

# Grammaticalization without Feature Economy: Evidence from the Voice Cycle in Hungarian

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## The Problem

Middles in Hungarian (anticausatives, reflexives, dispositional middles, mediopassives and antipassives) are encoded in a complex manner:

- special verb inflection paradigm (contextual allomorphy in the subject agreement suffix conditional on voice) (couple of verbs only):

(1) *tör-∅*            *tör-ik*  
break-3SG        break-3SG  
'sy breaks sg'    'sg gets broken'

- special verb infl. paradigm + middle suffix (the typical case):

(2) *old-∅*            *\*old-ik*            *old-ód-ik*  
dissolve-3SG    dissolve-3SG    dissolve-MID-3SG  
'sy dissolves sg' 'sg gets dissolved'

- special verb infl. paradigm. + 2 middle suffixes (the second is optional) (an innovation):

(3) *lát-∅*        *\*lát-ik*        *lát-sz-ik*        *lát-sz-ód-ik*  
see-3SG    see-3SG    see-MID-3SG    see-MID-MID-3SG  
'sy sees sg' 'sg can be seen / is visible / seems'

## Main claims

- Different stages of an ongoing grammaticalization cycle: the elements encoding middle voice lose their function and are reinforced by other elements, which in turn lose their function and are further reinforced etc.
- In Old Hungarian, middle voice was encoded via a separate inflectional paradigm (contextual allomorphy in AgrS conditional on the feature content of a silent Voice head)
- In Modern Hungarian, middle voice is encoded via a separate middle voice suffix (an overt spellout of the Voice head)
- Grammaticalization involved the reinterpretation of frequentative / diminutive suffixes (v heads) as middle voice suffixes (Voice heads)
- This reinterpretation was not based on shared abstract features, but rather, on a principled correlation between middle voice and frequentative aspect

## Building blocks

- Following Bartos 1999, den Dikken 1999, É. Kiss 2002 etc., I assume the following structure for the vP and the inflectional domain:

(4) [<sub>AgrSP</sub> [<sub>AgrOP</sub> [<sub>MoodP</sub> [<sub>TenseP</sub> [<sub>ModP</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> ]]]]]]]].

