

CHAPTER 4

‘My enemy’s enemy is my friend’

Similarities motivated by contrasts in Hungarian sentence structure

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In Hungarian generative grammar, the terms *topic* and *focus* designate structural positions associated with logico-semantic functions. The present chapter highlights the fact that elements sharing the behaviour of “topics” and “foci” are highly varied, and that logico-semantic definitions only capture prioritized subsets of the relevant data. I argue that preverbal, inversion-triggering elements (“foci” and the negative particle) are overriders, with their semantic commonality depending on relationships of contrast vis-à-vis a baseline clause type, that of neutral positive declarative clauses. With regard to sentence-initial, weakly stressed expressions (“topics” and “sentence adverbials”), I propose that they are contextualizers, generating supporting context for the processing of a message. Here, the baseline can be identified as the situation where no explicit contextualization is necessary. The possibility for two patterns to be similar indirectly, by virtue of standing in contrast with a third one, will be referred to as the ‘my enemy’s enemy is my friend’ principle of linguistic organization.

Keywords: baseline, contextualization, contrast, focus, overriding, topic

1. Introduction

An important guiding principle of cognitive linguistics is that “[s]imilarity of form reflects similarity of meaning, and difference of form reflects difference of meaning” (Wierzbicka 1995: 224). Arguably, this principle is far from being unique to the linguist’s enterprise; it is fundamental for our implicit as well as explicit knowledge of language. In L1 acquisition, on encountering repeated occurrences of a word, the child implicitly assumes that the meaning will be the same or very similar across contexts, with homonymy in need of special attention. In morphology, the stem is expected to be the same or very similar across a range of paradigmatic values, with

suppletion treated as a special case. The principle is thus so deeply ingrained that even formalist linguists tend to adopt it by default: when a set of elements behave similarly, this is often taken as evidence that there must be something common in their meaning. However, when initial attempts at finding this semantic commonality fail, they are more likely to give up the pursuit than cognitive linguists, for whom language is all about meaning, and grammar is the study of constructions, i.e. learned pairings of meaning and form on a lexicon-syntax continuum (see e.g. Goldberg 2006; Langacker 2008).

The present chapter addresses two puzzles of Hungarian sentence structure, revisiting the phenomena standardly referred to in the generative literature as “topic” and “focus”. In both cases, a set of formal properties is shared across a range of seemingly highly diverse element types. As we shall see, the mainstream generative solution is to base categorization on a prioritized subset of the data, namely the subset that conforms best to *a priori* assumptions about language. Elements in the complementary subset are either excluded from the category (witness the fate of sentence adverbials in the case of topics, and the negative particle in the case of foci), or else their membership is granted in a stipulative manner.

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, however, Wierzbicka’s principle needs to be taken more seriously. Specifically, the task is to describe the constructions at work, providing a coherent description of their semantic pole that helps motivate formal similarities by functional ones. However, a key feature of my proposal is that the observed formal similarities are motivated not so much (or not only) by direct functional parallels but rather (also) by relationships of contrast with respect to an unmarked default, or baseline, configuration (cf. Langacker 2012, 2016, this volume). The possibility for two patterns to be similar by virtue of standing in contrast with a third one will be referred to as the ‘my enemy’s enemy is my friend’ principle of linguistic organization. The fact that contrasts are so fundamental for understanding the phenomena may remind one of Saussure’s famous dictum whereby “in language there are only differences” (Saussure 1966 [1915]: 120).

The chapter is structured as follows. In Section 2, I introduce the two puzzles, and give an overview of how the phenomena are analysed in mainstream generative grammar. In Section 3, I argue that what preverbal, inversion-triggering elements (“foci” and the negative particle) have in common is that in terms of speech function, they define sentence types standing in contrast with the baseline type of neutral positive declarative sentences. In Section 4, I turn to topics, and show that they represent a subtype of a broader category of contextualizers, contributing to the generation of supporting context for the successful (fluent as well as accurate) processing of a message. This time, what contextualizers have in common is identified by reference to a baseline pertaining to the processing of context. Finally, Section 5 concludes the chapter.

2. Shared behaviour, diverse meanings: Two puzzles of Hungarian sentence structure

Hungarian has a rich case morphology and a system of postpositions, which are crucial for making formal distinctions between various participants and circumstances of the profiled grounded process (for the concepts of profiling and grounded process, see Langacker 2008). Concomitantly, word order in Hungarian is used primarily for coding other aspects of meaning such as illocutionary force, polarity, and information structure. In generative grammar, the notions topic and focus have long been assumed to play a central role in the description of Hungarian word order. In mainstream proposals put forward by Katalin É. Kiss, they receive logical rather than discourse semantic interpretations (cf. É. Kiss 2002, 2009).

In the present section, I show that the elements of shared formal behaviour are in fact highly varied in the case of both “topics” and “foci”, with a logico-semantic analysis at best capturing a prioritized subset of the data. From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, the fact that functionally highly diverse elements behave similarly may seem puzzling, and it is the resolution of the two puzzles that Sections 3 and 4 are devoted to.

Let us begin with Puzzle 1, which can be formulated as follows. In Hungarian, simple positive declarative clauses display a default preverb-verb order, as illustrated by a token of the lexeme *felhív* ‘telephone’ in (1). Within *felhívta* (a 3rd person past-tense form also coding a definite object), the verb form *hívta* ‘called.3SG.DEF’ is preceded by the preverb *fel*, literally meaning ‘up’. However, the default preverb-verb order is reversed in constructions which include an interrogative phrase (2a), an expression serving to identify a participant or circumstance to the exclusion of other options (2b), a restrictive adverb (2c) or the negative particle *nem* (2d) in an immediately preverbal position. These elements are also prominent prosodically, owing not only to their own (pitch) accent but also to the destressing of the verb in their wake. The puzzling question is why it is precisely these element types that share the formal properties just described. In the examples, I highlight the relevant inversion-triggering expressions by capitalization.

- (1) *János tegnap fel-hívta Mari-t.v*
 John.NOM yesterday PREV-called.3SG.DEF MARY-ACC
 ‘John called /telephoned/ Mary yesterday.’
- (2) a. *KIT hívott fel János?*
 whom called.3SGPREV John.NOM
 ‘Who did John call?’
 b. *MARIT hívta fel János.*
 Mary.ACC called.3SG.DEFPREV John.NOM
 ‘It was Mary that John called.’

- c. *János RITKÁN hívja fel Marit.*
 John.NOM rarely call.3SG.DEFPREV Mary.ACC
- d. *János NEM hívta fel Marit.*
 John.NOM not called.3SG.DEFPREV Mary.ACC
 ‘John didn’t call Mary.’

In generative grammar, the immediately preverbal elements in (2a)–(c) are analysed as occupying focus position; technically, the specifier of a Focus Phrase (cf. É. Kiss 2002: 86). For certain distributional and theory-internal reasons, the negative particle in (2d) is not regarded as an instance of focus, despite the fact that its behaviour in the example above is precisely analogous to that of the immediately preverbal expressions in (2a)–(c). In what follows, I treat *nem* ‘not’ as belonging to the construction whose description is at issue. The decision is based on both its observed behaviour and the fact that negativity is also present in the meaning of restrictive adverbs such as *ritkán* ‘rarely’, illustrated in (2c). I provisionally call the pattern Construction X and represent it as follows.

meaning	?
word order	immediately preverbal element followed by preverb-verb inversion
prosody	element with pitch accent followed by the destressing of the verb

Figure 1. A provisional representation of Construction X

As the figure implies, it would be desirable to characterize the meaning associated with the formal properties in general (or at least coherent) terms, so that the formal similarities across various preverbal, prosodically prominent, inversion-triggering element types receive semantic motivation. However, this is not what we find in the logico-semantic account proposed by É. Kiss (2002, 2009), whereby the focus position is argued to be linked to the logical function of *exhaustive identification*. Let us next consider this line of thought along with the question as to what semantic similarities may be spotted between element types sharing the formal behaviour of “foci”.

The notion of exhaustive identification can be brought to bear on the data as follows: within a set of contextually/situationally given referents, the focus exhaustively (i.e. fully, completely) specifies a proper subset for which the proposition expressed by the complement of Focus₀ holds (cf. É. Kiss 2002: 78).¹ Clearly, this characterization applies to (2b) but not to the other examples (2a), (2c) and (2d). In (2b), Mary is identified by the speaker as the person whom John called. In line with

1. In É. Kiss (2002), the complement of Focus₀ is a projection called Predicate Phrase (PredP); however, this aspect of the analysis has since undergone several modifications.

