentially case-marked) nominals in Hungarian have been analyzed as “incorporated” into the verb. Although they are not incorporated in the prototypical way (as we see in Navajo, for example), Farkas and de Swart (2003) argue that bare nominals such as *beteget* in (46) participate in Type I Incorporation (‘incorporation as juxtaposition’), according to the typology of incorporation given by Mithun (1984).

- (46) Az orvos beteg-et vizsgál-t.
 the doctor patient-ACC examine-PAST.3SG.INDEF
 ‘The doctor patient-examined.’

Evidence for this comes from the fact that they have the same distribution as verbal prefixes (called “preverbs”), and from their semantics: incorporated nominals do not contribute a discourse referent, but rather further specify the kind of event denoted by the verb.

To explicate the distributional similarity between bare nominals and Hungarian “preverbs”, a little background is in order. A “preverb” is a type of prefix that verbs often carry. Some preverbs are homophonous with directional case endings, as Germanic verb particles are often homophonous with directional prepositions. For example, one of the prefixes is *be-* ‘into’, which is homophonous with the front vowel variant of the *-ba/-be* case ending, which also means ‘into’. The meaning of a verb-preverb combination is not completely predictable from the elements that comprise it; e.g. *rúg* ‘kick’ combined with *be-* yields *berúg* ‘get drunk’ (É. Kiss, 2002). Moreover, the combination may be found in different subcategorization frames than the verb on its own participates in. For example, the verb *olvas* ‘read’ can be transitive or intransitive, and so can *felolvas* (*fel:* ‘up’), but *elolvas* (*el:* ‘away’), *átolvas* (*át:* ‘across’), and *megolvas* (*meg:* perfective) are obligatorily transitive (É. Kiss, 2002, p. 56).

Preverbs are not always prefixes; their positioning depends on a variety of factors, including focus and aspect. Because the sentence focus must appear directly adjacent to the verb (not including the preverb), the preverb appears following the verb in the presence of a focus (É. Kiss, 2002, p. 56).

- (47) a. János fel-olvas-t-a a vers-e-i-t.
 John.NOM up-read-PAST-3SG.DEF the poem-his-PL-ACC
 ‘John read out his poems.’

- b. János TEGNAP olvas-t-a fel a vers-e-i-t.
 John.NOM yesterday read-PAST-3SG.DEF up the poem-his-PL-ACC
 ‘John read out his poems *yesterday*.’

Incorporated nominals also occur postnominally in the presence of a focus, as in (48).

- (48) Az orvos épp vizsgál-t beteg-et, amikor...
 the doctor just examine-PAST.3SG.INDEF patient-ACC when
 ‘The doctor was just patient-examining, when...’

Preverbs do not always occur directly adjacent to the verb they are associated with; an auxiliary such as *fog* ‘will’ or *akar* ‘want’ may intervene. This is illustrated in (49).

- (49) János fel fog olvas-ni egy vers-et.
 John.NOM up will.3SG.INDEF read-INF a poem-ACC
 ‘John will read a poem.’

Incorporated nominals can also undergo this kind of “preverb-climbing” even if they are unfocused:

- (50) Az orvos beteg-et fog vizsgal-ni.
 the doctor patient-ACC will.3SG.INDEF examine-INF
 ‘The doctor will patient-examine.’

In contrast, full DPs must be focussed if they precede an auxiliary. Thus, bare nominals must occur preverbally except when there is a distinct focus, and can undergo “preverb-climbing”, unlike full DPs, but like preverbs.

Example (44) involves incorporation according to the semantic diagnostic; no translator is implied to exist. The placement of the bare nominal is subject to the same constraints as those on preverb placement in these constructions as well. Thus, it is only grammatical for the bare nominal to occur post-verbally if a focus appears before the verb:

- (51) a. * Nem szabad kér-ni tolmác-ot, hogy lefordítsa.
 not allowed request-INF translator-ACC COMP translate.SBJ
 ‘It is forbidden to ask a translator to translate.’
 b. Nem szabad DIÁK-NAK kér-ni tolmác-ot, hogy lefordítsa.
 not allowed student-DAT request-INF translator-ACC COMP translate.SBJ
 ‘It is forbidden for *students* to ask a translator to translate.’

Thus, what (45) is showing us is that accusative focus-raised subjects do not incorporate, and are in this respect unlike regular objects. Under the view that accusative focus-raised subjects are not arguments of the verb, this fact is unsurprising; only arguments of the verb would be expected to incorporate.

Note that incorporation in Hungarian is quite free, semantically. The example in (44) shows that it can occur with a verb of communication, and an animate argument. According to Farkas and de Swart (2003, p. 96), “in Hungarian the incorporation construction is freely available, and is not restricted to a set of lexical verbs (‘incorporating verbs,’ like in West Greenlandic for instance)”. Thus, example (45) is not due to a semantic restriction on incorporation.

Note also that there is no problem placing focus on the incorporated element of an incorporated verb construction. To illustrate:

- (52) Mari nem UJSÁG-OT olvas, hanem SZTORI-t.
 Mary nem newspaper-ACC read.3SG.INDEF but story-ACC
 ‘Mary’s not reading a *newspaper*, but a *story*.’

Here, the incorporated nominal *újságot* ‘newspaper (ACC)’ is incorporated and focussed. Thus, the ungrammaticality of (45) can’t be explained on the basis of a restriction against focussing incorporated nominals.

Rather, focus-raised accusative subjects can’t be incorporated into the matrix verb because they are not arguments of the matrix verb. Thus, this construction is not a kind of equi.

2.4.2 Against control in general

It is still possible to maintain that focus-raised accusative subjects are objects; the construction could be analyzed as raising, and the accusatives therefore as athematic objects of the matrix verb. But supposing that accusative focus-raised subjects are objects in any sense, even athematic objects, has an odd consequence as well: given that focus-raising is a type of long-distance (A’) movement of precisely the same nature as question formation, the object analysis of accusative focus-raised subjects implies that long-distance dependencies may hold between two argument (A) functions. A-movement is generally finite clause-bound, while A’-movement crosses finite clause boundaries, so this scenario is almost inherently contradictory. As it turns out, there are several pieces of evidence to suggest that accusative focus-raised subjects are not in fact objects in any sense, even athematic objects (as I argued in my LFG03 paper).

