

Report on Németh T. Enikő's Akadémiai doktori értekezés *Interaction between grammar and pragmatics: The case of implicit subject and direct object arguments in Hungarian language use*

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This report is submitted in English, based on the instructions communicated in Hungarian in the letter dated 22 March 2016, signed by Palkovics László Amand. I will follow the instructions in order, addressing each item in a separate section whose title provides the English rendition of the relevant Hungarian instruction, along with the Hungarian original in parentheses.

Scientific results (*Tudományos eredmények*)

The book submitted by the author in fulfilment of the requirements for the MTA doctorate addresses the complex interaction of lexical-semantic, morphosyntactic, and pragmatic factors in the licensing of implicit subject and direct object arguments in Hungarian. The discussion is based on material unearthed in the previous literature (including important contributions by the author and her long-standing co-author Károly Bibok) and on corpus research by the author herself. From chapter 3 onwards, the book argues in detail for the existence of three ‘manners of occurrence’ of implicit arguments in Hungarian – (A) a silent argument recoverable from lexical-semantic information listed as part of the lexical entry of the verb, in keeping with the cognitive principle of relevance; (B) a silent argument with a (proto/stereo)typical interpretation provided by the immediate utterance context (including encyclopedic information), in keeping with the principle of relevance; (C) a silent argument with an interpretation consistent with the principle of relevance obtained by ‘extending the immediate utterance context of the argument’. The theoretical literature on silent arguments and non-projection of arguments is integrated into the discussion wherever relevant, although the focus lies rather too narrowly on pro-drop (see the discussion under ‘Shortcomings’, below).

Novelty (*Újdonság*)

The opening paragraph of section 1.3 says explicitly that ‘[t]he present book is intended to summarise the results of my previous work into implicit arguments in Hungarian and to enrich it in several new respects’ (p. 37). Significant portions of the book are indeed based directly on work done (and published) previously by the author and/or her long-standing co-author, Károly Bibok. It is not always clear to what extent the present book adds substantively to previous work. The ‘enrichment’ referred to in the statement quoted above seems to lie primarily in the fact that the book draws on ‘data from different direct sources’, and ‘set[s] up a typology of Hungarian verbs according to the possibilities of their occurrences with implicit arguments and reveal what motivations underlie the use of lexically unrealised arguments and what principles guide their interpretation mechanisms’ (p. 37). Not being intimately familiar with the details of Németh T.’s and Bibok’s earlier work, I cannot state with confidence whether, in the pursuit of these aims, the book has succeeded in delivering genuinely novel results that go beyond what the author had previously reported. There can be no doubt, however, that this work makes important contributions to our understanding of the distribution of implicit subject and direct object arguments in Hungarian, and more generally. The results reported in the book are of great value to the debate about the distribution and licensing of silent arguments – which leads me to the next point.

Merit (*Érdemek*)

The in-depth discussion of the Hungarian facts, obtained from a variety of sources, presents a detailed microcosm of implicit arguments, empirically rich and analytically rigorous. For anyone interested in the distribution and licensing of implicit arguments, both theoretical linguists (whether of a generative or a functional persuasion) and those working on discourse analysis and the relation between grammar and pragmatics, this book should be essential reading. The fact that the book takes an in-depth look at the facts from a single language lends the work great empirical credibility. The fact that Hungarian is a pro-drop language that in addition avails itself of implicit arguments that are not representable as *pro*'s provides a valuable window on the distribution of implicit arguments. The book could have been stronger in sorting (more) carefully through the formal and interpretive distinctions between pro-drop, ellipsis, and non-projection of implicit arguments (see 'Shortcomings', below). It could also have cast its net wider, in looking beyond implicit arguments of *verbs*. But the book is highly meritorious in categorising the various classes of verbs that allow their subject and/or object to remain unexpressed, presenting a precise typology, and identifying the pragmatic factors involved in the legitimacy of implicit subject and direct object arguments. The book is written in excellent English, and it has an eminently clear and logical organisation.

Shortcomings (*Hiányosságok*)

In this section, I will comment in some detail on what I consider to be the main shortcomings of the book in its present form. As a note to the reader, I would like to emphasise that, although the degree of detail in the comments to follow is occasionally quite high and the total length of the discussion of the book's shortcomings is considerable, this should not be taken to mean that I consider this to be a poor piece of work: to the contrary, the fact that the book triggers some of the questions/comments raised above indicates that it is thought-provoking. But I would have appreciated discussion inside the book itself of at least some of these questions.

In its perspective on the various ways in which implicit arguments could logically come about, the book is seriously incomplete in its coverage of the theoretical literature. One might easily get the impression from the author's presentation that linguistic theory allows just one type of syntactically represented implicit argument: a silent pronoun, customarily represented as *pro*. Readers unfamiliar with the theoretical literature would get a profoundly distorted picture of the state of the art if they took this message away from the book. Apart from *pro*, theoretical approaches to implicit arguments also countenance at least the following two possibilities: (a) argument ellipsis (a member of the large family of ellipsis, not involving a silent pronoun), and (b) topic drop (an information-structurally restricted type of syntactically represented implicit argument, licensed only in operator positions). In the following paragraphs, I will briefly comment on both of these possibilities.

re: (a) An important question never raised by the author in her discussion of implicit objects is whether we might be dealing with what the literature calls 'argument ellipsis' (in which case the object is not represented as *pro* but as a full noun phrase that receives no phonological exponent at the end of the derivation; the book drops the word 'ellipsis' occasionally (e.g., on p. 56), but never in a technical sense). There are ways to distinguish between pro-drop and argument ellipsis. One familiar diagnostic is the strict/sloppy identity distinction: while an object pronoun (overt or null, i.e., *pro*) is expected to allow only a strict reading, an elliptical object should in principle allow a sloppy reading (such sloppy

readings being typical of ellipsis constructions of all stripes). The following minimal pair from Brazilian Portuguese illustrates: (ia) is strict only (Pedro switches of *João*'s sound system), whereas (ib) also supports a sloppy reading (Pedro switches off *his own* sound system).