É. Kiss's analysis, Mary can be said to represent a proper subset of the set of people whom John could have called. From the exhaustive meaning of focus it follows that other options are excluded ('It was Mary and nobody else that John called'), focusing thus crucially affects the truth-conditional meaning of the sentence.

As É. Kiss (2009: 292) notes, "[c]ertain types of elements, e.g., wh-phrases, phrases modified by *only*, or monotone decreasing quantifiers, are obligatorily focussed." This is clearly no more than a stipulation; in other works, however, É. Kiss does attempt to make explanatory comments on why the element types in (2a) and (2c) are focussed. (As mentioned above, the negative particle does not belong to focussed constituents under her assumptions.) For example, with regard to (2a), she claims that an interrogative phrase asks for, rather than performs, identification (cf. É. Kiss 2003: 31), which goes some way toward motivating its behaviour. Clearly though, the explanatory scope of exhaustive identification can hardly be extended to all of the inversion-triggering elements, with the negative particle presenting an especially serious challenge.

An alternative approach, drawing on Arany (1873), would be to consider *negativity* as the functional basis of the construction. This solution applies best to (2d), and it also naturally accommodates (2c), since *ritkán* 'rarely' expresses the speaker's negative evaluation of the attested frequency with respect to some presumed norm (for a more detailed discussion, see Section 3). Moreover, the analysis might be stretched further to apply to (2b), since identifying Mary as the person John called implies the truth of a range of negative statements about whom he did not call. However, this is already fairly opportunistic, and the pattern in (2a) can hardly be motivated along these lines.

Finally, similar comments can be made about *restriction* as an overarching concept (cf. Imrényi 2012). This works best for (2b) and (2c), with the validity of an open proposition (about John calling *x*, and about John calling a person at *n* frequency) restricted to Mary within a set, and to a lower degree on a scale, respectively. The pattern in (2d) can perhaps be motivated by saying that negation is an extreme case of restriction; the validity of a proposition is restricted to the point that it is claimed to be false. Again, though, this is a rather opportunistic and impressionistic account that is more applicable to some inversion-triggering element types than others.

To conclude the discussion so far, the observed formal similarities cannot be fully motivated by direct functional similarities, with notions such as identification, negation and restriction only partially accounting for the patterns. In other words, Construction X cannot be called either Identificational Construction, Negative Construction or Restrictive Construction. In cognitive linguistics, it would of course be viable to assume that we are dealing with a family of constructions that cannot be analysed as elaborations of the same symbolic schema. However, a

coherent, unified account is still desirable, and in Section 3, I offer a proposal that does apply to the constructs in (2a)–(d) in the same manner.

In the remainder of this section, let us move on to Puzzle 2 and the no less mysterious Construction Y. I begin with the generative approach and the data that motivate it before raising questions from a cognitive perspective.

Mainstream generative grammar posits a topic position in the syntactic structure of Hungarian sentences, with strong repercussions for phonological and semantic interpretation. According to É. Kiss, “[t]he topic is an XP extracted from the functionally extended verb phrase into the left periphery of the sentence. It precedes the pitch accent that marks the left edge of the functionally extended verb phrase in Hungarian. It is interpreted as the logical subject of predication” (É. Kiss 2009: 288).²

É. Kiss (2002: 8) uses the following examples to introduce the phenomenon of topichood in Hungarian. For ease of interpretation, a slash has been added after the topic part of each sentence.

- (3) a. *A védők / sokáig tartották a várat a törökök ellen*
 the defenders long held.3PL the fort.ACC the Turks against
 ‘The defenders held the fort against the Turks for a long time.’
- b. *A védők / sokáig tartották a törökök ellen a várat.*
- c. *A várat / sokáig tartották a védők a törökök ellen.*
- d. *A várat / sokáig tartották a törökök ellen a védők.*
- e. *A törökök ellen / sokáig tartották a védők a várat.*
- f. *A törökök ellen / sokáig tartották a várat a védők.*

As É. Kiss (2002: 8–9) observes,

Although [3a–f] describe the same event (the event of the defenders holding the fort against the Turks for a long time), they formulate it as statements about different participants of the event. [3a,b] make a statement about the defenders (that they held the fort against the Turks for a long time), [3c,d] make a statement about the fort (that the defenders held it against the Turks for a long time), whereas [3e,f] make a statement about the Turks (that the defenders held the fort against them for a long time). That is, the sentences all instantiate a similar predication relation, with the initial constituent functioning as the logical subject of predication, and the rest of the sentence functioning as the logical predicate. [...] [T]he logical subject of predication will be referred to by the term ‘topic’. So the Hungarian sentence primarily divides into a topic and a predicate. [...] The topic foregrounds an individual (a person, an object, or a group of them) from among those present in the universe of discourse as the subject of the subsequent predication.

2. Gécseg and Kiefer (2009) argue that *topic* and *logical subject* should not be treated as synonyms; however, they do accept É. Kiss’s view that the basic structure of Hungarian sentences is determined by articulation into logical subject and logical predicate.

As a further important point, É. Kiss remarks that “[a] sentence can contain more than one topic. A sentence with two topics expresses predication about a pair of the participants of the given event or state” (É. Kiss 2002: 13).

As for formal markers of the boundary between topic (logical subject) and logical predicate, É. Kiss relies on two criteria. “The most obvious clue is stress: the first obligatory stress, which also represents the heaviest grammatical stress in the sentence, falls on the first major constituent of the predicate” (É. Kiss 2002: 8). In addition, “we can locate the topic–predicate boundary by finding the rightmost position where a sentence adverbial [e.g. *remélhetőleg* ‘hopefully’, *szerencsére* ‘fortunately’] can be inserted. Sentence adverbials can precede or follow the topic, but cannot enter the predicate” (É. Kiss 2002: 9).

At this point, it is worth taking a closer look at the distribution of sentence adverbials. In accordance with the above remarks, all of the linearizations in (4) are possible, each having the same basic meaning (cf. É. Kiss 2002: 20).

- (4) a. *Szerencsére a várat a törökök / nem tudták elfoglalni.*
 fortunately the fort.ACC the Turks.NOM not could.3PL occupy
 ‘Fortunately, the Turks were not able to occupy the fort.’
 b. *A várat szerencsére a törökök / nem tudták elfoglalni.*
 c. *A várat a törökök szerencsére / nem tudták elfoglalni.*

In these sentences, there are two topics, namely *a várat* ‘the fort.ACC’ and *a törökök* ‘the Turks.NOM’. Note that the sentence adverbial *szerencsére* ‘fortunately’ and the two topics may occur in any order at the left periphery, to the left of the pitch accent falling on *nem* ‘not’. As É. Kiss puts it, “[t]he free order of a sentence adverbial relative to the topic constituents, and its topic-like prosody might suggest at first sight that it is also a topic. However, it does not share the semantic features associated with the topic function: it is not understood as the logical subject of predication” (É. Kiss 2002: 20). Consequently, sentence adverbials are not to be treated as topics.

The interpretive strategy manifested in this rather circular line of reasoning can be described in abstract terms as follows.

1. Based on a subset of relevant data (as well as implicit theoretical considerations favouring logically defined categories), a category X is formed, and given a logical definition.
2. Another subset of data is observed, comprising linguistic elements whose formal behaviour matches those which have been assigned to category X.
3. It is noted that elements in this new subset of data cannot be regarded as members of category X, since they fail to satisfy the logical definition of the latter.
4. A new category Y is set up to host elements which cannot be subsumed under category X.

From a cognitive perspective, it seems clear that the logically inclined analysis cannot be maintained; topics and so-called sentence adverbials ought to be subsumed under a general category. The following sample text provides additional support for the claim that sentence-initial elements preceding the heaviest stress (a pitch accent) in the sentence cannot be adequately described by the notion of topic, especially when the latter is equated with the concept of logical subject of predication. In each sentence of the excerpt, the relevant sentence-initial expressions are underlined.

