POSSESSING A PROCESS: A COGNITIVE SEMANTIC APPROACH TO THE ACTION NOMINAL CONSTRUCTION IN HUNGARIAN

László Palágyi

ELTE Eötvös Loránd University
palagyi.laszlo@btk.elte.hu
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1437-4746

Abstract

This paper investigates the semantics of action nominal constructions (ANCs) in Hungarian. The theoretical assumptions concerning grammatical structures are defined in the framework of usage-based construction grammar. ANCs are investigated in the model of conceptual integration. The input spaces of the ANC network are intransitive and transitive constructions characteristic of nominative-accusative languages on the one hand, and nominal possessive constructions on the other. Agent and patient semantic roles correspond to the formal components of certain possessive constructions. The ergative nature of mapping can be explained by the symbolic structure and grammaticalization of the possessor in Hungarian. Although the use of dative case is claimed in the literature to be a secondary (marked) way to express the possessor, it proved to be dominant before the reform era (1772–1825) according to our corpus analysis. The motivation behind the mapping between constructions can be captured by a generic space. The constructions share a mental path semantic structure and an inflectional pattern that makes the grounding of a person possible. However, the emergent nature of the meaning of ANC is also reflected in grounding, as instead of the asymmetric reference-point structure of possession, it holistically serves to refer to a person or thing. Compression and passivation are further functions that cannot be simply traced back to possessive or verbal constructions. These cognitive advantages might also motivate the use of ANC.

Keywords: construction, action nominal, possession, conceptual network

1. Introduction

The action nominal construction (ANC) is a highly problematic phenomenon in the world's languages as it exhibits a combination of formal and semantic properties that are systematically distinguished in grammatical description. An action nominal (AN) is a deverbal noun "with the general meaning of an action or a process" (Comrie 1976: 178). As for ANC, certain semantic and syntactic relations characteristic of verbs (and finite clauses) are mapped onto a noun-headed structure. Accordingly, Hungarian AN – which is expressed by the *-ás/-és* deverbal suffix with "automatic" (inflection-like) productivity (Berrár 1973) – may have adverbial relations (see example 1) and participant roles similar to those of the base verb (see examples 2 and 3).[1] Examples 2 and 3 show that *állatok* 'animals' is the possessor in accordance with the Hungarian possessive structure (featureless possessor always precedes the possessed), however, its relationship with the possessed obviously corresponds to the syntactic relations of the base verb. That is to say, the argument structure expressed by the syntactic relations of the finite verb still prevails in the meaning of ANC and it is (at least partly) inherited in nominalization (Laczkó 2000). That is why Grimshaw (1990) characterizes this class of words as complex event nouns.

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[1] In the glosses, "NLZR" is used as an abbreviation for "nominalizer".

(1) erdő-ben fut-ás
forest.SG-INE run-NLZR.SG.NOM
'running in (the) forest'

(2) az állat-ok ki-hal-ás-a
the animal-PL out-die-NLZR-PX3SG.NOM
'extinction of animals'

(3) az állat-ok megfigyel-és-e
the animal-PL observe-NLZR-PX3SG.NOM
'observation of animals'

One of the main issues in our knowledge of ANC is a lack of (conceptual) semantic considerations, and there has been little discussion on the motivation behind the use of a possessive structure in the construction. Instead of treating the possessor function as semantically unrestricted in Hungarian (cf. Laczkó 1997), this paper adopts the symbolic thesis (Langacker 1987) and considers the possessor function as being polysemous. Therefore, ANC is treated as an extended schema, a construction distinct from other possessive structures. The paper attempts to explore the semantic basis of the two-faced nature of Hungarian ANC in a usage-based constructionist framework. It also aims to demonstrate that though Hungarian ANC exhibits several properties of possessive constructions as well as those of transitive and intransitive ones, it has some characteristics which none of them manifest (cf. Comrie 2011). The reason for this is that not all the elements of the constructions mentioned above are mapped onto it, and it has emergent meaning. We chose the model of conceptual networks (Fauconnier and Turner 2002) to describe the emergent nature of ANC in the network of constructions.

The next part of the paper provides an overview of the core features of the Hungarian ANC. The third part outlines the main assumptions of our usage-based constructionist approach. Such an assumption is the associative relationship between the argument structure and the verb, and the epiphenomenal nature of word classes. In the fourth part, the constructions in question are investigated as components in a single-scope network. The fifth part concludes.

2. Some characteristics of the Hungarian ANC

As for the number of arguments in ANC, Hungarian belongs to the restricted type (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2005) as the structure contains only one argument (as a possessor). This argument is the single one of an intransitive AN (cf. "subjective genitive"), or the patient of a transitive AN (cf. "objective genitive"), see again examples (2) and (3).

The use of való ~ 'being' grammaticalized from the present participial form of the existential verb van 'be' is also characteristic, especially when the ANC expresses a participant as well as a circumstance, as illustrated in example (4a). This paper does not deal with való, which presumably provides ANC with temporality and contributes to the sequential (Langacker 1987) link between an action and an adverbial circumstance. Otherwise, in accordance with the schema of Hungarian noun phrases, it is also possible to express an adverbial circumstance and a participant role without való if the former follows the ANC, as shown in (4b).

(4a) az állat-ok erdő-ben való megfigyel-és-e
the animal-PL forest.SG-INE. be.PTCP observe-NLZR-PX3SG.NOM
'observing animals in the forest'

(4b) az állat-ok megfigyel-és-e az erdő-ben
the animal-PL observe-NLZR-PX3SG.NOM the forest.SG-INE
'observing animals in the forest'

Although this paper does not address compounding and lexicalization either, in a more nuanced approach, another argument may arise in the structure when the possessed is a deverbal compound, as in example (5a). In this case, the rather passive meaning of Hungarian compounds (see Kiefer 2003; Kugler and Simon 2017) overrides the ergative nature of the Hungarian AN. In addition, the AN can take an agent as a possessor if it is lexicalized via conversion, which has further formal indicators (Szabolcsi and Laczkó 1992). The AN in example (5b), *megfigyelés* 'observation' has been lexicalized – and became a simple event noun (Grimshaw 1990) – according to the action→result metonymic pattern (Palágyi 2021).

(5a)   az   etológus   állat-megfigyel-és-e
       the   ethologist.SG   animal-observe-NLZR-PX3SG
       'ethologist's animal observation'

(5b)   az   etológus   új   megfigyel-és-e
       the   ethologist.SG   new   observe-NLZR-PX3SG
       'the ethologist's new observation'

Metonymic extension of action nominals is often responsible for the ambiguous meaning of the constructs. One might understand *megfigyelés* as a result nominal metonymically extended from the noun *megfigyelés* 'observation' as well as an actual AN derived from the 'surveil' meaning of the polysemous base verb *megfigyel*, see (5c).

