

**RELATIONAL NOUNS AND
ARGUMENT STRUCTURE –
EVIDENCE FROM HUNGARIAN**

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Abstract

The fundamental goal of this paper is to argue for postulating that a clearly identifiable group of (underived) relational nouns has an argument structure in addition to what is often called a lexical conceptual structure – at least in languages like Hungarian. First, I place relational nouns in a general typological setting, pointing out that it is necessary to attribute at least lexical conceptual structures (LCS) to them. Then I claim that Hungarian body part nouns like *kéz* ‘hand’ have both inalienable and non-inalienable uses, which has become grammaticalized. In the former, they must be associated with an argument structure (AS), and in the latter, their LCS complement has been eliminated (hence, they have no argument structure, either). Next, I discuss the treatment of relational nouns of the *szomszéd* ‘neighbour’ type, which behave partially differently. The essence of my analysis is that they also have ASs, and I account for the optionality of their possessor argument by invoking the standard suppression operation. I also show that there is independent motivation for assuming that Norwegian body part nouns also have ASs, although their behaviour is different from that of their Hungarian counterparts. Finally, I demonstrate that there are several (LFG) analyses of different phenomena in a variety of languages whose crucial assumption, shared by my approach in this paper, is that possessors are true syntactic arguments of relational nouns.

1. Introduction

On the grounds of Bresnan’s (2001) view of the architecture of Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG), in this paper I make the following assumption without any justification. The lexical form of a predicate contains two interrelated dimensions:

- *argument structure* (AS), cf. Bresnan’s a-structure;
- *lexical conceptual structure* (LCS), cf. Bresnan’s lexical semantics.

This is a relatively wide-spread view across generative approaches. For a classical example in the Chomskyan paradigm, see Grimshaw (1990), which is also relevant from the perspective of the present paper inasmuch as it extensively discusses argument taking nominal predicates as well.

In my representations I will indicate LCS complements between { and } and AS arguments between < and >. Consider the following simplified example:

- (1) *kick*, v { x , y }
 < agent, theme >
 [-o] [-r]

In this paper I argue that there is a group of Hungarian underived relational nouns whose morpho-syntactic behaviour calls for an analysis that postulates that they have both LCSS (which is a trivial assumption) and ASSs.

As regards the analysis of English underived relational nouns like *hand* and *neighbour*, just like in the case of the analysis of derived nominals like *destruction* and *assassination*, there is a whole range of radically different approaches. One extreme view is that underived relational nouns do not have ASSs at all: they only have LCSSs, cf. Uriagereka (1995), for instance. Other authors attribute strict ASSs, typical of verbal predicates, to a set of relational nouns, and they account for the predictable optionality of (some of) their arguments by assuming lexical processes (e.g., suppression) trivially taken to apply to genuine verbal predicates, cf. Barker (1995). Some others do not assume such processes, so for them fewer noun types have ASSs, cf. Castillo (2001); yet others consider the arguments of relational nouns to be optional to begin with, cf. Asudeh (2005).

Hungarian relational nouns have been much less studied so far in general, and from a generative linguistic perspective in particular. In his special, non-generative, functional-semantic framework, Hadrovics (1969) offers a comprehensive analysis of Hungarian possessive constructions, based on a remarkable empirical investigation. It also deals with noun phrases headed by words I consider underived relational nouns; however, there is no explicit, coherent and consistent treatment of these nouns in this work. For detailed criticism, see Laczkó (2008). On the generative side, Szabolcsi (1994), in a Government and Binding Theory (GB) framework, and Laczkó (1995), in an LFG framework, assume without any justification or argumentation that certain classes of underived relational nouns assign theta roles or have argument structures, respectively. Alberti (1995) argues against Szabolcsi's (1994) theory of theta-role assignment in Hungarian possessive constructions and endorses a strongly LCS-based-style account on which even underived nouns standardly not considered relational are assumed to assign a theta-role. Laczkó (2008) appears to be the first attempt at a comprehensive generative account of Hungarian underived relational nouns.