- (5) *Teljes csendben, két évig húzódo tárgyalások után / szenzációszámba menő kulturális hírről számolt be a napokban több hazai médium, illetve internetes portál. [2] A világhírű, magyar származású fotóriporter, Robert Capa hagyatékából / egy több mint ezer darabos kollekción vásárolt a Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum a fotográfus hagyatékát kezelő, New York-i székhelyű International Center of Photographytól (ICP) még tavaly decemberben. [3] A vételár a hírek szerint / 835 ezer dollár volt. [4] A megvásárolt gyűjteményt ezen a héten / már ki is csomagolták Budapesten. [5] A következőkben / megismerhetik Capa igencsak kalandos életútját.*³

[1] After two years of negotiations conducted in complete silence, a sensational piece of cultural news was reported in recent days by several Hungarian media outlets and internet sites. [2] From the legacy of the world-famous photographer of Hungarian descent, Robert Capa, a collection of more than a thousand pieces was purchased by the Hungarian National Museum from the International Center of Photography in New York, which is in charge of the photographer's legacy, back in last December. [3] The price, according to the news, was 835.000 dollars. [4] This week, the purchased collection was already unpacked in Budapest. [5] In what follows, you can learn more about Capa's remarkably adventurous life.

In Section 4, I return to the analysis of this text; for now, note that the notion of topichood applies to a very limited subset of the relevant expressions sharing the same formal properties. At this stage, Puzzle 2 can be formulated like this: What is the semantic contribution of sentence-initial, weakly stressed elements preceding the heaviest stress of the sentence?⁴ In other words, how is the semantic pole of Construction Y to be characterized?

3. http://mandiner.blog.hu/2009/02/22/robert_capa_hagyateka, last accessed on 13 June 2022.

4. Stress being a matter of relative prominence, what is important about the sentence-initial elements under study is that their stress is weaker than the pitch accent they precede. This is what is meant here by “weakly stressed”.

meaning	?
word order	sentence-initial position
prosody	weakly stressed; followed by pitch accent

Figure 2. A provisional representation of Construction Y

Just as in the case of Construction X, it would be possible to account for the phenomena with a family of constructions, eschewing the need for a schematic definition of the semantic pole that applies to each of the instances. For example, Jacobs argues that “the common denominator of topic–comment (TC) constructions in natural languages is not a single functional feature (e.g. aboutness) but rather the fact that they share some salient semantic attributes with prototypical examples of TC” (Jacobs 2001: 641). While this approach is certainly justified, extensions from a prototype tend to motivate the abstraction of schemas under the assumptions of cognitive linguistics (cf. Taylor 1995: 65–68, Langacker 2008: 225–226). Therefore, I regard Jacobs’s prototype-based approach and my proposal on a general schema to be complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

To summarize the discussion in this section, I have shown that the notions of focus and topic (interpreted in terms of exhaustive identification and logical subjecthood, respectively) are hardly adequate for describing Hungarian sentence structure. Both of these logically defined categories are based on a prioritized subset of the relevant data, and fail to illuminate the semantic motivation of why certain types of elements behave similarly. In Sections 3 and 4 below, I revisit the phenomena with the aim of accounting for the observed formal similarities by functional ones. A key feature of the proposal is that understanding functional similarities crucially requires the study of relationships of contrast.

3. Inversion as a way of marking departures from baseline clauses. “Foci” as overriders

The present subsection takes Goldberg’s (2006) account of English Subject-Auxiliary Inversion (SAI) as its point of departure, and motivates the range of inversion-triggering elements by the functional departures they symbolize with respect to prototypical, or baseline (cf. Langacker 2012, 2016, this volume), finite clauses. It is argued that neutral positive declarative clauses represent the central clause type in Hungarian, with the implication that functional departures may pertain to three parameters, namely positive vs. negative, declarative vs. non-declarative, and neutral vs. non-neutral. In terms of the internal structure of the relevant constructions, inversion-triggering elements are described as overriders.

Let us begin with a brief summary of Goldberg’s analysis, based on the figure below.

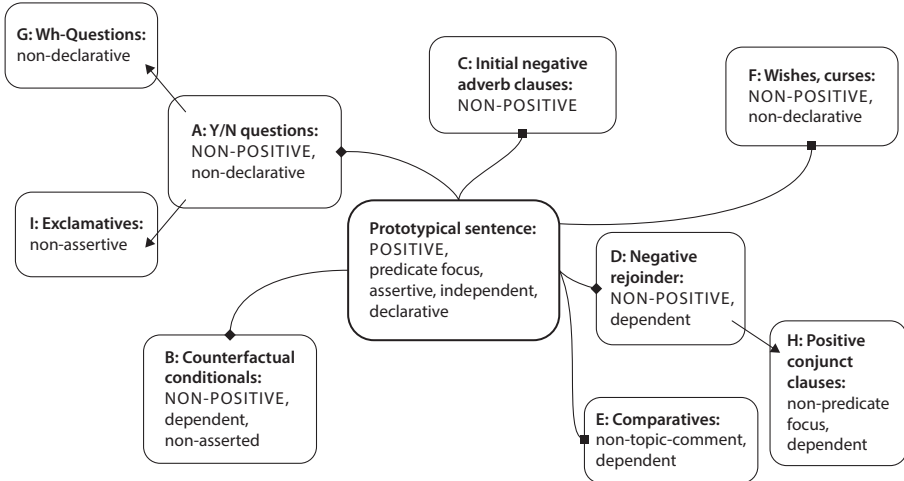


Figure 3. Goldberg’s (2006: 179) account of English subject-auxiliary inversion

Goldberg’s attempt to motivate the range of SAI constructions in English involves a radial network whose centre is occupied by prototypical sentences (Figure 3). Prototypical sentences are characterized by a cluster of functional properties. In particular, they are positive and declarative, they assign focus status (in terms of the given/new dichotomy) to the predicate, they are assertive, and independent (i.e. they are not restricted to occurring as embedded clauses). The distribution of SAI in clauses of seemingly highly heterogeneous functions is then motivated by markedness links (in effect, relationships of contrast) with respect to this central type.⁵

Under Goldberg’s assumptions, there is no need for all SAI constructions to share the same semantic properties, just as it is not required of each member of a category organized by the prototype principle to be closely similar. Instead, it is sufficient that the function of each SAI construction departs in one way or another from the prototype. As Goldberg puts it, “SAI is a motivated device for indicating deviations from prototypical sentences, particularly for non-positive expressions.

5. The examples Goldberg uses to illustrate the constructions in the network are as follows: *Did she go?* (Y/N questions), *Where did she go?* (wh-question), *Had she gone, they would be here by now* (counterfactual conditionals), *Seldom had she gone there* (construction with initial negative adverb), *May a million fleas infest his armpits!* (wishes/curses), *Boy did she go!* (exclamatives), *He was faster at it than was she* (comparatives), *Neither do they vote* (construction with negative conjunct), *So does he* (positive rejoinder) (Goldberg 2006: 166).

It is certainly not the only possible device: overt negatives, discourse particles, and other special constructions could do the job equally well" (Goldberg 2006: 181). In short, Goldberg's approach is aimed at, and arguably succeeds in, *motivating* the range of SAI constructions, but it is not designed to *predict* the distribution of inversion. This, however, meshes perfectly with the general orientation of cognitive linguistics (see e.g. Langacker 2011: 30, Janda 2015: 133).

As we turn to Hungarian, let us now consider a broader range of clause types, including those exemplified in (1–2) and a few additional ones.

- (6) *János tegnap fel-hívta Mari-t.*
 John.NOM yesterday PREV-called.3SG.DEF Mary-ACC
 'John called /telephoned/ Mary yesterday.'
- (7) a. *^János tegnap fel-hívta Mari-t?*
 John.NOM yesterday PREV-called.3SG.DEF Mary-ACC
 'Did John call Mary yesterday?'
- b. *János tegnap fel-hívta-e Mari-t?*
 John.NOM yesterday PREV-called.3SG.DEF-Q Mary-ACC
 'Did John call Mary yesterday?'
- (8) *Bárcsak János fel-hívna Mari-t!*
 If only John.NOM PREV-call.COND.2SG.DEF Mary-ACC
 'If only John called Mary!'
- (9) *Hívd fel Marit!*
 call.2SG.IMP PREV Mary.ACC
 'Call Mary!'
- (10) a. *KIT hívott fel János?*
 Whom called.3SG PREV John.NOM
 Who did John call?'
- b. *MARIT hívta fel János.*
 Mary.ACC called.3SG.DEF PREV John.NOM
 'It was Mary that John called.'
- c. *János RITKÁN hívja fel Marit.*
 John.NOM rarely call.3SG.DEF PREV Mary.ACC
 'John rarely calls Mary.'
- d. *János NEM hívta fel Marit.*
 John.NOM not called.3SG.DEF PREV Mary.ACC
 'John didn't call Mary.'