(5c)   az   etológus   megfigyel-és-e
       the   ethologist.SG   observe-NLZR-PX3SG
       'the ethologist's observation' / 'surveillance of the ethologist'

3. Usage-based constructionist assumptions

In this section, the issue of the relationship between argument structures and verbs, and that of lexical classes are outlined in a usage-based constructionist framework. We consider morphological and syntactic structures as constructions in terms of schematic form-meaning pairings (Goldberg 1995). Modelling constructions is possible in the first place because they have schematic meaning (relatively) independent of exemplars. The main reason for defining ANC as a particular construction is that the meaning of the construct goes beyond the meaning of the components, i.e., it cannot be completely traced back to the meaning of the possessive structure, and the transitive and intransitive meanings are unmarked (unfeatured) on the formal side.

3.1. Verbs and argument structures

The relationship between verbs and argument structures is important to be clarified because the AN schema is built on a source-oriented generalization (see Bybee 2001) that involves the circumstances and participants of the process type evoked by the base verb. An argument structure involving specific semantic roles inherently relates to the meaning of a syntactic construction. Semantic roles in Hungarian are typically marked via morphological constructions and not by word order or prepositions. Although morphological constructions and syntactic relations contribute to the meaning of the construction, it cannot be derived from them, as shown in examples (6) and (7). A ditransitive construction with a so-called indirective alignment (Haspelmath 2015) can be observed in example (6), *Sári* (diminutive form of the Hungarian version of *Sarah*) in the (default) nominative case designates the agent acting by volition, *játékbabák* 'dolls' in the accusative case (with *-at* suffix) denotes the patients affected by the action, and *gyerekeknek* 'children.DAT' refers to the beneficiaries of the profiled action. In example (7), the nouns take the same case markers; however, *Sári* marks the experiencer who undergoes a cognitive experience, *játékbabák* 'dolls' fulfil

the theme semantic role, and *gyerekek* 'children' expresses the assumed-role (cf. Imrényi 2021) semantic role. Both constructions are considered form-meaning pairings learnt holistically, therefore, the semantic distinction between the two sentences cannot be reduced either to the particular morphological cases or the distinct meanings of the verbs (*ajándékoz* 'give as a gift', *hisz* 'believe'). Instead, we claim that the schematic meaning (and argument structure) of the construction is directly associated with the relevant inflectional constructions, and it is evoked by verbs that are semantically compatible with them.

(6) Sári   a   játékbabák-at gyerekek-nek   ajándékozta.
    Sári.SG.NOM the   doll.PL-ACC   child.PL-DAT   give(as a gift).PST.3SG.DEF
    'Sári gave the dolls to children.'

(7) Sári   a   játékbabák-at gyerekek-nek   hitte.
    Sári.SG.NOM the   doll.PL-ACC   child.PL-DAT   beleive.PST.3SG.DEF
    'Sári thought the dolls were children.'

There are several other verbs capable of representing the constructions illustrated above. The verb of (6) may be replaced by *ad* 'give', *adományoz* 'donate', *küld* 'send', etc., verbs which directly activate three participant roles. However, *ígér* 'promise' and *vesz* 'buy' are also capable of expressing possessive transfer, even if the lexical meaning of the former does not contain a participant role similar to a patient, and that of the latter lacks a beneficiary. Thus, they gain the 'transfer' meaning in the construction (even if it may be lexicalized), in other words, their meaning is compatible with the ditransitive construction metonymically (serving as a reference-point to a complex script from the act of PROMISING/BUYING to that of GIVING).

Accordingly, the verb of (7) could be replaced by *gondol* 'think', *vél* 'reckon', *néz* 'look', etc., verbs which are semantically compatible with the 'perceive and interpret' constructional meaning. Again, each verb mentioned above may activate the script of the cognitive process expressed by the constructional meaning, but their metonymic shift is sanctioned by the construction. The lexical meaning of *gondol* 'think' and *vél* 'reckon' gains the 'perceive' semantic component when fusing with the construction, while that of *néz* 'look' is extended by the 'interpret' semantic component.

All this does not mean that the inflectional constructions and syntactic relations lack usage-based knowledge of the given syntactic constructions to which they contribute. As for the constructions illustrated above, the Hungarian dative case that relates to the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema (Kothencz 2012; Pomázi 2022) is semantically motivated since it indicates the endpoint of a process ("end" of transfer, "result" of cognition) in both constructs. However, the semantic change of morphological constructions is an aspect of constructionalization during which the meaning of morphological constructions is fading compared to the whole, i.e., the meaning of the syntactic construction.

It should be highlighted that while semantic roles serve to describe the meaning of constructions, syntactic roles (SUB, OBJ) belong to their formal side according to Goldberg's construction grammar (1995). However, a purely formal view of syntax is highly problematic from a usage-based perspective; terms like subject, object, and verb (!) should not be treated as formal primitives without any functional (usage-based, semantic) basis (Croft and Cruse 2004). As opposed to the notion of purely formal syntactic properties we adopt the symbolic thesis (Langacker 1987) according to which grammatical structures and relations are inherently semantic and represent (schematic) semantic structures and relations. In our view unipolar (purely formal) relations of grammar are represented by phonological structures, but the terms subject and object refer to (highly schematic and polysemous) semantic relations required for representing the participants of a process. We assume that subject and object do not represent syntactic roles but rather relations within a clause, therefore, constructions not only form a network but their internal structure itself is a network (Imrényi 2021). In Hungarian, these syntactic relations are marked by inflection. A pattern of inflectional constructions is associated with one or more patterns of semantic roles, thus constructions with different meanings may have similar internal network structure. The meaning of an inflected

nominal word-form depends on the activated syntactic construction (see again (6) and (7)). In this spirit, the Hungarian ditransitive construction can be characterized as below.
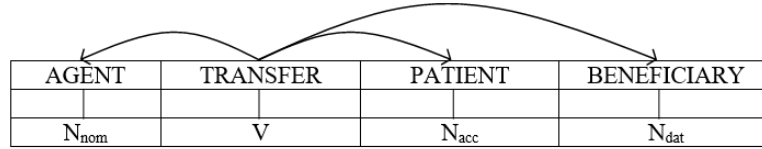
AGENT	TRANSFER	PATIENT	BENEFICIARY
N_{nom}	V	N_{acc}	N_{dat}

Figure 1. Transfer schema adapted from Imrényi (2021)

