

## What Passes for a Passive? An investigation of passive participles in Hungarian

**1. The purpose of the study** Hungarian  $-(V)(t)t$  (hence, T) and  $-vA$  ( $-vA_2$ , all with Laczkó's 1999, 2000 terminology) participles resemble canonical passive constructions in three fundamental respects: (i) the external argument is absent, (ii) the accusative Case of the object is absorbed and (iii) and in the case of copula +  $vA$  constructions, the subject position is available for the internal argument (cf. example (1)). These facts notwithstanding, the existence of the passive in Hungarian is widely disputed. In the broad sense, the term 'passive' subsumes adjectival and verbal passives: however, in her seminal work on passive participles, Kratzer (1994) demonstrates that in the absence of an implicit agent, adjectival participles cannot be regarded as passive in the strict sense (although with loose terminology, I will continue to refer to them as passives). On the basis of a systematic study of T and  $-vA$  participles, I suggest that in Hungarian both eventive and stative passives are more widespread than assumed in general. Ultimately, I argue for the existence of adjectival participles as well as verbal passives with both T and  $-vA$  participles: notably, T and  $-vA$  participles are shown to be positional variants of the passive in the extended sense (including adjectival participles).

**2. Review of the literature** In the literature on Hungarian participles, the division is not only over the cut to be made between adjectival and verbal passive participles: even the existence of the verbal passive is questioned at times. Work with explicit claims concerning the adjectival/verbal nature of the so-called passive participles involves Horváth and Siloni (2005) and Siloni (2006) who, referring to É. Kiss (2002), deny the existence of the verbal passive as such in Hungarian; as regards T participles, they fall under the category of adjectival passives in their analysis. By contrast, Alberti (1994, 1996) argues extensively that copula +  $vA$  participles are instances of the verbal passive. The converse of Alberti's (1994, 1996) conjecture is made by Tóth (2000), who adduces evidence that copula +  $vA$  participles are stative resultative (hence, not passive). Yet again, Laczkó (1995, 2005) submits that T participles are eventive, whereas copula +  $vA$  participles are stative. And finally, the debate revolving around the nature of the missing external argument in T participles (Laczkó 2005 and Kenesei 2005) concludes with Laczkó's (2008) proposal of a dual analysis employing both PRO and suppression.

**3. The specifics of the investigation** A systematic application of empirical tests involving time adverbials, manner adverbs, counterfactuality and agent-oriented diagnostics like *by*-phrases, agent-oriented adverbials and control confirm the availability of verbal properties such as eventivity and agentivity with both T and  $-vA$  participles, in addition to the adjectival readings (for an illustration, cf. (3,4)). However, the fact that in the case of  $-vA$  participles the stative/eventive split emerges between *van/volt* ('is/was') +  $vA$  and *lett/lesz* ('became/will be(come)') +  $vA$  participles makes the impact of the copula equivocal. In principle, (i) eventivity could be the contribution of the copula *lett/lesz*, while (ii) in languages like Greek, agentivity may characterize resultant states (R-states, a subclass of adjectival passives). Provided that eventivity could be shown to be imported by *lett/lesz*, which arguably involve a 'become' component, and agentivity could be associated with adjectival participles, there would be no need to postulate the existence of verbal passives with  $-vA$  participles. Nonetheless, I will show that R-state *van* +  $vA$  constructions are limited to agents that are characteristic of the result state (cf. Rapp 2000; also example (2)): the liberal use of agent-oriented expressions is restricted to *lett* +  $vA$ . The inseparability of eventivity and agentivity furnishes evidence for a verbal passive account of *lett* +  $vA$  constructions: the participle itself contains more functional structure, which correlates with the choice of the copula by matching (cf. also Bartos 2008), as attested in other languages (e.g. German, Swedish) as well. Moreover, eventive T participles further bolster the claim that the verbal passive exists in Hungarian. Finally, the (in)compatibility of adjectival and verbal passive participles with monadic verbs provides independent support for a genuine passive approach: unaccusative verbs only form *van* +  $vA$  but not *lett* +  $vA$  participles, and unergatives are ruled out from *van* +  $vA$  constructions.

**5. Residual issues** Although participle-formation from unaccusative and unergative verbs typically complies with the well-established generalization (e.g. Jaeggli 1986, Anagnostopoulou 2007) that (i) unaccusative verbs have no eventive passive counterpart and (ii) unergatives are incompatible with the