Argument 1: Binding

The first argument for the non-object status of accusative focus-raised subjects is that they can be non-reflexively bound by the matrix subject. This is shown in (53), where the non-reflexive pronoun-plus-emphatic *Ő magát* ‘him, himself’ is bound by the matrix subject.

- (53) \check{O}_i MAGÁ-T mondta Péter_i hogy szeret-i Mari-t
 He himself-ACC say-PAST-3SGDEF Peter.NOM COMP love-3SG.DEF Mary-ACC
 ‘It is him_i, himself, that Peter_i said loves Mary.’

The non-reflexive anaphor in (53) is preferable to the reflexive anaphor in (54).

- (54) \check{O} NMAGÁ-T_i mondta Péter_i hogy szeret-i Mari-t
 himself-ACC say-PAST-3SGDEF Peter.NOM COMP love-3SG.DEF Mary-ACC
 ‘It is himself_i that Peter_i said loves Mary.’

This is parallel to the English situation illustrated in (55) and (56) (thanks to Joan Bresnan, p.c.).

- (55) It was himself_i that he_i said likes Mary.
 (56) It was him_i, himself, that he_i said likes Mary.

I find (56) slightly preferable to (55), but I find both grammatical. In (55) and (56), there is no reason to believe that the anaphors are objects of *say* (or any governable function of *say*), but the clefting indicates that they function as the focus of *say*. This example therefore supports the possibility of reflexive anaphor binding by subjects into the focus of the same clause.⁸ The fact

⁸Focus-raised obliques, however, cannot be bound by the matrix subject:

- (i) * \check{O} nmagá-val mond-t-a, hogy nem akar-sz tancol-ni.
 herself-with say-PAST-3SG.DEF COMP not want-3SG.INDEF dance-INF
 ‘It was herself_i that she_i said you didn’t want to dance with.’

I believe the contrast between (i) and (54) may be due to the fact that the matrix verb assigns case to the accusative, and it is therefore more local. This explanation would predict that accusative focus-raised objects that agree in

that accusative focus-raised subjects may be reflexively bound by the matrix subject is therefore *not* evidence for the idea that they are matrix objects.

The binding configuration in (53) is not possible for regular objects; this *is* evidence *against* the objecthood of that anaphor. A non-reflexive pronoun functioning as an object cannot be bound by a subject in the same clause, as is well known (this would be a Condition B-type violation). This is illustrated in (58).⁹

(57) Péter_i önmagá-t_i utálja
 Peter.NOM himself-ACC hate-3SGDEF
 ‘Peter hates himself.’

(58) * Péter_i [ö magá-t_i] utálja
 Peter.NOM him himself-ACC hate-3SGDEF
 ‘Peter hates himself.’

As shown above, a focus need not be a local reflexive anaphor when bound by the subject of the same clause. To use Kiparsky’s (2002) terms, the focus of a clause is not in the “domain of obviation” of the subject, where local reflexive anaphora is obligatory. As shown in (58), the Condition B-related generalization holds exactly the same way in Hungarian; prototypical objects must be reflexive if bound by the subject in the same clause. Accusative focus-raised subjects are therefore not objects.¹⁰

Argument 2: Depictives

Another piece of evidence against the treatment of accusative-marked focus-raised subjects as objects comes from depictive secondary predication. As in English, depictives can modify either the subject or the object in a simple transitive sentence, as in (59).

(59) János-t_j lát-t-am_i részeg-en_{i/j}.
 John-ACC see-PAST-1SG drunk-ly
 ‘I saw John drunk.’

Here, either John or the speaker may be construed as having been drunk. The same adverb, in the same position, cannot modify an accusative focus-raised subject, as shown in (60).

(60) János-t_j lát-t-am_i részeg-en_{i/*j} hogy beszél-get-ett Mari-val.
 John-ACC see-PAST-1SG drunk-ly COMP speak-FREQ-PAST Mary-with
 ‘John, I saw drunk that he was chatting with Mary.’

definiteness with the matrix verb would be able to be reflexive anaphors, and this prediction is borne out:

(ii) Önmagá-t mond-t-a János hogy Mari szeret-i
 himself-ACC say-PAST-3SG.DEF John.NOM COMP Mary.NOM love-3SG.DEF
 ‘It is himself that John said that Mary loves.’

⁹To be honest, the sentence (58) is not totally awful according to my informant. Since the framework I am using for my analysis cannot model more than a binary distinction in grammaticality, I will treat it as ungrammatical for the purposes of analysis. The fact that the emphatic reflexive isn’t so bad, however, may indicate that emphatic reflexives can in fact be A-bound. The explanation for the contrast between (58) and (53) would then perhaps lie in the fact that the anaphor in (53) is A’-bound (from a focus operator position). Then it would be possible for accusative focus-raised subjects to be matrix objects; in that case, the constraint on emphatic reflexives would just require an A’ binder.

¹⁰It is unfortunately not possible to use the possibilities for binding by the accusative focus-raised subject in order to determine its status as an object or not; see appendix A.

In (60), *részegen* may only modify the speaker, not John.

In English, depictives are known to be capable of modifying only a subject or an object; they cannot modify an indirect object, for example.

- (61) a. John_i fried the potatoes naked_i. (Rapoport, 1999, p. 653)
 b. John fried the potatoes_i raw_i.

- (62) *John fried Mary_i the potatoes hungry_i.