The paper has the following structure. In section 2, I posit relational nouns in a general typological setting, pointing out that it is necessary to attribute at least LCSSs to them. In section 3, I claim that Hungarian body part nouns like *kéz* 'hand' have both inalienable and non-inalienable uses, which have become grammaticalized. In the former, they must be associated with an argument structure, and in the latter, their LCS complement has been eliminated (hence, they have no argument structure, either). In section 4, I discuss the treatment of relational nouns of the *szomszéd* 'neighbour' type, which behave partially differently. The essence of my analysis is that they also have argument structures, and I account for the optionality of their possessor argument by invoking the standard suppression operation. In section 5, I show that there is independent motivation for assuming that

Norwegian body part nouns also have argument structures, although their behaviour is different from that of their Hungarian counterparts. In section 6, I demonstrate that there are several (LFG) analyses of different phenomena in a variety of languages whose crucial assumption, shared by my approach in this paper, is that possessors are true syntactic arguments of relational nouns. This is followed by some concluding remarks in section 7.

2. Relational nouns, typology, and LCS

The behaviour of relational nouns across languages has been extensively discussed in the typological literature, fundamentally in the context of inalienability and the semantics of possessive constructions. The most salient types of these nouns include

- kinship terms (e.g., *father*, *child*);
- body parts (e.g., *hand*, *eye*);
- part–whole relationships (e.g., *middle*, *edge*).

In a great number of languages these inalienable nouns typically exhibit distinct formal (morphological or syntactic) properties. For a comprehensive overview, see Nichols (1988). Here is a randomly selected example. In Nanai if a relational noun, which by default has an inalienable interpretation, is used in a non-inalienable/alienated sense then it has to be used with a special possessive paradigm including a morpheme encoding non-inalienable possession (NIP).

- (2) a. naj-dili-ni
person-head-3SG
'(the) person's (own) head'
- b. naj-dili-ŋo-ni
person-head- NIP-3SG
'(the) head in the possession of the person'

These well-attested cross-linguistic phenomena minimally call for a clearly definable LCS approach to the nouns in question – otherwise it would hardly be possible to formulate the relevant rules for the relevant processes.

The following Hungarian facts point in the same direction.

(A) There are nouns in the relevant categories which practically can only be used in possessive constructions; that is, in possessive inflectional forms (cf. head-marking). This especially holds for part–whole nouns, cf.

- (3) a. a ceruza hegy-e
 the pencil.NOM edge-3SG¹
 ‘the edge of the pencil’
- b. a kör közep-e
 the circle.NOM middle-3SG
 ‘the middle of the circle’

(B) There are a few nouns that have two different stem variants when they are inflected in the possessive paradigm, depending on whether they are used in an inalienable or in an alienable sense. For instance, *gyapjú* ‘wool’ has different stem versions when it is taken to belong to a sheep inalienably and when it is interpreted as alienably belonging to a shepherd. The noun *tető* ‘roof’ also exhibits stem alternation depending on its inalienable vs. alienable use, for instance, whether it is an inalienable part of a house or it is alienably related to the owner of the house.

- (4) a. a juh gyapj-a
 the sheep.NOM wool-3SG
 ‘the sheep’s wool’
- b. a juhász gyapjú-ja
 the shepherd.NOM wool-3SG
 ‘the shepherd’s wool’
- (5) a. a ház tete-je
 the house.NOM roof-3SG
 ‘the roof of the house’
- b. János tető-je
 John.NOM roof-3SG
 ‘John’s roof’

(C) In Hungarian, too, it is only a part–whole inalienable noun that can be used as an “extra” argument. First consider the following English examples.

- (6) a. John kicked Peter’s leg.
 b. John kicked Peter on the leg.

¹In the glosses a marker like 3SG on the noun head represents both possessive-marking and agreement-marking.

(A) Intuitively, the generalization that quite a few such nouns practically can only be used in possessive constructions (with the possessive inflectional paradigm), can be captured in the most principled manner by assuming that they have an AS which contains a possessor argument, and if this argument is not realized, the principle of completeness is violated. Consider (3), repeated here for convenience's sake.

- (3) a. a ceruza hegy-e
 the pencil.NOM edge-3SG
 'the edge of the pencil'
- b. a kör közep-e
 the circle.NOM middle-3SG
 'the middle of the circle'

The Hungarian word *hegy* is interesting because it means both 'edge' (of a long-shaped object) and 'mountain'. Although the etymological relationship is clear, speakers sense homophony here. In its relational meaning the word is almost exclusively used in a possessive DP. The word *közép* 'middle', again, almost always occurs in a possessive construction. Compare (9a)³ and (9b).

