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## Are Hungarian fake objects really fake?\*

The aim of this article was to investigate the syntactic properties of Hungarian nonsubcategorized accusative Case-assigned NP, i.e. a constituent commonly known in current international linguistics as fake resultative or occasionally fake object.

The analysis revealed that this particular constituent who appears in resultative constructions derived from unergatives behaves exactly the same way as the real or direct object does: for example, it appears in specifier position of VP, receives accusative Case, and functions as an argument that undergoes the event expressed by the verb. Because of these distinct syntactic properties this article suggests naming the analyzed nonsubcategorized syntactic element honorary object.

**Keywords:** syntax; Hungarian; fake object; resultative construction; unergatives.

### 1. Introduction

In her paper on resultatives published in 1983, Jane Simpson introduced a new syntactic category to the world of linguistics: the category of fake reflexive. The Simpsonian fake reflexive, as well as the latter emerged variation known as fake object refers to a particular nonsubcategorized constituent inserted in underlying structure of intransitive, i.e. unergative verbs and towards which the action of the underlying external argument (surfaced agentive subject) is directed. Hungarian linguistics took over this category; however neither Hungarian fake reflexives, nor

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fake objects were ever analyzed: if they were, it might become obvious that they behave just like real (direct) objects, thus qualifying them fake is misleading.

For that reason I shall argue in favor of renaming these constituents: I am showing the main properties of abovementioned nonsubcategorized NPs<sup>1</sup> starting with general characteristics of resultative constructions (section 2). Section 3 presents the main properties of Hungarian resultative constructions, whilst section 4 proposes a new analysis of nonsubcategorized NPs in question.

## 2. Resultative constructions: basic properties

Generally speaking, the resultative construction is a transitive construction displaying strict syntactic uniformity: it is always composed of a verb denoting activity and two verbal arguments among which one is the agentive subject (underlying external argument) of the verb, whilst the other can be interpreted as real (direct) object (underlying direct internal argument) of the verb, thus undergo a change of state or location as a result of the activity denoted by the verb. Additionally, there is a nonsubcategorized phrase, which expresses a result state of the event expressed by the verb (e.g. *clean*, *off the table*, *to death*, respectively in (1)). The result state is predicated of one of the verbal arguments (such as *the shirt*, *the tissue*, respectively in (1a–b)) or a nonsubcategorized NP (*himself* in (1c)).

- (1) a. *Sarah washed the shirt<sub>i</sub> clean<sub>i</sub>.*  
b. *Mary sneezed the tissue<sub>i</sub> off the table<sub>i</sub>.*  
c. *John laughed himself<sub>i</sub> to death<sub>i</sub>.*

Following observations by Jane Simpson who labels the English nonsubcategorized NP in (1c) “fake reflexive” (Simpson, 1983: 145), Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995) posit the Direct Object Restriction (DOR) which states that result XPs can be predicated solely of NPs surfacing in direct object position (2–3).

- (2) a. *Peter painted the house<sub>i</sub> yellow<sub>i</sub>.*  
b. *He drove his tyre<sub>i</sub> flat<sub>i</sub>.*

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviations used: Acc = accusative, AP = adjective phrase, *e* = empty category, Comp = complementizer, *i, j* = referential index, NP = noun phrase, Pred = head of predicative phrase, Pred' = intermediate projection of Pred, PredP = predicative phrase, Spec = specifier, Subl = sublativ, *t* = trace, T' = intermediate projection of T, TP = tense phrase, Top' = intermediate projection of Top, TopP = topic projection, *v* = head of light verb projection, *v'* = intermediate projection of *v*, *vP* = light verb phrase, *V* = head of (lexical) verb phrase, *V'* intermediate projection *V*, XP = maximal projection.



c. *Sarah ran her shoes<sub>i</sub> thin<sub>i</sub>.*

- (3) a. *The door<sub>i</sub> swung open<sub>i</sub>.*  
 b. *The window<sub>i</sub> broke open<sub>i</sub>.*