The examples above have it in common that they all prompt for the conceptualization of a telephoning event. However, their speech functions are very different. Whereas by using (6), the speaker is stating the occurrence of a telephoning event, with (7a,b) she is asking whether such an event took place. The sentence in (8) is

used to express the speaker's desire for the hypothetical event of John calling Mary to occur. With (9), the speaker issues a command, or makes a suggestion, to the listener, in an attempt to get her to initiate a telephoning event. Finally, the functions of (10a)–(d) have already been discussed before; these also clearly depart from the speech function of (6). From this point on, I refer to (6) as a *neutral positive declarative clause*, and argue for the central (prototypical or baseline) status of this type.

As we compare (6) with (10d), the contrast pertains to *polarity*, with the former being positive and the latter negative. The positive sentence is clearly conceptually simpler and more basic, which ultimately results from the fact that perception has a positive bias. We only see what we perceive as *existing* in our fields of vision. By contrast, the absence of something can never be directly perceived; rather, the conceptualisation of negative situations necessarily has additional processing complexity (whereby what is perceived is compared to what could be or was expected to be perceived). In his somewhat idiosyncratic style, Szilágyi N. (1996: 110) expresses this as follows.

A negative sentence [...] cannot be produced directly on the basis of a single linguistic percept. This has a simple explanation: it is so because I am unable to perceive negatively. [...] A negative sentence can only arise when I first perceive the situation in my mind as existing, and then acknowledge the fact that it is not possible to actually perceive it. [...] And I can only put this into words by saying my prior perception [...] but also adding something to the sentence (such as a negative word), whereby I can signal to the listener that this is in fact not my perception of the actual situation but rather my prior, mental perception which does not match the situation as it is.”
(my translation)

While some of the wordings might be problematic, Szilágyi makes the important and valid points here that (1) negative sentences are semantically as well as formally dependent on positive ones and that (2) this semantic (conceptual) dependence has a strong perceptual basis (see also Langacker 2016: 435). The binary opposition between positive and negative polarity is not an opposition of equals but instead positive polarity serves as the basic, unmarked member from which negative polarity departs.

Langacker (2012) proposes that in a system, it is usual for one member to have lesser conceptual complexity, providing “a baseline conception which others take as the point of departure for their characterization” (Langacker 2012: 11). For example, within the number category of nominals, singular functions as a baseline for accessing plural number. In Langacker's terminology, “the latter is derivative, being obtained from the baseline through some conceptual operation, as well as a formal operation serving to symbolize it” (Langacker 2012: 12). With regard to clauses, the above considerations suggest that positive polarity represents

the baseline conception with respect to negative sentences, as indeed argued by Langacker (2012: 38).

In clauses with restrictive adverbs such as *ritkán* 'rarely', negativity is manifested in a peculiar way. Crucial in this regard is the observation that *néha* 'sometimes' does not trigger inversion, as illustrated by (11) below.

- (11) *János néha fel-hívja Marit.*
 John.NOM sometimes PREV-call.3SG.DEF Mary.ACC
 'John sometimes calls Mary.'

This example suggests that *ritkán* 'rarely' is negative not because it profiles a low degree of frequency but rather because it expresses the speaker's negative evaluation of that frequency. A more accurate account can be offered in terms of Langacker's analysis of the functional contrast between *few/little* and *a few/a little*. As Langacker (2009: 76) puts it,

In terms of quantity, *a few* and *a little* are comparable to *few* and *little* – the quantity specified lies toward the lower end of the scale. They are however positive expressions by virtue of how the specified quantity is mentally accessed: instead of scanning downward from the norm, they are based on upward scanning from the scalar origin.

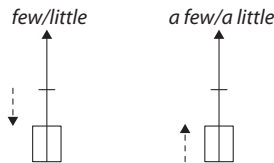


Figure 4. The semantic difference between *few/little* and *a few/a little* (Langacker 2009: 76)

By the same token, *néha* 'sometimes' reflects a construal in which a low degree of frequency is compared to zero as a point of reference, and therefore evaluated positively. Incidentally, this view receives cross-linguistic support from Latin, where *nonnunquam* is the word meaning 'sometimes'. This expression is composed of the elements *non* 'not' and *nunquam* 'never', thus it literally means 'not never'. *Ritkán* 'rarely', by contrast, profiles the same low frequency vis-à-vis a higher norm; in other words, its meaning hinges on downward scanning along the scale.

A second key property of (6) is that with regard to *illocutionary force*, it expresses a statement (by virtue of being a declarative sentence), unlike the yes/no question in (7), the optative-desiderative sentence in (8), the imperative clause in (9), and the *wh*-question in (10a). While in the speech production of children acquiring their language, statements about the world can hardly be regarded as primary, declarative sentences do predominate in most discourse types of adult

language (cf. Givón 2001: 287), owing to their fundamental contribution to the updating of shared knowledge. Furthermore, they can be regarded as conceptually simpler than other types when meaning generation is considered in its social cognitive context. As Langacker observes, “[i]n contrast to other speech acts (like ordering or questioning), [a statement] requires only the minimum in terms of cooperative activity – namely, that the hearer attend to it and comprehend it” (Langacker 2012: 14; see also Croft 1994). For Langacker, this minimal degree of overt hearer involvement accounts for the unmarked default, or baseline, status of declarative sentences.

Finally, the functional contrast between (6) and (10b) can be seen as involving the *neutral vs. non-neutral* parameter. I assume that this parameter is only relevant for the classification of positive declarative sentences. A neutral positive declarative clause is one which can be felicitously uttered in a maximally general context, and naturally construed as a reply to the out-of-the-blue questions ‘What happened? What is the situation?’ (cf. Gécseg and Kiefer 2009: 585). By contrast, a non-neutral sentence presupposes a larger amount of shared knowledge, and answers a more specific question. With regard to the examples under study, whereas *János tegnap felhívta Marit* ‘John called Mary yesterday’ is a neutral positive declarative clause, *MARIT hívta fel János* ‘It was Mary that John called’ is non-neutral, since it replies to the more specific question *KIT hívott fel János?* ‘Who did John call?’⁶

Again, it seems clear that the neutral type represents the baseline with respect to which the non-neutral one is derivative. The non-neutral sentence in (10b) can be paraphrased as *Akit János felhívott, az Mari* ‘Whom John called is Mary’ (cf. É. Kiss 2006), whose presuppositional part *akit János felhívott* ‘whom John called’ involves the same structure as a neutral sentence. Thus, the existence of neutral clauses provides conceptual scaffolding for the processing of non-neutral ones.

Neutral positive declarative clauses state the occurrence of a process, or more precisely, they are used by speakers to state *the existence of a process in a mental space* (cf. Fauconnier 1985). In (6), the process of John telephoning Mary is situated in the speaker’s conceived reality of past events, in other words the process is stated to have occurred. However, neutral positive declarative clauses may also be used to state the existence of a process in other mental spaces. This is what we find in

6. É. Kiss (2008: 131) treats the term “non-neutral” as a synonym for “containing focus and/or negation”. Following Olsvay (2000), she posits a Non-Neutral Phrase (NNP) as a complement of either Foc_0 or Neg_0 . Although at first sight, this may seem to achieve the result that the present section aims for, namely a unified treatment of foci and the negative particle, I would suggest that for a negative or wh-interrogative sentence, the parameter of neutrality is not an issue to begin with. To say that negative and interrogative sentences are non-neutral masks the importance of polarity and illocutionary force as independent parameters.

János felhívna Marit 'John would (like to) call Mary', with the verb in conditional mood, in which the process is portrayed as existing in the space of John's intentions or desires.

Note that a non-neutral sentence is not used to state the existence of the process which is profiled by the verb. Rather, it serves to identify a participant or circumstance of a process whose existence is presupposed, as suggested by the paraphrase mentioned above.

Let us now move on to the formal properties of the constructions under study. Neutral positive declarative clauses are characterized by the following:

- level prosody (henceforth LP), i.e. each stressable word/expression of the sentence receives approximately the same degree of stress, none receiving significantly more prominence than any other
- falling intonation (FI); there is a gradual descent in pitch, with no sharp rises or declines
- flexible word order of dependents (FO); since differences in participant and circumstance types are coded by cases and postpositions, there is no fixed position for dependents with respect to the expression schematically profiling the process
- default order (DO) of preverb and verb, with no inversion (eg. *fel + hívta*)
- the lack of special-purpose lexical or morphological markers of clause type (-M) – In the simplest case, the verb has no mood suffix, as declarative mood is expressed by the lack thereof. However, as we have seen, conditional mood can also be used in declarative sentences which report on somebody's intentions or desires (for details, see Kas 2005).