As far as the issue of lexical verbs is concerned, they profile participant roles (Goldberg 1995, Langacker 2008), e.g., *ígér* 'promise' profiles someone who makes a promise and someone to whom the promise is made. However, we take a more lexicalist stance according to which verbs evoke semantic roles and syntactic relations as well. According to *Magyar értelmező kéziszótár* "Hungarian Explanatory Dictionary", the verb *ígér* 'promise' activates the nominative−accusative−dative pattern that symbolizes two distinct constructions in which the verb may mean: 1) 'promise something to someone'; 2) 'promise to give an object to someone' (cf. example (6) and Figure 1). We reject the "bottom-up or top-down" dilemma of clausal meaning, and hypothesise that constructions do not only originate with the meaning of frequently used verbs (Goldberg 2006) but the instances play an essential role in the schematized constructions as well (Langacker 2008). Thus, syntactic constructions can be considered exemplar-based schemas, their instantiations are produced by analogical extension (Bybee 2010). Knowing a clausal construction implies knowledge of the verbs which represent it, accordingly, knowing a verb demands knowledge of the constructions which it usually represents. As Taylor puts it: "To know a word is to know, inter alia, the kinds of constructions in which it can occur [...]. A further crucial aspect of knowing a word is knowing its frequency in the language, both its overall frequency and its frequency with respect to a range of contextual and situational variables" (2017: 253). From this perspective, the relationship between the verb and the argument structure is still not inherent, but a rather gradual associative relationship for which the *verb → syntactic construction* and *syntactic construction → verb* connections are both responsible. These usage-based connections originate in the semantic integration of the verb's participant roles with the construction's semantic roles. Several verbs may strongly associate the same construction (and argument structure), a verb may associate several constructions, and constructions can take unexpected verbs creatively (on the analogy of the strongly associated ones).

The associative relationship between verbal meaning and the semantic role of the subject must be highlighted in Hungarian. The Hungarian verb may function as a finite clause in itself since it morphologically always expresses tense, mood, person and number, that is to say, the verb is the basis of agreement as it always involves the subject (Imrényi 2021).[2] Although a verb may evoke constructions that vary in transitivity as well (see *készül* 'sy prepare for sg', 'sg is being made'), knowledge of a Hungarian verb typically includes the semantic role associated with its subject, i.e. the nominative dependent with which it agrees in person and number (Imrényi 2017). What is more, the type of profiled participants belongs to the meaning of Hungarian verbal derivational constructions. For instance, a derivate with an *-ít* suffix profiles an active participant (see *meleg* 'warm' → *melegít* 'to warm sg'), while one with an *-od(ik)/ed(ik)/öd(ik)* ending profiles a passive one (see *meleg* 'warm' → *meleged(ik)* 'sg is warming').

Although action nominals evoke the constructional meanings typically represented by the base verb, the circumstances and participants of the process type can be backgrounded when it is integrated into the AN morphological construction, as shown in example (8). According to the rule-based description (see Laczkó 2000), *készítés* 'making, preparing' should only appear as a

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[2] The historical reason for this is that the Hungarian finite verb is an ancient clause (Havas 2003), thus syntactic constructions are partly grammaticalized within it.

possessee in the ANC (see (8a)) because its base verb requires a patient semantic role (*Peti készít √ 'Peti is making/preparing'). However, in the case of (8b), the transitive meaning obligatory at the base verb is not represented, and the result of "making" is accessible only contextually. Examples (8a) and (8b) demonstrate that the relationship between the clausal construction evoked by the verb and the ANC is not transformational in any sense. Instead, they are constructions more or less associated in the constructicon (network of constructions), and this associative relationship is obviously observable on the level of constructs (what is more, it is built on the lexical level from a usage-based perspective).

(8a)   ajándék   készít-és-e
        gift.SG   prepare-NLZR-PX3SG.NOM
        'preparing a gift'

(8b)   A **készít-és**[3] fortélyait   a saját nagyapjától   leste el[4]
        the make-NLZR finesse.PL-PX3SG.ACC the own grandfather.PX3SG.ABL learn.PST.3SG.DEF
        'He learned the tricks of making from his own grandfather.'

3.2. Word classes

Adjectival, adverbial, and nominal schemas have relatively fuzzy boundaries in Hungarian, but the verbal schema is clearly delimited regarding morphological as well as syntactic constructions. This means that Hungarian nominal and verbal constructions are easily separable. The two schemas primarily differ in their construal (Langacker 1987). The cognitive motivation behind the AN morphological construction is that while in the case of the base verb, the process is represented as a sequence of instantaneous states, it can be holistically represented as a THING when integrated into nominal morphosyntactic schemas, and all instantaneous states are mapped onto each other. As we have seen in examples (1) and (8b), the schematic participants are not necessarily part of the meaning (Tolcsvai Nagy 2017). However, the AN only partially represents the nominal schema, strictly speaking, an AN construct cannot be defined as being a noun. It does not take numerous nominal determiners and its inflectional pattern is defective as it lacks plural forms. This could be in correlation with its capability of expressing verbal meaning and semantic components of clausal constructions.

The lexical status of AN is unclear (see section 4), thus it is worth outlining a usage-based notion of word classes. As far as word classes and schematicity relations are concerned, low-level generalisations need to be primary in a usage-based framework. We assume that rich knowledge characterizes low-level schemas that can be lexically instantiated. Information is not cumulated but schematized in high-level schemas that are based on the shared properties of the more specific ones. Thus, we do not assume either inheritance links (cf. Booij 2017) or morphosyntactic properties without word class labels (cf. Kenesei 2010). Word classes can be defined as extremely general (and so widely functioning) language-specific, epiphenomenal (Croft 2001) schemas of different constructions with few characteristics. The characteristics of word classes are possibly overlapping. In the rest of the paper, we approach ANC as a morphosyntactic blend of possessive (nominal) and transitive, intransitive (verbal) constructions.

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[3] It could be raised that the noun in the example is a simple event nominal (Grimshaw 1990). In that case it would take plural (Szabolcsi and Laczkó 1994; Palágyi 2021). However, the plural form of the noun only appears as a result nominal with 'products' meaning in the Hungarian Gigaword Corpus (Oravecz et al. 2014).
[4] Source: Hungarian Gigaword Corpus (Oravecz et al. 2014).

4. Action nominal construction as a blend in a single-scope network

In this section, ANC is investigated as a conceptual blend. The model of blending (Fauconnier and Turner 2002) originally serves to handle the semantic integration of mental spaces and not that of relatively stable conceptual structures such as constructions. Although we do not treat the elaboration of ANC, and the schema extension of possessive structure as an on-line mental operation, it can still be assumed that constructions are interrelated, a construct of ANC is (at least partially) motivated and sanctioned by other verbal and nominal constructions.

