

A Modular Account of Hungarian Focus Movement

1. Focus movement **1.1.** Chomsky (1971, 1976) proposed that focusing in English involves a covert syntactic readjustment operation analogous to QR, a view forcefully criticized by much subsequent research (e.g., on the grounds that it apparently incurs island violations). **1.2.** Overt focus-related displacements, nevertheless, have frequently been given a syntactic account even in those cases where the relevant displacement is not amenable to an analysis in terms of some independently existing construction, like a cleft (as in Hungarian, Basque, Italian, Greek, Finnish, etc). According to the current mainstream implementation of this approach, the displacement of a focus phrase targets a specialized functional projection (e.g., F(oc)P; Rizzi 1997), and involves feature-checking. At present this is the received view of focus movement in Hungarian too (e.g., Brody 1990, Puskás 1996, 2000, É. Kiss 1998, 2002, 2006, Horvath 2005, 2007, Kenesei to appear). **1.3.** An alternative recent approach to overt focus-related displacements in natural language is purely stress-based (e.g., Zubizarreta 1998, Neeleman and Reinhart 1998; Fanselow 2004). On this approach, focus-related movements are triggered to create a syntactic structure that will observe the independent stress–focus correspondence requirement (3) (see Cinque 1993, Reinhart 1995, Szendrői 2003). Hungarian focus movement (HFM) has been given such a purely stress-based treatment by Szendrői (2001, 2003). On her account the focused phrase is fronted in HFM in order to get into a position where main stress is assigned, which position is projected in turn through prior V-movement.

2. Issues with current approaches to HFM **2.1.** Horvath (2005) provides a detailed critique of Szendrői's purely stress-based approach, noting the following two major issues. Szendrői's approach involves massive look-ahead into the prosodic component within the restrictive mainstream model, where the flow of information between the modules of prosody and syntax is uni-directional, and where syntax is geared to optimally feed the SEM component rather than PHON (Chomsky 2005 et seq). HFM is not bona fide *focus* movement: on the one hand, HFM is associated with exhaustivity, and on the other, some focused expressions (like information focus, and *also-* and *even-*phrases) do not undergo HFM. An additional problem is posed by covert instances of HFM, which is argued to apply to in situ 'identificational' foci (see Surányi 2004): such focus movement is left without an account. **2.2.** The major issues the "FocP" cum feature-checking approaches face stem from two primitives that they posit: a specialized functional head (Foc), and an uninterpretable focus feature. The latter gives rise to problems of unrestrictiveness, as is the case with uninterpretable features in general that do not have any interface realization (e.g., Brody 2000). As for the former, crucial support for a functional head ideally comes from the fixed absolute position that it determines for a given class of elements, in the case at hand, focus. However, the set of positions that HFM targets is relatively weakly restricted once covert HFM is also taken into account, as Surányi (2004) shows (see also §6.1). That covert HFM exists is evidenced by Beck-intervention effects, and sensitivity to islands (e.g., (6)).

3. Main claims This paper argues that (i) if applied to the identificational focus (FOC_{ident}) involved in HFM (Kenesei 1986, Szabolcsi 1994, É. Kiss 1998) rather than focus in general, then Chomsky's basic proposal (cf. §1.1) can and should be upheld. In particular, FOC_{ident} moves to be interpreted. (ii) Since FOC_{ident} is a subcase of (ordinary) focus (defined as invoking alternatives, Rooth 1985, Büring to app.), the PF manifestation of FOC_{ident}-movement *is* affected by prosodic constraints on focus, viz. by (3) (hence by the default placement of the Nuclear Stress (NS), see Reinhart 1995, Szendrői 2003).

4. FOC_{ident} as an identificational predicate FOC_{ident} is a predicate predicating of some element B that it is identical with some other element A (see Chomsky 1976, Kenesei 1984, 1986, Szabolcsi 1994; see a.o. Partee 1998/2000 and Heller 2005 for such a view of (English) specificational/identificational copular clauses). A and B need to be of the same type if the predication of their identity is to be interpretable. In the identificational focus movement construction in (1), (2a) represents the identificational predicate FOC_{ident}. FOC_{ident} is uninterpretable in situ (whether it is object or subject), hence it needs to extract (analogously to QR). The iota operator gives rise to an existential presupposition (obligatory with FOC_{ident}, see Bende-Farkas 2006), as well as uniqueness/exhaustivity. (2b) corresponds to the proposition containing the free variable resulting from the extraction of FOC_{ident} (Heim and Kratzer 1998). Note that (2b) must be a full proposition (with the predicate's arguments, including its tense argument, saturated); and it must contain at least one free variable, otherwise the iota operator would quantify vacuously when (2a) is applied to (2b), yielding (2c). A null constant (realized as a resumptive pronominal element; associated with topicalization/CLLD, e.g., Cinque 1990, Rizzi 1997), instead of a variable, is therefore predicted to be incompatible with HMF.

