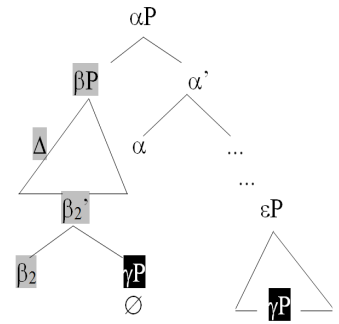


The Hungarian Contrastive VP-focus and Mirror-Focus Constructions

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Our point of departure is that four observations on Hungarian contrastive VP-foci reported by Kenesei (1998: 233–240) without any formal explanation (K1–4) can be explained on the basis of the following straightforward remnant-movement-based hypothesis: what is going on is indeed nothing else but the focusing of a higher VP-projection (marked as βP in the Figure).



We follow Alberti (2004) and Alberti&Farkas (2017) in assuming (i–ii): (i) there are several syntactic positions in Hungarian which do not tolerate right branching, (ii) nevertheless, even such a position, marked as (Spec, αP) in the Figure, can be applied to host a right branching constituent, βP , at the cost of extracting the concerned right periphery, γP , in order to provide βP with the pragmaticosemantic contribution peculiar to the operator hosted in α .

Kenesei’s first observation to be accounted for (K1) is illustrated by the minimal pair presented in (1): it is dispreferred for βP to start with the verb stem, that is, it is dispreferred for the remnant to consist of the single verb stem (see (1b): βP =AspP, while βP =TopP in (1a)).

- (1) • Can a verb constitute the material of the remnant?
- Péternem [a **HAM**letet olvasta **MA**rinak], (hanem **SZA**ladgált).
Péternem the Hamlet.Acc read.Past.3Sg Mari.Dat but run_around.Past.3Sg
‘What Peter was doing was run around rather than read out Hamlet to Mari.’
 - [?]Péter nem [**OL**vasta a **HAM**letet **MA**rinak], (hanem **SZA**ladgált). Intended: (1a)
Péter not read.Past.3Sg theHamlet.Acc Mari.Dat but run_around.Past.3Sg

K2–3 pertain to the choice of the topic within βP . Here the radical differences in acceptability between (2a–c) can simply be attributed to the usual differences wrt topicalizability. An argument (2a) is a better (non-contrastive) topic than an adjunct (2b), and only referential adjuncts can serve as non-contrastive topics; non-referential adjuncts (2c) are not suitable for this function. NB: this argumentation exploits the assumption that βP is a TopP and should be focused as such.

- (2) • Different types of topic in the remnant
- Péter[a **HAM**letet olvasta fel a **KERT**ben], (nem pedig **ÚSZ**zott).
Péter the Hamlet.Acc read.Past.3Sg up the garden.Ine not but swim.Past.3Sg
‘What Peter was doing was read out Hamlet in the garden rather than swim.’
 - ^(?)Péter[a **KERT**ben olvasta fel a **HAM**letet], (nem pedig **ÚSZ**zott). Intended: (2a)
Péter the garden.Ine read.Past.3Sg up the Hamlet.Acc not but swim.Past.3Sg
 - *Péter [**HAN**gosan olvasta fel a **HAM**letet], (nem pedig **ÚSZ**zott).
Péter aloud read.Past.3Sg up the Hamlet.Acc not but swim.Past.3Sg
Intended: ‘What Peter was doing was read out Hamlet aloud rather than swim.’

K4 pertains to idioms (3): idioms are not *ab ovo* excluded from the “VP-focus” construction under discussion; there are, however, radical differences:

- (3) • Topicalized idiom parts in the remnant
- ^{*)}Nem [a **VIZES** **LE**pedőt húzták rá], (hanem csak **CSE**Rben hagyták).
not the wet blanket pull.Past.3Pl onto but only tannin.Ine leave.Past.3Sg
‘What they did was only let him down rather than drop the hammer on him.’
 - Nem [a **ZA**varosban halászott], (hanem csak **ÖS**szekeverte a **DOL**gokat).
not the muddy.Ine fish.Past.3Pl but only mix.Past.3Sg the thing.Pl.Acc
‘What he did was only confuse the things rather than fish in troubled waters.’

Again, our explanation, to be elaborated in the talk, is based on the internal structure and word order of βP . We also claim that our remnant-movement-based method enables us to account for mirror-focus constructions (É. Kiss 1994, Alberti&Medve 2000).

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