- (i) a. de noite, João liga seu aparelho de som, mas Pedro desliga *ele*
at night João turns.on his sound system but Pedro turns.off it
- b. de noite, João liga seu aparelho de som, mas Pedro desliga ____
at night João turns.on his sound system but Pedro turns.off

To determine whether null objects (in particular, those with plural referents in Hungarian, for which much of the literature argues that these cannot be represented as *pro*'s) are pro-dropped or the result of argument ellipsis, one would have to investigate whether they can give rise to sloppy identity readings. If so, we are arguably not dealing with pro-drop. And if we are not dealing with pro-drop, the cases of object drop involving a plural referent do not undermine the generalisation established in the theoretical literature regarding the features of object-*pro* in Hungarian. Explicit discussion of this important question in the book would have been very welcome. As things stand, the book confines itself to presenting examples of implicit definite objects that clearly have a plural referent, and drawing the conclusion that the claims in the theoretical literature that (third person) object-*pro* in Hungarian must be singular are incorrect. This is unfortunate.

re: (b) The existence of topic drop is also well known from the theoretical literature on implicit arguments. In languages such as Dutch, which do not allow pro-drop, subject and direct object arguments can remain unexpressed under syntactic conditions that indicate that the silent argument finds itself in the high left periphery of the clause, in the topic position. Because topics are by their very nature anchored to the discourse context, it is unsurprising that the success of topic drop will depend on the context. But importantly, the distribution of topic drop is also tied to syntactic structure in ways that suggest that an appeal to the argument's discourse function alone is insufficient. There is discussion in the literature as to whether the licensing of silent arguments in Chinese involves topic drop or pro-drop, or perhaps a combination of both. There are no *a priori* reasons to expect topic drop not to occur in pro-drop languages – Hungarian, in particular, is very well known for the fact that it likes to place topical material in the high left periphery; it might very well be able to leave such topics unexpressed under certain circumstances. There has been no prominent discussion of topic drop in the literature on Hungarian silent arguments, to my knowledge. This book could have begun to make a contribution to this logical possibility. It is a pity that it leaves the matter entirely untouched.

Alongside syntactically projected implicit arguments, the theoretical literature also countenances the possibility of non-projection of an argument role into the syntactic structure, via lexical suppression or possibly the postulation of multiple lexical entries for a given predicate head (world knowledge or an understanding of the discourse facilitates the recovery of such implicit arguments). In some of the earliest explicit treatments of the 'passive transformation' in the generative framework, the external argument of the passive participle was assumed to be lexically suppressed, with the internal argument being promoted to subject via a lexical rule – 'Externalise Theme' (Williams). The feasibility of a lexicalist treatment of the passive (also a cornerstone of Lexical Functional Grammar) has been thoroughly discredited primarily because of the fact that the subject of the passive does not need to be a member of the passivised verb's

argument structure (*The theorem was proven false*). But though ‘Externalise Theme’ is most highly unlikely to be a defensible ingredient of the analysis of the passive, the possibility that the passivised verb’s external argument might be lexically suppressed has proven less easy to discard. For apparent cases of the syntactic activity of the implicit agent (*The ship was sunk to collect the insurance*), alternative approaches (e.g., in terms of ‘event control’; Williams again) have been put forward. If the external argument of the passive *is* syntactically projected, the question of what its nature might be (*pro* or PRO) has turned out to be a far from simple matter – neither *pro* nor PRO would occur in its ‘natural’ environment as the implicit subject of a passive. The idea that certain external arguments are not projected into the syntax seems particularly relevant for the so-called middle construction (*vox media*), where an agent is always understood but seems syntactically entirely inactive: *Chickens kill easily* (**by my grandmother/ *deliberately/ *to prove a point*). There is no discussion of any of this in the book.

For certain implicit objects, the idea that they do not get projected in the syntax also remains a viable option. The Unspecified Object Deletion construction (strangely enough, this classic terminology does not occur anywhere in the book; on p. 11 a range of terms for the implicit object of the construction in question are listed, but ‘UOD’ is strikingly absent from this list) is treated in these terms in the book. The author says that ‘it is not easy for purely syntactic approaches to explain the behaviour’ of UOD (p. 41; on p. 42 we find a sweeping dismissal, attributed to Cote (1996), of syntactic approaches to UOD, but the single argument cited there, based on example (20b) (**Joyce ate it_i this afternoon because the turkey_i was ready*), is strikingly inadequate: (20b) is not syntactically ill-formed, as is particularly clear from the grammaticality of *Joyce ate the turkey_i because the turkey_i was ready*). The book does not survey in any detail the generative literature on UOD – which actually has made some quite interesting contributions. Let me give just one example to illustrate my point. Postal (1977) has pointed out in work on French *faire à* causative constructions that while the French equivalent of *John made Mary eat her meal* requires the ‘causee’ argument to be adorned with the dative preposition *à*, as is typical of *faire*-causatives based on transitive verbs, this preposition obligatorily does not show up when the logically bivalent verb is used intransitively: *Jean a fait Marie manger* ‘John made Mary eat’. Postal interpreted this as an argument for the existence in French of the so-called ‘antipassive’ (more familiar from polysynthetic languages): the verb is detransitivised and the internal argument (rather than, as in the case of the passive, the external argument) is suppressed. There are two ways in which one could view antipassivisation. If suppression happens at the level of the lexicon, the internal argument of the verb in the antipassive fails to be projected into the syntax; what we are dealing with in syntax, in *Mary is eating*, is a garden-variety monovalent, intransitive verb, with world knowledge allowing us to recover the fact that if Mary was eating, she must have been eating something edible that is eaten conventionally. If ‘antipassive’ is a syntactic operation on a ‘normally’ projected argument structure (see e.g. Baker’s 1988 incorporation analysis), its output must, in a case-theoretic sense of the term, be intransitive. One strategy that certainly will not work, however, is to treat *eat* as an ordinary transitive verb and to represent the implicit object of *eat* (or French *manger*) in the syntax, in the form of a case-dependent *pro*: that would make it very hard to account for the obligatory absence of the dative preposition in *Jean a fait Marie manger*. It is syntactic arguments of this sort that one would have liked to see discussed in the book in connection with the question of whether the implicit object of verbs like *eat* are or are not syntactically projected. Throughout, the book neglects to discuss clearly syntactic arguments, such as the one brought up by Postal (1977) – arguments that could potentially have endorsed the author’s conclusion. The fact that the book does not mention such arguments at all (not even obliquely, or in a footnote) is, to my mind, a major shortcoming.