This restriction serves to rule out sentences containing intransitive verbs in which the resultative construction is supposed to predicate over the subject of the verb. However, as example (4) illustrates the sole underlying direct internal argument (i.e. the verbal argument which surfaces in direct object position) is not sufficient for achieving such construction, which already questions the strictness of this constraint:

(4) *Peter painted the house.*

Furthermore, resultative constructions can be derived from unergatives (i.e. intransitives) (5), thus verbs with no underlying direct internal arguments. When such resultative construction arises the unergative verb requires a fake reflexive or some other nonsubcategorized object NP (consider Carrier and Randall, 1992; Levin and Rappaport Hovav, 1995) to introduce something which the resultative phrase can predicate (e.g. *himself* in (1c), *herself*, *himself*, respectively in (5)).

- (5) a. *Mary sang herself asleep.*  
 b. *Peter ate himself sick.*

Because the presence of an underlying direct internal argument is insufficient to build a resultative construction and because there are resultative constructions that do not subcategorize for real (direct) objects, it can be stated that

- (i) the Direct Object Restriction is too strong<sup>2</sup> and  
 (ii) there exist two very distinct types of resultative predications.

The first class is the class of object-oriented resultative constructions (Rothstein 2004). They express the real resultative predication as object-oriented resultative constructions exhibit predication which aims at underlying direct internal argument and expresses the result state of the underlying direct internal argument of the verb.

Thus, object-oriented resultative constructions can be derived only from verbs whose underlying structure contains direct internal argument: in case of transitive verbs the underlying direct internal argument surfaces as real (direct) object (6),

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that there is a number of works (Hoekstra, 1988; Levin and Rappaport Hovav, 1995; Wechsler, 1997; Rappaport Hovav and Levin, 2001; Rothstein, 2004 etc.) arguing that the DOR is not correct, however summarizing those is not a goal in this paper.



whilst the underlying direct internal argument of the unaccusative surfaces as subject (7).

- (6) a. *Peter hammered the metal flat.*  
b. *The cold wind froze the lake solid.*
- (7) *The door swung open.*

The second class is the class of subject-oriented resultative constructions (Rothstein, 2004). These are indirect resultative constructions since the predication expressed through them aims at underlying external argument (4, 8) instead of underlying direct internal argument.

- (8) a. *Mary laughed herself helpless.*  
b. *The girls danced themselves dizzy.*

Subject-oriented resultative constructions are derived from unergatives, which means that they are valency increasing constructions. Namely, the underlying structure assigned to unergatives contains only an external argument; this argument being agentive cannot undergo change, hence cannot function as an argument that undergoes the event expressed by the verb. The solution to the problem is inserting a fake reflexive (e.g. *herself*, *themselves* in (8)) in the underlying structure of the verb which allows the same entity expressed by underlying external argument to function as agent and patient at once, thus makes composing of the subject-oriented resultative construction possible.

### 3. Resultative constructions in Hungarian: the build-up

The unaccusative-unergative distinction in Hungarian grammar brings significant syntactic and morphosyntactic consequences into being; one of them is linked to the Hungarian resultative constructions.

Hungarian resultative constructions aren't studied in-depth, yet since it is proven that Hungarian differentiate between verb classes with underlying direct internal argument and a verb class lacking underlying direct internal argument (Bene, 2011), it is plausible to assume that this language also distinguishes between object-oriented (9–10) and subject-oriented resultative constructions (11–12).

- (9) *Zsuzsa puhá-ra főzte a húst.*  
Susan tender-to cooked the meat-ACC  
'Susan has cooked the meat tender.'



- (10) *Péter tisztá-ra septe az udvart.*  
Peter clean-to swept the backyard-ACC  
'Peter has swept the backyard clean.'
- (11) *Éva rekedt-re kiabálta magát.*  
Eva hoarse-to shouted herself  
'Eva has shouted herself hoarse.'
- (12) *Éva piros-ra sírta a szemét.*  
Eva red-to cried the eyes-ACC  
'Eva has cried her eyes red.'

