

Tibor Laczkó

Introduction

This special thematic issue of *Argumentum*¹ presents selected papers from the *First Theoretical and Experimental Linguistics Workshop* at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary (KRE), 25–26 October 2023.² The workshop was organized by our Theoretical and Experimental Linguistics Research Group at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, KRE.³ The major goal, the mission of the workshop was to promote interaction and collaboration among researchers working in theoretical and experimental linguistics. We had nineteen invited speakers from abroad and Hungary, eight invited plenary talks and ten parallel thematic sessions also featuring invited talks.⁴ In addition, we hosted a poster session and a tutorial session. The feedback we received indicated that the mission of the workshop was successfully completed.

The collection of the papers in this proceedings also testifies to the success of the workshop. They manifest considerable coverage in a variety of dimensions. The authors analyze phonological, morphological, syntactic or semantic phenomena from four languages: Hungarian, Russian, English and German. They report the results of research in widely used theoretical frameworks, or their results are descriptive in nature, sometimes with strong diachronic or comparative perspectives. The empirical avenue is also represented in the form of experimental or corpus linguistic research. At the metalinguistic level the relationship or contrast between theoretical and empirical investigation is also addressed. In addition, there are two specific topics covered in this volume. On the one hand, general linguistic and pedagogical issues are explored related to a large-scale orthographic competition in the Carpathian Basin. On the other hand, the procedure of the successful creation of a parallelized database for facilitating the parallel reading of various Bible versions is presented.

¹ The publication of this volume was supported by a research grant obtained from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary (*Theoretical and Experimental Research in Linguistics*, reg. no. 20736B800).

² <https://btk.kre.hu/konf/eknyek/> (accessed 25 August 2024).

³ <https://btk.kre.hu/index.php/2015-12-05-09-31-20/kari-kutatocsoportok/958-elmeleti-es-kiserletes-nyelvezeti-kutatasok.html> (accessed 25 August 2024).

⁴ See the *programme* at <https://btk.kre.hu/konf/eknyek/> (accessed 25 August 2024). Already the titles of the majority of the presentations show that they reported the results of recent research in theoretical or experimental linguistics, and, not infrequently, they manifested the most welcome combination of these two types of linguistic investigation.

In their paper, *László Cseresnyési* and *Miklós Kontra* argue that linguistics needs to be fundamentally data-oriented if it aims at empirical adequacy. It is in this way that it will be capable of reflecting what can be referred to as “sociolinguistically valid collective intuitions”. The authors present data from the Hungarian National Sociolinguistic Survey and the Budapest Sociolinguistic Interview project to support their claim that two structural grammars from 1998, each entitled as “a grammar of Hungarian”, describe Codified Standard Hungarian, which in some cases results in their ignoring the grammaticality judgments of more than fifty per cent of Hungarian native speakers in Hungary. The authors seem to use the terms theoretical linguistics and generative linguistics synonymously, also stating that this linguistics can be characterized as lacking reliable empirical foundation, and they emphatically contrast it with empirical linguistics, which they pursue and endorse. At a metalinguistic level, the paper addresses issues directly related to the above-mentioned goal of the workshop: the promotion of interaction between the practitioners of empirical and theoretical linguistics. The authors make strong claims from their empirical perspective. It is likely that the paper will generate a fruitful scholarly debate in the future.

Csaba Csides analyzes various types of consonant clusters in English. He uses the formal apparatus of two frameworks: Strict CV-Phonology and Government Phonology. A key device in both phonological theories is the use of empty categories: empty vocalic and empty consonantal positions. The concept is similar to the use of empty syntactic categories in Government and Binding Theory and the Minimalist Program. The essence of this empty category phonological approach is that it makes it possible to assume that traditional consonant clusters are in fact surface realizations of underlying CVCV (i.e. consonant-vowel-consonant-vowel) sequences. The author applies his own algorithm to handle a variety of consonant clusters and the distribution of stressed and unstressed vocalic positions in a uniform fashion. He argues for two non-standard principles related to government. On the one hand, while other models are unidirectional, assuming that government is either strictly left-to-right or strictly right-to-left, he proposes bidirectionality regulated in a principled manner. On the other hand, he claims that the targets of government can be either empty or contentful skeletal positions.