- (9) Context: *Lődd le azt a korongot!* 'Shoot that disk.'
- a. A közep-ét céloz-d!
 the middle-3SG-ACC aim-IMPER.2SG
 'Aim at its middle.'
- b. *A közep-et céloz-d!
 the middle-ACC aim-IMPER.2SG
 'Aim at the middle.'

As this pair of examples illustrates, in this context, which represents a typical context for such strongly relational words, the word cannot be used in a non-possessive construction (also see point (C) below). In actual fact, it seems that *közép* 'middle' is generally restricted to possessive constructions when used in fully-fledged DPs/NPs, with the possibly rare exception of its abstract notional use:

³ Note that Hungarian is a pro-drop language, including the pro-drop of possessors. In (9a), for instance, the possession- and agreement-marking (3SG) is capable of encoding a 3rd person singular pronominal possessor in LFG terms. The overt pronoun version of the possessive noun in (9a) is this.

- (i) az ő közep-ét
 the it.NOM middle-3SG-ACC
 'its middle' (In Hungarian *ő* is a gender-neutral 3SG pronoun.)

- (10) A számtani közép különbözik
 the arithmetic middle.NOM differ.PRES.3SG
 a mértani közép-től.
 the geometric mean-ABL
 ‘The arithmetical mean is different from the geometrical mean.’

The presence of the possessor always triggers the use of possessive inflection on the noun head in Hungarian, given that in this language possessive constructions are obligatorily head-marking. Thus, a corresponding morphological generalization is that these strongly relational nouns almost exclusively occur in the possessive paradigm.

Naturally, there can be other ways of capturing the fact that these nouns require the possessive context, but by far the most straightforward solution is to attribute strict ASS to them. On the treatment of their rare occurrence in non-possessive constructions, see section 4.

(B) A closely related property of relational nouns is that when they occur within possessive noun phrases, without a strongly influential linguistic or situational context, the possessor constituent is, as a rule, interpreted as the salient element of the inalienable relationship.

- (11) Péter fel-emel-te a kez-é-t.
 Peter.NOM up-raise- PAST.3SG.DEF the hand-3SG-ACC
 ‘Peter raised his hand.’

We can think of several situations in which Peter did not raise his own inalienable hand. For instance, Peter could work in a factory producing artificial limbs, or he could be a hand surgeon, or he could be a sculptor working on a hand etc. In all these cases he could have raised a limb he was working or operating on. It is worth pointing out in this connection that in theory (11) could also be interpreted as Peter raising someone else’s inalienable hand. What is significant is that none of these interpretations is available without a strongly influential context. It is not the case then that there is a continuum of more likely and less likely interpretations in no particular context or in a neutral context, and the primary inalienable interpretation happens to be at the top. It is the only interpretation. Again, although there can be other plausible solutions, this fact can be most naturally captured by assuming that the possessor is a genuine argument of the noun bearing this inalienable relation to the noun. On the use of nouns like *kéz* ‘hand’ in non-inalienable meanings, see point (C) below and section 4.1.

(C) Most importantly, certain types of Hungarian relational nouns in clearly definable constructions must not be used in non-possessive noun phrases on the relevant inalienable reading. Compare (12a) and (12b).

- (12) a. Péter fel-emel-te a kez-é-t.
 Peter.NOM up-raise- PAST.3SG.DEF the hand-3SG-ACC
 ‘Peter_(i) raised his_(i) hand.’
- b. Péter fel-emel-te a kez-et.
 Peter.NOM up-raise- PAST.3SG.DEF the hand-ACC
 ‘Peter raised the hand. / *Peter_(i) raised his_(i) hand.’

Without any context or in a neutral context, the interpretation of (12a), in which the noun *kéz* ‘hand’ occurs in a possessive DP (with possessive pro-drop), is that Peter raised his own inalienable hand (also see the discussion in point (B) above). What is of crucial significance here is that this inalienable interpretation of the non-possessive DP containing the noun *kéz* ‘hand’ is strictly unavailable in (12b). In other words, the relationship between Peter and the hand in (12b) is strictly non-inalienable/alienated. This sentence only admits readings on which Peter raised someone else’s hand or an “alienated” limb, e.g., an artificial hand in a hospital. The rule then is that for the inalienable interpretation to be available the noun must be used in a possessive construction, as in (12a).