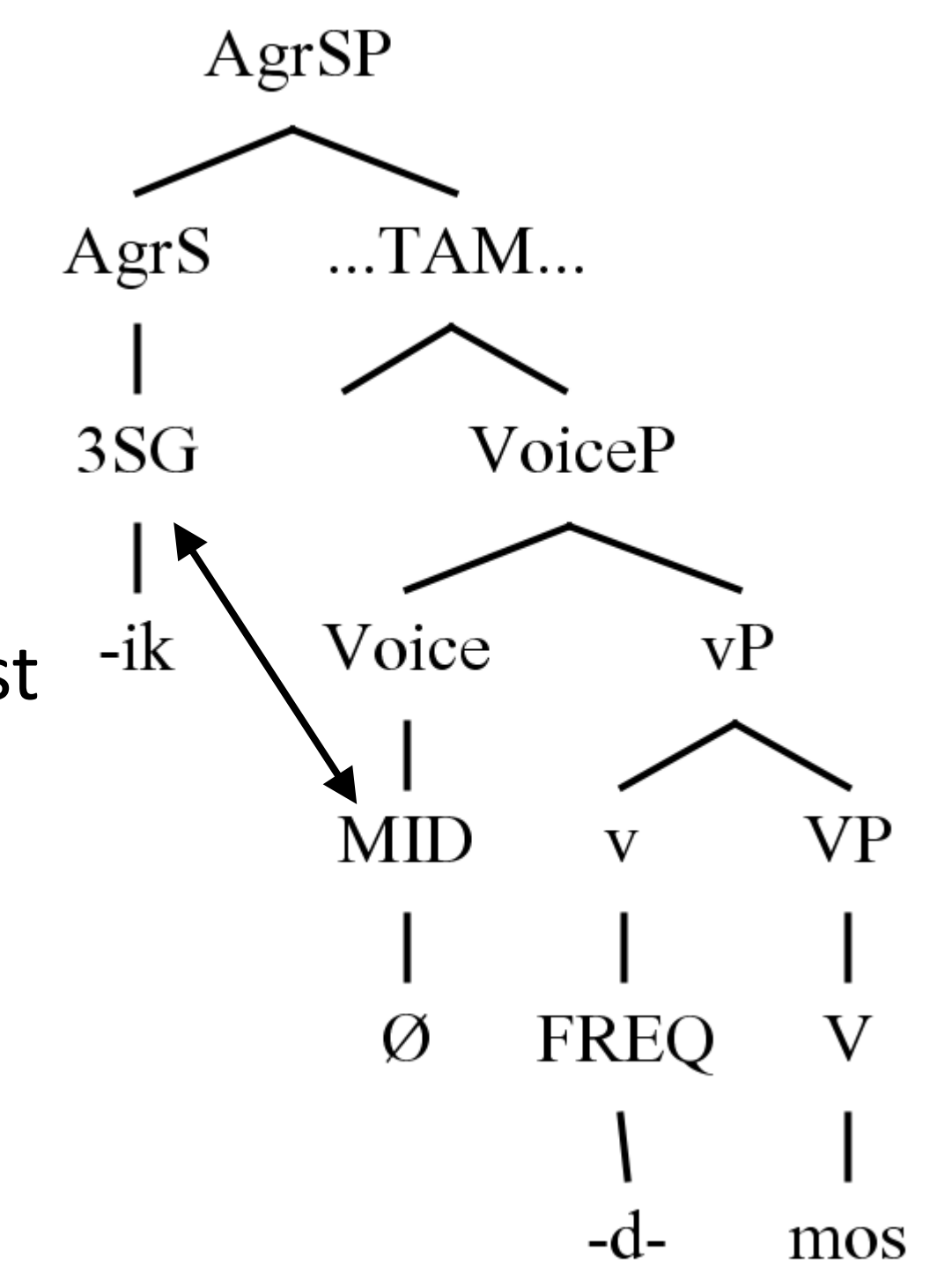
- I assume with Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou and Schäfer (2015) that in morphologically marked anticausatives (and middles in general), a VoiceP is projected, but SpecVoiceP is not
- Based on their functions related to causativity alternation and verb-formation from roots, I analyze frequentative suffixes as v heads:

(5) a. *for-og*                      b. *for-gat*  
vturn-FREQ                      vturn-FREQ  
'turn-inchoative'                'turn-causative'