Not all verbs allow their objects to be modified by a depictive, and the generalization as to why not has been a subject of debate. Williams (1980) and McNulty (1988) characterize the set of English noun phrases that can be modified by a resultative in terms of thematic role; Rapoport (1999) argues that this is inadequate, and proposes an aspectually-based account. Although the jury appears to be out on exactly what secondary depictive predication diagnoses, it is assumed throughout the literature that the domain of depictive secondary predicates is based on the presence or absence of a c-command relationship between the depictive and the NP to be depicted. Based on this assumption, *Jánost* is in the c-command domain of *részegen* ‘drunk’ in (59), but not in (60). Staying within this framework, if accusative focus-raised subjects are objects at any point in the derivation, then they should leave a trace in the scope of a depictive adjoined below the focus projection. The fact that the depictive in (60) cannot modify the accusative focus-raised subject indicates that it does not leave a trace in that scope. It follows that accusative focus-raised subjects do not “stop off” within the VP, and hence are not matrix objects.

Now, the comparison between (59) and (60) is slightly unfair. While the depictive in (60) is set off on the right by a complement clause, nothing occurs to the right of the depictive in (59), so the two depictives may not be in the same place. But a depictive set off by a complement clause on the right may still modify a true matrix clause object, as the following example shows:

- (63) János-t_j kér-t-em_i meg részeg-en_{i/j}, hogy jöjjön
 John-ACC ask-PAST-1SG.DEF PERF drunk-ly COMP come.3SG.SBJ
 ‘I asked John drunk to come...’
- (és az-ért nem emlékez-ett).
 and COMP-because not remember-3SG.INDEF.PAST
 ‘... (and so he didn’t remember).’

Assuming that the argumental clause occupies a position lower than the focus projection in (63), the depictive is also positioned lower than the focus projection. The fact that the depictive can still modify the (locally) focussed accusative nominal suggests therefore that the accusative nominal leaves a trace in its c-command domain. The modifiability of the focussed accusative in (63) is crucially *not* due to surface structure c-command. Thus, even if the complement clause in (60) prevents the depictive from c-commanding the focus-raised accusative at surface structure, it should still be possible for the depictive to modify the accusative noun phrase if it leaves a trace in its scope.

It is beyond the ambitions of this paper to develop an theory of resultatives in LFG, but the intuitions underlying this argument should be encoded to yield the same result. In particular, I would like to assume at the minimum that “leaving a trace in object position” corresponds in the relevant ways to the LFG notion of objecthood, and that this evidence therefore argues against an LFG analysis of focus-raised accusative subjects as objects.

Note that if modifiability by a depictive in Hungarian is sensitive to argument structure, rather than grammatical function, then the contrast between (59) and (60) may be due to the fact that the raised accusative is not assigned a thematic role by the matrix predicate in (60), as argued above. In that case, this data would only constitute another argument that accusative focus-raised subjects are not thematic objects. In any case, this data demonstrates a contrast between accusative focus-raised subjects and typical objects.

2.4.3 The complement clause as OBJ

The evidence in (21) and (22), which shows that bridge verbs occur in the definite conjugation to agree with their complement clauses, suggests that the complements of bridge verbs are direct object complements, while the complements of non bridge verbs are not. Independent corroboration of this idea comes from the fact that the complements of bridge verbs are associated with an accusative correlative pronoun in the correlative construction:

- (64) Az-t mond-t-a, hogy ott vannak.
 it-ACC say-PAST-3SG.DEF COMP there be.3PL.indef
 ‘He said that they were there.’

In contrast, the complements of non-bridge verbs are associated with an oblique correlative pronoun:

- (65) Ar-ról dicseked-t-ek, hogy ott vannak.
 it-about brag-PAST-3SG.DEF COMP there be.3PL.indef
 ‘He bragged about the fact that they were there.’

Berman (2003) argues for an analysis of similar patterns in German that eschews the grammatical function COMP; she argues that complement clauses associated with accusative correlatives should be analyzed as OBJ. She provides alternative explanations for all of the original motivations for having COMP in the inventory of grammatical functions. One of the original motivations for COMP is the non-topicalizability of the clausal object of *persuade*, in contrast to *tell* (Kaplan and Zaenen, 1989):

- (66) a. Kevin persuaded Roger that these hamburgers were worth buying.
 b. *That these hamburgers were worth buying, Kevin persuaded Roger.
- (67) a. Louise told me that Denny was mean to her.
 b. That Denny was mean to her, Louise told me (already).

Kaplan and Zaenen (1989) account for this contrast by distinguishing the grammatical function of the clausal argument of *persuade* from that of the clausal argument of *tell*; the former is COMP, while the latter is OBJ2, and COMPs don’t topicalize. Berman’s explanation for the contrast lies in the fact that the clausal argument of *persuade*, when realized as a noun phrase, is marked by the preposition *of*:

- (68) a. *John persuaded me the right answer.
 b. John persuaded me of the right answer.

Thus, the grammatical function that the clausal argument of *persuade* bears is OBL and OBLs don’t topicalize. Berman offers a similar explanation for why the object of *pray* cannot be realized as a noun phrase. This was offered by Grimshaw (1982) as an argument for COMP, as well. Dalrymple

and Lodrup (2000) show that the complement of *hope* cannot be passivized, which was also explained using a distinction between OBJ and COMP. For all of these arguments, Berman simply points to the fact that the nominal manifestations of the arguments are oblique arguments of prepositions. For Berman, obliques can't be topicalized (without a resumptive pronoun) or realized as plain NPs, or passivized. She thereby removes all of the evidence for a distinction between OBJ and COMP.

The definiteness agreement contrasts in (21) and (22) lend additional support to the Berman-style analysis. If the complement clause to a bridge verb is correctly analyzed as OBJ, then focus-raised accusative subjects logically cannot function as OBJ, using the very fundamental assumption in LFG that there cannot be more than one OBJ (by consistency). (This is not just an LFG-internal assumption; other frameworks that use grammatical functions as primitives, such as Relational Grammar, also prohibit there being more than one OBJ. In a configurationally-oriented framework, this would correspond to the object *position*, e.g., the sister to V^0 , only being filled once. The impossibility of more than one object follows from fundamental assumptions in every syntactic framework I know of.)