As can be seen above, Hungarian resultative constructions also look a lot like transitive constructions: they involve a verb expressing some activity, the agentive subject (underlying external argument) of the verb, and two nonsubcategorized constituents.

The nonsubcategorized resultative phrase usually represented by sublative Case-assigned adjective (*puhá-ra* 'tender-to', *tisztá-ra* 'clean-to', *rekedt-re* 'hoarse-to', *piros-ra* 'red-to', respectively in (9-12)) is inherently present in both resultative construction types, which is actually apparent since its role is to express the new state in which the affected constituent gets into when the event expressed by the verb is accomplished.

The other nonsubcategorized constituent of the construction however lacks the property of inherentness: the nonsubcategorized accusative Case-assigned NP (*magát* 'herself' (11), *szemét* 'eyes-ACC' (12)) occurs only in Hungarian resultative constructions derived from verbs whose structure contains only an underlying external argument, i.e. unergatives. Its role is to denominate the constituent affected by the event expressed by the unergative verb, in other word, behaves as patient.

Henceforth, the main objective of mine will be to determine what makes the surfacing of the nonsubcategorized NP<sub>Acc</sub> in Hungarian subject-oriented constructions possible.

#### 4. The analysis

The most striking property of Hungarian subject-oriented resultative constructions is the presence of nonsubcategorized accusative Case-assigned NP, which seems like a contradiction. In order to solve this contradiction it is important to examine what role this noun phrase serves.



By examining the examples cited under (11) and (12) it becomes obvious that the function of nonsubcategorized accusative Case-assigned NP (*magát* ‘herself’, *szemét* ‘eye-ACC’, respectively) is to predicate a (partial) change of state of the agentive subject (underlying external argument) *Éva* ‘Eva-NOM’: namely in sentence (11) it is Eva’s eye that turns red, thus changes state because of Eva’s crying, while in (12) it is Eva in her entirety that becomes affected by her own shouting.

To achieve this, the language overlooks a rule by which in syntax unergative verbs are characterized as monadic verbs with single underlying external argument (agentive subject) and inserts a nonsubcategorized accusative Case-assigned constituent to mark the agentive subject self or certain part of it as affected by the event expressed by the unergative verb. Consequently, as examples (11–12), repeated here as (13–14) show this nonsubcategorized NP<sub>Acc</sub> and the agentive subject (underlying external argument) in these constructions refer to the same entity, hence they are coreferential:

(13) *Éva<sub>i</sub> rekedtre kiabálta magát<sub>i</sub>.*  
Eva hoarse-to shouted herself  
‘Eva has shouted herself hoarse.’

(14) *Éva<sub>i</sub> pirosra sírta a szemét<sub>i</sub>.*  
Eva red-to cried the eyes-ACC  
‘Eva has cried her eyes red.’

However, revealing the function of Hungarian nonsubcategorized accusative Case-assigned NP itself provides no answer to the question how it is possible that this particular NP to which accusative Case is assigned lands in the resultative construction derived from unergative verbs.

Before I continue however, I wish to digress from the matter under discussion because I believe at this point a remark regarding my terminology is necessary.

As already seen in (11) and (12), in Hungarian the constituent I refer to as NONSUBCATEGORIZED ACCUSATIVE CASE-ASSIGNED NP can be denoted by two distinct nominal lexical items. When surfacing as reflexive pronoun (e.g. *magát* ‘herself’ in (11)) it is recognized by linguistics as fake reflexive; a reflexive that serves as object in subject-oriented resultative constructions. In addition, since it is coreferential with the agentive subject (14), it predicates the result state of that very same agentive subject.

