

Focus and negation in Hungarian: some problems and the idea of VP-movement

1 Goal. In my talk I examine the structure of the Hungarian sentences containing both a focus and negation. I argue that in the case of multiple foci it is not the verb but the VP that moves to NNP immediately below FP. This analysis may be compatible with several previous theories (for example É.Kiss (to app.) and Brody&Szabolcsi (2003)). I show how it can solve a few problems with respect to scope relations and the position of the verb.

2 Problems. As is well-known, in Hungarian the focus and the (negated) verb must be adjacent in the linear order, which follows from Surányi (2002) based on the co-projection of [foc] and [neg]. This is less simple in the analyses in which the spellout position of the verb is lower than the Foc (Count) head (the NN (NonNeut) head in É.Kiss (to app.) and the AgrS head in Brody&Szabolcsi (2003)). Moreover, the stressed postverbal distributive quantifier can take inverse scope over sentential negation, if both operators have narrower scope than the focus (1b).

- (1) *Ki nem válaszolt meg több, mint két kérdést?*
who not answered PV more than two question-ACC
'Who did not answer more than two questions?'
a. who > not > more than two q.
b. who > more than two q. > not

The LF-position of the distributive quantifier is problematic either in Surányi (2002) (due to the co-projection of [foc] and [neg]) or in the extended version of Brody&Szabolcsi (2003) (due to the Ref>Dist>Foc>Neg hierarchy in the highest scopal series). It can be solved in É.Kiss (to app.) in such a way that the distributive quantifier is right-adjoined to NegP, however, (2) cannot be excluded syntactically, the fact that no element (quantifier, adverb, VM) can intervene between the focus and the (negated) verb is explained by a PF-constraint.

- (2) * *Ki több, mint két kérdést nem válaszolt meg ?*

É.Kiss supposes that there is only one NNP projection for economical reasons if both a NegP and an FP appear in the structure (3) (NegP>FP>NNP). It is not clear how to derive (4), which contains a higher focus.

- (3) *Semelyik fiú sem csak egy lánnyal táncolt.*
no boy NEG only one girl-with danced
'No boy danced with only one girl.'
no b. > only one g.
- (4) *TEGNAP nem táncolt csak egy lánnyal 'semelyik fiú.*
yesterday not danced only one girl-with no boy
'It was yesterday that no boy danced with only one girl.'
YESTERDAY > no b. > only one g.

On the other hand, all sentences in (5) are ungrammatical: in (5a) the verb moves to the higher NN head (*FP>NNP>NegP>FP>NNP); (5b) contains only one NNP or Neg is assumed to block V-movement (*FP>(NNP>)NegP>FP>NNP) and (5c) is similar to (5b), but the negative quantifier is right-adjoined to NegP. It should be explained why the higher NNP is allowed to be between the NegP and the lower FP in (4) (FP>NegP>NNP>FP>NNP) unlike in (3).

- (5) a. * *TEGNAP táncolt semelyik fiú sem csak egy lánnyal.*
b. * *TEGNAP semelyik fiú sem csak egy lánnyal táncolt.*
c. * *TEGNAP nem csak egy lánnyal táncolt 'semelyik fiú.*

3 Proposal. Adopting the NNP projection from É.Kiss (to app.) and scopal series from Brody&Szabolcsi (2003), I assume that the Foc head must take a [nonneut] complement and the Neg head has an inherent [nonneut] feature. The head of the complement of Foc separates scopal series (like AgrS, T, AgrO, ...) since its specifier is not occupied by an operator binding a variable. (This can also be regarded as a less sharp version of the assumption in Kenesei (2006) that every FP must dominate a CP.) I introduce the notion of morphosyntactic licensing in the following way: a head is morphosyntactically licensed if and only if it is morphologically realized (including that the morphological word is spelt out in this position) or the feature-sharer element in its Spec position is morphosyntactically licensed. I suppose that every head separating scopal series must be morphosyntactically licensed. This licensing condition will be satisfied if the verb moves to the lowest [nonneut] head and all higher [nonneut] heads immediately below FP attract the closest extended VP with a [nonneut] feature (NNP or NegP).

Focused infinitival clauses (6) provide some independent evidence for VP-movement. I argue from the facts of the focusless matrix clause and multiple infinitives that (6b) cannot be derived by a free PF-linearization. Since an infinitive cannot move to RefP, I assume that in (6b) the finite VP containing the infinitive moves to the higher NNP and there are two FPs in the matrix clause (some evidence is provided by *se*-phrases).

- (6) a. Ki fog csak két tárgyból vizsgázni?
 b. Ki fog vizsgázni csak két tárgyból?
who will [take-an-exam]-INF only two subject-from
 'Who will take an exam in only two subjects?'

In my proposed analysis the inverse scope reading in (1b) is generated by the movement of the NegP to Spec,NNP: the negative operator does not c-command the distributive quantifier. The NegP-movement can give a syntactic account for the ungrammaticality of (2): the distributive quantifier occupies either a left-adjoined or a right-adjoined position, the negated verb will precede it.

- (1') [_{FP} Ki [_{NNP} [_{NegP} nem válaszolt [_{PredP} meg válaszolt]]_i [_{DistP} több, mint két kérdést [_{NegP} ~~nem~~ ...]]_i]]

In (3) the NNP is not forced to move since the Neg head selecting FP is not a head separating scopal series. In the structure of (4) the lower NNP moves to Spec, NegP and that is why the higher NN head will be morphosyntactically licensed after the NegP has moved to its specifier position.

- (3') [_{DistP} Semelyik fiú sem [_{NegP} (nem) [_{FP} csak egy lánnyal [_{NNP} táncolt]]]]
 (4') [_{FP1} Tegnap [_{NNP1} [_{NegP} nem [_{NNP2} táncolt]]_i [_{FP2} csak egy lánnyal [_{NNP2} ~~táncolt~~]]_i]]_k
 [_{DistP} semelyik fiú (sem) [_{NegP} ~~nem~~ [_{NNP2} táncolt]]_i [_{FP2} csak egy lánnyal [_{NNP2} táncolt]]_i]]_k

(5a) violates MLC: the NegP is a closer phrase with a [nonneut] feature than the lower NNP. In (5c) the higher NN head is not morphosyntactically licensed by the NegP in its Spec position because the lower NNP did not move to Spec, NegP. But this movement is not triggered in (3), where no higher NNP is present.

4 Conclusion. The type of VP-movement I propose can replace head movement and covert movement in certain cases. This type of remnant movement has some properties different from the remnant movement developed in Kayne's theory. This VP-movement is triggered by a head that must be morphosyntactically licensed, it is not strictly local and a VP-chain is formed even in mirror theory. This theoretical device seems to be useful from both an empirical and a theoretical point of view.

References

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