The fact that the clause should be treated as OBJ, in addition to the oddness of positing an A' dependency between two A positions, is another *a priori* argument against treating focus-raised accusatives as objects in LFG. In this section, we have also seen empirical evidence from binding and depictives to the same effect. I conclude that accusative focus-raised subjects are not matrix objects, at least in dialect A. (If accusative focus-raised subjects were matrix objects in dialect B, we would predict obligatory reflexive binding and possibly modifiability by a depictive; this would be interesting to find out.)

This conclusion has at least two important consequences. First, accusative case is not a sufficient condition for objecthood, so we need a theory of NP case licensing and interpretation other than a simple constructive case model (Nordlinger, 1988), by which any accusative noun phrase automatically becomes an object. This will be addressed in §3.3. The second consequence, supported also by the object focus-raising facts in §2.2, is that a verb may agree in definiteness with an accusative-marked noun phrase that is not its object. Therefore, the generalization in (9) is incorrect. The generalization governing the distribution of definiteness agreement should therefore not be stated in terms of grammatical function (objecthood) but rather, in terms of case.

3 Case assignment

Let us consider the hypothesis that definiteness agreement is sensitive to accusative case, rather than objecthood. This would give us the analysis sketched in the first section, only relativized to case, rather than objecthood.

The present first person singular ending *-om/-em/-öm* would bear the following specification (again interpreted non-constructively, and where *a* is meant to be a variable over attributes, implicitly universally bound).¹¹

(69) **Surface constraint on definite verb forms**

$$-Vm \quad V_{infl} \quad (\uparrow a \text{ CASE})=\text{ACC} \Rightarrow (\uparrow a \text{ DEF})=c +$$

Indefinite verb forms would require the absence of any such feature. For example, the first person singular indefinite verb form would bear the following specification:

¹¹This variable notation is not strictly part of the formal machinery of LFG, but it could be defined as an expression that is in formal constraint language of LFG. It would be defined to expand into a massive disjunction, wherein each disjunct substitutes in a different attribute for *a*. (Since there are finitely many attributes, the length of the expansion is finite.)

(70) **Surface constraint on indefinite verb forms**

$-Vk \quad V_{infl} \quad (\uparrow a \text{ CASE})=\text{ACC} \Rightarrow \neg(\uparrow a \text{ DEF})$

This revision would correctly derive the fact that accusative focus-raised subjects agree in definiteness with the matrix verb, without falsely predicting them to behave as objects.

But as this section will demonstrate, being an accusative in the same clause with some verb is not an entirely sufficient condition for triggering definiteness agreement with that verb.

3.1 Temporal adverbials

The surface case-based account of definiteness agreement in (69) and (70) appears at first glance to explain another situation involving accusative case-bearing nominals that are not prototypical objects. Accusative case surfaces on temporal expressions and on the adjective *jó* ‘good’ with intransitive verbs:

- (71) a. *Két orá-t tanul-t.*
two hour-ACC study-PAST-3SG.INDEF
‘He/she studied (for) two hours.’
b. *Két orá-t alud-t.*
two hour-ACC sleep-PAST-3SG.INDEF
‘He/she slept (for) two hours.’

- (72) *Igaz-an jó-t pihen-t-ünk.*
true-ly good-ACC rest-PAST-1PL.INDEF
‘We really rested well.’

The temporal expression *két orát* ‘two hours’ in (71) cannot be replaced by a definite accusative, as in (73).

- (73) a. * **Az egész nap-ot tanul-t.**
the whole day-ACC study-PAST.3SG.INDEF
‘INTENDED: He/she studied all day.’
b. * **Az egész nap-ot alud-t.**
the whole day-ACC sleep-PAST.3SG.INDEF
‘INTENDED: He/she slept all day.’

The contrast between (71) and (73) would seem to reflect a surface constraint on the definiteness of accusative nominals, rather than a constraint on the definiteness of objects, because the temporal adverbial *két orát* ‘two hours’ is not an object.

The fact that *két orát* is not an object can be shown by the fact that it may co-occur with a real direct object, as in (74).

- (74) *Két orát tanul-t-a a lecké-t.*
two hour-ACC study-PAST-3SG.DEF the lesson-ACC
‘I studied the lesson (for) two hours.’

Thus, *két orát* ‘two hours’ in (71) is not an object, either. The contrast between (71) and (73) is therefore not due to a constraint on the definiteness of objects, but to a constraint on the definiteness of accusatives. The surface case-based theory outlined in (69) and (70) appears to be

more adequate, therefore, than the grammatical function-based theory outlined in the formalization of (9).

However, the very evidence against the objecthood of indefinite accusative temporal adverbials (and therefore in support of a grammatical function-independent theory of definiteness agreement) is inconsistent with the surface case-based theory. In (74), the constraint (69) is being violated, because an indefinite accusative noun phrase co-occurs in the same clause with a definite verb form. The possibility of (74) suggests that there is more than one kind of accusative case: accusative case that is assigned by the verb, and accusative case that is licensed independently. In (74), the verb assigns accusative case to its object, and the indefinite temporal adverbial has independently licensed accusative case. This idea will be formalized below.

3.2 Object focus-raising

Another situation in which definiteness agreement fails to hold between a verb and an accusative noun phrase in the same clause involves object focus-raising. When the accusative object of the embedded clause is focus-raised, the matrix verb may be either definite or indefinite, as shown in (75) (É. Kiss, 1987).

- (75) a. *Két lány-t mond-t-ál* *hogy Zoli fel-hiv-ott*
 two girl-ACC say-PAST-2SG.INDEF COMP Zoli.NOM up-call-PAST.3SG.INDEF
 ‘You said that Zoli invited *two girls*.’
- b. *Két lány-t mond-t-ad* *hogy Zoli fel-hiv-ott*
 two girl-ACC say-PAST-2SG.DEF COMP Zoli.NOM up-call-PAST.3SG.INDEF
 ‘You said that Zoli invited *two girls*.’