An important question that should, I think, have been raised in the book as well is what should be said about implicit arguments of predicates other than *verbs*. Nouns, to the extent that they have argument structure (Grimshaw 1990), seem eminently capable of leaving their arguments implicit. Adjectives expressing a psychological state can typically leave their experiencer argument implicit. How do these things fit into the analysis developed for implicit arguments of verbs? It would have been interesting to see at least some discussion of this question somewhere in the book.

The amount of space and the value attributed to metatheoretical and methodological reflections throughout the book are both disproportionally large. The importance of Kertész & Rákosi's criteria for plausible argumentation in the context of this book is minimal. Statements of the type 'it is not reasonable to sharply separate the process of the hypothesis construction and the process of making a hypothesis plausible', and 'the relationship between theory and data must be thought of as cyclic and prismatic, and it is always the actual argumentation process which determines what can serve as data and in what functions' (p. 34; repeated several times later in the book) come across as pedantic, as token acknowledgements of the fact that the author has studied Kertész & Rákosi's (2009, 2012) work. (It seems particularly awkward to appeal specifically to the authority of Kertész & Rákosi in connection with the judgement that 'on the basis of the *Magyar Értelmező Kéziszótár* ... one cannot make a plausible statement about the subjectlessness of Hungarian verbs of natural phenomena, i.e., this dictionary cannot be considered a reliable or usable data source in this respect'; p. 93.) The methodological concerns frequently raised in connection with the generative standard of data collection and assessment (esp. the fact that this method is based on the researcher's intuitions) are in no way alleviated in the book by the author's reliance on corpora: as the author herself is aware (see p. 30), although corpora explicitly present the contexts in which the sentences under scrutiny are uttered, as long as the discourse participants are not directly available to the researcher for questioning it remains up to the researcher to determine what the speaker's intention might have been within the given context. Discourse analysis applied to a corpus is no more objective than the construction of a sentence and a context for use.

The above are general issues. Below I will list briefly a number of more specific shortcomings of the book.

- On p. 50, the author notes in passing that there seems to be a difference between **Did you lock?* (given as ungrammatical by Fillmore 1986:98, although, as the author points out, the absoluteness of Fillmore's claim is subject to debate) and *Did you lock up?*, with the particle *up*. This contrast seems systematic, in an interesting way, not just in English but cross-linguistically. Thus, in Dutch **Ik sluit wel* 'I will lock' is likewise markedly worse than *Ik sluit wel af*, featuring the particle *af* 'off'. And later in the book, the author herself mentions several Hungarian examples involving implicit objects to verbs in the indefinite/subjective conjugation specifically in the presence of a verbal modifier – the first time this comes up on the side is on p. 146, where it is pointed out that indefinitely/subjectively inflected *gyón* and *meggyón* (the latter featuring the verbal modifier *meg*) both allow a non-specific implicit object; on pp. 149–50, many other examples are given. These observations create an outstanding opportunity for a case-study, within the book as a whole, of the role of verbal modifiers/particles in the distribution of implicit objects of the non-specific/unspecified sort. From a syntactic point of view, such cases raise very serious questions. Ordinarily, the presence of a verbal modifier/particle or, more generally, a resultative secondary predicate renders the presence of an object

obligatory – such particles can even transitive verbs that are otherwise intransitive, forcing the presence of a ‘fake reflexive’ simply to satisfy the verb’s newly won transitivity (*John laughed ~ John laughed *(himself) silly; John sneezed ~ John sneezed *(himself) away/up*). But peculiarly, in the cases mentioned above, the presence of the verbal modifier/particle seems to have the opposite effect, licensing the absence of an object. This is a matter that remains very poorly understood; the author’s research would seem to have placed her in an excellent position to make a meaningful contribution to it, but unfortunately the interesting questions raised by the verbal modifier/particle cases are left unmentioned.

- I do not understand the discussion on pp. 58–9 of the claim that in (46a) (*Sue had not heard from Joe for months when, suddenly, she received a letter*) the verb *receive* ‘does not trigger a presupposition which involves the zero argument *from x*’. A proper understanding of this claim may very well be ‘depending on the definition of presupposition’ (p. 59); but this definition is not clarified in the discussion at hand, leaving things up in the air.
- Of the hypothesis (found e.g. in Haegeman & Ihsane’s 1999, 2001 formal-syntactic work on diary drop) that ‘the interpretation and acceptability of utterances with null subjects in English varies from situation to situation, which is the result of pragmatic factors’, the author says that it ‘contradicts the generative grammatical background assumption concerning the relationship between grammar and pragmatics’ (p. 77). This reflects a misunderstanding. It is entirely coherent for the output of a syntactic derivation to be grammatically well-formed yet to be unsuitable for use in particular pragmatic contexts. It is equally unproblematic for something that is grammatical to be rejected because of processing limitations (a *performance*-based matter): the ‘garden path’ effect induced by *The horse raced past the barn fell* is hard to overcome (esp. in silent reading); multiple centre-embedding (as in Chomsky & Miller’s 1963:286 classic example *The rat the cat the dog chased killed ate all the malt*) is grammatical but considered unparseable. It would be more surprising for an output of a syntactic derivation that is *rejected* by the principles of the grammar to be deemed acceptable under certain circumstances – but this, too, is known to happen: **The rat the cat the dog chased ate all the malt* is often reported to be much better than the Chomsky & Miller sentence (see work by Frazier and Clifton), despite the fact that there is a mismatch between the number of subjects and the number of available predicates that renders the sentence ungrammatical. Such ‘grammatical illusions’ do not undermine, let alone disprove, the generative theoretical model: such sentences *are* indeed grammatically ill-formed. One should not want the grammar to declare grammatical everything that ‘sounds okay’ (including anacoloutha, which are ubiquitous in the spoken language). It is equally undesirable for the grammar to rule *ungrammatical* things that are well-formed but hard to process, or not used in the right pragmatic setting. That said, the question of how much pragmatics should be incorporated into the formal theory is a non-trivial one – theoretical work of the past twenty years has ‘appropriated’ quite a lot of pragmatic territory, esp. in the information-structural realm (see the ‘cartographic approach’, in particular). A serious discussion of the grammar–pragmatics interface would have been very useful; the kind of comment made on p. 77 (with reference to work by Scott 2013) is not helpful.
- In connection with the previous point, I should also draw attention to the author’s own statement that ‘particular contexts can override the grammatical constraints and license