By contrast, each of the additional clauses in (7–10) features some kind of functional departure from the baseline as characterized above. They are either non-positive, non-declarative, or non-neutral, hence they are not used to state the occurrence (existence) of an instance of telephoning. On the formal side, this is signalled by their deviation from the baseline with regard to one or more formal properties. Such departures include

- special prosodic prominence of an element in the clause (-LP); for instance, identificational sentences such as (10b) feature an extra pitch accent on the identificational expression, with the ensuing elements having their stress reduced or eliminated
- intonational contour distinct from the gradual fall (-FI); this is best illustrated by the yes/no question in (7a), which features a special intonation contour involving a gradual rise up to the penultimate syllable and then a sharp fall

- fixed word order of certain dependents, particles, etc. (-FO); for example, interrogative pronouns, the negative particle *nem* ‘not’, and *bárcsak* ‘if only’ introducing optative-desiderative sentences all obey strict constraints on their linearization, they cannot be placed anywhere in the sentence
- inversion of preverb and verb (-DO); sentences departing from the baseline are often marked by inversion; such constructions include negative clauses, wh-questions, sentences expressing identification, and imperative clauses
- morphological or lexical marking of clause type (M); morpho-lexical type marking devices include the negative particle, the *-e* interrogative particle, various interrogative pronouns, the imperative mood suffix, and *bárcsak*.

Overall, the clause types reviewed in this section can be arranged in the radial network in Figure 5 below (cf. Imrényi 2017a: 674), inspired by Goldberg’s (2006: 179) analysis of English SAI constructions.

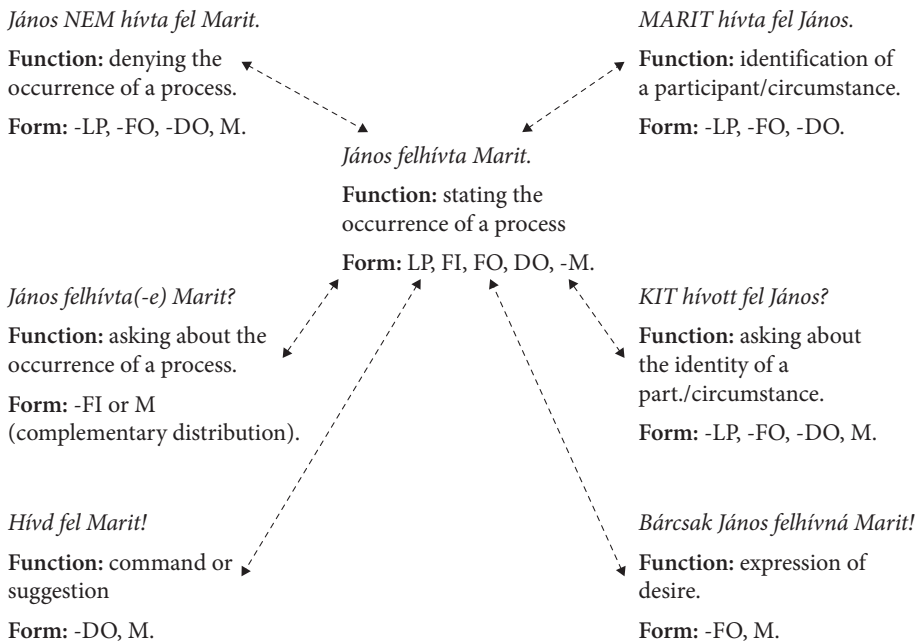


Figure 5. A radial network of Hungarian clause types

In contrast with Goldberg’s account, which only displays constructions deviating from prototypical sentences by their use of inversion, here the central clause type is associated with a broad set of formal properties, any of which can be the locus of cross-constructional difference. In the spirit of Goldberg’s proposal, the shared behaviour of seemingly highly heterogeneous inversion-triggering elements

is motivated by the fact that they all engender functional departures from neutral positive declarative clauses. In other words, similarities in form are motivated not so much by direct similarities in function but rather by relations of contrast with respect to the baseline. Non-declarative, non-positive and non-neutral clauses are not (all) inherently similar; however, they are similar by differing from neutral positive declarative ones. Metaphorically speaking, 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' seems to present itself as a principle in the organization of language.⁷

A more complete analysis of the phenomenon also addresses the internal structure of the relevant constructions. Since this aspect of the analysis of inversion-triggering elements has been discussed in detail elsewhere (cf. Imrényi 2017b), here I only go through the main steps of the proposal.

The first step is the observation that *felhívta* is itself a full-fledged positive declarative clause, meaning 'he/she telephoned him/her'. It can thus be used to state the occurrence of a telephoning event when the two participants, the caller and the called, are contextually recoverable. As a second step, note that in (6), the positive declarative clausal core *felhívta* is merely elaborated, i.e. specified in finer-grained detail (cf. Langacker 2008: 198). In other words, (6) is also used to state the occurrence of an instance of telephoning, just as the schematic sentence *Felhívta*, it is only different by being more specific in construal. Thirdly, it is plausible to argue that in (10a)–(d), a positive declarative clausal core is also materially present, by virtue of the clause including the segmental content of *fel* as well as *hívta*. However, the baseline function of the core as a schematic positive declarative clause stating the occurrence of a process is *overridden*.

For example, the negative sentence in (10d) includes the segmental content of *fel* and *hívta*. When these two co-occur in a sentence, their functional grouping is used by default (without inversion) to state that an instance of telephoning took place (cf. (6)). In (10d), however, the meaning of *nem* 'not' is in conflict with this baseline function. The negative particle overrides the default positive value associated with the core (the preverb-verb combination), which is iconically coded by the overriding of default linear order. In much the same way, interrogative, identificational and restrictive elements may also be described as *overriders* (cf. Imrényi 2017b: 307). Accordingly, Construction X can be recast as an *Overriding Construction*.⁸

7. For the motivation of why yes/no questions do not obligatorily display inversion in Hungarian, see Imrényi (2012: 215). The lack of obligatory inversion after *bárcsak* 'if only' may be due to its status as a space builder (cf. Dancygier and Sweetser 2005). It is used to set up a mental space in which various hypothetical situations can be simulated, including those whose occurrence would be expressed by neutral or non-neutral positive declarative clauses.

8. For a general understanding of overriding, see Michaelis 2002.

meaning	overriding of the baseline function of the core as a schematic clause
word order	immediately preverbal element followed by preverb-verb inversion
prosody	element with pitch accent followed by the destressing of the verb

Figure 6. Construction X as an overriding construction

To conclude this section, I have argued that inversion-triggering elements in Hungarian may receive a unified functional account not so much by reference to direct functional similarities, but rather through a study of relations of contrast with respect to neutral positive declarative sentences. Departures from the baseline may involve any of the positive/negative, declarative/non-declarative and neutral/non-neutral parameters, which accounts for why a broad range of seemingly highly diverse patterns involve preverb-verb inversion. Finally, I have also noted that under a more in-depth analysis of the internal structure of constructions, inversion-triggering elements may be characterized as overriders. For more on the latter aspect of the analysis, see Imrényi (2017b).

4. Topics as a subtype of contextualizers

Recall from Section 2 that Hungarian generative grammar posits a topic position at the left periphery of the sentence, hosting constituents which function as the logical subject of predication. The rest of the sentence is assumed to serve as the logical predicate, and its beginning is marked by pitch accent (cf. É. Kiss 2002, 2009). However, this approach entails a sharp distinction between topics and sentence adverbials (e.g. *szerencsére* ‘fortunately’), even though the latter also behave just like topics when they appear at the left periphery. In the present section, I revisit the phenomenon, and offer a unified account based on the notion of contextualization. The proposal is presented after an overview of analyses by Brassai (1860), Langacker (2012) and Halliday (2014).

The sample text below, already quoted in Section 2, leaves little doubt that the notion of topichood (logical subjecthood) is inadequate for describing the meaning of sentence-initial elements preceding the pitch accent. In the excerpt, the relevant expressions are underlined.