In (75a), the matrix verb agrees with the raised accusative, *két lányt* ‘two girl[s] (ACC)’, which is indefinite. In (75b), the matrix verb is agreeing with the embedded clause, as it would normally in the absence of raising:

- (76) *Mond-t-ad* [*hogy Zoli fel-hiv-ott* *két lány-t*]
 say-PAST-2SG.DEF COMP Zoli.NOM up-call-PAST.3SG.INDEF two girl-ACC
 ‘You said that Zoli invited two girls.’

Example (75b) violates the surface constraint (69). The reason that agreement is optional in the case of object focus-raising, as opposed to subject focus-raising, seems to have to do with the fact that focus-raised objects can receive accusative case from the embedded verb, rather than the matrix verb. This example therefore also calls for a distinction between accusative case assigned by the verb in question, and accusative case that a noun phrase receives independently of the verb in question. With object focus-raising, the raised object can receive accusative case from the lower verb, so the higher verb doesn’t have to assign accusative case to it. If definiteness agreement goes along with accusative case assignment, the matrix verb therefore need not agree with the raised object. If we suppose that the raised object *can* be assigned accusative case by the matrix verb, then the matrix verb should be able to agree in definiteness with the raised accusative, as in (75a). Thus, the optionality of agreement shown in (75) follows from the optionality of accusative case assignment by the matrix verb.

3.3 Assigning accusative case

The examples in the previous two sections call for a distinction between just having accusative case and being in the same clause as some verb, and having accusative case that is assigned by

that verb. Only the latter is relevant for characterizing the distribution of definiteness agreement. Therefore, let us replace (69) with a constraint to the following effect:

(77) **Case-assignment-based constraint on definite verb forms (informal)**

The constituent whose accusative case feature is assigned by a verb in the definite conjugation must be definite.

Note that it is presupposed that an NP to which accusative case is assigned exists, rather than saying, “if X is assigned accusative case by a definite verb form then X must be definite”. This prevents intransitive definite verb forms, and is also motivated by some of the data we will see in §C, example (113b) in particular.

The fact that the constraint is relativized to the case assigner accounts for the data we have just seen as follows. In (75b), let us assume that the focus-raised object can receive case either from the embedded verb alone, or from both the embedded verb and the matrix verb. If the focus-raised object does not receive case from the matrix verb, then the matrix verb may be definite; (77) will be satisfied. (In (75a), the surface constraint (70) is satisfied; the indefinite verb form is accompanied by an indefinite nominal on the surface, so there is no need to change that constraint at this point.) When a subject from the embedded clause focus-raises and surfaces in accusative case, the accusative case is clearly assigned by the matrix verb, *hence definiteness agreement with the matrix verb is obligatory*.¹²

The distinction between independently received accusative case and accusative case that was assigned by the verb also serves to account for (74), in which an indefinite accusative temporal adverbial appeared with a transitive, definite-conjugation verb. If indefinite accusative temporal adverbials license their own accusative case, and definite verbs only require that the nominal to which they assign accusative case be definite, then (74) is not in violation of the verb’s constraint.¹³

The intuition in (77) may be formalized as follows. The definite ending will carry something like the following specification (a again ranging over single attributes, and existentially bound here):

$$(78) \quad -Vm \quad V_{infl} \quad (\uparrow a \text{ CASE})=\text{ACC} \wedge \\ (\uparrow a \text{ DEF})=c +$$

The fact that a ranges over single attributes ensures the *locality* of accusative case assignment.

The variable a will have to be constrained, so that inflectional endings are prevented from assigning case to the local subject, for example. In other words, in addition to the locality of accusative case assignment, there is a *complementation* constraint, which requires that the path of accusative case assignment passes through a complement function. So far we have seen that a can be functionally identified with the local OBJ, as in the textbook examples of definiteness agreement. In focus-raising, we have seen that the SUBJ of a clausal OBJ, or any non-null sequence of OBJs may also be assigned accusative case by the matrix verb (provided it is in a local relationship to the matrix verb). Because we get definiteness agreement between matrix verbs and embedded-clause

¹²In subject focus-raising, either the lower verb does not assign nominative to the focus-raised subject, or the focus-raised subject gets assigned case twice, and accusative case somehow overrides nominative case. The latter approach seems intuitively correct.

¹³Wechsler and Lee (1996) analyze accusative case-marked adverbials in Korean slightly differently; they argue that the domain of accusative case assignment should be extended to include the SITUATION DELIMITER role, whereas I do not assume that accusative temporal adverbials are assigned accusative case by the predicate. However, the formalizations of their ideas in LFG proposed by ? using constructive case could be very easily incorporated into the analysis being proposed here. As long as accusative case assignment corresponds to constructing the accusative case feature, a constructive case approach is compatible with the idea that accusative temporal adverbials assign their own case. Lee’s analysis of Korean also has the advantage of being able to capture the semantic properties of accusative temporal adverbials, which are quite similar in Hungarian.

objects in focus raising as well, the logic of this analysis requires that those embedded clause objects receive accusative case, too. Therefore let us create a “macro” ACCPATH, in the style of Dalrymple’s TOPICPATH and FOCPATH, which will be defined as follows:¹⁴

$$(79) \text{ ACCPATH}=\text{OBJ}^+ (\text{SUBJ})$$

The definite ending may then be constrained as follows:

(80) **Case-based constraint on definite verb forms (formal)**

$$\begin{aligned} -Vm \quad V_{infl} \quad (\uparrow a \text{ CASE})=\text{ACC} \wedge \\ (\uparrow a \text{ DEF})=c + \wedge \\ (\uparrow a)=(\uparrow \text{ACCPATH}) \end{aligned}$$

This constraint defines the case of a to be ACC, where a is [DEF+] and functionally identical to an f -structure that is related to the f -structure of the matrix verb via ACCPATH.¹⁵

I assume that accusative nominals, except for accusative temporal adverbials, need to have their case licensed. Formally speaking, they contribute a constraining equation requiring the CASE feature of the f -structure they map to to be ACC. Thus, generally, accusatives cannot occur in the absence of a licenser. (The infinitive ending must therefore be an accusative case assigner as well, since infinitives can independently license accusative case.) Only definite accusatives are licensed by definite verb endings; indefinite accusatives are not.