The other type of nonsubcategorized accusative Case-assigned NP is represented in Hungarian by so-called body-part NP (e.g. *szemét* ‘eyes-ACC’ in (12)). The rarely



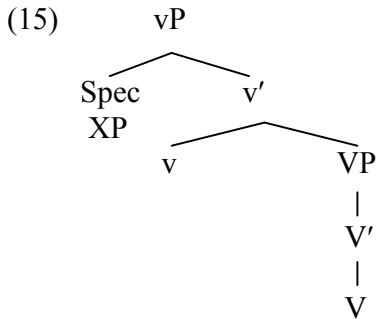
occurring body-part NP behaves the same way as the aforementioned reflexive pronoun does (14), therefore it could also be attributed as fake.

It should be noted though that although both nonsubcategorized NP<sub>Acc</sub> types satisfy the fakeness condition defined by Simpson (1983) according to which the constituent appearing as object in constructions derived from unergative verbs has to be coreferential with agentive subject in order to be considered fake, in effect neither of them are fake.

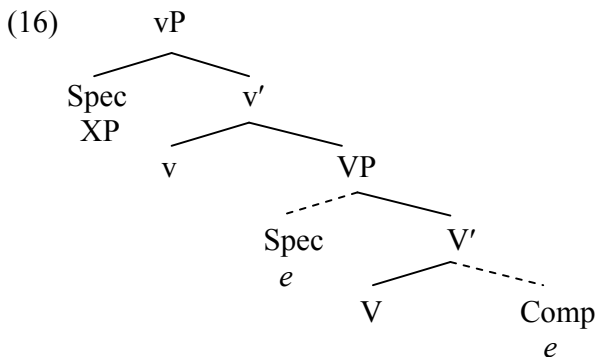
Namely, even though the reflexive pronoun *magát* ‘her/himself’ (11) is not the surfaced direct internal argument of the verb, it still marks via accusative Case that the agentive subject is not only the causer, but also the bearer of the result state; in other words, it indicates that the action of the agentive subject is directed towards the subject self. Similarly, in (12) the NP<sub>Acc</sub> *szemét* ‘eyes-ACC’ is neither underlying direct internal argument, yet its role is to define which part of the agentive subject is affected. This means that both reflexive pronouns and body-part NPs behave as real (direct) objects, therefore given that the term FAKE implies that something is not real or that it is false, labeling them as fake is inaccurate. Nevertheless, since these constituents are inserted during derivation into the empty direct internal argument position of verbs, they should be differentiated from those accusative Case-assigned NPs which are generated in direct internal argument position of verbs. Therefore I would like to propose here calling the nonsubcategorized NP<sub>Acc</sub> appearing in Hungarian subject-oriented resultative constructions honorary object.

After clarifying the terminology let us now turn to the question how a nonsubcategorized accusative Case-assigned NP enters a resultative construction derived from unergative verbs and becomes visible in syntax.

In order to find an answer, we should take a close look at unergatives, because it is to assume that the surfacing of nonsubcategorized constituent in analyzed Hungarian resultative construction depends on underlying structure of these intransitives:



As can be seen, this layered verb phrase is very peculiar. As already mentioned, in syntax unergatives are characterized as monadic verbs with a sole argument which generates in specifier position of vP-projection. This is a property that implies hierarchical underlying build-up, yet this structure is unusual for the reason that its lower shell is in actual fact expandable. Namely, as (16) shows, the specifier position of VP-projection and the complement position of V head are generated empty, which means that in the course of derivation these positions may well host additional constituents. I must add though that the Comp position of the lexical verb has minor importance in this specific case; for us it is the Spec,VP that counts, because it is this position that holds the key to the mystery of Hungarian nonsubcategorized accusative Case-assigned NPs.