- (12) [1] Teljes csendben, két évig húzódo tárgyalások után / szenzációszámba menő kulturális hírről számolt be a napokban több hazai médium, illetve internetes portál. [2] A világhírű, magyar származású fotóriporter, Robert Capa hagyatékából / egy több mint ezer darabos kollekciót vásárolt a Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum a fotográfus hagyatékát kezelő, New York-i székhelyű International Center of Photographytól (ICP) még tavaly decemberben. [3] A vételár a hírek

szerint / 835 ezer dollár volt. [4] A megvásárolt gyűjteményt ezen a héten / már ki is csomagolták Budapesten. [5] A következőkben / megismerhetik Capa igencsak kalandos életútját.

[1] After two years of negotiations conducted in complete silence, a sensational piece of cultural news was reported in recent days by several Hungarian media outlets and internet sites. [2] From the legacy of the world-famous photographer of Hungarian descent, Robert Capa, a collection of more than a thousand pieces was purchased by the Hungarian National Museum from the International Center of Photography in New York, which is in charge of the photographer's legacy, back in last December. [3] The price, according to the news, was 835.000 dollars. [4] This week, the purchased collection was already unpacked in Budapest. [5] In what follows, you can learn more about Capa's remarkably adventurous life.

Of the underlined expressions, only *a vételár* 'the price.NOM' and *a megvásárolt gyűjteményt* 'the purchased collection.ACC' clearly fulfil the role of topic, profiling the referent that the rest of the sentence says something about. The additional elements may seem at first sight to be highly heterogeneous. The sentence-initial expressions of the first two sentences involve metonymy, hinging on temporal contiguity and a part/whole relationship, respectively. In sentence [3], *a hírek szerint* 'according to the news' has an evidential function. Finally, the last two sentences feature left-peripheral elements which specify a temporal frame (*ezen a héten* 'this week') and a place in the ongoing discourse (*a következőkben* 'in what follows').

The fact that sentence-initial elements are so varied can hardly come as a surprise to those knowing the work of Sámuel Brassai. A Transylvanian polymath of the 19th century, Brassai developed a detailed model of sentence structure, and made important discoveries about word order in Hungarian and in other languages. As demonstrated by Imrényi and Vladár (2020), he deserves a prominent place in the history of dependency grammar. Moreover, it seems clear from Brassai's ideas presented below that his approach is highly compatible with the basic assumptions of cognitive linguistics.

One key question about word order that Brassai sought to answer was the following.⁹

Is there any dependent of the verb that must be placed first? In other words, is there a rule by which some dependent of the verb is entitled or indeed required to occupy the very first position in the sentence on account of its form or meaning, its relation to the governing verb or to the function of the sentence?

(Brassai 2011 [1860]: 51)

9. Throughout the chapter, Brassai's passages are quoted in my translation.

At this point, Brassai's attention was not limited to Hungarian. Rather, he made the methodologically sound decision to look for patterns in languages where the nominative (the subject) has a fixed default position in front of the verb. The above question was thus made more concrete, the issue being which dependent may or must precede even the nominative in these languages. Based on an impressive cross-linguistic sample of sentences, he concluded that sentence-initial elements may designate

(1) A *place*, wherein the event is unfolding, or property is dwelling, that is expressed by the sentence. This place can be physical or [...] abstract. (2) *Time*, as specified more or less definitely. (3) A *circumstance* that bears on a part or the whole of the sentence. (4) A *precondition* of the sentence or the *characterization* of its main theme. (5) The *main theme* of the sentence. (6) A *prior event* whose consequence is the main content of the sentence. (7) Rarely, a *consequence* when it is the preceding event that the sentence is informing about. (8) A *means*, when the sentence discusses the goal, and (9) a *goal*, when the sentence is about the means. It can also mark (10) a *superior or more general concept or group*, whose subordinate member or members are the theme of the sentence. (11) *Concession*. (12) *Contrast*. (13) *Comparison*. (14) *Stipulation or restriction*. (15) *Distinction*. (16) A *witness or authority*. (17) *Marking of serial order*, and finally, [there are] (18) certain words which I cannot characterize in any other way than by calling them *attention-grabbers*. (Brassai 2011 [1860]: 52–54, highlights in the original)

These observations apply to Hungarian as well, where the nominative dependent has no fixed default position but sentence-initial elements preceding the pitch accent do constitute a category in need of functional characterization. In this respect, it is worth noting that the sample text in (12) includes several examples which support Brassai's observations. For example, sentence [1] begins with an expression profiling a prior event, sentence [2] with one that designates a superior or more general group, and sentence [3] involves a left-peripheral element with evidential meaning, in line with Brassai's reference to "witness or authority". And it is especially noteworthy that Brassai, in contrast with É. Kiss, offered a unified functional account of these seemingly highly varied element types.

Brassai used the term *inchoative* (derived from the Latin verb *inchoare* 'to begin') to name the category he had discovered, drawing on an Arabic tradition.¹⁰ His functional definition sounds as follows: inchoatives "prepare the ground in the listener's mind for comprehending the meaning of the sentence, in other words they have an attention-directing, preparatory role, linking up the mental operations of the listener with those of the speaker" (Brassai 2011 [1860]: 54). This way, Brassai

10. On the Arabic term *mubtada'* 'inchoative' that Brassai alludes to here, without naming his source, see Farina 2017: 166.

managed to find underlying unity behind the variety of left-peripheral elements preceding the pitch accent. Remarkably, he did so by viewing language in its social cognitive context, mindful of the intersubjective, perspectival and dynamic nature of meaning (cf. Tomasello 2003; Zlatev et al. 2008).

From the perspective of present-day cognitive linguistics, all but the name of the category seems adequate. For one thing, the name *inchoative* refers to a formal property, leaving the semantic pole in the background. Moreover, as we shall see, the restriction on word order that Brassai's term implies may not be a crucial aspect of the category. In the remainder of this section, I consider two alternative terms, one by Langacker (2012) and one by Halliday (2014), before presenting a new proposal.

Langacker (2012) employs the notion of *anchoring* as a general concept under which topichood can be subsumed. A topic is regarded as a participant anchor (cf. (13a)) but there are also circumstantial ones, as exemplified by (13b).¹¹

- (13) a. *Her brother she was waiting for all morning.*
 b. *All morning she was waiting for her brother.*

As Langacker (2012: 45) puts it,

[Anchoring] can be understood as the general notion with respect to which topic represents a special case. An anchor is an instruction to interpret a proposition with respect to a particular domain of knowledge or a certain aspect of the situation described. Thus it “frames” the proposition and serves as initial point of access for presenting or apprehending the situation.

While the notion of anchoring is quite general, apparently it is still not general enough. In particular, the following examples arguably pose a problem to Langacker's (2012: 45) definition of anchoring as an “instruction to interpret a proposition with respect to a particular domain of knowledge or a certain aspect of the situation described”.

- (14) a. *Probably she was waiting for her brother.*
 b. *Unfortunately she had to wait for a long time.*

The elements *probably* and *unfortunately* are very similar to how *her brother* and *all morning* are used in (13). Hence, they deserve to be included in the same category. However, they do not seem to be describable as either participant anchors or circumstantial anchors.

11. A third subtype, that of existential anchors, is not discussed here, as it would necessitate a more detailed discussion of Langacker's analysis. However, this omission does not affect the relevance of the points raised in this section.

In addition, the metaphor inherent in the notion of anchoring seems to have two implications that may be untenable, at least when it comes to the analysis of Hungarian. Firstly, anchoring implies that for the most part, one anchor will do; it is difficult to see why anyone would employ two, three or even more anchors under normal conditions. However, it is quite common for a Hungarian sentence to have two or more left-peripheral elements preceding the pitch accent, cf. sentences [3] and [4] of the sample text in (12). Secondly, the metaphor also implies that anchoring cannot be performed at any time. One must first anchor the boat before proceeding to other tasks, and by the same token, Langacker links anchoring to initial position within a sequence of elements. As we shall see later, this implication makes it hard to motivate parallels between certain sentence-initial and sentence-final elements.

Let us now turn to Halliday (2014), who makes use of the concept of Theme, following the Prague School. Under his definition,

The Theme is the element that serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its context. The speaker chooses the Theme as his or her point of departure to guide the addressee in developing an interpretation of the message [...]. The remainder of the message, the part in which the Theme is developed, is called [...] the Rheme. (Halliday 2014: 89)

Crucially, as the following quote reveals, Halliday regards topic as just one of the many subtypes of Theme.