Additional support for this approach comes from the very fact that accusative temporal adverbials can co-occur with real direct objects as in (74).¹⁶ In that type of example, the verb assigns accusative case to its direct object, not to the accusative temporal adverbial. In contrast, accusative focus-raised elements cannot co-occur with real direct objects that are also accusative-marked. The verb *megkér* ‘request’ assigns accusative case to an animate requestee argument in addition to taking a complement clause. With *megkér*, it is marginally possible to focus-raise the (accusative) object of the complement clause, but in the focus-raising situation the animate requestee cannot be overtly expressed:

$$(81) \text{ Egy könyv-et kér-t} \quad \text{meg (*engem), hogy hoz-z-ak} \quad \text{el.}$$

the book-ACC ask-PAST-3SGDEF PERF me COMP bring-SBJ-1SG.INDEF away

‘It was a book that he/she asked me to bring.’

The fact that focus-raised accusatives may not co-occur with nominals to which the matrix verb would otherwise assign accusative case is evidence that focus-raised elements receive accusative case from the matrix verb (in contrast to temporal adverbials, which have case independently).

We have seen already that the surface constraint on definite verb forms is insufficient to account for cases in which an indefinite accusative co-occurs with a definite noun phrase. One case involved

¹⁴Marác (1989) explains the possibility of accusative case assignment by the matrix verb in focus-raising in GB terms. He argues that bridge verbs L-mark their CP complements, and focus-raised accusative subjects stop in Spec,CP on their way to the matrix focus position, and that they are assigned accusative case in Spec,CP. His main piece of evidence for this idea is the fact that the complementizer *hogy* ‘that’ is obligatory in focus-raising and question formation, though normally optional. I find this a somewhat attractive and elegant proposal, but I am unable to translate it into LFG terms.

¹⁵This constraint does not rule out the possibility of the definite ending attaching to verb stems that are intransitive or that take only oblique objects, such as *fél* ‘fear’, which assigns the oblique case *tól/től* meaning ‘from’. *Fél* does not take a direct (accusative) object. Under this proposal, the stem *fél* is prevented from occurring with a direct object not because it fails to assign accusative case, but because it does not take an OBJ. Because ACCPATH must pass through an OBJ function, accusative will not be assignable to the argument of *fél*.

¹⁶See appendix B for an explanation for why definite temporal adverbials behave slightly different from indefinite temporal adverbials.

indefinite accusative temporal adverbials, and another case involved indefinite accusative focus-raised objects. To see that the surface constraint on the indefinite verb form (70) is insufficient as well, consider the verb *megkér* ‘request’. This verb takes an animate accusative requestee argument and a finite clause. It agrees with the animate accusative argument in definiteness, normally:

- (82) a. Meg-kér-t-e (őt), hogy hoz-z-a el a könyv-et
 PERF-ask-PAST-3SG.DEF him/her COMP bring-SBJ-3SG.DEF away the book-ACC
 ‘He asked him/her to bring the book.’
- b. Meg-kér-t (engem), hogy hoz-z-am el a könyv-et
 PERF-ask-PAST-3SG.INDEF me COMP bring-SBJ-1SG.DEF away the book-ACC
 ‘He asked me to bring the book.’

The finite clause argument of *megkér* ‘request’ is oblique, as evidenced by the fact that it can be associated with a sublative (*-ra/-re* ‘lit. onto’) case-marked pronoun:

- (83) Ar-ra kér-t-e meg (őt), [hogy hoz-z-a el a könyv-et]
 that-SUBL ask-PAST-3SG.DEF PERF him/her COMP bring-SBJ-3SG.DEF away the book-ACC
 ‘He asked him/her to bring the book.’

Despite the fact that the clause is oblique, it is marginally possible to focus-raise the object of the embedded clause in, for example, (82b), and then the verb may agree either with it or with the implied accusative requestee, according to Szamosi (1976).

- (84) a. **A könyv-et** kér-t meg, [hogy hoz-z-am el].
 the book-ACC ask-PAST.3SG.INDEF PERF COMP bring-SBJ-1SG.DEF away
 ‘It was the book that he asked me to bring.’
- b. **A könyv-et** kér-te meg, [hogy hoz-z-am el].
 the book-ACC ask-PAST.3SG.DEF PERF COMP bring-SBJ-1SG.DEF away
 ‘It was the book that he asked me to bring.’

In (84a), the indefinite verb form co-occurs with a definite accusative in the same clause, in violation of (70).

Another example in which a definite accusative can co-occur with an indefinite verb in the same clause involves the verb *jön* ‘come’, which is referred to as an “aspectual verb” by den Dikken (1999). The verb *jön* does not agree in definiteness with the object of an embedded infinitive clause, and yet the object of the embedded infinitive may be expressed in the matrix clause, headed by *jön*:¹⁷

- (85) A legtöbb ember ő-T jött hallgat-ni.
 the most people him-ACC come.PAST.3SG.INDEF hear-INF
 ‘The most people came and heard HIM.’

This also violates (70); here we have a definite accusative in the same clause as an infinitive verb.

Neither example (84a) nor example (85) would violate a softened version of (70) analogous to (77).

(86) **Case-assignment-based constraint on indefinite verb forms (informal)**

If the accusative case feature of some NP is assigned by an indefinite verb, then that NP must not be definite.

