

A curious Hungarian imposter in camouflage

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This talk discusses the grammar of the curious Hungarian pronominal element *jómagam* ‘myself, I’. While being a more complex variety of the primary reflexive *magam* ‘myself’ (*jó* ‘good’ + *magam* ‘myself’), *jómagam* does not behave like a typical reflexive element.

Its key properties are as follows:

(i) It tends to be restricted to less colloquial registers. Speakers vary in the extent to which they use it, and many experience it as a marker of stilted or mannered style.

(ii) As various corpora of Hungarian testify, it dominantly occurs in the 1SG form, and all the other members of the paradigm are much less frequent. I use the 1SG form for illustration.

(iii) As a finite subject, *jómagam* triggers obligatory 1SG agreement on the verb (1). It also determines first person agreement as a conjunct member of a coordinate subject (2). In this respect, *jómagam* acts like the 1SG personal pronoun.

(iv) Agreement morphology is licit in Hungarian in certain non-finite constructions. *Jómagam* can occur in such positions that are construed with agreement for pronouns, but it does not trigger 1SG agreement there, see the agreeing postposition construction in (3a) and the possessive construction in (3b). In this respect, *jómagam* is not like a pronoun.

(v) Whereas the primary reflexive *magam* ‘myself’ can act as an *intensifier* in the sense of König & Gast (2006), *jómagam* cannot. It does not normally co-occur with an overt pronoun (see 1), and it does not have the typical intensifier functions that König & Gast identify (cf. *I am a librarian myself*).

(vi) It is typically used as a finite subject with no (local) linguistic antecedents. But it may have one if it is in a non-subject position, in which case *jómagam* is coreferential with this antecedent but it cannot act as a bound variable (not shown).

(1) (*Én) Jómagam könyvtáros vagyok / *van.
I.NOM myself.NOM librarian am / is
‘I am a librarian.’

(2) Oszkár és jómagam voltunk / *voltak jelen.
Oscar.NOM and myself.NOM were.1PL were.3PL present
‘Oscar and I were present.’

(3) a. jómagam és János között b. 4 hektár jómagam tulajdonába került.
my self and John between 4 hectar myself possession-POSS-INTO got
‘between myself and John’ ‘4 hectars ended up in my possession.’

In fact, *jómagam* behaves in a way that is reminiscent of two classes of DPs discussed in the recent literature. *Camouflage DPs* (Collins et al. 2008) and *imposters* (Collins & Postal 2012, Collins 2014) both have an apparent third person exterior with an ability to refer to the speaker or the addressee (see, respectively, *Your Majesty should praise yourself/herself* and *The present authors attempt to defend ourselves/themselves*). As Kallulli (2014) have shown, imposters and camouflage DPs in Albanian can trigger both third person or non-third person agreement on the finite verb. *Jómagam* exhibits only 1SG agreement in finite contexts, whereas it cannot show 1SG agreement in non-finite contexts. In essence, it constrains the phi-feature variation attested in other languages to distinct spaces.

To account for these facts, I will argue that *jómagam* has a defective possessive structure, resembling the Ass-Camouflage Construction discussed in Collins et al. (2008). As such, it shows no agreement in positions where agreement is only triggered by pronouns (3). In finite contexts, however, *jómagam* behaves more like the imposters of Collins and Postal (2012) in being derived from an underlying appositive structure with a pronominal head. This structure will be shown to be responsible both for the agreement patterns in (1-2), and for the attested logophoric nature of *jómagam*.

References

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