Péter Szűcs (University of Debrecen) – Expanding the empirical landscape of propositional proforms: a covert noun-based adjectival type in Hungarian

Following the terminology of Frey et al. (2016), "propositional proforms" are occurrences of pronouns whereby these elements refer not to some extralinguistic, physical entity but some aspect or part of the discourse itself. An English, a German and a Hungarian example are provided in (1), the underlined propositional proforms are linked in some way to the complement clause. These constructions have received a relatively large amount of attention recently, see e.g. Alsina & Yang (2019), den Dikken (2018: 26-37), Molnár (2015), Sudhoff (2016) and Szűcs (2015).

(1) a. *I hate it that the media lumps all non-voters as "too lazy to vote".*　　　(from COCA)

 b. *Max bedauert es, dass Lea krank ist.*　　　(German)
 Max regrets it COMP Lea ill is
 'Max regrets (it) that Lea is ill.'

 c. *János az-t mondja, hogy Kati a legokosabb diák.* (Hungarian)
 John that-ACC says.DEF COMP Kate the smartest student
 'John says (that) that Kate is the smartest student.'

The main questions concerning these constructions revolve around the semantic nature of the proforms (expletive vs. argument vs. predicate), their licensing conditions (factivity, assertivity, anaphoricity, etc.) and the relationship between the proform and the complement clause (expletive-associate chain, adjunction, subject-predicate relationship).

In my presentation, I will expand the empirical landscape of the investigations with an adjectival type in Hungarian, see (2), and I aim to show that this instance substantially differs from the ones scrutinized in the literature (the ones in 1).

(2) *János olya(n)-t mond, hogy Kati a legokosabb diák.*
 John like.that-ACC says.INDEF COMP Kate the smartest student
 'John says such a thing that Kate is the smartest student.'

I argue that the most plausible analysis for the construction is one whereby the surface proform is actually a complex nominal structure, in which the nominal core is covert (it gets zero spellout):

[NP [AP *olyan*] [NP ∅ (+number, case)]], "∅" being an abstract noun amounting to "(propositional) thing". The CP is only indirectly related to the main clause (via adjunction). The key arguments:

- *Olyan* 'like.that' is an adjectival proform, yet it carries noun case morphology (accusative) in (2). This is possible since in Hungarian, the suffixes of unpronounced nominals may cliticize onto overt elements in the noun phrase, see Lipták & Saab (2014) and (3).

 (3) a. *nagy almá-t* b. *nagy-ot*
 big apple-ACC big-ACC
 'a big apple' 'a big (one)'

- Since the nominal core provides sufficient semantic content, no discourse-semantic restrictions of any sort (anaphoricity/factivity as in German and English or distal deixis as in Hungarian) are imposed on the proform. That is, the proximal counterpart *ilyet* 'like.this' could be used in (2), in a neutral sentence, introducing new information.

- Since noun phrases can be plural, the plural form of the proform *olyan-ok-at* 'like.that-PL-ACC' may also be used, unlike in the examples in (1)-(3) (**I hate them that…*, *Max bedauert sie ('them') *dass…*, **az-ok-at mondja, hogy…*).

- The clause does not necessarily express the content of a proposition, it may also serve as a resultative adjunct, see (4).

 (4) *János olya-t mondott, hogy az állam is leesett.*
 John like.that-ACC said.3SG COMP the jaw.POSS.1SG too dropped.3SG
 'John said that my jaw also dropped.' or 'What John said made my jaw drop.'

These arguments, (together with others, concerning pre/postverbal occurrence and information structure) should provide sufficient evidence for the analysis outlined earlier and to be explicated.

In conclusion, the proposals contribute to a better understanding of propositional proform strategies both for Hungarian and for comparative, theoretical purposes as well.

Keywords: propositional proforms, subordination, clausal complementation, covert nouns

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