When the agentive subject predicates that the volitional action expressed by unergative verb refers to agentive subject self, this intended meaning is expressed through insertion of a nonsubcategorized NP in specifier position of VP-projection because this is the position in hierarchical verb phrase that holds the constituent toward the action expressed by the verb is directed. Additionally, the Spec,VP is an





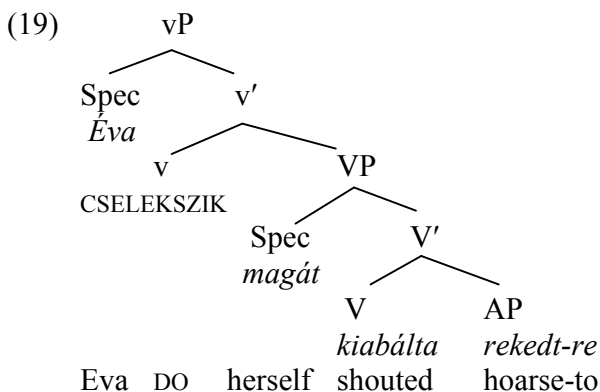
Argument position, which is a property that points toward a possible explanation of how accusative Case-assigned constituents can surface in resultative constructions derived from unergatives. Namely, the acceptability of sentences cited under (11) and (12) follows from Burzio's Generalization (17) according to which

- (17) all and only verbs that can assign  $\theta$ -roles to the subject can assign accusative Case to an object.

Burzio (1986) argues that unergative verbs can assign  $\theta$ -role (i.e. Agent  $\theta$ -role) to their subjects, and therefore they have the ability to assign accusative Case too. The latter property of unergative verbs is actually very important in the course of derivation of Hungarian subject-oriented resultative constructions, because allows the marked option of accusative Case assignment to nonsubcategorized NP inserted in Spec,VP, i.e. Argument-position and consequently prevents the violation of the Case Filter:

- (18) “\*NP if NP has phonetic content and has no Case.” (Chomsky, 1982: 49)

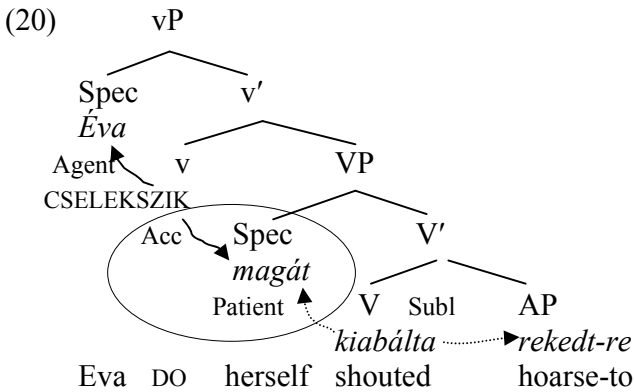
In other words, when for instance the subject-oriented resultative construction in (11) is derived, once the hierarchical verb phrase had projected two nonsubcategorized constituents are inserted in hierarchical verb phrase: a fake object (in our case represented by reflexive pronoun *magát* ‘him/herself’) and a resultative phrase (*rekedt-re* ‘hoarse-to’), which is a type of secondary predicate (Bene, 2009); the previous constituent is going to occupy the empty Argument-position, whilst the latter appears is empty Comp position:



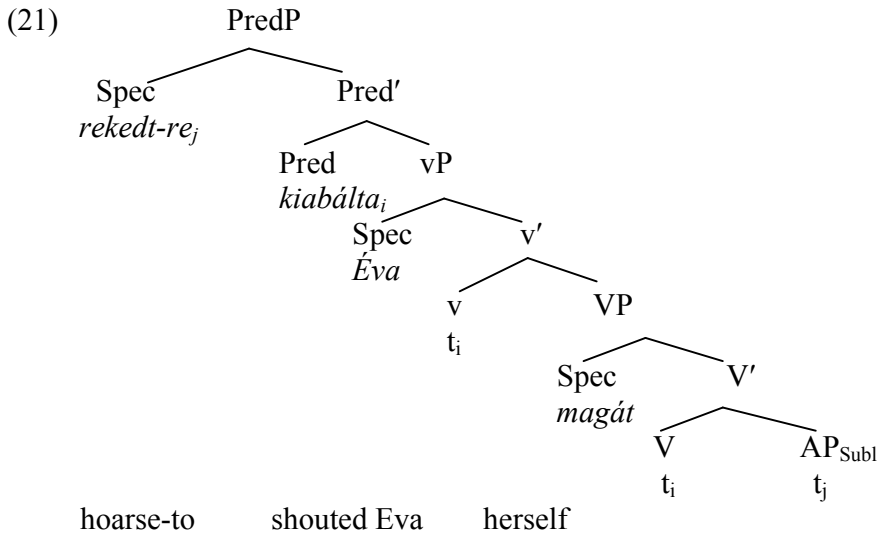
After the empty positions had filled in accordance with Burzio's Generalization the light verb ( in our example it is the light verb CSELEKSZIK ‘DO’) assigns Agent theta-role to underlying external argument (*Éva* ‘Eva-NOM’) generated in Spec,vP