¹⁷found at www.mek.iif.hu/porta/szint/human/szepirod/magyar/mikszath/cikkek2/html/26.htm

This would have a formal interpretation analogous to (80):

(87) **Case-assignment-based constraint on indefinite verb forms (formal)**

$$-Vm \quad V_{infl} \quad (\quad (\uparrow a \text{ CASE})=\text{ACC} \wedge \\ \neg(\uparrow a \text{ DEF}) \wedge \\ (\uparrow a)=(\uparrow \text{ACCPATH}) \quad)$$

The inflectional ending optionally defines the case of some a to be accusative, where a is required not to be [DEF+], and also required to be functionally identical to an f -structure related to the verb's f -structure via ACCPATH. Accusative case assignment is optional for an indefinite verb form, so it may function as a simple intransitive. If the verb root does not license accusative case, then the accusative case feature is not defined by the ending. In that case, accusative noun phrases that require their accusative case feature to be defined by the verb will go unsatisfied.

Assuming that the matrix verbs in examples (84a) and (85) do not assign accusative case to the raised objects, the constraint in (87) is not violated there. This is not an unreasonable assumption, because in both cases the raised objects receive thematic roles from other verbs, which could potentially assign them accusative case as well. The constraint in (87) also serves to account for the facts of definiteness agreement in subject focus-raising, where the matrix verb does assign accusative case to a raised NP.

In summary of §3, neither the object-based characterization of the distribution of “object” agreement nor the surface case-based characterization is descriptively adequate. Rather, the correct generalization is that a verb must agree in definiteness with any noun phrase to which it assigns accusative case. This, in addition to the assumption that bridge verbs may assign accusative case either to their focus or to their object, serves to account for the data we have seen so far.

4 Infinitive-selecting verbs

The idea that definiteness agreement is related to accusative case assignment rather than object-hood provides a natural explanation for other agreement facts related to auxiliary-like verbs with infinitival complements. In these cases, the target of agreement is, intuitively speaking, assigned a thematic role by the embedded infinitive verb, but agreement shows up on the matrix verb. This is exemplified in (88) (É. Kiss, 2002, p. 203).

- (88) a. Meg-próbál-*ok* ritk-ább-an veszíteni el *dolg-ok-at*.
 PERF-try-1SG.INDEF rare-more-ly lose.INF away thing-PL-ACC
 ‘I’m trying to lose things more rarely.’
- b. Meg-próbál-**om** ritk-ább-an veszíteni el **az esernyőm-et**.
 PERF-try-1SG.DEF rare-more-ly lose.INF away the umbrella-ACC
 ‘I’m trying to lose my umbrella more rarely.’
- c. Meg-próbál-*l-ak* nem el-veszíteni *bennetek-et* a tömeg-ben.
 PERF-try-2-1SG.DEF not away-lose.INF you-ACC the crowd-in
 ‘I’m trying not to lose you in the crowd.’

In (88a), the embedded verb’s infinitive object, *dolgokat* ‘things’ is indefinite, so the indefinite conjugation on the matrix verb is required. In (88b), the embedded object *az esernyőmet* ‘my umbrella’ is definite, so the definite conjugation on the matrix verb is required. In (88c), the subject of the matrix verb is first person, and the object of the embedded infinitive is second

person, and here the special *-lak/-lek* suffix is required; the matrix verb *próbál* agrees both in definiteness and in person with the object of its infinitival complement.¹⁸

Facts related to preverb climbing indicate that the auxiliary-like verb *próbál* does not participate in “clause union” with the embedded verb. The future auxiliary verb *fog* and the verb *akar* ‘want’ behave similarly to *próbál* ‘try’ in that they agree with the object of their complement, but they show an additional clause-union property not witnessed with less auxiliary-like verbs like *próbál*. This is illustrated in (89).

- (89) a. \underline{Fel}_i fog-*ok* t_i olvas-ni *valami-t*.
 up will-1SG.INDEF read-INF something-ACC
 ‘I will read something out.’
- b. \underline{Fel}_i fog-**om** t_i olvas-ni **ezt a level-et**.
 up will-1SG.DEF read-INF this the letter-ACC
 ‘I will read out this letter.’

The “preverb-climbing” in (89) is not possible with more semantically contentful infinitive-selecting verbs like *próbál* ‘try’ (den Dikken, 1999). This difference indicates that the verbs that allow it are more closely intertwined with their infinitival complements than the verbs that do not allow it. If preverb-climbing is the mark of clause-union, and lack of preverb-climbing indicates lack of clause-union, then the definiteness agreement phenomenon that we observe with verbs that do not allow preverb-climbing takes place in the absence of clause-union.¹⁹ This in turn suggests that the accusative with which the main verb agrees is not its object, nor even clausemate with the verb.

If definiteness agreement diagnoses accusative case assignment, as would follow from the proposal in §3, then the possibility of definiteness agreement between a verb and an accusative noun phrase in a separate clause entails that accusative case assignment can be non-local. This is not predicted by the formalization in §3. The constraints (80) and (87) only allow case assignment to a strictly local function, because the path to the accusative case assignee is an instantiation of a , which only ranges over single attributes. To allow for the possibility of non-strictly local case assignment, it would be necessary to weaken the locality constraint on accusative case assignment, replacing a with a variable ranging over series of attributes. The locality of accusative case assignment can be maintained by restricting accusative assignment to the minimal finite domain. Let x stand for a (possibly infinite) series of attributes. To restrict accusative case assignment to the minimal finite domain, the following modifications of (80) and (87) could be used:

- (90) **Case-based constraint on definite verb forms (formal)**
 $-Vm \quad V_{infl} \quad (\uparrow x \text{ CASE})=\text{ACC} \wedge$
 $(\uparrow x \text{ DEF})=c + \wedge$
 $(\uparrow x)=(\uparrow \text{ACCPATH})$

where x is constrained to be a sequence of attributes each with the off-path constraint $\neg(\rightarrow \text{TENSE})$. In the examples in (88), x would be instantiated as XCOMP OBJ.

The complementation constraint, formalized using ACCPATH, must also be loosened to allow for this type of accusative case assignment. The intuition underlying ACCPATH is that accusative case may only be assigned to a direct complement; XCOMP must also be considered a direct complement.

¹⁸One might imagine that the verb is agreeing with the infinitive clause, which inherits object features (person, definiteness) from its own object. This is not a possible analysis, because there are verbs that take infinitive complements which do not agree with the embedded object in definiteness; they bear the indefinite conjugation whether the embedded object is definite or indefinite.