Gábor Alberti, *Anastasia Saypasheva Felvizi-Veress*, *Atieno Linda Ouma* and *Judit Farkas* present a novel morphological analysis of Hungarian agreement paradigms. They subscribe to the widely held assumption that the ultimate sources of agreement markers are demonstrative pronouns, which at a later stage become ordinary pronouns, which, in turn, become unstressed and undergo possible phonological changes. The authors point out that if pronominal agreement in a language has a long diachronic development, the correspondence between current personal pronouns and the etymologically related agreement forms is harder to detect. Hungarian agreement paradigms exhibit this characteristic. In this general context, the authors claim that the synchronic system of agreement in Hungarian maintains the distinguished correspondence between pronominal basis and agreement form in a special but remarkably regular way. Their generalization is as follows. In Hungarian, finite verbs have both definite and indefinite paradigms. When the segmentation of morphologically complex agreement forms is carried out appropriately, the correspondence between a pronoun and the agreement form can be reliably established if and only if the (reduced) presence of the relevant pronoun is detectable in both paradigms.

In the second paper on the morphosyntactic phenomenon of agreement in this volume, *Tatiana Davidyuk* reports the results of her investigation of subject–verb agreement patterns in Russian in sentences with disjointed subjects. She concentrated on instances in which the

disjuncts in complex subject noun phrases differ in person and she also compared disjoined and conjoined configurations. She made use of previous theoretical insights and she also conducted acceptability judgement experiments, exploring how Russian native speakers rank different agreement patterns. Her most important findings are as follows. The resolved agreement pattern, in which the verb agrees with the person hierarchy (1 > 2 > 3), received the highest degree of acceptability. However, third-person plural, third-person singular and closest disjunct agreement are also possible patterns to a lesser extent. The author found that these results align with patterns discernible with conjoined subjects. In addition, it turned out that the type of conjunction (coordinating *ili* ‘or’ vs. correlative *ili ... ili* ‘either ... or’) does not significantly affect agreement patterns despite their different semantics.

In the third agreement paper in this proceedings, *Lada Pasko* analyzes partial predicate agreement in Russian. When there is a coordinated subject noun phrase in the sentence and the verb carries plural agreement marking, we talk about full agreement. When the verb is singular, we talk about partial agreement: the verb agrees with the coordinated subject for person but it does not agree for number. The author’s theoretical framework is the Minimalist Program (MP). She reports the results of two acceptability judgement experiments she conducted in order to test previous MP analyses. In particular, she set out to test the tenability of an account that assumes that in the case of partial agreement VP coordination takes place, which is followed by an Across-the-Board (ATB) movement of the verbal heads to a structurally higher position. The ATB analysis implies constraints on partial agreement in a variety of configurations (e.g. symmetrical predicates and subject–verb word order). The author’s experimental results argue against the predictions of ATB. She concludes that the findings provide empirical evidence for an alternative analysis: DP-coordination.

Enikő Tóth, Péter Csátár and György Rákosi present the results of their complex experimental research they carried out in order to explore the use of demonstrative pronouns, primarily *ez* ‘this’ and *az* ‘that’, in Hungarian child language as compared to adult language. The authors conducted a pioneering pilot production study and they supplemented it with a corpus study. The production data they obtained from an elicitation task showed that in child language there are proportionally more distal demonstrative items (e.g. *az* ‘that’) used than in adult language, as testified by the data produced by the members of an adult control group. The results of the independent corpus study the authors also conducted revealed a similar difference between child language and child-directed adult language data. In addition, it turned out that the use of demonstrative items in the language of 4-year-old children is divergent: a qualitative analysis of the experimental results revealed that Hungarian children at this age can be taken to be at different developmental stages regarding the acquisition of demonstratives: at the no contrast stage, at the partial contrast stage or at the full contrast stage. The child at the third stage has already mastered the use of the adult like patterns.

The paper by *Péter Szűcs* also has a Hungarian pronominal topic. Motivated by some earlier proposals, including his own, the author outlines an MP-style analysis of what he calls “clausal associate proleptic demonstrative proforms”, i.e. *ez* ‘this’ and *az* ‘that’ when they are combined with finite clauses.⁵ He points out that the majority of previous approaches treated these

⁵ Below is one of his examples.

Az valószínű, hogy Kati okos.
that likely COMP Kate smart
‘It is likely that Kate is smart.’

