

THURSDAY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLOQUIUM

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16:15-17:45

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ASPECTUAL COGNATE OBJECT CONSTRUCTIONS IN HUNGARIAN

In my presentation, I offer a syntactic investigation into Hungarian aspectual cognate objects (ACOs) and aspectual cognate object constructions (ACOCs). Knowing that the language blocks the co-occurrence of ACOs (e.g. *egy széles mosolyt* ‘a wide smile.ACC’) with a prototypical unergative verb (e.g. *mosolygott* ‘smiled’), I claim that it has accusative pseudo-objects (POs), which are literally not cognate with the prototypical unergative verb they accompany but are demonstrated to be non-subcategorized and non-thematic nominals that have the same role and the same syntactic properties as ACOs in languages where these objects are both semantically and morphologically related to the verb. Consequently, the counterpart of the English canonical ACOC in (1) is not the example in (2a) but the sentence in (2b):

(1) Mary smiled a wide smile.

- (2) a. *Mari mosolygott egy széles mosolyt. b. Mari mosolygott egy széleset.
 Mary smiled one wide smile.ACC Mary smiled one wide.ACC
 ‘Mary smiled a wide smile.’

More precisely, I propose that these Hungarian POs be divided into the following three classes:

- a) the very frequently used PO *egy* ‘one.ACC’
- b) a small and closed class of – frequently used – POs such as (*egy jót* ‘(one) good.ACC’, (*egy nagyot* ‘(one) big.ACC’, (*egy hatalmasat* ‘(one) huge.ACC’ and (*egy óriásit* ‘(one) gigantic.ACC’)
- c) a large and open class of – less frequently used – POs such as (*egy széleset* ‘(one) wide.ACC’, (*egy mélyet* ‘(one) deep.ACC’, (*egy félelmeteset* ‘(one) dreadful.ACC’, (*egy szelídet* ‘(one) tender.ACC’, (*egy hangosat* ‘(one) loud.ACC’, (*egy vidámat* ‘(one) joyful.ACC’, (*egy gyorsat* ‘(one) quick.ACC’, (*egy öregeset* ‘(one) elderly.ACC’, (*egy hosszút* ‘(one) long.ACC’, (*egy bájosat* ‘(one) charming.ACC’ or (*egy kellemeset* ‘(one) pleasant.ACC’)

The motivation behind the above ternary division is supported by syntactic evidence. I show that although members of the three classes of POs exhibit uniform behaviour with respect to most cognate tests (e.g. passivization, quantification with a strong determiner, theta-role assignment, pronominalization, indefiniteness restriction, restrictive relative clause modification, *mit* ‘what.ACC’ questioning and aspectual contribution), they behave differently with respect to some other diagnostics (e.g. contrastive topicalization, focusing and adverbial interpretation).

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