In conceptual integration, two input spaces are mapped onto each other to create a new, integrated space. The structure of the input spaces mirrors that of the generic space that motivates the integration. As can be seen in Figure 2, correspondences between generic, input, and blended spaces play an important role in the emergence and structure of the network. Only those components of the input space are mapped onto the integrated space which correspond to components in the other input space.
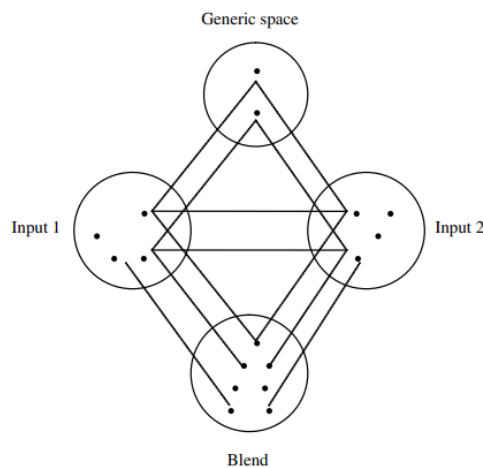

Figure 2. A basic integration network
(adapted from Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 46)

Different types of conceptual networks are distinguished according to the nature of mapping. Single-scope networks are relevant from our perspective as ANC clearly shows formal properties of the possessive structure, that is to say, the integrated space mirrors the structure of only one input space. The single-scope network is based on metaphorization, an input space is understood in the terms of another one. The latter is a framing input that organises the former called focus input. As shown in Figure 3, the blend inherits the internal structure of the framing input, while the focus input is mapped onto the blend in a rather diffuse way.
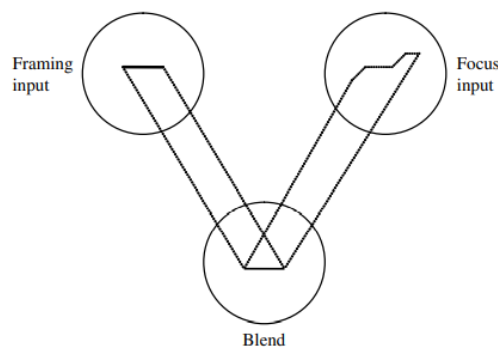

Figure 3. Structuring focus input by inner-space projection from framing input
(adapted from Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 130)

4.1. Input spaces

The input spaces of ANC are possessive constructions (as the framing input) and verbal constructions (as the focus input). The correspondences between input spaces make mappings onto ANC possible. The input spaces and correspondences in question are examined below.

4.1.1. Framing input – possessive constructions

Constructions expressing possession can be modelled as reference-point structures (Langacker 1999). Tolcsvai Nagy (2017) describes the Hungarian possessor as a reference-point (R), a mental starting point that provides access to a target (T) (the possessee) within a conceptual domain (D). In example (9a), *Sári* serves as a reference-point for the real topic of the discourse event, i.e., the dog that is placed at the centre of attention. As illustrated in examples (9b–e), the reference-point may be the speaker and the partner, either separately (9b–c) or together (9d).

(9a) Sári kutyá-ja   (9b) a kutyá-m.   (9c) a kutyá-d
     Sári dog-PX3SG.NOM   the dog-PX1SG.NOM   the dog-PX2SG.NOM
     'Sári's dog'   'my dog'   'your dog'

(9d) a kutyá-nk   (9e) a kutyá-tok   (9f) a kutyá-ja
     the dog-PX1PL.NOM   the dog-PX2PL.NOM   the dog-PX3SG.NOM
     'our dog'   'your dog'   'his/her dog'

Concerning the 1st and 2nd persons, it is always sufficient to mark the T in the reference-point structure outlined above, because the given speaker and his/her partners are known in the discourse event (when the 1st or 2nd person pronouns precede the possessee, they usually receive stress on the formal side and more attention on the semantic side). However, in 3rd person (see (9a) and (9f)), omitting the R (the possessor) is only possible if it has been activated in the discourse.

    The use of a morphologically featured possessor is also a characteristic way, especially in the 3rd person, of expressing a reference-point structure. The possessor can also be in the dative case that is functionally similar to the genitive of Indo-European languages. Word order plays an important role in the reference-point structure. When the possessor is in its default, unfeatured form, the R always precedes the T. As illustrated in examples (10a) and (10b), the use of dative case allows word order to be flexible. Nevertheless, the iconic mapping of the mental path is still more characteristic, the R goes before the T more frequently even when it is in the dative case (Pomázi 2022). The motivation behind the grammaticalization of dative is that the construction expresses the result of getting hold of something. The spatiality and direction of the goal are metaphorical (Tolcsvai Nagy 2013: 264).

(10a) Sári-nak   a   kutyá-ja   (10b) a   kutyá-ja   Sári-nak
      Sári.SG-DAT   the   dog-PX3SG.NOM   the dog-PX3SG.NOM Sári.SG-DAT
      'Sári's dog'   'the dog of Sári'

Two types of formal elaboration might cooccur in the 3rd person, thus it is possible to express multiple reference-point structures. In the case of example (11), Sári's dog is a T and R at the same time. The construction focuses attention on the dog in relation to Sári, but the dog is backgrounded in relation to its profiled collar.

(11)   Sári   kutyá-já-nak   a   nyakörv-e
       Sári   dog-PX3SG-DAT   the   collar-PX3SG.NOM
      'the collar of Sári's dog'

The possessive relationship expressed by -é also needs to be mentioned in the network of Hungarian possessive constructions. It is worth comparing the reference-point structure in example (12a) with example (12b), which has already been dealt with. Supposing that the constructs refer to the same scene, the T is the possessee in both cases. The meaning of R (Sári) is specific and that of T is schematic in example (12a). On the other hand, the T is detailed (the dog) and the R is schematized in (12b). This is in close connection with the information structure of the two expressions. The category of DOG needs to be activated to understand (12a), and Sári needs to be contextually accessible to understand (12b).

(12a) a   Sári-é   ugat   (12b) a   kutyá-ja   ugat
       the   Sári-POSS.NOM bark.PRS.3SG   the   dog-PX3SG.NOM   bark.PRS.3SG
       'Sári's one is barking'   'his/her dog is barking'

As opposed to the examples above, the existence of the mental path is highlighted in examples (13) and (14), and its direction is expressed by the meaning of the whole clause. In (13), the possessor and the possessee mark a conceptual domain the conceptualizer can share with his/her partner(s). The possessee (the dog) is the "topic" in the information structure of the clause, while the possessor is the "comment". The information structure of the clause is responsible for the foreground/background alignment of the possessor and the possessee, but their relationship is more symmetric than that of the reference-point structure, attention is not shifted on the possessor, and the possessee is not backgrounded either. A possessive clause with the so-called dative-possessive (see 14) also serves to share a conceptual domain in Hungarian.[5] Unlike the reference-point structures of (12a) and (12b), the possessor and the possessee have a temporally construed syntactic relationship in (13) and (14). Both (13) and (14) may be used to direct attention to a relationship between the possessor and the possessee. This relationship is construed differently by the two with regard to information structure but both contain temporality and (here indicative) mood of the clausal meaning.

