

SUMMARY OF PHD THESIS

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ANALYSIS OF APPOSITIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN HUNGARIAN

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1. Aims of the study

The topic of the study – as it is referred to by the Hungarian traditional terminology – is the syntactic analysis of appositional constructions in Hungarian, examined within the theoretical framework of generative syntax. Since the Hungarian generative literature lacks a profound analysis of Hungarian appositional constructions, the basic objective of this study is to fill in this gap.

The aim of my thesis is to set up a comprehensive theoretic analysis of Hungarian appositional constructions. A serious problem emerged related to the examined construction: there is not a unified stand point in descriptive grammars in Hungarian whether this construction should be analyzed as subordination (Tompa 1964, Rácz 1991), coordination (Szabó 1955; Antal 1964, 1977; Jakab 1977) or as some sort of specific transitional structure (Balogh 1999). Dér (2001) disapproved of the concepts of subordination and coordination, and argued that there is a third relation on word-structure level: the identifying/appositional relation. In my opinion the problem is rooted that certain types of the appositional construction, i.e. attributive appositions and identifying appositions are attempted to be analyzed in a unified way, regardless of their different properties. In order to get a clear picture on the examined constructions, it is necessary to analyze the two types separately. It also emerged that a third type of appositions should be distinguished from the other two. It is the adverbial apposition, which shows different characteristics from both types.

During my investigation in the international literature another problem has occurred: as opposed to Hungarian grammars, adjectives in postnominal position are not classified as appositional constructions, so the question has arisen whether Hungarian attributive appositions should be classified within appositional constructions or not. I do not want to exclude from the scope of my investigation attributive appositions, and yet, their comparison with identifying appositions seems to confirm the hypothesis that these are two different constructions which do not obligatorily have the same structures. At the same time I do not wish to oppose the prevailing tradition in descriptive grammars, so attributive appositions became part of my study too.

The questions I wanted to answer in my dissertation were the following: What is the concept of apposition? What different types of appositions can we distinguish in the range of Hungarian appositional constructions? What are the characteristics of each appositional type? In which way appositional constructions are linked to the host sentence, and which are the syntactic procedures they have to undergo, and how? What kind of structural analysis can be

assigned to each of the different appositional constructions? How appositional constructions and parentheses are related to each other?

2. Attributive appositions

I analyzed attributive appositions with preserving the traditional term, although I do not classify this construction within attributes.

First I described the properties of attributive appositions, giving some additional information to the properties listed in descriptive grammars, and also making some modifications. I had to clarify the statements which claim that attributive appositional constructions can be transformed into attributive structures with position in the front, and that a Subject-Predicate relation can be created from the construction units. On the one hand, the concept of „transformation” is misleading working on a generative theoretical platform, on the other hand, reformulation of the constructions is possible only under certain conditions. Moreover, in case of non-intersective adjectival appositions and appositions with numerals it is not possible to set up a predicative relation between the anchor and the apposition, and in case of the superlative form of an adjectival apposition further restrictions are needed in order to create a Subject-Predicate relation. It is also important to point out the restrictiveness of attributive appositions, as this property plays significant role in distinguishing different appositional types, and also serves as an important argument in favour of the concept that the structure must be analyzed in a way different from identifying appositions.

I suppose sharing instead of agreement between the construction units in attributive appositions, by this making it clear for the reader that I do not regard the construction as subordination. The data show that the construction units must share the plural markers, case endings, and the possessive marker *-é*, while the apposition and the anchor can share the same possessive marker with restricted possibility only. We can observe shared marking in the case of postpositions, but when the units of the appositional construction do not stand in distant locations, our example will be grammatically correct even in the case when it is only the apposition that is followed by postposition. The anchor and the apposition do not need to have same definiteness.

I examined whether it is possible to generate an appositional construction from any attributive structure. Based on the examples, the following conclusions can be drawn: A non-intersective adjective can occur as an attributive apposition only in the context where the noun denotation comprises two disjoint subsets. Adjectives in superlative form without a definite

article cannot serve as attributive appositions, while numerals can occur as attributive appositions restrictedly, under certain conditions.

I compared Hungarian attributive appositions with the Greek ‘polydefinite’ constructions, since at first they seem to show great similarity, but the thorough comparison shows more differences between the two constructions than similarities. This examination is important, as it may help us answer the questions: 1) How can we classify Hungarian appositions? 2) What is the relation between the different types?