the use and guide the interpretation of zero plural pronominal objects' (p. 203; the statement is repeated *verbatim* in chapter 6, on p. 246). Here, the author's outlook on the organisation of the system (in particular, the relation between grammar and pragmatics) should be explained in at least a sufficient amount of detail to make it possible for the reader to understand how this 'overriding' can come about.

- A question that arises on p. 85 is whether the implicit objects of aspectual verbs such as *finish* and *continue* are nominal or (small) clausal. Related to this is the question of whether the author intends her discussion of implicit arguments to be confined to nominal ones or envisages a wider range of argument types. See also the next point.
- The author decides to treat the unrealised locative in *It is raining [somewhere]* and the unrealised instrument in *He killed her [using some instrument]* as locative and instrumental *arguments* of the verbs in question (pp. 87–8), including them within the scope of the definition of implicit arguments given in (57) on p. 81. The text on p. 87 uses the modal 'should' in this connection: 'we should say that the verb *rain* has not only a subject argument but also a second argument which refers to a location, and the verb *kill* has not only a subject argument and a direct object argument but also a third argument that refers to an instrument'. Modals also populate the first paragraph of p. 88. But nowhere does the author present an explicit argument that explains why one 'should' treat *rain* and *kill* as predicates that take a locative and instrumental argument, respectively.
- I do not understand the appeal to 'processing effort' made on p. 91, and again on p. 168. The idea is that leaving an argument implicit achieves the same result as making it explicit, but involves less processing effort. It seems that processing effort is mixed up here with production effort. Surely, recovering implicit arguments requires *more* processing effort on the part of the listener than does the interpretation of explicit ones. From the perspective of sentence processing, the more stuff is explicit, the smoother the parsing will be.
- Though I agree with the author's treatment of the subject of weather verbs as a thematic argument (rather than as expletives), I do not understand how the facts in (61) and (62) on p. 99 demonstrate that 'Hungarian weather verbs occur with syntactic subjects which are not empty expletives' (p. 100). The distribution of *-va/ve* versus *-ván/vén* participles in (61) and (62) is rooted in the fact that the latter cannot have a subject because they make no case available for, whereas the latter can because they do. This is a purely *grammatical* factor, having nothing to do with the thematic or athematic nature of the subject when present. That so-called 'expletives' are subject to the Case Filter is something that has been known for decades (cf. the obligatoriness of *for* in *For there to be progress made, there needs to be some serious research done first*). One could, to be sure, take this to indicate that things like English *there* are NOT expletives, and to take the Visibility Condition's connection between structural case and the possession of a thematic role seriously; but the text discussion on p. 100 does not talk about the Visibility Condition at all, and seems to be jumping to a conclusion.
- The treatment the implicit subject of occupational verbs is assimilated to that of the implicit subject of verbs of natural phenomena. An important fact that the discussion in the book overlooks in this connection is the fact that the implicit subject of occupational verbs is typically, probably systematically, third person *plural* (see the examples in (81)

on pp. 123–4 of the book): though *Magyarországon, az ember/emberek dolgozik/dolgoznak 8-tól 16-ig* is grammatical as a generic statement with either a third person singular or a third person plural explicit subject, third person plural inflection is required when the subject is implicit. The implicit subject of verbs of natural phenomena, by contrast, is always third person *singular*: although *Raindrops are falling* is a perfectly well-formed utterance, and so is its Hungarian equivalent *Esnek az esőcseppek*, the Hungarian counterpart to English *It is raining* with an implicit subject is invariably *Esik*, never *Esnek*. This suggests that the parallel treatment of the two verb classes, which the proposal advanced in the book affords us, is not advantageous. Rizzi's (1986) well-known observation about the implicit objects in Italian, viz., that they are (a) arbitrary in reference and (b) consistently third person *plural*, is clearly relevant in connection with the discussion of the implicit subject of occupational verbs. We are dealing, in the case of occupational verbs, with what Rizzi called *pro_{arb}*. Explicit subjects of occupational verbs, in non-pro-drop languages, also strongly tend to be third person plural (*In Hungary, they work from 8 a.m. till 4 p.m.*). A generalisation suggests itself; it should have been brought out into the open and explained.

- On p. 158, the book illustrates the fact that Hungarian *zabál* 'devour' and *vedel* 'swill' allow an implicit object when bearing indefinite/subjective inflection (put differently, these verbs sanction Unspecified Object Deletion). What is missing here is an acknowledgement, or, better still, an explicit discussion, of the well-known fact that English verbs of consumption allow UOD only when NOT adorned with a specific manner component: *devour* is in fact one's typical textbook example of an obligatorily transitive verb in English; it is impossible to reply to the question *What is Sándor doing?* with **He's devouring*. The difference between English and Hungarian with respect to UOD with *devour/zabál* and *swill/vedel* is striking, and would have made for an interesting topic for some language-comparative discussion – which could very well have been highly illuminating regarding the precise nature of the 'unspecified object deletion' process at work with verbs of consumption in English and Hungarian.
- The book rejects an 'enumerative conception of the lexicon' (p. 166), i.e., the adoption of more than one lexical entry for a particular verb, and instead opts for an approach in which a single lexical entry (e.g., for the verb *iszik* on p. 167) includes an optional argument. One wonders in what sense the inclusion of an optional argument in a lexical entry is a substantive improvement over the postulation of multiple discrete lexical entries. Isn't (130) in effect a shorthand for two lexical entries for *iszik*? If the author genuinely believes that placing an argument in parentheses is more principled than presenting multiple lexical entries, one would have liked to see some argument to this effect. Nothing else said, it seems to me that (130) on p. 167 is equivalent to the approach rejected on p. 166.
- At various points in the discussion (particularly explicitly on p. 194), the author extrapolates from the interpretation of the implicit object of verbs inflected with *-lak/lek* to the interpretation of first- and third-person implicit objects. This extrapolation is tenuous. The morphological make-up of the form *-lak/lek* arguably includes a marker for second person: the *-l*. This *-l* occurs in the subjective conjugation as one of the two markers for a second person *singular* subject (the other one being *-sz*). It is logically coherent to think that, because the *-l* is one of the markers of second person *singular* subjects, this *-l* should likewise have a predilection for singular objects when it forms an integral subpart of the