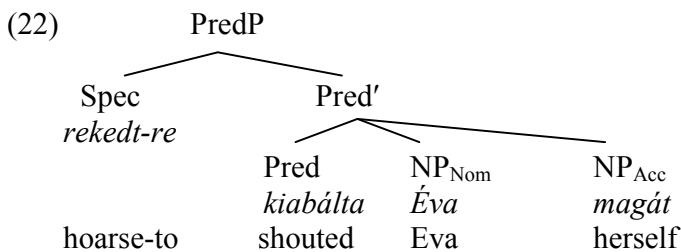
and accusative Case to reflexive pronoun *magát* ('herself') inserted in Spec,VP. Notice, this particular pronoun had already been theta-marked by the lexical head, which also assigned sublative Case to the other inserted constituent: the resultative phrase *rekedt-re* ('hoarse-to'), also in line with Burzio's Generalization. For this reason it should be noted here, that this derivation pattern makes obvious that Burzio's Generalization applies not only for lexical verbs, but for light verbs too which is not surprising, since light verbs and lexical verbs differ only on phonological level, this distinction however may be disregarded here.



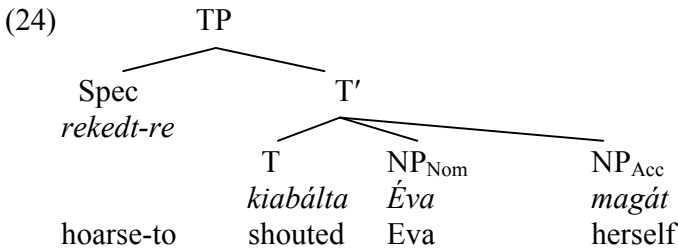
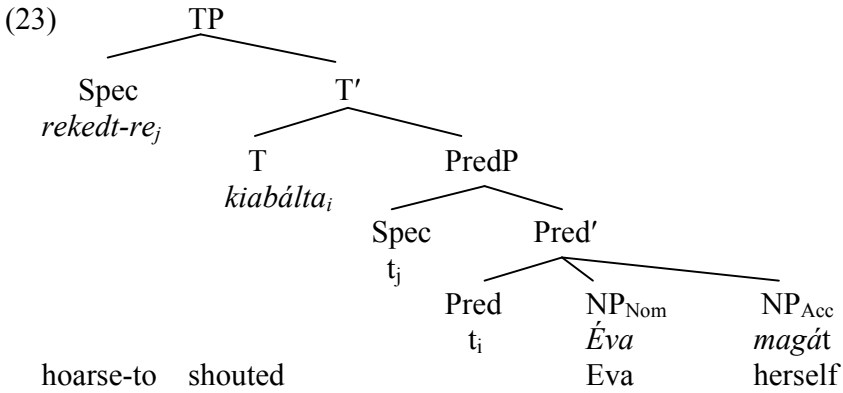
After the theta-role assignment and Case assignment took place, the vP-projection extends further into PredP: the verb *kiabálta* 'shouted' moves via head of vP-projection to Pred head and creates the maximally lexically extended verb phrase, whilst the secondary predicate (*rekedt-re* 'hoarse-to') moves to the specifier position of PredP-projection secondary predicates being characterized by syntactic property of modification of another element or phrase (Bene 2010).



