

Hungarian as a Japanese-type scrambling language

1. Hungarian is known as a language with overt movements to a richly articulated preverbal left-periphery, where a strict left-to-right scope order holds (e.g. É. Kiss 1991). Its postverbal domain, where constituent order exhibits a radical freedom, has received much less attention recently, although whether Hungarian is configurational with respect to its A-positions/VP structure was a frequently discussed issue throughout the 80s/early 90s. The only elaborated analysis that has emerged from that discussion is that of É. Kiss (1987a, b, 1994, 2002, 2003), according to which the Hungarian clause (and later, VP) is basically non-configurational: arguments (and adjuncts) are generated in a free order in a flat structure, cf. (1). In this paper I argue that the non-configurational VP analysis is ill-founded, and show that Hungarian is better characterized as featuring (local) scrambling of the Japanese type.
2. The main empirical arguments presented in favor of a flat VP structure are the following. (i) Lack of WCO effects with short *wh*-movement, cf. (2). (ii) Lack of a Superiority effect in multiple *wh*-fronting. (iii) Availability of V+S idiom chunks. (iv) Lack of certain restrictions in movement of subjects, cf. (3–4). (v) Condition C effects with subjects; cf. (5). (vi) Radical freedom of constituent order in the postverbal area. In fact, all of (i–v) point to a lack of S/O-asymmetries in domains where configurational languages of the English type have them. As for S/O-asymmetries attested in anaphor and pronominal variable licensing, they are accounted for by a Primacy Condition that disjunctively subsumes prominence in a Thematic Hierarchy and linear precedence (É. Kiss 1994).
3. I begin by pointing out that Hungarian does not fall into either one of the two best studies classes of non-configurational languages: the head-marking and the dependent-marking type (cf. Nichols 1986, Baker 1996, 2001). Then it is demonstrated that (i–vi) are inconclusive evidence in favor of a flat VP inasmuch as a scrambling analysis (based on a configurational *vP*), assuming overt V-movement to a relatively high projection: PredP (É. Kiss 2004) dominating TP, can derive (i–vi) just as well, and it can do so without relying directly either on a Thematic Hierarchy or on linear order. As for (i) and (ii), scrambling is known to obviate WCO and Superiority in scrambling languages like German and Japanese too, e.g., Haider 1986, Saito 1992). (iii) is inconclusive for two independent reasons. First, in a flat VP V+S do not form a base structure constituent (nor do V+O) (cf. Marantz 1981). Second, languages like English too have a number of S+V idiom chunks (e.g. (6), see Postal (2002)). (iv) The correlation between *pro*-drop/VP-internal subjects (characterizing Hungarian too) and lack of *that*-trace effects (Perlmutter 1971, Bennis 1986) is well-known. As for (4a), either or both of two factors can be held responsible: multiple *wh*-movement (cf. Rudin 1988) (cf. Bulgarian), and also, a *vP*-internal subject (cf. Sabel (2002) and references therein) (cf. Spanish, Italian). (v) All informants I consulted judge (5) to be ??? at worst, the degradation being attributed to the overt presence of the object pronoun. (7a) with *pro* as object is fully acceptable (vs. (7b) with *pro* as subject), contrary to the prediction of a flat VP account. On the other hand, (8) is out both with an overt pronoun and with *pro*, which fact is explained on Ruys' (1994) interface economy account in terms of blocking by (2) (for German). (vi) Scrambling gives rise to freedom in constituent order.
4. A host of facts are shown to be problematic for a non-configurational VP analysis, but fall out on a scrambling account (which assumes a hierarchical *vP*). (i) We find WCO S/O-asymmetries with universal quantifiers. (ii) Superiority effects are detected in several constructions, including *n*-word fronting (9) and long singular *wh*-movement in multiple questions (10). (iii) Subjects are CED islands (cf. (11)), while complements are not. (iv) I exemplify cases of S/O-asymmetry for Condition C in the domain of epithets, coreferential lexical DPs, and A-bar reconstruction (beside (7a) vs. (7b)). (v) S/O scope asymmetries are exhibited postverbally by non-increasing modified numeral QPs, cf. (12). (vii) An S/O asymmetry can be witnessed in the satisfaction of the anti-c-command condition on parasitic gap licensing. (viii) Adverb scope interpretation is not free, contrary to what is expected in a flat VP.
5. Effects attributed to linear precedence (cf. §3) are derived, assuming Hungarian scrambling has A-type properties: A-type scrambling (of Obj) feeds binding of an anaphor (in the possessor of Subj, cf. (13)), it feeds pronominal variable binding (paradigmatic properties of 'A-scrambling', cf. Grewendorf and Sabel (1999).)), but it does not feed Condition C. Scrambling does not induce WCO effects or parasitic gap licensing. If scope interpretation in a Subj Obj order is unambiguously 'S > O' (e.g. (12)), scrambling of Obj over Subj licenses a 'O > S' scope reading as well as 'S > O', cf. (14). No clear specificity effects of the German or Dutch type are discernible. All these properties are shared by the Japanese-type local scrambling movement (e.g. (13')) (cf. Saito 1992, 2003, Miyagawa 2003, Kitahara 2002, Bailyn 2003), which I propose is operative in the Hungarian postverbal field.