I propose to capture these facts by making the following key assumption: *kéz* ‘hand’ in its inalienable use has an AS and its possessor argument must be realized; hence the ungrammaticality of (12b) in the relevant sense. I give the simplified lexical form of this word in this use in (13).

- (13) *kéz*, N: ‘HAND { body , body-part }’
 < whole >
 [-r]
 (POSS)

Note that I use relatively informal but informative labels in this representation. The terms “body” and “body part” in the LCS are rather straightforward. The semantic role label “whole” is meant to encode the generalization that body-part—body relationships are a subset of part—whole relationships. These terms are also comparable with Barker and Dowty’s (1993) non-verbal proto-roles. In addition, I assume that the “whole” role has the [-r] intrinsic specification; that is, it is a theme-like argument, and it is mapped onto the (POSS) grammatical function. On the nature of (POSS) see section 6; on the mapping principles I assume, see Laczkó (2004).

There are two important points to be made at the end of this section. On the one hand, it has to be explored how this approach can be augmented in such a way that it should accommodate an appropriate and consistent analysis of *kéz* ‘hand’ as used in (12b). I tackle this task in section 4. On the other hand, in languages like Norwegian nouns corresponding to the Hungarian *kéz* ‘hand’ type behave differently inasmuch as they admit the inalienable

interpretation even in sentences corresponding to (12b). I discuss these issues in section 5.

4. Extending the analysis

In this section I intend to extend the analysis in two directions. On the one hand, I show how I analyze *kéz* ‘hand’ type relational nouns when they are used in a non-inalienable sense. On the other hand, I discuss how I envisage the analysis of the *szomszéd* ‘neighbour’ type, which differs from the previous type in a significant respect.

4.1. The non-inalienable use of *kéz* ‘hand’

Consider the example in (12b), repeated here for convenience.

- (12) b. Péter fel-emel-te a kez-et.
 Peter.NOM up-raise- PAST.3SG.DEF the hand-ACC
 ‘Peter raised the hand. / *Peter_(i) raised his_(i) hand.’

The challenge here is twofold. On the one hand, we have to account for the omissibility of the possessor argument of *kéz* ‘hand’ we postulated in section 3. On the other hand, we have to ensure in a principled manner that the sentence in (12b) must not have a reading on which Peter raised his own hand (see the starred translation in (12b)). The first solution that jumps to mind is a kind of a suppression analysis developed by Barker (1995) for English relational nouns. The essence of his approach is as follows. ASs are attributed to several groups of relational nouns in their relevant uses. In order to account for cases in which no argument is present in the construction, Barker assumes that the argument in question is suppressed. In the spirit of the standardly applied general suppression analysis (in the treatment of passivization, for instance), the basic idea is that the suppressed argument (which does not appear in the constituent structure) is existentially bound in the AS of the nominal predicate. Barker’s analysis can be translated into our framework and analysis so far in the following way.

- (14) a. *kéz*₁, N: ‘HAND₁ { body , body-part }’
 < whole >
 [-r]
 (POSS)
- b. *kéz*₂, N: ‘HAND₂ { body , body-part }’
 < whole >
 Ø
 ∃x

4.2. The *szomszéd* ‘neighbour’ type

Relational nouns like *szomszéd* ‘neighbour’, *apa* ‘father’, *nagy mama* ‘grandmother’, etc., which I call “social relation” nouns, behave rather differently in a significant respect. Consider the following example.

- (16) Péter bosszant-ja a szomszéd-ok-at.
Peter.NOM annoy-PRES.3SG.DEF the neighbour-PL-ACC
‘Peter is annoying the neighbours.’

This sentence, as opposed to (12b), can be felicitously interpreted in such a way that Peter annoys his own neighbours (despite the fact that the relational noun occurs in a non-possessive construction). Interestingly, (16) can also mean that Peter annoys the speaker’s (and/or the listener’s) neighbours. These nouns appear to behave in a more uniform manner across languages. I claim that the explanation for this is that they cannot be interpreted inalienably. Let us take a look at Asudeh’s (2005) example.

- (17) Context – Hermit A to Hermit B:
John saw a neighbour downtown. #It wasn’t his neighbour, though.