Some grammarians have used the terms Topic and Comment instead of Theme and Rheme (e.g. Hockett, 1958: 201–203; cf. also Li & Thompson, 1976). But [...] the label ‘Topic’ usually refers to only one particular kind of Theme, the ‘topical Theme’. (Halliday 2014: 89)

The many kinds of Theme that Halliday works with are illustrated by Figure 7 below.

well	but	then	surely	Jean	wouldn't	the best idea	be to join in
cont	stru	conj	modal	voc	finite	topical	
Theme						Rheme	

Figure 7. Subtypes of theme in systemic-functional Grammar (Halliday 2014: 107)

While the definition that Halliday supplies for the category is something that I build on in this chapter, there are also some questionable aspects of his account.

To begin, if prosody is anything to go by, the Theme/Rheme boundary might be better positioned just before the modal auxiliary *wouldn't* in Figure 7. Halliday's assumption that “the Theme of a clause ends with the first constituent that is either

participant, circumstance or process" (Halliday 2014: 105), so that anything before it also belongs to the Theme, appears to be rather arbitrary.

Secondly, if the Theme is defined as "that which locates and orients the clause within its context" (Halliday 2014: 89), then it is not clear why *Theme* should be the best name for the category. The word's etymology goes back to Classical Greek, where its primary meaning was 'that which is put down'. However, even this etymology does little to motivate the term, and it seems problematic that the definition has so little to do with the meaning of the word in present-day English. Since in general usage, *theme* is simply a synonym for *topic*, one may wonder what is theme-like in the function of *surely*, and one may find it difficult to work with the term *topical theme*. Moreover, the term may mislead students of linguistics to think that Theme/Rheme is simply another name for Topic/Comment, blurring the important conceptual difference between Themes (as defined by Halliday) and Topics (whether these are defined in logical or in discourse semantic terms).

For these reasons, I now argue for a terminological shift, replacing the terms inchoative, anchor and Theme by that of *contextualization*. That is to say, the relevant clause-initial elements are considered contextualizers that "provide supporting context for the smooth processing or accurate interpretation of some foregrounded information" (Imrényi 2017b: 313). Contextualizers are thus assigned the dual function of facilitating processing and/or signalling the speaker's intended interpretation.¹²

The proposal has much in common with Halliday's approach. Arguably, "that which locates and orients the clause within its context" is more aptly called *contextualizer* than *Theme*.¹³ In addition, the dual function of contextualizers suggested above is consonant with Halliday's following remark: "The message begins with 'let me tell you how this fits in', and/or 'let me tell you what I think about this'" (Halliday 2014: 109).

For space limitations, I do not go through all of the subtypes of inchoative listed by Brassai, rather I only comment on general tendencies exemplified by the sample text in (12).

Firstly, starting the clause with a topic (profiling a participant and standing in an aboutness relation with the rest of the clause) can be motivated by considerations

12. Gumperz (1982: 113) defines contextualization as the process by which discourse participants "foreground or make relevant certain aspects of background knowledge and underplay others", introducing the term 'contextualization cue' to refer to linguistic signals for the situated understanding of socio-cultural meaning. Verschueren (1999: 112) suggests that "the notion can easily be generalized to any linguistic trace of a contextualization process."

13. Remarkably, in their paper adopting Halliday's framework, Ramm and Villiger (1995: 12) refer to the theme position as "the contextualization position in the clause" (see also Modrián-Horváth 2015: 140).

of ease of processing. A crucial organizing principle of our knowledge of the world is that processes are linked (anchored) to persons and things; this is how we memorize, store and retrieve them. Hence, the topic provides a natural point of access for the speaker to arrive at the message she wants to convey, and at the same time also signals to the listener how she can integrate the new information into her existing knowledge.

Secondly, a highly frequent type of contextualization involves the specification of space and time (e.g. *ezen a héten* ‘this week’). This is not a relationship of aboutness, but rather reflects our tendency to store and retrieve knowledge about events based on their spatial and temporal settings. We are generally able to sort (important, recurring, recent or imminent) events chronologically, and also typically create memories for events on the basis of where they occurred. Moreover, event types are commonly linked to types of places, and stored in the form of frames and scripts, a classic example being the restaurant script (Schank and Abelson 1977). Providing initial access to a spatial or temporal setting therefore helps with the processing of information. In addition, a spatial or temporal contextualizer may also be used to restrict the domain in which the information is valid. For example, by starting a clause with *in my home country* or *30 years ago*, the speaker is able to signal that whatever information comes next is valid specifically under the spatial or temporal circumstances just specified (often in contrast with the place and time of the speech situation). This point also applies to many instances of topic. As noted by Chafe, “‘real’ topics (in topic prominent languages) are not so much ‘what the sentence is about’ as ‘the frame within which the sentence holds’” (Chafe 1976: 51, quoted by Jacobs 2001: 656).

Thirdly, as the sample text in (12) reveals, metonymy is a key aspect of contextualization. This is because (sentence-initial, preparatory) contextualization is about the directing of attention by first setting up a supporting context and then proceeding to a target conceptualization. In sentence [1] of the text, evoking prior events has the effect of preparing the listener for the sensational piece of cultural news that comes next. The prior events and the event in the focus of attention are metonymically linked based on temporal contiguity and a cause/effect relationship. Similarly, sentence [2] involves a meronymic relation, with the mentioning of Capa’s legacy providing access to the collection that forms part thereof. In Cognitive Grammar, metonymy is described in the framework of reference point constructions (cf. Langacker 2001).

Fourthly, contextualizers are often crucial for allowing the listener to keep track of how the text (the discourse) is evolving, where it is heading, what point has been reached, etc. This is exemplified by the discourse deictic expression *a következőkben* ‘in what follows’ in sentence [5] of the sample text, illustrating the metaphorization of space in reference to parts of the ongoing discourse. Various other types listed

by Brassai, including inchoatives expressing concession, contrast, or the marking of serial order, can also be interpreted as contextualizers aimed at situating a clause in its textual context.

Finally, elements expressing epistemic modality (e.g. *valószínűleg* 'probably'), evidentiality (e.g. *a hírek szerint* 'according to the news'), or evaluative attitude (e.g. *szerencsére* 'fortunately') serve to signal crucial aspects of the speaker's intended interpretation. Put differently, they are geared toward accuracy rather than fluency of processing. By using an epistemic adverb, the speaker is able to signal that she is not sharing fully certain information. This often goes hand in hand with evidential marking, whereby the speaker specifies the source of information, including the option of portraying someone else as informant. These elements are crucial for the speaker's compliance with the cooperative principle (Grice 1975). Finally, an attitude marker such as *szerencsére* 'fortunately' or *sajnos* 'unfortunately' serves to align the world-view of the speaker and the listener, allowing the speaker to express empathy (sometimes irony) or to influence how the listener is to evaluate the message.

While discussing Langacker's notion of anchoring, I remarked that the implication that anchors come first might not be desirable. Sentence [2] of the sample text, repeated in (15) below with an updated analysis, serves to back up this claim.

- (15) *A világhírű, magyar származású fotóriporter, Robert Capa hagyatékából / egy több mint ezer darabos kollekción vásárolt a Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum a fotográfus hagyatékát kezelő, New York-i székhelyű International Center of Photographytól (ICP) / még tavaly decemberben.*

From the legacy of the world-famous photographer of Hungarian descent, Robert Capa, a collection of more than a thousand pieces was purchased by the Hungarian National Museum from the International Center of Photography in New York, which is in charge of the photographer's legacy, / back in last December.

As suggested by the underlining, the sentence-final phrase *még tavaly decemberben* 'back in last December' also appears to have a contextualizing function. Specifically, it involves the particle *még* (usually meaning 'yet, still', but here meaning something like 'as early as' or 'back'), which is meant to prevent the reader from assuming that the transaction and the appearance of the news item have happened in quick succession. The news was made public in February 2009, and at the point in the text where *még tavaly decemberben* appears, it would be natural for the reader to assume that Capa's collection has just been purchased. The sentence-final contextualizer is used to eliminate this false assumption of temporal contiguity, motivated by the reader's background knowledge about the speed with which news items usually appear on the internet. Note that the proposed analysis automatically accounts for sentence-final use, which can be simply treated as **retroactive contextualization** (cf.