## Analysis

### 1. Late Old Hungarian: AgrS contextual allomorphy conditional on Voice

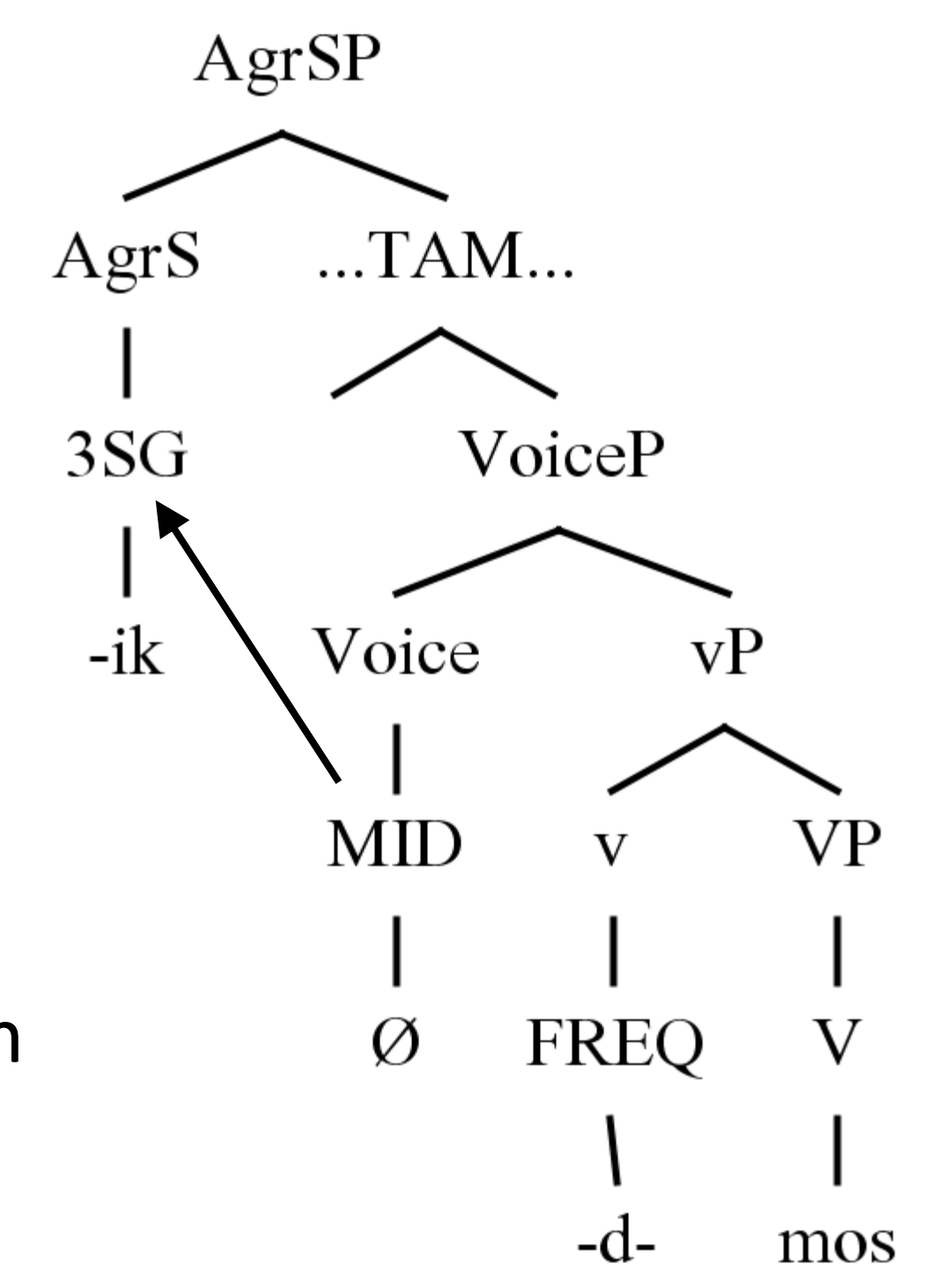
(5) *mos-d-∅-ik*  
wash-FREQ-MID-3SG  
'sy washes herself frequently'



- Learnability issue: middle paradigm and active paradigm overlap in most tenses and moods. (Clark and Roberts 1993, Faarlund 2008)