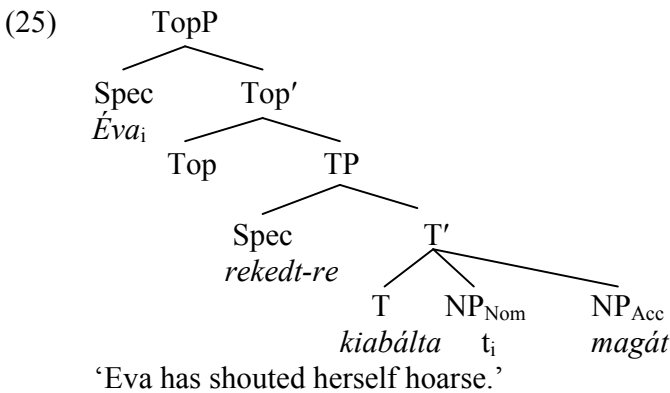
As the lexical verb had left its original position in V, the silent lower copies of the verb and their projections are deleted and the vP-projection, i.e. the lexical domain of Hungarian sentence flattens allowing the linearization of sister constituents in free order (É. Kiss, 2006, 2008):



At this point, the PredP-projection expands further into TP: the lexical verb (*kiabálta* 'shouted') rises from Pred to T, and the filler of Spec,PredP (*rekedt-re* 'hoarse-to') moves to Spec,TP (23); these movements will trigger another flattening (24).



The final structure of sentence (11) will come into existence after the underlying external argument (*Éva* 'Eva-NOM') moves from the semi-flattened syntactic structure in (24) and rises to Spec,TopP:



As can be seen, in syntax Hungarian nonsubcategorized accusative Case-assigned NPs behave exactly the same way as real or direct objects do, consequently in my esteem calling them fake is inaccurate. However, given that



nonsubcategorized objects should be distinguished from subcategorized, thus real (direct) objects, naming them honorary objects would be justified.

## 5. Conclusions

This paper has argued that the syntactic category of fake reflexive introduced by Simpson (1983) as well as the latter appeared variation known as fake object should be renamed – with regard to Hungarian.

In Hungarian the constituent I was referring to as nonsubcategorized accusative case-assigned NP can be denoted by two distinct nominal lexical items: by reflexive pronouns and so-called body-part NPs. By examining them it becomes obvious that (i) both types of nonsubcategorized NPs are inserted in empty generated direct internal argument position and (ii) they undergo a change and they are case-assigned in accordance with Burzio's Generalization. These properties imply that Hungarian nonsubcategorized accusative Case-assigned NPs behave just like real (direct) objects, therefore naming them fake is imprecise. Nevertheless, because nonsubcategorized NPs should be distinguished from subcategorized or real (direct) objects, naming them honorary objects would be reasonable.

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### JESU LI MAĐARSKI LAŽNI OBJEKTI ZAISTA LAŽNI?

Cilj ovoga rada bio je proučiti sintaktičke odlike mađarskih imenskih fraza kojima se dodjeljuje uloga akuzativa, tj. konstituenta u svjetskoj lingvistici poznatog kao “lažni” rezultativ, ili ponekad lažni objekt. Analizom se otkrilo da se taj konstituent, koji se pojavljuje u rezultativnim konstrukcijama izvedenima iz neergativnih glagola, ponaša sasvim jednako kao pravi, odnosno direktni objekt, npr. pojavljuje se na položaju specifikatora u glagolskoj frazi, uzima akuzativ kao padež i funkcionira kao argument na kojem se odvija čin izražen glagolom. Zbog ovih specifičnih sintaktičkih odlika, u radu se predlaže da se analizirani nekategorizirani sintaktički element nazove ‘honorarnim’ objektom.

**Ključne riječi:** mađarski; lažni objekt; rezultativna konstrukcija; neergativni glagoli.