(13)   a   kutya   Sári-é
       the   dog.SG.NOM   Sári-POSS.NOM
       'the dog belongs to Sári'

(14)   Sári-nak   van   kutyá-ja.
       Sári.SG-DAT(POSS)   be.PRS.3SG   dog-PX3SG.NOM
       'Sári has a dog'

4.1.2. Focus input – intransitive and transitive constructions

Hungarian is a nominative-accusative language, thus the targeted participant of an action is marked with respect to the participant that is not targeted no matter whether it is an active or passive participant. The secondary role of a transitive action with two participants is represented by the accusative case with -(V)t suffix. The so-called primary and secondary character of the roles can be described in terms of a trajector–landmark asymmetry (Langacker 1987); however, this relation is supplemented by another type of cognitive hierarchy in Hungarian. In his analysis, Imrényi (2020) draws our attention to the explanatory value of Langacker's billiard-ball model concerning the Hungarian subject. In terms of the model, participants of a scene represented by a clause are described as discrete physical objects that move around in space due to some form of energy, especially that acquired through interactions with other objects. In this sense, the Hungarian

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[5] The motivation behind the grammaticalization of the existential verb in 3rd person resides in its 'existing' semantic component (Tolcsvai Nagy 2016).

subject profiles the most important participant regarding energy transfer, it represents the source of the action (or action chain) represented by a verb. For instance, the verb *becsuk* 'close', 'shut down' profiles two participant roles and the one that is the starting point of the energy transfer is the subject, as illustrated in (15a). When the base verb takes the *-ódik* suffix, the middle verb *becsukódik* 'sg closes' profiles a single participant which is represented as a subject, as shown in (15b). When elaborating a causative derivational construction, the verb *becsukat* 'get sg closed' profiles three participant roles, and again, the source of the energy transfer is represented by the subject relation, as illustrated in (15c) (adapted from Imrényi 2020: 175). Accusative case, for its part, marks the endpoint (the door, the shop) of the action chain in (15a) and (15c) as well.

(15a)   Péter   becsukta   az   ajtó-t.
        Péter.SG.NOM   close.PST.3SG.DEF   the   door.SG-ACC
        'Péter closed the door.'

(15b)   Az ajtó   becsukódott.
        the door.SG.NOM   close.PST.3SG
        'The door has closed.'

(15c)   A hatóság   becsukatta   a boltossal   a   bolt-ot.
        the authority.SG.NOM   close.PST.3SG.DEF   the shopkeeper.SG.INS   the   shop.SG-ACC
        'The authority had the shopkeeper close the shop.'

In the constructs above, the nominative case can express the agent (see (15a), (15c)) and patient (see (15b)) thematic roles, while the accusative represents the patient (see (15a) and (15c)). In other constructions with a single participant, the nominative case might represent a theme as well, as it is illustrated in (16a). The nominative–accusative pattern of a clause might also express a lower degree of transitivity. It typically represents an experiencer–theme semantic relationship associated with sense verbs (see (16b)); or agent–location relationship evoked by motion verbs (see (16c)). The nominative–accusative pattern can represent the theme–experiencer semantic relationship as well, but it is associated only with a few verbs such as *érdekel* '(to) interest (someone)' and *foglalkoztat* '(to) concern (someone)', see (16d).

(16a)   Innen   látszik   a   torony.
        from here   seem.PRS.3SG   the   tower.SG.NOM
        'The tower can be seen from here.'

(16b)   Innen   jól   látom   a   koncert-et.
        from here   well   see.PRS.1SG.DEF   the   concert.SG-ACC
        'I can see the concert well from here.'

(16c)   Budapesten   kíváncsian   jártam   az   utcák-at.
        Budapest.SG.SUPE   curiously   walk.PST.1SG.DEF   the   street.PL-ACC
        'I curiously walked the streets in Budapest.'

(16d)   Peti-t   érdekli   az   irodalom.
        Peti.SG-ACC   interest.PRS.3SG.DEF   the   literature.SG.NOM
        'Literature interests Peti.'

The next section explores the correspondence between the possessive and verbal constructions.

4.1.3. Mappings of elements across inputs

As it has been already mentioned, the network that results in the ANC can be described as a single-scope network because it is the possessive structure that basically frames the components of the transitive and intransitive constructions evoked by a verb. In the case of single-scope networks, it should be emphasized that the framing input is a well-structured space, while the focus input is a rather diffuse one (see again Figure 3). In our case, this means that the semantic pole of the clausal construction evoked by a verb is (partially) mapped onto the symbolic elements of the possessive construction, the former is therefore purely conceptual, more flexible and abstract, while the latter is symbolic, formally fixed knowledge (residing in the associative relationship between the phonological and semantic poles).

As shown in Figure 4, the possessee corresponds to the process type evoked by a base verb (we deal with the nominalization of the verb concerning the blended space). The possessor corresponds to the noun that has the agent or patient thematic role with subject or object dependency relationship of the intransitive construction; or the transitive construction's patient or object dependency relationship (which are marked by the nominative and accusative case). As it has been already mentioned in section 2, one actor can be mapped onto the possessor in the noun construction, thus the mapping is partial from this point of view.
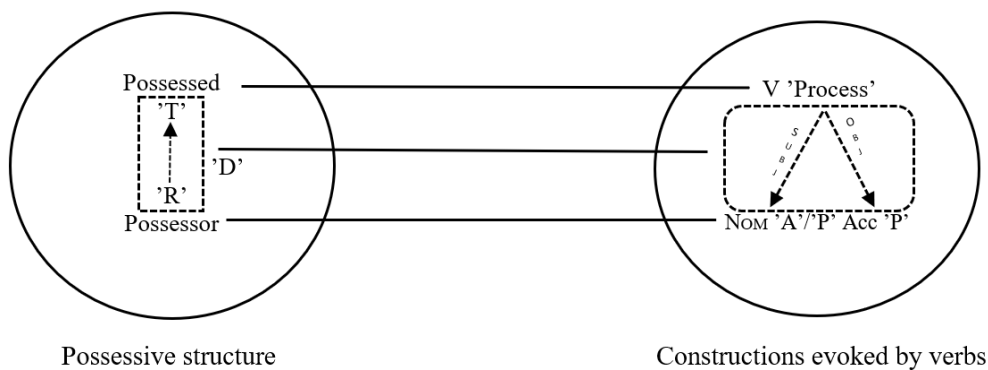

Figure 4. Mappings across inputs

The meaning of the subject and object dependency relation is mapped onto the AN in such a way that it is formally marked by a possessive structure. Although, as shown in Figure 4, the subject and object relationship between the verb and the noun corresponds to the reference-point structure of the possessee and the possessor, the construal of the ANC is fundamentally different from the reference-point structure of the possessive construction. In the ANC, the relationship between the possessee and the possessor does not denote the relationship between two things, but that between a THING and a PROCESS. Participant roles of the process type evoked by a verb can optionally be backgrounded (see (8b)), thus it is obviously not the THING that makes the PROCESS accessible. When they cooccur, the participant role and the process type form a conceptual unit and they are semantic conditions for each other. Proof of this is that even when an additional AN is added to the semantic unit expressed by the possessive relationship, the participant role and the AN still fulfil the modifier function in a conceptually indivisible manner. While in example (11), Sári (the first possessor) became finally backgrounded with respect to the collar, and the dog is R and T at the same time, in example (17), the 'minister' is not backgrounded, the 'visit' in dative is neither an R nor a T, disapproval concerns the whole scene of which the minister is the main actor. The semantic distinction between the two construal can be described as follows:

PS [[[participant]participant]]participant] ↔ ANC [[participant−process]process].