The special context ensures that the noun *neighbour* in the first sentence cannot be interpreted as related either to the speaker (Hermit A) or to the listener (Hermit B), given that hermits, by definition, do not have neighbours. (Compare this with the possible interpretations of (16) discussed above.) Thus, the only appropriate scenario for the first sentence is that John saw one of his own neighbours. It is for this reason that the second sentence is semantically deviant in this context. A person can only be the neighbour of someone (another neighbour): no non-inalienable/alienated interpretation is available in the case of these social relation nouns. Compare (17) with (18).

- (18) John raised a hand. It wasn’t his hand, though.

As I argued above, body part nouns do also admit the non-inalienable/alienated interpretation; hence the contrast between (17) and (18).

Given the absolutely inalienable character and the consequential behaviour of relational nouns of the *szomszéd* ‘neighbour’ type, that is, social relational nouns, the following alternative analyses suggest themselves.

- (A) It can be assumed that these relational nouns have no ASS: they only have LCSS, in the spirit of Uriagereka (1995), for instance.
- (B) It can be postulated that they have LCSS and optional ASS, that is, the AS argument is optional, in which case the corresponding LCS complement is existentially bound, cf. Asudeh (2005).

- (C) In the spirit of Barker (1995), we can develop a suppression account by assuming that there are two lexical entries for words like *szomszéd* ‘neighbour’. The basic lexical form is *szomszéd₁* ‘neighbour₁’, which is a relational noun with an LCS and an obligatory AS, and we derive *szomszéd₂* ‘neighbour₂’ from it by suppressing, that is existentially binding, the argument in AS.

Notice that all the three solutions enable us to capture the relevant empirical generalizations about the behaviour of *szomszéd* ‘neighbour’ nouns: the optionality of the syntactic expression of the complement and its obligatory presence in interpretation (cf. strict inalienability). In the representational system of lexical forms I have introduced for the purposes of the present paper, below I show the crucial aspects of these solutions.⁴

The (A) solution would require the following simple lexical form.

- (19) *szomszéd*, N: ‘NEIGHBOUR { sr/m₁ , sr/m₂ }’

This entry only contains the LCS dimension, no AS. The relevant complement is always present in the LCS and its optional syntactic reflex has the status of adjunct-like modification; therefore, it does not appear in this lexical representation.

The (B) version would make the entire AS, containing the possessor argument, optional.

- (20) *szomszéd*, N: ‘NEIGHBOUR { sr/m₁ , sr/m₂ }’

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} < sr/m_1 > \\ [-r] \\ (POSS) \end{array} \right)$$

This representation is my “translation” of Asudeh’s (2005) treatment of the English word *neighbour* into my framework for the analysis of *szomszéd* ‘neighbour’ in Hungarian. The significant parts of his lexical entry for my present purposes are as follows.

- (21) *neighbour*: N
 (↑ PRED) = ‘neighbour’
 ...
 ((↑ OBL)_σ = (↑_σ ARG))
 ...

⁴ I use the following abbreviations: sr = social relation, m = member. These labels are informal here, too.

I take the equations (\uparrow PRED) = ‘neighbour’ and ($(\uparrow$ OBL) $_{\sigma}$ = (\uparrow_{σ} ARG)) to indicate that in his approach AS is optional. According to him, when there is no (OBL) argument realized, the corresponding LCS complement is existentially bound. (It is an additional complication and contrast that in the case of the Hungarian noun here and in all my previous work I attribute the (POSS) function to the relevant complement/argument.)

The (C) option is the classical suppression analysis formulated in my current framework. Consider:

- (22) a. *szomszéd*₁, N: ‘NEIGHBOUR₁ { sr/m₁ , sr/m₂ }’
 < sr/m₁ >
 [-r]
 (POSS)
- b. *szomszéd*₂, N: ‘NEIGHBOUR₂ { sr/m₁ , sr/m₂ }’
 < sr/m₁ >
 ∅
 Ex

The standard suppression idea, adopted here, too, is that *szomszéd*₁ ‘neighbour₁’ does have a strict AS, cf. (22a), and when the suppression lexical redundancy rule is applied to this lexical entry, the argument in the AS will be associated with the ∅ grammatical function, and at the same time, it will be existentially bound, cf. (22b). Thus, the fundamental difference between (B) and (C) is that in the former the entire AS is optional and existential binding takes place in LCS, while in the latter AS is obligatory and suppression and existential binding takes place at this level.