-*lak/lek* form (and then serves as an object marker). For first- and third-person objects, by contrast, the verbal inflection of Hungarian includes no marker specialising for the number specification of the object. So there is no *a priori* reason to expect number-related issues in connection with implicit first- or third-person objects. The fact that there apparently *are* number-related issues there is thus a separate story. It would have been good to have the second-person case treated separately from the first- and third-person cases.

- In connection with first- and second-person objects, it would have been welcome to see some discussion of the way Hungarian expresses ‘inclusive reference anaphora’. The inflectional properties are very interesting here, and have been discussed in the literature (see, for instance, the work done on this topic by Den Dikken, Lipták & Zvolenszky 2001). Thus, while *Mi engem választunk meg* exhibits the familiar inflectional pattern (indefinite/subjective conjugation in the presence of a first-person object), its inverse is ungrammatical with indefinite/subjective inflection (**Én minket választok meg*); to the extent that Hungarian speakers can express the proposition ‘I voted for us’ with *minket* as the object pronoun at all (there is speaker variation on this point; the preferred option is *magunkat*), this pronoun must co-occur with definite/objective inflection on the verb: *Én minket választom meg*. What has not been discussed, to my knowledge, is the extent to which object omission is possible in these constructions, and what effect, if any, the inflectional form of the verb has on the omissibility of the object in cases of ‘inclusive reference anaphora’. This book should have raised these cases, at least in passing.
- As I mentioned before, in the discussion in chapter 5 of implicit third-person objects the author overlooks the possible role played by the distinction between pro-drop and argument ellipsis.

In the discussion of the individual theses submitted by the author along with the book, I will occasionally include some critical discussion of specific ingredients of the book as well.

Authentic data (*Hiteles adatok*)

On this item, I can be very brief. The book deserves ample praise for the fact that it contains a wealth of authentic data, collected by the author through corpus research.

Novelty of the individual theses (*a mű mely téziseit fogadja el új tudományos eredményként, és melyeket nem*)

Below, I reproduce each of the author’s 21 theses, indicate whether I accept them, and comment on their novelty.

As a general comment at the outset, I would like to point out that some of the statements presented as ‘theses’ are not theses at all, and many of them are excessively lengthy, covering in excess of ten text lines. It may be common practice for ‘theses’ to be formulated in this way (as research summaries); as an outsider, this is something I cannot judge.

- 1 ‘*A legfrissebb releváns szakirodalom különböző típusú implicit argumentumokra vonatkozó különböző megközelítéseinek értékelésével összegeztem azokat a szempontokat, amelyeket univerzálisan alkalmazni lehet az implicit argumentumok vizsgálatában.*’

I accept this statement, though, of course, it is not in any way novel. It goes without saying that a book on topic *x* should summarise and evaluate the extant literature on *x*. This should not have been presented as a *thesis*, because it is not ‘a statement or theory that is put forward as a premise to be maintained or proved’ (a typical dictionary definition of ‘thesis’).

- 2 *‘Felhasználva az 1. pontban közölt eredményt, az implicit argumentumoknak egy komplex szempontrendszert integráló új definícióját nyújtottam. A definícióban szereplő lexikai-szemantikai, grammatikai és pragmatikai evidenciák együttes figyelembevételét javasoltam összhangban a nemzetközi kutatások legfrissebb eredményeivel.’*

I accept this thesis, though there is no particular novelty to it: the licensing of silence invariably relies on an interplay of lexical-semantic, morphosyntactic, and pragmatic considerations.

- 3 *‘A komplex szempontrendszerből adódóan három olyan metaelméleti és módszertani döntést hoztam, amelyek teljesen új szemléletet jelentenek az implicit argumentumok kutatásában: (a) a grammatikát és a pragmatikát egymással összefüggésben definiáltam, (b) mondatok helyett megnyilatkozásokat, azaz a nyelvhasználatot vettem figyelembe és (c) különböző típusú adatforrásokból származó adatokat integráltam a kutatásban.’*

The research reported in the book does not rise above its predecessors in being methodologically ground-breaking in any way. There is no novelty to the discussion of Kertész & Rákosi’s metatheoretical and methodological issues in the book. The author occasionally gives the impression as though the added value of this book (beyond the results of work by the author and her long-standing co-author Bibok already available in the published literature) lies to a significant extent in the fact that it has subjected itself to the rigour of Kertész & Rákosi’s injunctions. The opening paragraph of section 1.3 highlights the fact that the book ‘reflect[s] on my research from a metatheoretical point of view in order to shed light on how methodological decisions can influence the process of research into implicit arguments in Hungarian and the formulation of conclusions’. However, the contribution made by the various invocations of Kertész & Rákosi’s work is truly negligible in the context of the book as a whole. The book would have been better off without these interludes on metatheory and methodology; a single prominently placed main-text paragraph or footnote would have been sufficient.