¹⁹Preverb-climbing can cross *hogy*-clause boundaries, though: *Fel_i akarom, hogy t_i olvassd a levelet* ‘I want you to read out the letter’. So we probably can’t assume that preverb-climbing implies clause-union. It still may be the case that lack of preverb-climbing implies non-clause-union, though.

Den Dikken explains definiteness agreement in (88) based on accusative case assignment as well. On den Dikken’s analysis, definiteness agreement is one of several clause-union properties that unite in a prototype, but “clause union is not a unitary phenomenon”. He explains the possibility of definiteness agreement in constructions where preverb-climbing is impossible (as with *próbál* ‘try’ and the permissive-causative *hagy* ‘let’) through layering of functional projections. On his analysis, the projection in which *both accusative case and definiteness features are checked* is generated “upstairs”, but the projection headed by the preverb is generated “low” in constructions where preverb-climbing is impossible. This analysis bears a resemblance to the case-assignment based analysis argued for above, in that definiteness agreement and accusative case assignment go hand in hand.

There are other constructions, according to Den Dikken, in which the projection that checks accusative case and definiteness is base-generated “low”, close to the infinitive. This is the case in examples like (91) and (92), where the matrix verb remains in the indefinite conjugation, regardless of the definiteness property of the embedded clause object.

- (91) a. Jött-él meg-látogat-ni *valaki-t*
 came-2SG.INDEF PERF-visit-INF someone-ACC
 ‘You came and visited someone.’
- b. Jött-él meg-látogat-ni **Péter-t**
 came-2SG.INDEF PERF-visit-INF Peter-ACC
 ‘You came and visited Peter.’
- (92) a. Igyeksz-ünk meglátogat-ni **Péter-t**
 strive-1PL.INDEF visit-INF Peter-ACC
 ‘We make efforts to visit Peter.’
- b. Igyeksz-ünk meglátogat-ni *néhány kollégá-t*
 strive-1PL.INDEF visit-INF few colleague-ACC
 ‘We make efforts to visit some colleagues.’

On den Dikken’s analysis, when the matrix verb does not agree with the embedded object, “the AgrO head checking the definiteness and Case of the object of the infinitive must be downstairs in the infinitival domain, represented by a phonologically null element” (É. Kiss, 2002, p. 50).

É. Kiss (2002), following Bartos (1999), denies that accusative case assignment and definiteness agreement go hand in hand. For Bartos (1999), “the definite AgrO morpheme has no null allomorph”, so examples like (91) and (92) involve no definiteness feature checking; the embedded objects only check accusative case with an accusative case checking head. The matrix verbs have no definiteness feature to check; only transitive verbs need to check their definiteness feature, according to his theory. Bartos analyzes examples like (88), wherein the matrix verb agrees with the embedded object, using distinct functional heads for accusative case checking and definiteness agreement; the embedded infinitive checks accusative case, while the matrix verb checks definiteness agreement.

The fact that a null allomorph of the definite AgrO morpheme is unnecessary may be an advantage of Bartos’ theory over den Dikken’s within the Minimalist framework, but in the LFG theory being put forth here, we can retain the idea that accusative case checking (assignment) and definiteness agreement go hand in hand, without having to posit a null morpheme. The reason that *jön* ‘come’ does not agree in definiteness with the object of the infinitive phrase, I propose, is that the infinitive is an adjunct, purpose clause in *jön* constructions. Thus, the complementation constraint on accusative case assignment would be violated were *jön* to assign accusative case to the

object of the infinitive complement. The reason that *igyekszik* ‘strive’ does not agree in definiteness with the object of its infinitive complement, I propose, is that the infinitive complement has an oblique function, and is therefore not a direct complement. In these constructions, the infinitive ending *-ni* checks accusative case and definiteness (in the sense of constructing the feature), which can be formally implemented with an optional defining equation allowing that possibility.

With the modifications to our assumptions about accusative case assignment we have made in this section, the case-assignment based theory of definiteness agreement captures the definiteness agreement phenomena involved with infinitive-selecting verbs.

5 Conclusion

I have argued that whether a verb appears in the definite or indefinite conjugation depends not on properties of its object, not on properties of the nearest accusative-marked noun phrase, but on properties of the noun phrase to which it assigns accusative case. Informally, the distribution of definite and indefinite verb endings can be captured via the following constraints.

(93) **Case-assignment-based constraint on definite verb forms**

The constituent whose accusative case feature is assigned by a verb in the definite conjugation must be definite.

(94) **Case-assignment-based constraint on indefinite verb forms**

If the accusative case feature of some NP is assigned by an indefinite verb, then that NP must not be definite.

The main facts that this captures are (i) that verbs agree in definiteness with accusative focus-raised subjects, and (ii) that indefinite accusatives can be in a clause headed by a definite verb, as long as the verb doesn’t assign the accusative phrase case, as we saw with both temporal adverbials and focus-raised objects. This analysis also extends naturally to account for another set of object agreement facts, which involve infinitive-selecting verbs.

The analysis does not predict any asymmetry between definite and indefinite agreement, as has been claimed to exist by Szamosi (1976), but those facts are tenuous, as discussed in appendix C. It does not treat definiteness agreement on a par with person agreement, as the traditional characterization does, but this is not warranted, as discussed in appendix D. In several places throughout this paper I have refrained from choosing one analysis over another, but my main point has been that definiteness agreement is sensitive to accusative case assignment, rather than objecthood or accusative case alone.

As Paul Kiparsky pointed out (p.c.), the main thesis of this paper isn’t very surprising, given that “subject” agreement has been shown also to be sensitive to nominative case in languages in which oblique case-marked noun phrases function as SUBJ, such as Icelandic. Taking the conclusion of this paper with that fact, a potential generalization emerges: perhaps agreement is universally sensitive to case assignment in dependent-marking languages, rather than grammatical function. This is a question for further research.

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