During the comparison with the Greek ‘polydefinite’ constructions I have come to the conclusion that attributive appositions cannot be classified as close appositions, despite their restrictive character, and due to the same property they cannot be observed within the group of loose appositions either.

This is another reason why Hungarian attributive appositions and identifying appositions should be analysed separately, without attempting to assign a unified construction to both of them, as traditional grammars used to do.

During the structural analysis of attributive appositions, based on my own counterarguments I first ruled out the previous concepts. The necessity of agreement with the construction argues against subordination. The main argument against the coordinated phrase is the free word order of the construction units, while the assumption of a transitional construction would not solve the problem either. I propose that attributive apposition in Hungarian should be regarded as an elliptical coordination of two clauses. I illustrated through several examples that the analysis of appositional constructions in such manner does not violate the conditions of an ellipsis, since the content-identity requirement, context-identity requirement and locality condition are all met. We must point out two minor achievements: 1) First, the examinations confirmed that in Hungarian examples reflexive ellipses may also have different Agr-endings. 2) Second, as opposed to statements of Bánréti (2007), the locality condition must also be fulfilled, even in cases when no potential antecedent is embedded between the anchor and the apposition. During my analysis of attributive apposition I worked with the following types of ellipses and movements: NP head-ellipsis, backward ellipsis, sluicing, ATB-topicalization and RNR. With these five movements all the word-order versions of a sentence containing attributive appositions can be described.

3. Identifying appositions

I devoted a whole chapter to the analysis of identifying appositions. First I have reviewed the properties of identifying appositions, with some modifications and additional information to

certain statements in the Hungarian literature. On one hand, I do not regard this appositional construction as an attribute either (similarly to attributive apposition), on the other hand, by transposing the construction units, we can form a construction with an attribute in the front in some of these examples, too. I have examined the properties of identifying apposition that could justify its independence from the matrix clause:

1) Hungarian identifying constructions can also have an adverbial between the construction units, 2) the construction can have its own *pro* subject, indicated by the presence of the reflexive pronoun *maga* ‘himself’. However, our assumption about the independence of identifying apposition is contradicted by the fact that the apposition must have the same case ending as the anchor.

I have introduced two novel approaches while presenting the types of identifying appositions. I argued in favour of the concept that close appositions can be distinguished in Hungarian too, even if their occurrence is more limited compared to the languages from international literature. During my examinations I also attempted to find out, based on English, German and Dutch examples, whether Hungarian identifying appositions can be classified in the three semantic classes (identification, attribution, inclusion) introduced by Heringa (2012). The question is significant because I argued that in the presence of certain conjunctions in Hungarian sentences, despite the traditional view, we have appositional constructions rather than subordinate clauses. In my research I also studied whether Hungarian apposition-markers can be separated and classified in different semantic classes, the same way as in languages studied by Heringa (2012). Having compared the Hungarian data with the English, German and Dutch examples, it has been found that in Hungarian it is not possible to classify the apposition-markers as characteristic uniquely of a given semantic class of appositional constructions, since certain apposition-markers of identification can also stand in examples for the semantic group of attribution.

My research also extends to the issue of which unit of the identifying apposition appearing either in subject or object position will induce agreement on the predicate. The question is important, since the answer may clarify whether identifying appositions should be analysed as subordinate or coordinate structures. Based on the investigation of test-sentences containing appositional constructions in subject position, the conclusion can be drawn that it cannot be conclusively decided whether it is the anchor or the apposition that controls the agreement, since the agreement is influenced by two different factors: the principle of proximity and the marked feature value of the anchor concerning plurality. The [Pl]-feature of a noun phrase is a marked feature value in number agreement. If the apposition is plural, then

the agreement is unambiguously clear: the verb will appear in plural (the principle of proximity reaffirms the plural agreement too). If the anchor is formally plural, then in the case of the appositional construction appearing in a preverbal position the principle of proximity and the markedness of plurality become conflicted, and the grammaticality judgements of the sentences show a greatly varied picture from the point of view of agreement. If the appositional construction appears in postverbal position, then it is the principle of proximity that determines the agreement. In the case of an appositional construction appearing in preverbal position as object, there are two additional factors influencing the agreement: the principle of proximity and the marked feature value of definiteness. The [Def]-feature of a noun phrase is a marked feature value in object agreement. If the apposition is definite, then definite conjugation is clearly preferred. If the principle of proximity and the marked feature value become conflict with each other, the judgement of sentences shows a mixed picture, but definite conjugation still seems more preferable. In the case of sentences containing appositional constructions in postverbal position, unequivocal grammaticality judgements are produced. In this case the agreement takes place according to the principle of proximity.