The insight that for a proper understanding of the distribution of implicit arguments, (a) one needs to take grammar and pragmatics jointly into account, and (b) it is important to consider the context of an utterance is well taken. The book’s demonstration of the significance of grammar–pragmatics interaction is its main and most successful contribution. (The more specific statement in (a) that grammar and pragmatics are *defined* ‘interrelatedly’ is debatable, though.) The importance of (c) considering and integrating a variety of data sources is not established convincingly in the book. It seems to me that one could readily read this book as an endorsement of the inductive, intuition-based approach standard in the generative framework: the context-embedded data from the corpus (dis)confirm a particular hypothesis depending on the analyst’s intuitions about what the intended meaning is (see above); one could just as well (or even, more efficaciously) have constructed utterances and their contexts, not relying on corpus data at all.

- 4 *‘A 3. pont (a)–(c)-jelzésű döntései újabb elméleti és empirikus eredményekhez vezettek azáltal, hogy olyan adatokat is be lehetett vonni a vizsgálat körébe, amelyekkel a mondatközpontú megközelítések nem foglalkoztak és nem is foglalkozhatnak a mondatközpontúsággal járó elméleti és empirikus következmények miatt.’*

I accept this thesis and endorse the significance of context – but this is a point already stated in #3. The present thesis does not seem to add anything extra, and strikes me as redundant.

- 5 *‘Feltártam a rivális definíciók háttérfeltevéseit, ami lehetővé tette az általam javasolt definíciónak a rivális meghatározásokkal való összevetését és annak megállapítását, hogy a különböző elméleti keretekben megfogalmazott javaslatok közül melyek egyeztethek össze és melyek nem az általam javasolttal és egymással. Ezáltal elhelyeztem a saját definícióm az implicit argumentumokkal foglalkozó kutatások kontextusában.’*

I accept this thesis. It reflects standard practice, and thus does not qualify as novel.

- 6 *‘A nemzetközi szakirodalomban elsőként mutattam rá arra, hogy a szemantikai és nyelvfilozófiai irodalom egyik jelenlegi éles vitájának tárgyát képező ki nem mondott konstituensek több fajtája kezelhető implicit argumentumként.’*

I accept this statement. It is not novel, however; and it is dubious that it could pass as a *thesis* proper.

- 7 *‘Kutatásomban a magyar nyelvhasználat megnyilatkozásaiban az implicit igei argumentumok előfordulásának és azonosításának három módját különítettem el:*
- (A) *Az ige lexikai-szemantikai reprezentációjának valamely eleme engedélyezi az ige argumentumának lexikailag realizálatlan előfordulását a kognitív relevancia elvével összhangban.*
 - (B) *A megnyilatkozás – amelyben az implicit argumentum előfordul – többi része, azaz a közvetlen megnyilatkozáskontextus (beleértve a megnyilatkozás grammatikai és enciklopédikus tulajdonságait) a kognitív relevanciaelvvel összhangban lévő tipikus interpretációt eredményez.*
 - (C) *Az implicit argumentum közvetlen kontextusának a kiterjesztése releváns interpretációhoz vezet.’*

This is the central contribution of the book. It presents a novel and useful taxonomical tool for the classification of occurrences of implicit arguments to verbs. As I mentioned under ‘Shortcomings’, an important question that should be raised in this connection is why the book focuses exclusively on implicit arguments to *verbs*. Nouns, to the extent that they have argument structure (Grimshaw 1990), seem eminently capable of leaving their arguments implicit as well. Adjectives expressing a psychological state can typically leave their experiencer argument implicit. How do these things fit into the taxonomy in (A)–(C)? It would have been interesting to see at least some discussion of this question somewhere in the book.

8. *‘Azok az igék, amelyek előfordulhatnak az első módon implicit alanyi és tárgyi argumentumokkal gazdag lexikai-szemantikai reprezentációval rendelkeznek. Szelekciós megkötésekkel, az események tipikus módjának előírásával, a kategóriák prototipikus struktúrája révén korlátozzák argumentumaikat. Lexikai-szemantikai reprezentációjuk kétféle értelmezése lehetővé teszi implicit argumentummal való használatukat. Ha csak az ige által jelölt esemény van a figyelem középpontjában, akkor az alanyi, ill. a tárgyi argumentum implicit maradhat, hiszen a lexikai-szemantikai reprezentációban a szelekciós megkötésben foglalt információ háttérinformációként továbbra is elérhető, amelynek révén azonosítható az implicit argumentum a szelekciós megkötés által*

megkövetelt típussal, a típus egy példányával vagy egy egyedi argumentummal. Ha viszont az alanyi, ill. a tárgyi argumentum is a figyelem középpontjában van, akkor annak lexikalizálnia kell. Az alanyi, ill. a tárgyi szemantikai tulajdonságai és a kontextus – beleértve a beszélő szándékait – között interakció eredménye.'

I accept this thesis as an important and novel contribution of the book.

- 9 *'Az implicit alanyi argumentumokkal az (A) módon való előfordulás vizsgálatakor a természeti jelenségekkel kapcsolatos igék osztályát vizsgáltam. A korábbi magyar szakirodalom által figyelembe nem vett korpuszadatok széles körére támaszkodva olyan előfordulásokat mutattam be, amelyek nem metaforikus és metaforikus használatban is ellentmondanak annak a magyar nyelvtani hagyománynak, amely a természeti jelenségekkel kapcsolatos igéket alanytalanoknak tartja. Ezen igék számára olyan lexikai-szemantikai reprezentációt javaslottam, amelyben van alanyi argumentumhely. Mivel a lexikai-szemantikai reprezentáció erősen korlátozza, hogy mi jelenhet meg az alanyi pozícióban, ezért egyértelműen megjósolható, hogy mi lehet az alany, akkor is, ha nem realizálódik. Ha tehát a szóban forgó igék mellett nem található lexikalizált alany, mert a kontextusban default értelmezésként van jelen, akkor nem alanytalan előfordulásról, hanem implicit alannyal való használatról van szó. Az általam javasolt elemzés előnye, hogy egységesen kezelhető vele a természeti jelenségekkel kapcsolatos igék implicit, ill. explicit alannyal való előfordulása nem metaforikus használatban, továbbá magyarázza a metaforikus használatokat is.'*

The book's discussion of verbs of natural phenomena (often called 'weather verbs' in the generative literature) is admirably detailed, and leads to the correct but not entirely novel conclusion (see Tóth's work on Hungarian, and the widespread consensus in the generative framework that the subject of 'weather verbs' is capable of controlling PRO) that these have a genuine argument. This argument is characterised in the thesis as a *subject* argument – a notion that needs to be handled with some care: for at least a subset of these predicates, it is highly likely that they select their single argument *internally* rather than *externally* (thus *esik* 'fall', for instance, is probably an unaccusative/ergative verb, not an unergative one).