### 2. Collapse of the middle paradigm

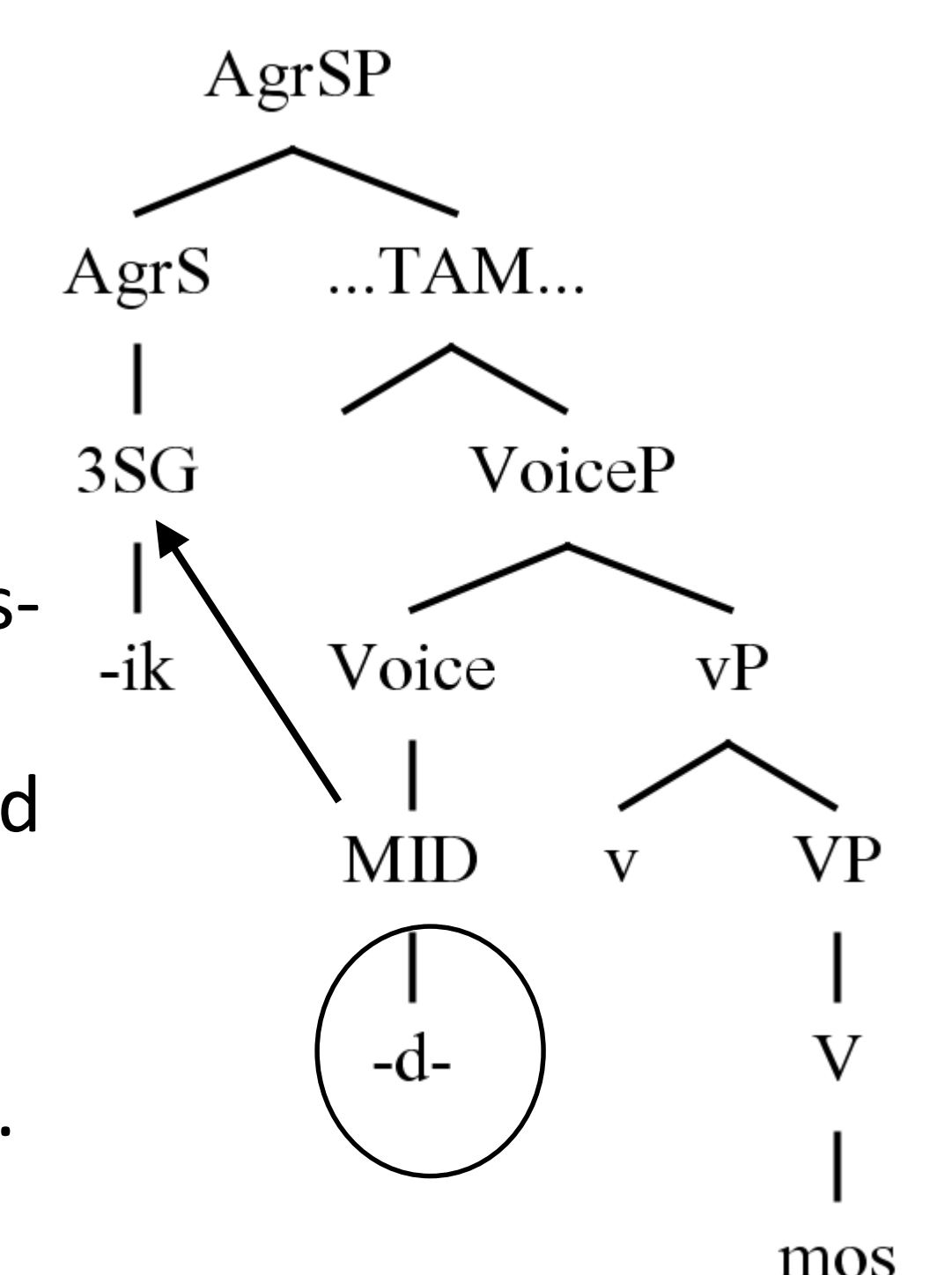
(6) *mos-d-∅-ik*  
wash-FREQ-MID-3SG  
'sy washes herself frequently'



- AgrS contextual allomorphy is reanalyzed: unaccusatives and even unergatives and finally some transitives start to be conjugated in the middle paradigm.
- One-to-one correspondence between AgrS allomorph and MID is lost.

### 3. Reanalysis of frequentative v heads as middle voice heads

(7) *mos-d-ik*  
wash-MID-3SG  
'sy washes herself'



- Transparency: middle voice is visible in all moods and tenses.
- Reanalysis based not on shared abstract features (Gelderen's 2011 Feature Economy), but on principled correlation between frequentative aspect and middle voice (esp. antipassives and dispositional middles).

### 4. The rise of middle suffix stacking

- Fragmented landscape of semi-productive middle suffixes, with the exception of the productive anticausative suffix *-V:d-*
- Semi-productive suffixes on dispositional middles are reinforced by *-V:d-*, which results in stacking (cf. Polinsky 2017): see (3) above.
- The spread of the productive suffix is a step into the direction of the restoration of Voice syncretism, closing the cycle.

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