Remember that I rejected this Barker (1995) style suppression in AS analysis in the case of *kéz* ‘hand’ nouns for reasons discussed above. However, given the significantly different behaviour of *szomszéd* ‘neighbour’ nouns, I find this solution absolutely tenable and feasible here. Moreover, of the three theoretically possible analyses of *szomszéd* ‘neighbour’ presented above, I opt for this version, that is, alternative (C). My main motivation for this is that it is this kind of account that is closest in spirit to my analysis of *kéz* ‘hand’ nouns. Consider the following comparison.

- Similarities:
 - in the analysis of both types the base form of the noun has obligatory LCS and AS;
 - in both cases some kind of a reduction (deletion or suppression) takes place at some level.

- Differences:
 - in the case of the *kéz* ‘hand’ type, suppression and existential binding affects the AS;
 - in the case of the *szomszéd* ‘neighbour’ type, the deletion of a complement affects the LCS.

5. On relational nouns in Norwegian

Norwegian presents a significant contrast to Hungarian inasmuch as in the former even body part relational nouns exhibit the same behaviour as social relation nouns. That is, the Norwegian counterpart of (12b) is grammatical even on the inalienable reading. Consider:

- (23) Peter løftet hånden
 Peter.NOM raised hand.DEF
 ‘Peter raised the/his hand.’

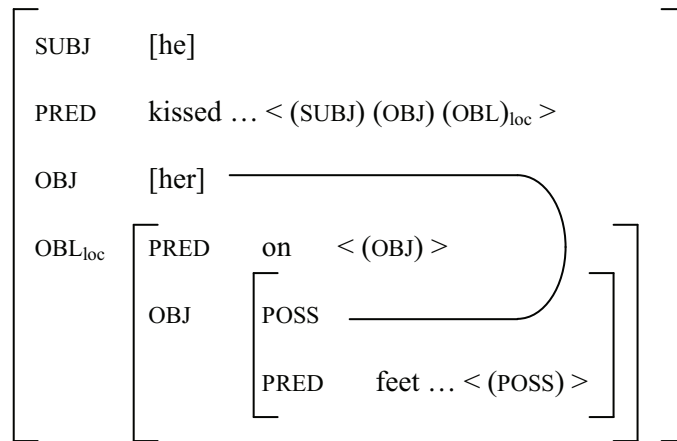
Thus, the following question needs to be addressed. In the previous section I pointed out that the behaviour of Hungarian social relation nouns like *szomszéd* ‘neighbour’ does not necessarily call for a strict AS and subsequent suppression analysis, and I opted for this version for the sake of at least partial similarity to the analysis of body part nouns like *kéz* ‘hand’. Now the lack of the behavioural contrast between these two major relational noun types in Norwegian may suggest that in this language there is no strong motivation for the strict AS and subsequent LCS complement deletion analysis, and it should be restricted to languages like Hungarian.

My claim is that there is indirect, independent, LFG-analysis-based motivation for the assumption that even Norwegian body part nouns should be analyzed as having an AS with a possessor argument. Lødrup (2009) discusses possessor raising in Norwegian. Consider his examples.

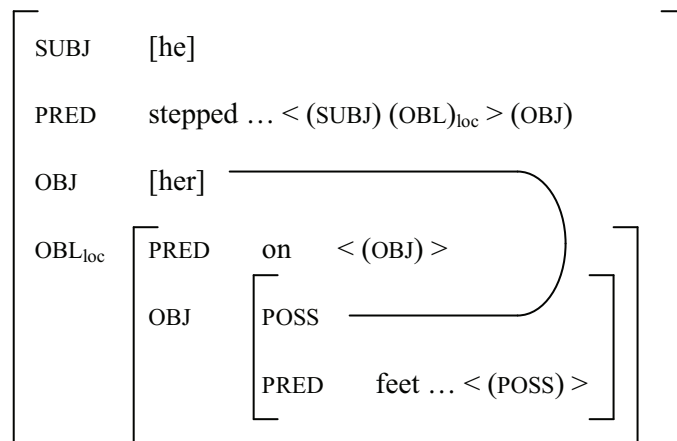
- (24) Han kysset henne på føttene. (transitive)
 he kissed her on feet.DEF
 lit.: ‘He kissed her on the feet.’
- (25) Han tråkket henne på føttene. (unergative)
 he stepped her on feet.DEF
 lit.: ‘He stepped her on the feet.’

The essence of Lødrup’s account is illustrated in the simplified f-structure representations of these sentences in (26) and (27).