(17) a   miniszter   Budapestre   látogat-ás-á-nak   helytelenít-és-e
      the   minister.SG Budapest.SG.SUB   visit-NLZR-PX3SG-DAT   disapprove-NLZR-PX3SG
      'disapproval of the minister's visitation to Budapest'

Accordingly, even when the participant is backgrounded, as in example (18a), the meaning of AN (*látogatás* 'visitation') might be anchored to a person; however, the construal of *kutya* 'dog' is not anchored to the owner of the dog , he/she is simply not part of the semantic structure (the owner can play a role in comprehension from a purely conceptual, unipolar aspect, e.g. with the collar evoking that it is not a stray dog).

(18a) a   látogat-ás   helytelenít-és-e   (18b) a   kutya   nyakörv-e
       the   visit-NLZR.SG   disapprove-NLZR-PX3SG   the   dog.SG.NOM   collar-PX3SG
       'disapproval of the visitation'   'collar of the dog'

It is important to consider that the meaning of clausal constructions characterized by lower transitivity degree cannot always be mapped onto the possessive structure (and hence to the ANC). Those verbs are easily compatible with AN and ANC that can evoke dynamism, change of state. Although the verbs *látszik* 'seem', *lát* 'see', *érdekel* 'interest' elaborate clausal constructions with subject and object dependency relations (as it has been outlined in 4.1.2), it is difficult to fit them into the ANC: ?*a torony látsz-ás-a* (seem-NLZR-PX3SG) 'seeming of the tower', ?*a koncert lát-ás-a* (see-NLZR-PX3SG) 'seeing the concert', **Peti érdeklése* (interest-NLZR-PX3SG) 'interesting (of) Peti'. The probable reason for this is that there is no change of state in the processes evoked by the base verbs above. This suggests that the subject and object syntactic relations do not correspond to the possessive construction in general, but specifically in the framework of the transitive and intransitive constructions containing the thematic roles of agent and patient – which, like other constructions outlined in 4.1.2, are based on (the schematic relational meaning of) the subject and object dependencies. Nor does it seem sufficient for semantic compatibility if one of the two actors performs a dynamic action. The lack of semantic coherence can be observable with the nominal derivate of the verb *jár* 'walk' (see 16c) as a possessee even if it evokes the nominative–accusative pattern with agent–location meaning: ?*a város jár-ás-a* (walk-NLZR-PX3SG) 'walking the city'. Here, *a város* 'the city' denotes the circumstance of motion, but it does not undergo a change of state.

Mapping of the experiencer and the theme with transitive meaning, as well as in some cases the intransitive theme, becomes possible when a verbal particle construes a change of state by means of indicating an endpoint and/or starting point of the action. This semantic operation is very important in relation to the transitivity scale, since it provides the action with punctuality and telicity (Hopper and Thompson 1980). The Hungarian verbal particle fulfils this semantic criterion. The punctual aspect of a process can be foregrounded as follows: *a koncert meg-hall-ás-a* (PERF-hear-NLZR-PX3SG) 'hearing (all of a sudden) the concert'. The telic aspect of an action can be foregrounded as follows: *a város be-jár-ás-a* (PERF-walk-NLZR-PX3SG) 'walking around the city'. The semantic criterion can be met without verbal particles as well. For instance, it is possible for the theme of the verb *észlel* 'perceive, detect' to correspond to the possessor because of its punctual meaning: *a hiba észlel-és-e* (detect-NLZR-PX3SG) 'detecting the error'. Based on all of this, it seems that the meaning of the ANC rests on the meaning of transitive and intransitive constructions with agent and patient thematic roles.

The cognitive hierarchy that characterizes the Hungarian clausal constructions (see 4.1.2) is not mapped onto the possessive construction. What is more, that of the possessive construction is just the opposite, the endpoint (or single actor) of the action chain corresponds to the possessor, the one to which something happens – the ergative nature of ANC is based on this cognitive hierarchy. Although a possessor expressed by word order, hence without morphological marker (see the examples in (9)) is more frequent in modern Hungarian (81,5% vs. 18,5% according to Pomázi 2022), the ergative semantic construction of the clausal meaning might be traced back to the dative case by which the possessor also can be expressed (see example (10)). The dative construction

typically denotes the direction and/or endpoint of a process (see the syntactic constructions illustrated by examples (6) and (7)), which can also be seen in the schematic meaning of possession. It is possible that the meaning of the dative morphological construction indeed motivated the correspondence between the patient (as the endpoint of an action) and the possessor. The use of dative in the possessive structure is much more characteristic in literary records of Old Hungarian, although Korompay (1991) claims that these texts (mainly translations) are not representative because of the influence of Latin. However, this reasoning does not concern data from Modern Hungarian (1772–1920). A random sample of 200 ANC construction from the Hungarian Historical Corpus between 1773 and 1847 suggests that the use of an unmarked (unfeatured) possessor became dominant only in this period.
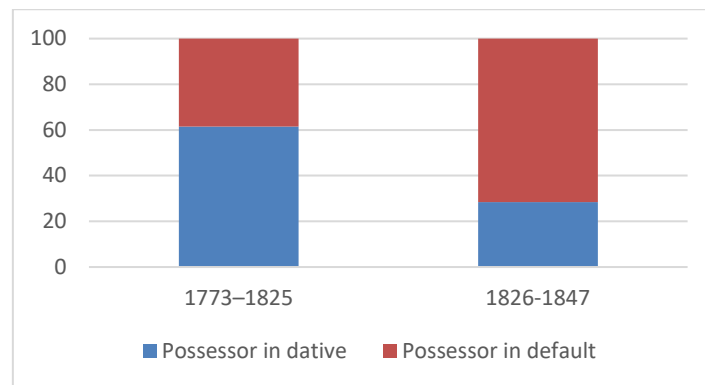

Figure 5. Distribution of featured and unmarked (unfeatured) action nominal possessors between 1773 and 1847 in Hungarian Historical Corpus

As can be seen in Figure 5, the use of dative proved to be more frequent before the so-called Hungarian Reform Era (1825–1848). That is to say, it is possible that even if the unmarked (unfeatured) possessor became primary in the ANC, the semantic correspondence between the patient and the possessor prevails because of the dative case.

Between the input spaces, not only the existence of mappings, but also their absence is revealing. In the network of possessive constructions, the action noun is compatible with the meaning of some constructions and incompatible with others, that is, some constructions functionally related to the possessive construction as framing input have a corresponding one, while others have no correspondence on the focus input side. Among the possessive constructions outlined in 3.1.1, the construction with the -é marker is compatible with the possessor, however, only in the function illustrated by (12a), see (19a). As for the function illustrated by (13), the constructional meaning evoked by a verb cannot be mapped onto, see (19b). In the former case, the process expressed by ANC can be defined as a topic in the information structure of the sentence, that is why its elliptic use is comprehensible. Concerning the latter one, a conceptualizer should assign and share a conceptual domain containing a process and an actor, which is impossible in Hungarian. The possessor and the possessee, hence the process and the actor of ANC must play the same role in the information structure of the clause.

