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Interpretive Aspects of Quotative Inversion: The Case of Hungarian

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Quotative Inversion (QI) is a syntactic phenomenon that occurs in English when a quote (Q), i.e. a segment of direct speech, precedes or encloses a reporting clause (RC) (here underlined):

(1) a. *"As falls Wichita, so falls Wichita Falls"* <u>*said Pat*</u>
    b. *"As falls Wichita,"* <u>*said Pat,*</u> *"so falls Wichita Falls"*

QI in English crucially involves inversion of the order of finite verb and subject. Detailed formal studies of QI in English have been provided by Collins and Branigan (1997), Collins (1997), and Suñer (2000), and extensions have been made to cover Dutch (de Vries 2006), French (Bonami & Godard 2008), and Spanish (Suñer 2000). This talk will study QI in Hungarian, which involves the obligatory inversion of finite verb and a particle often referred to as "verbal marker" (VM):

(2) a. *"Kedden   sikerült   a vizsgám"* <u>*jelentette be   János*</u>
        Tuesday.on succeeded the exam.my declared VM John
        '"On Tuesday I passed my exam" declared John'
    b. * *"Kedden sikerült a vizsgám"* <u>*bejelentette János*</u>
    c. *"Kedden sikerült"* <u>*jelentette be János*</u> *"a vizsgám"*
    d. * *"Kedden sikerült"* <u>*bejelentette János*</u> *"a vizsgám"*
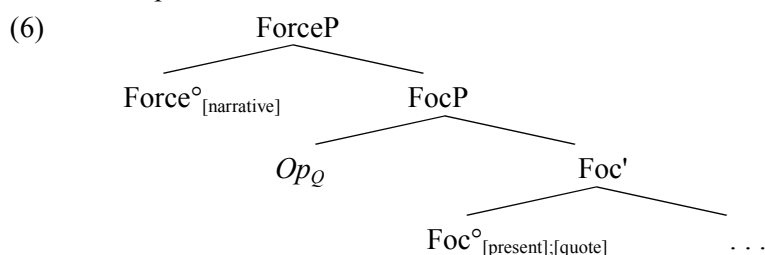
Following the literature just cited, one may assume that RC is a parenthetical clause involving an A'-moved operator, Op_Q. Moreover, it would be attractive to specifically follow Suñer (2000:541f.) in postulating that Op_Q occupies Spec,FocP in a structured "left-periphery" à la Rizzi (1997). This is so because focus movement in Hungarian triggers inversion of finite verb and VM as well. However, in addition to unexpected behavior wrt. prosody, long-distance dependency formation, and interaction with postverbal (multiple) focus, an analysis of Op_Q in Spec,FocP wrongly predicts that QI should exhibit the exhaustivity effects characteristic of Hungarian preverbal focus (modulo certain caveats, cf. Onea & Beaver 2011). Thus, consider (3) and (4):

(3) #*A képviselők* [*a médiatörvényt*]^F <u>*szavazták meg*</u>, *és   az alkotmányt   is   megszavazták*
    the delegates   the media.law.ACC voted   VM   and the constitution.ACC also VM.voted
    (#)'It was the media law the delegates voted for and they also voted for the constitution'

(4) *"Tizenöt éves   koromban elmentem otthonról,"* <u>*mesélte el   Béla*</u>
     fifteen   years age.my.in VM.went. home.from told   VM Béla
     és ezt is   elmesélte: "egy gyárban kezdtem el   dolgozni"
     and that also VM.told   a   factory.in started   VM work.inf
    '"I left home at age fifteen," Béla told us,
      and he also told us: "I (then) started to work in a factory."'

The effect in (3) is standardly attributed to violation of implication (5a) − exhaustive interpretation − (cf. Szabolcsi 1981; 1994). Yet, no such violation appears to arise in the QI case, (4), semantically captured here in terms of a naïve propositional format, (5b) (*p* = [[*I left home at age fifteen*]]).

(5) a. $\neg\exists x \in ALT_{(3)}(ml)$ [$x \neq ml \wedge$ VOTE.FOR(d,x)]   b. $\neg\exists x \in ALT_{(4)}(p)$ [$x \neq p \wedge$ TELL(b,x)]

A brute force attempt at accounting for this mismatch, could build on work by Jacobs (1984; 1988), who suggested that focus can be "bound" per default by illocutionary operators. In particular, it could be claimed that the specific "narrative" force accompanying QI determines a specific kind of non-exhaustive "presentational" focus. The structural skeleton of this would look as in (6):

(6)
               ForceP
           /   \
   Force°$_{[narrative]}$ FocP
                /   \
          Op_Q   Foc'
                    /   \
             Foc°$_{[present];[quote]}$ . . .

Independent evidence for this comes from the observation that QI is incompatible with standard "information focus" (cf. de Vries 2006:221):

(7) a.   A: *What did Kennedy say?*
    b.   B: # *"Ich bin ein Berliner" said Kennedy*

An overall more promising alternative is to analyze Hungarian QI as a variety of inversion triggered by complex predicate formation. This involves placement of Op_Q in PredP, a projection below FocP hosting (non-focused) predicative constituents like *pirosra* ('red'), which equally "attract" the finite verb across VM:

(8) *Mari pirosra <u>festette be</u> a kerítést*
  Mary red.onto painted VM the fence.ACC
  'Mary painted the fence red'

This analysis can be further motivated by the fact that certain quotative markers in Hungarian arise from incorporation of a demonstrative into a verb of saying. Examples are *úgymond* (lit. 'thus-said'; *úgy ≈ thus*) (now obsolete) and <u>*aszongya*</u> (lit. 'that-said'; *azt ≈ that*). Such an approach is in line with the common assumption that Op_Q corresponds to a silent demonstrative, usually realizable overtly as *so* in English (cf. Collins & Branigan 1997:14, 35; de Vries 2006:216). Incorporation of a demonstrative has the further welcome effect of independently voiding exhaustive interpretation. Thus, the revised (naïve) translation of (4) looks like (9a) ($q = [[$*I started to work in a factory*$]]$), which complies with condition (9b).

(9) a. THAT-TELL(b,p) ∧ TELL(b,q)
   b. ¬∃x ∈ ALT$_{(4)}$(p) [x ≠ p ∧ THAT-TELL(b,x)]

In addition to spelling this out more properly − heeding indexical semantics (cf. Zimmermann 1991), the demonstrative theory of quotation (cf. Davidson 1984), and the semantics of incorporation (Farkas & de Swart 2003) − this talk will (time permitting) deal with the following things: (a) formation of "quirky"/"literary" communication predicates under QI (cf. Fónagy 1986), (b) distinguishing *so* (Hu. *így*) from *this/that* (Hu. *ezt/azt*) on the basis of (in)definite verb morphology (cf. Bartos 2001), and (c) deriving the inaccessibility of TopP and FocP in the left-periphery of Hungarian (QI-)RCs from information-structural constraints (cf. Green 1980) on "narrative-Q-anchoring."

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