- 10 *'A természeti jelenségekkel kapcsolatos igékre kidolgozott elemzést egy újabb igeosztályra, a foglalkozásigékre is kiterjesztettem, növelve ezzel állításaim plauzibilitását, hiszen adatok még szélesebb körére érvényes a javasolt elemzés. A foglalkozásigék implicit alanyi argumentummal való előfordulásának vizsgálatakor arra is felhívtam a figyelmet, hogy az egyszavas megnyilatkozásokban való használatuk erős evidenciaként szolgál amellet, hogy gazdag a lexikai-szemantikai reprezentációt feltételezzünk a számunkra. A magyar nyelvtani hagyomány a foglalkozásigék olyan használatok, amikor nem szerepel explicit alany mellettük, határozatlan, ill. általános alanyokat feltételez. A foglalkozásigék lexikai-szemantikai reprezentációjában foglalt szelekciós megkötés révén, amely korlátozza a foglalkozást végző alany típusát, sokkal többet tudhatunk a hiányzó alanyokról: azok a szelekciós megkötés által megkíván [sic] típusokkal azonosíthatók, implicit alanyokként kezelhetők.'*

The treatment of 'verbs of work' (as the book calls them; 'occupational verbs' would be a better term, capturing the conventional nature of the work involved) assimilates their implicit subject to that of verbs of natural phenomena, which is a novel proposition. Unfortunately, it seems to me that it is false. See the discussion under 'Shortcomings', above.

- 11 *‘A fenti két igeosztály tagjai számára javasolt lexikai-szemantikai reprezentáció azt is felfedte, hogyan épül be az általános enciklopédikus információ a reprezentációba, ill. hogyan befolyásolják konkrét kontextuális tényezők az implicit alannal való előfordulást az (A) módon.’*

I accept this thesis; I do not consider it to be novel.

- 12 *‘A természeti jelenségekkel kapcsolatos igék és a foglalkozásigék implicit alannal való előfordulása tekinthető vonzatszámcsökkenéssel járó szintaktikai alternációnak, azaz alanyos igék alanytalan előfordulásának, hasonlóan a tárgyas igék tárgyatlan, azaz implicit tárggyal való előfordulásához.’*

This thesis emphasises the need to consider the distribution of implicit arguments not just for subjects but for objects as well. The book is commendable for having done so. The idea that the use of weather verbs and occupational verbs with and without an implicit argument is a syntactic alternation is developed and defended at length in the book.

- 13 *‘A tárgyas igék implicit tárgyi argumentumokkal való előfordulásának (A) módját is a gazdag lexikai-szemantikai reprezentáció és a kontextus interakciójával magyaráztam. A tárgyas igék lexikai-szemantikai reprezentációjában elérhető szelekciós megkötések szerepe mellett külön figyelmet fordítottam az igék által denotált események tipikus módjára vonatkozó előírásokra, valamint a kategóriák prototipikus struktúrájára. A tárgyi implicit argumentumok előfordulását az (A) módon az alanyi és a tárgyas ragozás is befolyásolja, ugyanis az (A) módon való használat az ige alanyi ragozásával jár együtt.’*

I accept this thesis as novel. The results of the study of the licensing of implicit objects via mode (A) are significant.

- 14 *‘Bár egyedi, idioszinkratikus tulajdonság, hogy egy tárgyas ige milyen konkrét kényszert ír elő szelekciós megkötés révén tárgyi argumentumára, a lexikai-szemantikai reprezentáció azon tulajdonsága, hogy tartalmaz a tárgyi argumentum típusára, a típus egy példányára vagy egy egyedre vonatkozó szelekciós megkötést, megjósolhatóvá teszi azt, hogy a tárgyas ige használható-e implicit tárgyi argumentummal az (A) módon. Ugyanakkor fontos hangsúlyozni, hogy a lexikai-szemantikai reprezentációban elérhető, tárgyra vonatkozó információ önmagában csak szükséges, de nem elégséges feltétele az implicit tárgyi argumentummal való használatnak, morfoszintaktikai (alanyi ragozás) és pragmatikai tényezőket is figyelembe kell venni.’*

That it is important to consider not just lexical-semantic information about the object but also morphosyntactic and pragmatic factors is a reassuring conclusion – but not a particularly ground-breaking one. I thus do not consider this thesis to be novel. Also, there is considerable overlap between the final portion of the present thesis and the thesis in #2, above.

- 15 *‘A magyar igék implicit alanyi és tárgyi argumentumokkal való használatának (B) és (C) módját kutatva, először a zéró alanyi és tárgyi anaforákat, valamint a zéró exoforikus névmási alanyokat és tárgyakat vizsgáltam. Az elemzések egyrészt ahhoz konklúzióhoz vezettek, hogy a grammatika által előírt olvasat csak tipikus olvasatnak, azaz specifikus kontextus hiányban fellépő értelmezésnek tekinthető, másrészt ahhoz, hogy a morfoszintaktikai tényezők (pro-ejtés, alanyi és tárgyas ragozás), valamint az általános*

pragmatikai tudásból és a konkrét kontextusból származó információk többszörös, többszintű interakciója engedélyezi ezen implicit argumentumok előfordulását.'

I accept this thesis. Because of its broad and all-encompassing nature, it would in fact be difficult to disagree with it.