(19a)   Sári   kirúg-ás-a   bosszant,   Peti-é   nem.
        Sári.SG   dismiss-NLZR-PX3SG.NOM   upest.PRS.3SG Peti-POSS.NOM not.
        'Sári's dismissal makes me upset, that of Peti does not.'

(19b)   *A   kirúg-ás   Sári-é.
         The   dismiss-NLZR.NOM   Sári-POSS.NOM
        'The dismissal belongs to Sári.'

Accordingly, another possessive construction that serves to assign and share a conceptual domain is also incompatible with the ANC's constructional meaning, see example (20).

(20) *Sári-nak   van   kirúg-ás-a.
       Sári.SG-DAT   be.PRS.3SG   dismiss-NLZR-PX3SG.NOM.
       'Sári has dismissal.'

The impossibility of assigning and sharing a domain, as well as the incompatibility of the AN meaning with these structures, can also be traced back to the fact that the actor and the process are conceptually inseparable from each other (the actor can only be backgrounded in the ANC), i.e., there is no point in emphasizing the relationship between them.

4.2. Generic space

Although we can see many correspondences between possessive constructions and clausal constructions, which are also mapped onto the ANC as a blend (see section 4.3), the existence of correspondences does not yet explain their creation. The generic space motivates the mappings between the input spaces, as it "provides information that is abstract enough to be common to both (or all) the inputs." (Croft and Cruse 2004: 404). The possessive construction and the clausal construction share quite abstract characteristics on both the semantic and formal sides.

Correspondences between the input spaces are motivated by the fact that a mental path is symbolized in both constructions. The possessive structure is a reference-point structure, during the comprehension of which the reference-point provides access to a target, while in the clausal construction the actors are connected to each other in a chain of actions. As for syntactic symbolization, both mental paths are expressed in a dependency relationship. The head of the clausal construction is the verb, that of the possessive construction is the possessee, the adjuncts are nouns in the former case, and the possessor is an adjunct in the latter. There are also similarities in the formal marking of these syntactic relations in Hungarian. In the case of a verb and a corresponding AN, there are (for historical reasons) parallels in the formal elaboration of personal deixis (see (21a)). Another morphological correlation is that the adjuncts that correspond to each other are in unfeatured default forms (see (21b)) or suffixed forms with *-nAk* (see (21c)).

(21a) lát-**om**   barát-**om**   lát-**od**   barát-**od**
        give-1SG.DEF   friend-PX1SG   give-2SG.DEF   friend-PX1SG
        'I see it'   'my friend'   'you see it'   'your friend'

(21b) Peti∅   lát-**ja**   Peti∅   barát-**ja**
        Peti.SG.NOM   give-3SG.DEF   Peti.SG   friend-PX3SG
        'Peti sees it'   'friend of Peti'

(21c) Peti-**nek**   ad-ja   Peti-**nek**   barát-ja
        Peti-DAT   give-3SG.DEF   Peti-DAT   friend-PX3SG
        'He/she gives it to Peti'   'Peti's friend'

The abstract correspondences outlined above can be represented in terms of input spaces as follows. It is important to emphasize that these correspondences are the basis of the network, they motivate the formation of mappings between the input spaces, that is, their significance can be raised primarily from a diachronic point of view.
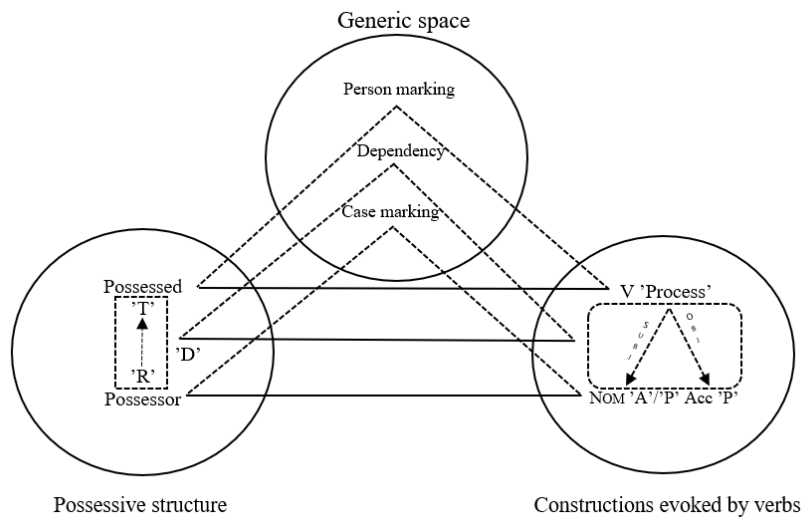
Figure 6. Generic space and input spaces of ANC

Among these correspondences of the generic space, the structure of the possessive construction and the action chain as a mental path are mapped onto the ANC. The mapping of correspondences of the input spaces motivated by the generic space onto the ANC, as well as person deixis and grounding in general, are already aspects of the ANC as a blended space.

4.3. Blended space

Correspondences between the input spaces motivated by the generic space are mapped onto the ANC as a blend. Nominalization is a key aspect of the mapping process. The formal elaboration of the possessive structure is possible if the verb that evokes the meaning of the syntactic construction is (at least partially) nominalized. The fact that the verb continues to evoke the meaning of the syntactic constructions in which it frequently participates proves the partial nature of nominalization. While conceptual autonomy is a principal characteristic of nominal meaning (Langacker 2008), the semantic structure of AN can in many cases be characterized by conceptual dependency (similar to the meaning of base verbs) in the sense that it denotes a RELATION between concepts that are construed as THINGS. As can be seen in examples (22a) and (22b), the AN also inherits the (morpho-syntactically expressed) conceptual dependency of the verb, i.e. − as already discussed in relation with example (8b) − often not all actors of the process type evoked by the verb can be backgrounded (cf. (22c) and (22d)).

> (22a)   *abbahagy-ok
>   break off.PRS-1SG
>   'I'm breaking off'

> (22b)   *abbahagy-ás
>   break off-NLZR
>   'breaking off'

> (22c)   abbahagy-ok   egy   beszélgetést
>   break off.PRS-1SG   a   dialogue.SG.ACC
>   'I stop a conversation'

(22d) a   beszélgetés   abbahagy-ás-a
      the   dialogue.SG.NOM   breaking off-NLZR-PX3SG.NOM
      'breaking off the dialogue'

As far as morphological formation is concerned, though the (partial) nominalization of the verb is necessary for the process type it evokes to be a possessee, knowledge of ANC is not restricted to the highly productive [v-*Ás*]ₙₐ morphological construction. As shown in example (23), the possessee may evoke a verbal meaning in other ways as well. The word *rekonstrukció* obviously functions as an AN, since it has verbal adjuncts in a "*való*" structure (see section 2, example (4a)). What is more, the Hungarian AN *rekonstrukció* 'reconstruction' and the verb *rekonstruál* 'reconstruct' it evokes are not in a concatenative relationship (unlike their English counterparts), but in a paradigmatic, lateral one. The combined functioning of the concatenative and paradigmatic morphological relations in the ANC suggests the adequacy of word-based morphological description (see Blevins 2006) as opposed to the morpheme-based approach.