Verschueren 1999: 112) aimed at enhancing accuracy of understanding. The same concept can also be used to account for the close parallel between left-dislocation and right-dislocation (as in *John_i, I never liked him_i* and *I never liked him_i, John_i*).¹⁴

Up to this point, the new category has been described in positive terms, i.e. a general characterization has been offered which captures similarities across the various subtypes. However, the importance of relationships of contrast is also crucially implied by the notion of contextualization. In particular, a supporting context is often already in place, and contextualizers may be said to depart from this baseline configuration.¹⁵ In the final part of this section, I elaborate on the latter aspect of the proposal.

With regard to spatial and temporal contextualizers, from the embodied and perspectival nature of meaning it follows that it is natural to see the speech event's here and now as providing a point of reference or origin from which other places and times can be accessed.¹⁶ The ability of humans to place temporally and/or spatially distant events in the focus of shared attention is a remarkable feat, which has been termed “displacement” and listed among the design features of language (Hockett 1960). Importantly, when a message pertains to the here and now, it is generally not in need of explicit contextualization in terms of spatial and temporal settings, since these values represent the unmarked default, or baseline, configuration. In other words, by default the spatial and temporal context is already in place; it is only departures from the baseline that require explicit contextualization. Needless to say, special circumstances such as marking a spatial or temporal shift with respect to the preceding discourse may still motivate the use of *here* and *now* as contextualizers, but by default, these values remain implicit.

Secondly, it can be assumed that discourse participants (and other entities they already have in the focus of attention) constitute a baseline in terms of topichood. Topics which are already established tend to receive minimal (pronominal) marking or else they are left implicit (Chafe 1994). From this perspective, topic as a subtype of contextualization may be regarded as a device allowing interlocutors to thematize entities which are not immediately present in the speech situation. Again, topics explicitly marking discourse participants may be necessary under a variety of circumstances (topic shift, honorifics, etc.); however, the tendency is for immediately available topical referents to be unmarked or minimally marked.

14. For a study of contextualization in Hungarian inter-clausal relations, see Kugler (2020).

15. See also Langacker's notion of a conceptual substrate, cf. Langacker (2008: 463–477).

16. For more on the perspectival nature of contextualization, and an attempt at harmonizing the present syntactic proposal with a pragmatic approach, see Tátrai (2020).

Thirdly, a similar unmarked default can also be plausibly posited in the domains of epistemic modality and evidentiality. By default, the speaker shares information for which she assumes responsibility and which she regards as valid without qualification. This default scenario tends to be unmarked, with any departures from it requiring the use of explicit contextualization.

Fourthly, it may be acknowledged that the need for marking complex textual relationships such as concession, contrast, serial order, etc. (along with the devices fulfilling this purpose) is a secondary development, with simple monoclausal utterances (turns of a dialogue) having a baseline status. Complex sentences are known to have evolved from simple ones, and much of the complexity found in written text types crucially depends on the medium itself. Thus, it can be plausibly assumed that by default, situating a message in its textual context does not require highly elaborate, explicit contextualization.

Finally, with regard to the use of attitude markers, it seems important that in spoken discourse, the verbal channel competes with paralinguistic cues for the marking of speaker attitude. For example, the fact that the speaker regards the message as positive (when this is not evident from background knowledge) can be reliably signalled by facial expression, gestures, and prosodic cues such as pitch, thereby rendering the use of expressions such as *fortunately* unnecessary.

Overall, then, the apparent heterogeneity and underlying unity of contextualizers can be derived from relationships of contrast, with verbal contextualization emerging when some aspects of the necessary supporting context are not already in place (and therefore safely left implicit). What links such varied contextualizers as topics, spatial/temporal expressions, evidential markers, etc. is not (only) inherent functional similarities across them but (also) their deviation, along a variety of dimensions, from the unmarked default. This unmarked default can be described as the situation when a message is not in need of explicit contextualization in the verbal channel. In essence, explicit verbal contextualization contrasts with the baseline of silence, in line with Langacker's proposal that his concept of B/E organization (the organization of systems into baselines and elaborations from them) can be applied to such general matters as silence vs. speech (Langacker 2016: 406).

In view of the above, Construction Y can now be recast as a Contextualizing Construction, and represented as in Figure 8 below.

meaning	contextualization (the generation of supporting context, aimed at fluency and/or accuracy of processing)
word order	(usually) peripheral position
prosody	when sentence-initial: weakly stressed, followed by pitch accent

Figure 8. Construction Y as a contextualizing construction

To conclude this section, I have argued that contextualization should be regarded as the general category subsuming topics, so-called sentence adverbials, and related phenomena. After an overview of the main subtypes based on Brassai's insights and a sample text, I considered analyses offered by Langacker and Halliday before making a new proposal. On the one hand, contextualizers can be defined in positive terms by reference to their role in aiding the fluency and/or accuracy of processing. On the other hand, the shared behaviour of seemingly highly heterogeneous elements is also crucially motivated by relationships of contrast with respect to a baseline. In particular, any explicit verbal contextualization marks a departure from the unmarked default situation wherein no such contextualization is necessary.

5. Summary and conclusions

In this chapter, an attempt has been made at resolving two puzzles of Hungarian sentence structure. Firstly, the question as to why inversion-triggering elements are so varied, and secondly, why sentence-initial, weakly stressed expressions preceding the pitch accent are so heterogeneous. It has been shown that the mainstream generative approach (adopting the notions of focus and topic) prioritizes subsets of the relevant data, and fails to account for why certain types of elements behave similarly.

Under the proposal, what links preverbal, inversion-triggering elements is that they define sentence types standing in contrast with the baseline represented by neutral positive declarative sentences. The dimensions of deviation involve three parameters (positive vs. negative; declarative vs. non-declarative; neutral vs. non-neutral), as captured by Figure 9, which accounts for why inversion-triggering elements appear at first sight to be so varied. In addition, I have suggested that under a more detailed analysis of the internal structure of the relevant constructions, these elements may be categorized as overriders.

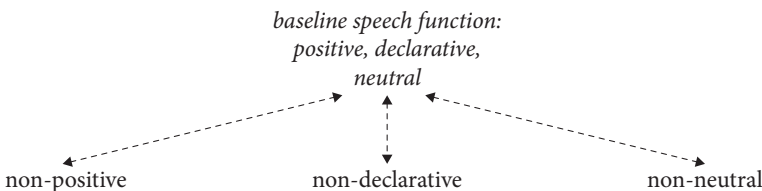


Figure 9. An account of inversion in terms of departures from a cluster of baseline properties

In essentially the same way, the functional commonality behind the use of sentence-initial, weakly stressed elements may be described by reference to relations of contrast. This time, the unmarked default situation is when a message is not in need of explicit contextualization in the verbal channel. What links peripheral elements sharing the same formal properties is that they contribute to the generation of supporting context for the fluent and/or accurate processing of a message; hence, each subtype marks a departure from the unmarked default. The analysis is schematically presented in Figure 10. (Note that the figure involves several simplifications, e.g. only links to the baseline are represented, and the subtypes are shown as if they were independent of each other.)

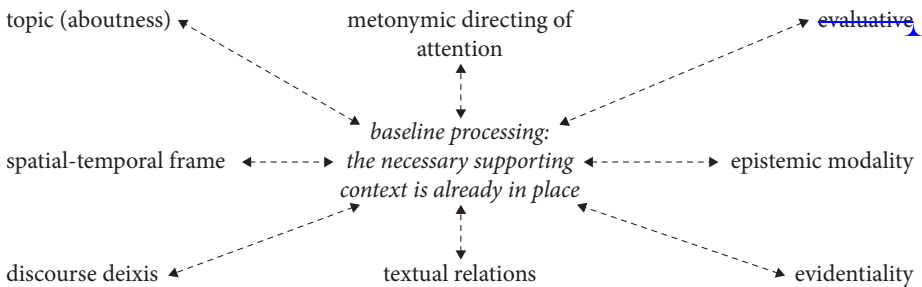


Figure 10. Dimensions of contextualization

A question raised in the introduction of this volume is whether contrast and analogy are equally important from the point of view of cognitive linguistics. The present chapter has argued that the understanding of similarity may crucially depend on the notion of contrast: two patterns may be similar indirectly, by virtue of differing from a third one. I have called this informally the 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' principle of linguistic organization. If the analyses presented here are on the right track, they suggest that relations of contrast are fundamental and possibly indispensable for an adequate characterization of what counts as similar in language.

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