In this sentence the distal pronoun *az* ‘that’ has a role comparable to that of *it* in the English translation.

proforms as either meaningless (i.e. expletive) elements, or entirely meaningful, referential deictic elements. The key feature of his alternative proposal is that these pronouns should be analyzed as predicates. He claims that his approach captures the non-referential but meaningful nature of these elements, which poses various theoretical and empirical problems for both the expletive and the fully referential accounts. He provides evidence from distribution, number features, nominalization, focussing, and the general patterning of demonstrative predicates for assuming that these proleptic proforms belong to the heterogeneous group of Hungarian “verbal modifiers”, which are often considered predicative in nature in MP frameworks.

Patrick Brandt deals with argument structural issues at the syntax–semantics interface. He proposes, in an MP model supplemented with an appropriate semantic component, an analysis of three specific German constructions: reflexive inchoative, *zu*-excessive and particle verb constructions. In certain uses they violate the hierarchical alignment of thematic roles and grammatical functions. The author outlines a compositional analysis of the unexpected change of state or modal semantics of these constructions. He points out that diatheses, e.g. reflexivization by means of *sich*, may change the linking. This can take place in the expected, unmarked way (where a higher role is linked to a higher grammatical function and lesser marking). However, it can also take place in an unexpected, marked fashion (where a higher role is associated with a lower grammatical function and more marking). The author’s solution is that in such cases a certain semantic component – namely, the negation (complement) of a property independently given – may be locally ignored at the interface and it will be interpreted at the next higher syntactic-semantic cycle. Metaphorically, semantic recycling takes place.

The paper by *Etelka Tóth* and *Tamás Csontos* presents the research results related to the Simonyi Zsigmond Orthographic Competition in the Carpathian Basin. The authors describe the competition, exemplify and discuss the major types of tasks, and characterize a corpus of students’ answers containing millions of tokens, which can be analyzed from various perspectives (e.g. linguistic, methodological or pedagogical). They concentrate on questions that posed serious problems for the participants, and set out to identify the factors that may be responsible for the poor results. They also examine the answers given by the Hungarian participants from Slovakia and compare them with the results of the participants from Hungary. Some of their concluding remarks are as follows. Hungarian students from Slovakia and students from Hungary have difficulties with the same tasks. Poorer performance can also be accounted for by changes in language usage, which need to be taken into consideration when editing newer orthographic dictionaries. The results are poorer when a task requires some grammatical knowledge as well.

Krisztina Neumayerné Streitman sets out to address the following important question of pedagogy and positive psychology in the 21st century. In what ways can educators be assisted to become professionals with positive self-concepts, to be able to support and motivate their students, to cope with stress and burnout, and to handle the challenges they potentially need to face in their careers? In order to explore possible answers to these issues, the author and her colleagues compiled a questionnaire concentrating on teacher motivation and coaching. The author discusses in a detailed fashion the theoretical and methodological background provided by the relevant literature that she and her colleagues capitalized on in compiling the questionnaire. This endeavour is also related to the Simonyi Zsigmond Orthographic Competition in the Carpathian Basin introduced in Etelka Tóth and Tamás Csontos’s paper inasmuch as the questionnaire was also targeted at teachers preparing their students for this competition.

In his paper, *Levente Zoltán Király* offers a detailed description of how the Unified Bible Reader (UBR) was developed at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary. The designated role of UBR is to facilitate the parallel reading of different versions of the Bible, including original language editions and antique as well as modern translations. The author discusses and exemplifies the following four steps in the process of creating a parallelized database of Bible texts: digitization, data cleaning, integration, and parallelization. He highlights the inherent challenges of the digitization phase which comprise the conversion of non-digital texts to digital format, primarily using optical character recognition (OCR) technology. Data cleaning is concerned with correcting OCR errors and resolving format inconsistencies. Integration, i.e. importing text into a unified database, addresses issues with rare cases of text division. Parallelization involves aligning textual units across different versions, accounting for variations in verse numbering and verse boundaries. The application may serve as a basis for more refined text splitting and the addition of annotations to support advanced textual analysis and translation comparisons.

Tibor Laczkó
Institute of English Studies, Department of English Linguistics
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary
H-1146 Budapest, Dózsa György út 25–27.
laczko.tibor@kre.hu