Psych predicates, anaphors and the configurationality issue in Hungarian

Anaphors have figured prominently in the debate on the (non-)configurationality of the Hungarian VP. Under the flat-VP approach, apparent binding asymmetries can be explained by recourse to a case hierarchy (É. Kiss 1987) or a thematic hierarchy (É. Kiss 2002). More recently, the configurational analysis has gained new impetus. É. Kiss (2008) argues that the base structure of the Hungarian VP is hierarchical but the lexical domain flattens out when the functional phase is built. Surányi (2006) also takes the base structure to be hierarchical and he assumes that it can be subject to scrambling operations during the derivation. Both of these two analyses can successfully account for both the configurational and the non-configurational properties of the Hungarian VP. While these authors focus on establishing the claim that Hungarian distinguishes external and internal arguments structurally, Szalontai (2012) extends the configurational analysis to triadic predicates of the *give*-type, showing that the two internal arguments of these verbs are also hierarchically arranged at the base. Thus the emerging view is that argument structure is configurationally coded in Hungarian syntax. Asymmetries in anaphoric binding patterns are elegantly explained by the postulation of a hierarchical base (and, from the other perspective, they serve as strong evidence for a hierarchical base in the argumentation).

My aim in this talk is to revisit the role of anaphors in the configurationality debate by focusing on two aspects of the data that deserve, in their own right, closer attention than what they often receive. First, many contributions to the debate quote not the basic Hungarian reflexive *maga* 'himself' but its morphologically more complex counterpart *önmaga* 'himself', assuming that both fall under the scope of Principle A (see, among others, É. Kiss 1987, 2002, Surányi 2006 and Kenesei at al. 1998, who claim that "the form *önmaga* serves as the best item to test the distribution of the reflexive"). Rákosi (2009, 2011) shows that this is not a valid assumption: unlike the basic reflexive, *önmaga* readily allows for coreference readings and may even disallow bound variable readings in certain contexts; and it often licenses proxy readings of different sorts. Second, psych predicates are also often referenced in the debate for they represent, non-canonical cases of argument realization (see Belletti & Rizzi 1988, Pesetsky 1995, Reinhart 2002, and Landau 2009 for general overviews). The talk primarily focuses on the so called *amare*-class (eg.: *szeret* 'likes') and the *piacere*-class (eg.: *tetszik* 'appeals to'). Verbs in the former class have an external experiencer argument, whereas *piacere*-verbs are two-place unaccusatives (see Rákosi 2006 for a detailed discussion of the Hungarian data).

The key empirical observations are as follows (see the data in (1-6)):

(i) The basic anaphor *maga* is never licensed as a *nominative* subject. *Önmaga* can function as a nominative subject by *any* predicate, though the licensing conditions vary. This suggests that the ability to function as a subject is not conditioned primarily by configurational factors but, ultimately, by the morphology of the anaphor.

(ii) In neutral contexts, *önmaga* is not licensed postverbally as a subject of an *amare*-predicate (compare (1a) and (1b)), whereas the same contexts license *önmaga* as the subject of a piacere-predicate (compare (1b) and (2b)).

(iii) *Önmaga* is licensed as the subject of an *amare*-predicate only if it is focused (3), or in contexts of *radical* proxy readings (6). (6) is meant to represent a time-travel scene, where the referent of the antecedent has a physically distinct copy of his own self.

(iv) In the case of *piacere*-predicates, a true bound-variable reading can be licensed either when *önmaga* is the nominative subject or the dative oblique (4). In the case of *amare*-predicates, a bound variable reading is only licensed if *önmaga* is the object, but not when it is the subject (compare (5a) and (5b)).

In short, (ii) and (iv) provide strong arguments for the postulation of a strict configurational difference between external and internal arguments. These data, however, do not support a configurational distinction between the two *internal* arguments of *piacere*-predicates; or, alternatively, what they may support is that two alternative base orders are possible with these verbs (either V>NOM>DAT or V>DAT>NOM). In the talk, I give a summary of arguments for and against both options.

My analysis of the argument structure of Hungarian psych verbs is couched in Reinhart's Theta System, and I show how it can successfully account for the Hungarian data (see also Rákosi 2006). In the analysis of the anaphoric data and the differences between *maga* and *önmaga*, I draw on Reuland's (2001, 2011) insights concerning the relevance of morphological complexity in the grammar of anaphors, and will build on Rákosi's (2009, 2011) analysis in particular in arguing that while *maga* necessarily creates a reflexive predicate in the sense of Reinhart & Reuland (and falls under the scope of Principle A), *önmaga* does not.

(1) a. *János nagyon szereti (ön)magát.*
John very likes himself.ACC
'John likes himself very much.'

b. **Jánost nagyon szereti (ön)maga.*
John.ACC very likes himself
'Himself likes John very much.'

(2) a. *János nagyon tetszik (ön)magának.*
John very appeals himself.DAT
'John appeals to himself very much.'

b. *Jánosnak nagyon tetszik *(ön)maga.*
John.DAT very appeal himself
'Himself appeals to John very much.'

(3) a. *Jánost csak *(ön)maga szereti.*
John.ACC only himself likes
'Only himself likes John.'

b. *Jánost még *(ön)maga sem szereti.*
John.ACC even himself nor likes
'Not even himself likes John.'

(4) a. *Mindenki nagyon tetszik (ön)magának.*
everyone very appeals himself.DAT
'Everyone appeals to himself very much.'

b. *Mindenkinek nagyon tetszik *(ön)maga.*
everyone.DAT very appeals himself
'Himself appeals to everyone very much.'

(5) a. *Mindenki csak (ön)magát szereti.*
everyone only himself.ACC likes
'Everyone likes only himself.'

b. **Mindenkit csak (ön)maga szeret.*
everyone.ACC only himself likes
'Only himself likes everyone.'

(6) **(Ön)magam jött velem szembe a folyosón.* [time-travel scene]
myself came me.with against the corridor.on
'Myself came towards me in the corridor.'

Selected bibliography (including only the literature on Hungarian)
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