- (1) a. [VP [_v V DP_{subj} DP_{obj}]] b. [VP [_v V DP_{obj} DP_{subj}]]
- (2) [Kit]_i hívott fel [az *pro*_i anyja] t_i?
whom called PV the (his) mother
'*Who_i did his_i mother call?'
- (3) Ki szeretné, hogy eljöjjön? (lack of *that*-trace effects)
who-nom would.like-2sg that PV-come-subj-3sg
'Who would you like to come along?'
- (4) a. (?)Melyik tanár nem tudod, hogy miért buktatott meg *pro*?
which teacher not know-2sg that why flunked-3sg PV 2SG-acc
'*Which teacher don't you know why flunked you?' (Subj mvt out of *wh*-island, cf.(b))
b. *Which boy do you wonder why wants to buy a new car?
- (5) *Tegnap felhívta Péter_i anyja őt_i [judgment É. Kiss 1987a]
yesterday PV-called Peter's mother-nom him
'Yesterday Peter's mother phoned him.'
- (6) a. The lovebug bit Tony b. Fortune smiled on Gwendolyn
- (7) What's the news about Peter?
a. ^{OK}Tegnap felhívta Péter_i anyja_{NOM} *pro*_{ACC i}
b. *Tegnap felhívta *pro*_{NOM i} Péter_i anyját_{ACC}
- (8) *Kinek_i az anyja hívta fel őt_i / *pro*_i ?
whose_i the mother-nom called PV him_i / *pro*_i-acc
- (9) #Nyilvános helyen szerintem senkivel se csókolózzon senki
public place-on in my opinion nobody-with NEG kiss-inf-3sg nobody-nom
intended: 'I think no kissing should be allowed in a public place.' (vs ^{OK}nobody_{NOM}...nobody_{ACC})
- (10) ?*Kit szeretné, hogy elvegyen ki?
who-acc would.like-2sg that PV-marry-inf-3sg who-nom (vs. ^{OK}who_{NOM} ... [CP ... who_{ACC}])
'*Who would you like who to marry?'
- (11) *Melyik tisztviselővel_i állította [egy interjú t_i], hogy az egyetem csődben van?
which official-with claimed an interview that the university bankruptcy-in is
'*With which official did [an interview t] claim that the university is bankrupt?'
- (12) TAVALY csinált meg több mint száz diák kevesebb mint öt tárgyat
last.year did-3sg PV more than hundred student-nom less than five subject-acc
'It was last year that more than 100 students completed less than 5 subjects.' (S > O, *O > S)
- (13) a. *Sokat kritizálják egymás szülei Jánost és Pétert
a lot-acc criticize-3sg each other parents-nom J.-acc and P.-acc
b. ?Sokat kritizálják [Jánost és Pétert]_i egymás szülei t_i
a lot-acc criticize-3sg J.-acc and P.-acc each other parents-nom
'John and Peter are criticized a lot by each other's parents.'
- (13') a. ?*[[Otagai-no sensei]-ga karera-o hihansita] (koto)
each other-gen teacher-nom they-acc criticized (fact)
b. ?[Karera-o_i [[otagai-no sensei]-ga t_i hihansita]] (koto) (Saito 2003)
they-acc each other-gen teacher-nom criticized (fact)
- (14) TAVALY csinált meg kevesebb mint öt tárgyat_i több mint száz diák t_i
last.year did-3sg PV less than five subject-acc more than hundred student-nom
(S > O, O > S)

Selected references É.Kiss, K. 1991. Logical structure in syntactic structure: the case of Hungarian. In: Huang, C.-T. J. et al. (eds.) *Logical Structure and Linguistics Structure: Cross-linguistic Perspectives*. Dordrecht: Kluwer. // É.Kiss, K. 1994. Sentence structure and word order. In: Kiefer, F. et al. (eds.) *Syntax and Semantics: The Syntactic Structure of Hungarian*. New York: Academic Press. // É.Kiss, K. 2002. Hungarian Syntax. CUP. // Grewendorf, G. and J. Sabel. 1999. Scrambling in German and Japanese: Adjunction versus multiple specifiers. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 17: 1–65. // Kitahara, H. 2002. Scrambling, case, and interpretability. In: S. D. Epstein et al. (eds.) *Derivation and Explanation in the Minimalist Program*. Blackwell. // Postal, P. 2002. *Skeptical Linguistic Essays. Chapter 3 A New Raising Mystery*. NYU, Ms. // Ruys, E., 1994. A global economy account of Weak Crossover. *Linguistics in the Netherlands 1994*: 223–234. // Saito, M. 2003. A Derivational Approach to the Interpretation of Scrambling Chains. *Lingua* 113: 481–518.