(26)



(27)



The most important point from our present perspective is that in this analysis the body part noun is assumed to have an AS containing a possessor argument, which is functionally controlled by a thematic object of the matrix predicate in (26) and by a non-thematic object of the matrix predicate in (27). Thus, if this approach to these phenomena is tenable then it provides independent motivation for us to assume that Norwegian body part nouns do have ASs.

In the next section I also discuss that, following from the general control principles of LFG, the (POSS) function in this analysis must be taken to be semantically unrestricted.

6. A note on possessor arguments

In this section I discuss independent, LFG-analysis-specific considerations supporting the view that it is reasonable to assume that (at least) body part type relational nouns have ASS and they contain a possessor argument. There are several linguists who tend to query the nature of this assumption. For instance, one of my anonymous reviewers has written this. “It is dubious, in general, that “possessor arguments” are listed in the argument structure of *any* nominal head.” Ash Asudeh (p.c., 28.07.2009.) has expressed a similar concern.

From a Hungarian perspective, I have argued for this assumption in numerous papers, especially in the context of analyzing complex event nominalization, cf. Laczkó (1995), (2000), (2004), for example. (In Laczkó (2007) I develop a radically novel analysis of Hungarian possessive DPs but my proposal here is compatible with the relevant aspects of that analysis.) In addition, I have consistently claimed that the (POSS) function, at least in languages like Hungarian, is semantically unrestricted.

In the previous section I showed that Lødrup (2009), in his LFG analysis of possessor raising constructions in Norwegian, postulates that body part nouns have a possessor argument. Moreover, on his account these possessors are functionally controlled. Given the standard assumptions about functional control in LFG, this automatically means that the (POSS) function of this argument must be taken to be semantically unrestricted, cf. Bresnan (1982).

According to Bresnan’s (2001) analysis even originally non-relational nouns in English possessive constructions have ASS: a possessive predicative template augments their lexical forms:

(28) a. $\text{hat}_1, N \text{ ‘HAT } \langle \rangle \text{’}$

b. $\text{hat}_2, N \text{ ‘HAT-OF } \langle (\uparrow\text{POSS}) \rangle \text{’}$

In other words, the template creates a relational noun from an ordinary noun, and the argument in this new argument structure is mapped onto the (POSS) function. Although she does not overtly discuss this, Bresnan independently needs to postulate the subcategorizable and semantically unrestricted nature of (POSS) for her functional control treatment of verbal gerunds in English.

Sells (2009) discusses examples of the type shown in (29) and (30)⁵ in relation to the treatment of adnominal clauses with genitive subjects in Altaic and East Asian languages. What is important for our present purposes is that in this generalized schema an ordinary, originally non-relational noun is assumed to have a relational counterpart with an AS containing a possessor

⁵ For the sake of simplicity of exposition, he use English words in these representations.

(A) Body part nouns like *kéz* ‘hand’ have both inalienable and non-inalienable/alienated uses, and this is grammaticalized in the language.

(B) Social relation nouns like *szomszéd* ‘neighbour’ are always inalienable.

I postulate that Type (A), in its inalienable use, has obligatory argument structure, and I capture its alienated use by assuming that its complement is deleted from its lexical-conceptual structure (naturally, this also results in the elimination of its argument structure).

For the sake of some partial uniformity in the analysis, I assume that Type (B) also has obligatory argument structure, and I capture the optionality of the argument by invoking suppression, and corresponding existential binding.

Several part-whole relational nouns appear to reject suppression. Compare, in this respect, (9b), repeated here for convenience, with (31).

(9) Context: *Lődd le azt a korongot!* ‘Shoot that disk.’

- b. *A közep-et céloz-d!
the middle-ACC aim-IMPER.2SG
‘Aim at the middle.’

Although in this particular context the interpretation of (9b) would be straightforward, and it could be easily accommodated by a suppression analysis, the relational noun *közép* ‘middle’ does not admit this.

(31) Context: *Mosd le az ablakpárkányokat!* ‘Wash the window sills.’

- Figyel-j a perem-ek-re!
pay.attention-IMPER.2SG the edge-PL-SUBL
‘Pay attention to the edges.’

Here we have a minimal pair contrast. The contextual setting is exactly of the same type in (9) as in (31), and in the latter example the suppression-based interpretation is readily available.

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