- 16 *'A zéró névmási tárgyakat illetően írott és szóbeli korpuszokból, gondolat kísérletekből és a saját és más adatközlők intuíciójából származó adatok mindkét szám minden személyére kiterjedő szisztematikus elemzése révén megcáfoltam a korábbi és a legújabb szakirodalom legnagyobb részének azt az állítását, hogy a magyar tárgyas igék csak egyes számú pronominális tárggyal fordulhatnak elő. A többes számú zéró anaforikus és exoforikus tárgyak előfordulását a grammatikai elvárásokat kiegészítő, módosító, ill. felülbíráló pragmatikai tényezők engedélyezik.'*

This is an important point, emerging already from the author's previous work. But it would have been welcome if the book could have included a more detailed discussion of the nature of the silent object in the relevant cases. It is often said (already in work by Farkas from the 1980s, not referred to by the author) that object-*pro* must be singular. The book presents several examples in which an implicit object of a verb in the definite conjugation clearly has plural reference (see esp. the examples on pp. 200ff.). An important question never raised by the author is whether these implicit objects are *pro*'s or whether we are dealing instead with what the literature calls 'argument ellipsis' (in which case the object is not represented as *pro* but as a full noun phrase that receives no phonological exponent at the end of the derivation). See the discussion under 'Shortcomings', above.

- 17 *'A megnyilatkozások kontextusban szereplő lexémák fogalmi címkéje alatt tárolt közvetlenül elérhető enciklopédikus információ is engedélyezheti az alanyi és tárgyi argumentumok lexikailag realizálatlanul hagyását a (B) módon. Ugyanakkor, a tárgyas igék implicit tárggyal való ilyen használatának elemzésekor rámutattam, hogy a megnyilatkozások morfoszintaktikai tulajdonságai is befolyásolják az előfordulás lehetőségét. Az igék ezekben az esetekben is alanyi ragozásúak kell, hogy legyenek ugyanúgy, ahogy az (A) módon való előfordulásnál, a figyelem középpontjában maga az ige által jelölt esemény áll, az implicit tárgyi argumentumok pedig nem rendelkeznek saját pozícióval a megnyilatkozás szintaktikai szerkezetében. Az enciklopédikus információ és az alanyi ragozás együttesen biztosítja az implicit argumentum tipikus azonosítását.'*

This is an interesting and novel thesis, which I accept.

- 18 *'Az implicit tárgyi argumentum előző pontban említett használatára egy neo-grice-i alternatív megoldást is javasoltam I-implikátúra bevezetésével. A tárgyi argumentum lexikai realizálatlanság kiváltja a szituáció tipikusságára utaló I-implikátúrát. Ha a szituáció nem tipikus, akkor a tárgyi argumentum nem maradhat implicit. Mindkét javaslatban az enciklopédikus információnak fontos szerepe van, de a két megoldás eltér abban, hogy mennyire tartja konvencionalizáltnak ezt az információt. A két javasolt megoldás arra a folyamatra is rávilágíthat a továbbiakban, hogy az eredetileg enciklopédikus kontextuális információ hogyan válik egyre konvencionálisabbá általánosított társalgási implikátúra, a lexéma fogalmi címkéje alá beépülő enciklopédikus információ, végül a lexikai-szemantikai reprezentációba szelekciós megköthetként bekerülő enciklopédikus információ formájában.'*

The individual ingredients of this thesis are not novel; the way the book brings them together is useful.

- 19 *‘A (C) mód vizsgálatakor az elemzések során megállapítottam, hogy a kontextuskiterjesztés mindhárom módja magában foglal grammatikai kódoló-dekódoló és pragmatikai következtetési folyamatokat, de eltérő mértékben. A diskurzuselőzményből származó információval történő kontextuskiterjesztés nagyobb mértékben támaszkodik grammatikai folyamatokra, mint a fizikai kontextusból és az enciklopédikus tudásból való kontextuskiterjesztés.’*

I accept this thesis, but the matter lies well beyond my area of expertise, so I cannot confidently judge its novelty.

- 20 *‘Az implicit tárgyi argumentumok előfordulási és azonosítási módjait a magyar nyelvhasználatban nagymértékben megszabja, hogy az ige milyen ragozási formával van ellátva. Ebbe a morfoszintaktikai tulajdonságba bele van kódolva az, hogy a tárgyi argumentum milyen módon van engedélyezve, ill. hogyan azonosítható. Szisztematikusan végigvizsgáltam minden számban és személyben mindhárom módon a tárgyas igeik implicit tárggyal való használatát. Az alanyi ragozási forma elvileg megengedi, hogy a tárgyas igeik mind a három módon előforduljanak implicit tárgyi argumentummal. Az egyes igeiknél azonban a konkrét lehetőségeket korlátozza, hogy az ige a három tipológiai csoport közül melyikbe tartozik. A tárgyas személyraggal ellátott implicit igeik csak a harmadik, (C) módon, közvetlen kontextusuk kiterjesztése révén állhatnak implicit tárgyi argumentummal, függetlenül attól, hogy egyébként az ige melyik csoportba tartozik. A három mód felől nézve, az (A) és (B) módon való előfordulás megköveteli, hogy a tárgyas ige alanyi személyraggal lássuk el, a (C) mód pedig megengedi mind az alanyi mind a tárgyas személyragot.’*

This is one of the central results of the book. I accept the thesis, and consider it sufficiently novel.

- 21 *‘A disszertáció számos helyén alkalmaztam metaelméleti és módszertani reflexiókat, amelyek a Kertész és Rákosi-féle (2012) plauzibilis érvelési modellre támaszkodtak. Ezek a metaelméleti és módszertani megfontolások segítettek kiküszöbölni a kutatás kontextusában fellépő inkonzisztenciákat és nagy mértékben hozzájárultak a kutatási folyamat előre haladásához, valamint az új tárgytudományos eredmények eléréséhez és ellenőrzéséhez.’*

This thesis overlaps substantially with thesis #3 and #4, and hence seems redundant.

Do you consider the work suitable for a public defence or not? (a doktori művet nyilvános vitára alkalmasnak tartja-e, avagy nem)

I consider this work suitable for a public defence.

Budapest, 3 May 2016

Marcel den Dikken