5. The Hungarian clause **5.1** I adopt the view that both the ‘verbal modifier’ VM (e.g., verbal particle) in a neutral clause and the fronted focus are raised to the same functional specifier (see É. Kiss 2005), with the verb adjoining to the host functional head (4a,b). I take this projection to be TP (cf. É. Kiss 2008, see also Horvath 1995), whose head bears an EPP feature. This EPP feature can also be satisfied by negation, an adverbial generated in Spec,TP (4c). **5.2** The Nuclear Stress Rule places the NS on the leftmost phonological phrase of an Intonational Phrase (É. Kiss 2002, Szendrői 2003). As TP corresponds to an IntP, the NS falls on the phonological phrase at the left edge of TP. I argue that this is the reason why the copy of FOC_{ident} must be overt in this position.

6. Benefits The account of FOC_{ident} based on §4–5 stays clear of the complications with the purely stress-based approach pointed out in §2.1, as it identifies type conflict resolution, rather than stress-assignment, as the *trigger* of FOC_{ident}-movement. Also, it posits no specialized functional head to treat HMF, avoiding the issues that it gives rise to (§2.2). The main properties of HMF fall out as follows.

6.1 First, covert HMF can target any scope position between the scope positions of any two post-verbal quantifiers (cf. §2.2), because HMF unselectively targets positions that are the sister of a propositional category (which category is turned into an open proposition in the course of HMF).

6.2 We correctly account for the behavior of a second FOC_{ident} (call it FOC₂) in a (true) multiple foci construction (cf. Krifka 1991). FOC₂ must undergo covert movement to a scope position *below* that of the pre-verbal FOC_{ident} (call it FOC₁). If FOC₂ raises to scope *below* FOC₁ in Spec,TP, then, since the NS does not fall on this lower position, the movement of FOC₂ will remain covert (just like QR). If FOC₂ is to scope *above* FOC₁, then it must raise above it, say, to an outer specifier of TP. But then NS falls on FOC₂, rather than on FOC₁, therefore it is the movement of FOC₂ that will have to be overt.

6.3 Narrow focus on the verb (or on the ‘verbal modifier’ immediately preceding it in neutral clauses) does not involve any extra movement (see (5)). This is because the movement configuration analogous to that in (1), required for an interpretation along the lines of (2), obtains even without an extra focus-movement step, since both the verb and the ‘verbal modifier’ are raised out of their base positions independently (to T and Spec,TP, respectively; see §5.1).

6.4 As FOC_{ident}-movement involves no feature-checking, it is correctly predicted not to display Superiority effects (cf. also Boskovic 2002).

6.5 The account explains why VM and V cannot be separated by NEG, but FOC and V can (see (4d-e)). This is because whereas NEG and VM are alternatives in satisfying EPP of T, FOC is merely *able* to satisfy EPP once it is in Spec,TP (with the effect of barring the movement of VM), but its movement is not *triggered* by EPP. Hence base-generating NEG in Spec,TP interferes neither with the movement of FOC_{ident}, nor with the overtness of this movement (which is due to NS placement).

6.6 The fact that both NEG and quantifier phrases can precede a pre-verbal focus is not accidental on the present account. FOC_{ident} creates a new proposition (by predicating identity), and quantifier phrases can raise out to the edge of propositional categories; clausal NEG can also apply to a propositional category.

6.7 Finally, HMF (in contrast to QR) can be indefinitely long, moving successive cyclically (e.g., É. Kiss 1987) (a problem for the purely stress-based account). It has been extensively argued that each step of a ‘long’ QR movement must observe Semantic Economy (e.g., Fox 2000, Cecchetto 2004; roughly, it must result in an interpretation that would otherwise not be available). The same should, and does, apply to FOC_{ident} movement: in each successively higher position (sister to a propositional category), the semantic argument (2b) of the FOC_{ident} is different.

-
- (1) [JÁNOS]_A [jött t vissza]_B
 J.-nom came back ‘It’s John who has come back.’
- (2) a. $\lambda p.(ix.p = j)$ b. come-back(y) c. $\lambda y.come-back(y) = j$
- (3) Any constituent that (reflexively) contains the NS of the Intonational Phrase is a possible focus.
- (4) a. [TP VM [T V [T]] [...]] b. [TP FOC [T V [T]] [...VM...]] c. [TP NEG [T V [T]] [...VM...]]
 d. [TP FOC NEG [T V [T]] [...VM...]] e. *[TP VM NEG [T V [T]] [...]]
- (5) a. [Vissza EMAILEZTE a dokumentumot], nem [vissza FAXOLTA]
 back EMAILED-3sg the document-acc not back FAXED-3sg
 b. *EMAILEZTE [vissza ___ a dokumentumot], nem FAXOLTA [vissza___]
- (6) a. Ki akar [le vizsgáztatni csak HÁROM diákot]? (infinitival complement clause)
 who-nom wants PV examine-inf only THREE student-acc
 b. *?Ki megy be [le vizsgáztatni csak HÁROM DIÁKOT]? (infinitival purpose adjunct)
 who-nom goes in PV examine-inf only THREE student-nom (N.B. non-rethorical question)