

Thematic arguments and thematic adjuncts: evidence from Hungarian datives

I will argue in this talk for an expansion of the traditional argument-adjunct dichotomy of semantically contentful expressions into a triad. I will elaborate a systematic distinction between thematic arguments proper, which are coded in the theta grid of the verb, and thematic adjuncts, which are not coded in the theta grid of the verb but are inserted through the derivation as bearers of a given thematic role type. Thematic adjuncts contrast with adjuncts proper, which are, as usual, not assigned thematic roles.

I will substantiate this approach with a study of Hungarian dative expressions that prototypically denote animate participants (Beneficiaries, Experiencers, and Recipients). Special attention is given to the following constructions:

- (1) *Nem tetszik János-nak, hogy Péter itt volt.*
not appeals John-DAT that Peter here was
lit. 'It does not appeal to John that Peter was here.'
- (2) *Úgy tűnik János-nak, hogy Péter itt volt.*
so seems John-DAT that Peter here was
'It seems to John that Peter was here.'
- (3) *Fontos volt / tilos volt / megér-te János-nak, hogy itt legy-en.*
important was / forbidden was / worth-PAST John-DAT that here be-3SG.SUBJUNCTIVE
lit. 'It was important/forbidden/worthwhile for John that he should be here.'

It is generally assumed that the dative of modal/evaluative predicates (3) is an *Experiencer argument* (Komlósy 1994, É. Kiss 2002, Tóth 2000), and that in this and in other crucial respects modals/evaluatives are similar to the *piacere*-type predicates in (1), cf. especially Dalmi (2002). The dative of *seem*-type predicates (2) has so far escaped closer attention.

My aim is to prove that these dative constructions are in fact of two fundamentally distinct kinds (the variation itself not being primarily conditioned by the categorial type of the predicate). The dative of *piacere*-predicates in (1) and of certain (uses of) modals is indeed an Experiencer argument, but the dative expression of *seem*-type predicates and of most modals and evaluatives is neither an argument nor a true Experiencer: it is a thematic adjunct. The two types differ significantly. First, only the former can be replaced by the PP *X számára* 'for X', which is shown to be ungrammatical in real argument positions. Second, only dative adjuncts may be exempt from the animacy requirement (cf. *It is good/important for the environment that ...*). Third, dative adjuncts need not have experiencer semantics even if they denote animate participants (cf. *I think it is important for John that ... though he doesn't think so*). Fourth, dative adjuncts are truly optional, whereas dative arguments are obligatory. Hence, if no overt dative is present, the construction is interpreted as involving an implicit non-generic Experiencer argument in the latter case, whereas in the former the construction receives an objective construal with no Experiencer present in the semantics (cf. Jackendoff in progress). Fifth, a dative Experiencer argument may co-occur with an Experiencer adjunct (especially if this latter is marked by the postposition *számára* 'for') in the governing domain of a single predicate.

I will develop an account of the thematic argument - thematic adjunct distinction within the Theta System of Reinhart (2002) and will show how the Hungarian data can receive natural explanation in this frame. The idea that certain adjuncts may have thematic specification has occasionally been suggested in the literature in different forms (cf., among others, Grimshaw 1990, Zubizarreta 1982, and especially Marelj 2004), here it is argued to be an essential design feature of grammar. Thematic adjuncts, as opposed to arguments, are generally optional and they are licensed by the presence of designated argument types or by designated semantic features of the predicate. The two thematic domains have their own formative rules (such as a constraint allowing only non-identical thematic entities to be co-realised) which are valid within, but not across the domain boundaries. I will show that this approach gives the right predictions also in the case of other thematic types, such as, for example, Comitatives and Instruments, which are both represented in the adjunct as well as in the argument domain.

Author:

Rákosi, György

Utrecht Institute of Linguistics

rakosigy@hotmail.com

Gyorgy.Rakosi@let.uu.nl

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