However, all observations change if we hold an intonational pause after the apposition. By this we intensify the parenthetical nature of the structure, due to which it seems that the predicate should rather agree with the anchor even in cases of appositional structures occurring in preverbal position as subject or object.

During the structural analysis I excluded the solutions of viewing the appositional construction as a reduced relative clause or analyzing it as an ellipsis.

I suggest that we should assign separate structural analyses related to each type of identifying apposition, based on the different properties. A coherent analysis can be given only in the case of loose appositions, where an intonational pause must be held after the apposition too, thus intensifying the parenthetical nature of the construction. If an intonational pause must be held after the apposition, the agreement with the predicate is solely controlled by the anchor, so we need apply the operation of supplementation Merge.

If an intonational pause is not held after the apposition, my proposal is the following: both specificational and predicational appositions should be analysed as appositional parenthetical phrases (Par_{APP}P), thus distinguishing them from appositional constructions where there is a pause after the apposition, too. In these constructions the apposition is **not** connected to the anchor by means of the operation of supplementation Merge, since in certain cases it is the apposition that controls the agreement with the predicate. So the apposition must also be visible for the predicate of the matrix sentence.

If there is no pause after the inclusive apposition, the predicate must agree with the apposition, it confirms the hypothesis of the two clauses standing in a coordination and the assumption of an ellipsis.

The analysis I propose is to adjoin the close apposition to the anchor from the right side by the operation of adjunction, and the two DPs will form one single constituent.

I had to examine separately the examples for appositions with personal pronouns, analysing them as appositive parenthetical phrases (Par_{APP}P), similarly to appositions classified as identification and attribution. In these constructions when the apposition is in preverbal position, the agreement with the predicate is controlled by the marked feature value of the anchor concerning personality.

I regard constructions like *mi férfiak* ‘we, men’ appositional constructions too, supposing a close relation between the construction units, similarly to close appositions.

I argued that adverbial appositive phrases should be distinguished from other appositional types. In the case of adverbial appositions I tried to separate from the real appositional constructions all examples which comprise two adverbials not related to each other through an appositional relation.

4. The concept of the apposition

In this chapter, based on the results of the dissertation, I attempted to clarify the concept of apposition related to Hungarian examples. First I modified the properties used in the Hungarian linguistic tradition:

- 1) Even though in appositional constructions the anchor is always followed by the apposition, it is incorrect to regard the anchor as the basic unit.
- 2) The units of the appositional construction are not agreed in case and number, but share the endings instead, while in the case of inclusive appositions the lack of sharing is acceptable for the units when the anchor is in plural.
- 3) The traditional standpoint on intonation also had to be changed, as in close appositions and some adverbial appositions the units of the construction constitute a single prosodic unit.
- 4) Finally, I refuted the statement that a predicative relation can be generated between the construction units of appositions, as it is not valid for attributive appositions, for certain examples of specificational and predicational appositions, besides, all the inclusive and adverbial appositions contradict this statement. Then I approached the question based on grammar modules, providing a comprehensive general definition of appositions, with additional data related to each type. It is impossible to give a common prosodic feature

uniform for all appositional constructions. A common syntactic feature of appositional constructions is that the construction units serve the same grammatical function. From a semantic point of view it can be stated that appositions in appositional constructions modify, complement, clarify or restrict the anchor, and the two construction units have the same reference (including inclusion). Furthermore, the construction has its own proposition, which is independent of the propositional content of the matrix clause. According to the pragmatic approach the appositional message is a conventional implicature (Potts 2005, Kim 2012), where the appositive helps the listener to identify the reference of the anchor, by providing additional information about it.

Having considered the characteristics of different appositions, I examined which examples cannot be classified as appositions. I had to exclude from the group of appositions some of the data previously regarded as appositions by Hungarian linguists. Furthermore, I introduced a new argument, that is by transposing the construction units of close appositions – in contrast to the examples presented in the international literature – we get a DP with a noun modifier and not another appositional construction.

I compared attributive apposition with identifying apposition, and by pointing out the differences, I attempted to confirm the hypothesis that we are facing two different constructions, which do not need to be forced into the same structural analysis.

Finally I have made a firm statement that my research results confirm partially the orphanage approach and partially the integration approach, depending on the question the construction of which appositional type we are dealing with.

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