(23)
elveszett naplóm   gondolati **anyag-á-nak**   emlékezetből való   **rekonstrukció-ja**[6]
lost   diary.PX1SG mental   material-PX3SG-DAT memory.SG.ILL be.PTCP reconstruction-PX3SG.NOM'
'reconstruction of the thought material of my lost diary from memory'

The word-based approach is also supported by the fact that ANs representing morphological construction that are no longer productive can also serve as possessees The lexicalized and highly polysemous noun *tétel* 'item', 'premise' can originally be traced back to the verb *tesz* 'take', 'put', 'do', 'make', but regardless of its opacity and polysemy, the noun has also preserved its function as an AN, i.e., in the ANC, it recalls the verb *tesz* despite the fact that it does not represent a productive pattern, and it no longer has the meaning of 'taking' or 'putting' by itself. Example (24) is an instance for *tétel* as an AN.

(24) a   kép   átlátszóvá   **tétel-e**
      the   image   transparent.SG.TRANS   making-Px3SG.NOM
      'making the image transparent'

All of this suggest that the constituency of morphological formation has only a secondary importance concerning the V→AN formation, which is based on varied (paradigmatic, concatenative, productive, unproductive) word-based associative relationships (cf. Chomsky's (1970) notion on inflectional and derivational AN). That is to say, ANC is the result of simultaneous processes on different levels of the lexicon-grammar continuum. Simultaneity is reflected in the conceptual dependency of AN outlined above (see (19)): it can be assumed from a usage-based perspective that nominalization cannot precede the creation of the possessive structure, but it goes hand in hand with the mapping of the clausal construction onto the possessive structure. Furthermore, the fulfilment of the AN role in ANC has semantic criteria (even if the [v-*Ás*]ₙₐ morphological construction productively serves to fulfil them).

As it can be seen in Figure 7 below, components of the input spaces are blended in the ANC, and the relationship between them corresponds to that between the base verb and its adjuncts.

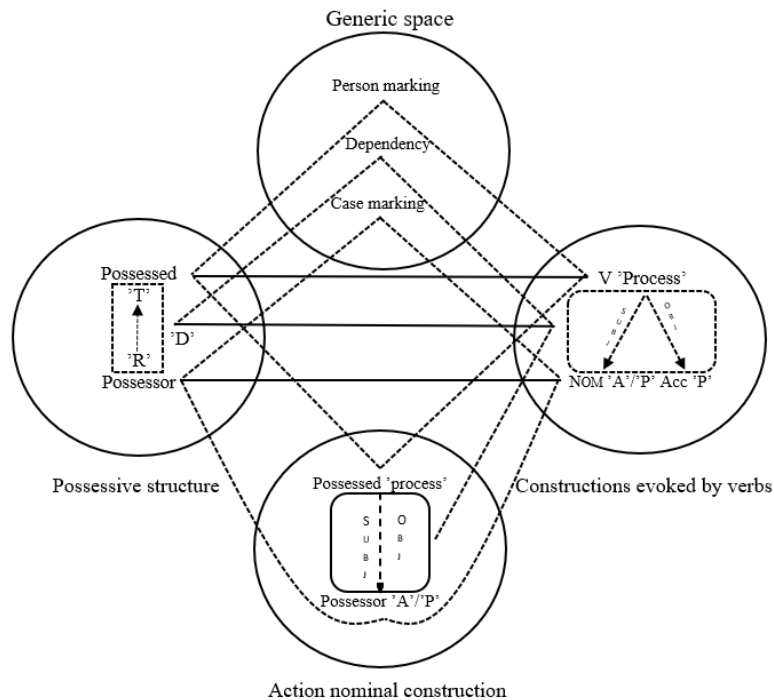---

[6] Source: Hungarian National Corpus.

Figure 7. Semantic network of action nominal construction

The blended nature of the ANC is also reflected in grounding. As for the partiality of nominalization mentioned above, it is also demonstrated by the fact that the typical nominal grounding elements function in a particular way in ANC. The adjustment of the process along with its participants to the speech situation is an important factor in the generic space concerning both input spaces (see section 4.2). Accordingly, the possessor and the possessed both contribute to the grounding of the action nominal construct, they are coreferential in ANC. However, the possessor (the participant of the process) plays the main role in grounding. The AN cannot symbolically be adjusted to the speech situation, it lacks quantifiers, it cannot have an indefinite article, and it does not have plural forms either.[7]

The lack of grounding elements mentioned above is in correlation with the unbounded construal of AN as well. It is true that the AN can take spatial case markers that are primarily associated with bounded objects (Pomázi 2020), but e.g. the meaning of inessive does not necessarily involve boundedness, even the boundaries of a CONTAINER can be fuzzy (cf., *víz-ben* water-INE 'in water'). There are a few constructions where the STATES ARE CONTAINERS metaphor contributes to the meaning of action nominals in inessive or elative case, with the ANs construed as denoting states via these spatial configurations, as illustrated by examples (25a) and (25b).

(25a) most   jöttem   a   fut-ás-ból[8]
       now   come.PST.1SG   the   run-NLZR-ELA
       'I've just come from running.'

(25b) minden   szület-és-ben   és   el-múl-ás-ban   van[9]
       everything born-NLZR-INE   and   away-pass-NLZR-INE   be.PRS.3SG
       'Everything is in birth and passing away.'

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[7] When a deverbal noun with *-Ás* suffix has a determiner or appears in a plural form, it is understood as a simple event noun (Grimshaw 1990) with an actual 'event' meaning.
[8] Source: Hungarian National Corpus.
[9] Source: Hungarian National Corpus.

The lack of quantifiers and indefinite articles concerns not only ANs but the process as a pos-sessee in ANC as well. However, the process in ANC is always grounded via its participant (agent or patient). The construal of this person has the characteristics of prototypical nouns, that is to say, it can be grounded by quantifiers and number marking, as illustrated by examples (26a) and (26b). Definite articles (*a* and *az*) can contribute to specific and unspecific readings of both singular and plural nouns in Hungarian. The nominal designating the main participants of (26a) (*a két szakszervezeti vezető* 'the two union leaders') has a specific meaning, the process of dismissal is grounded to two specific persons. By contrast, the nominal referring to the main participants of (26b) (*rendőri vezetők* 'police chiefs') has a generic meaning, consequently, the process of dismis-sal is not anchored to anyone specifically.

(26a) a   két   szakszervezeti vezető   kirúg-ás-a   kapcsán (…) tiltakozik[10]
        the two   union   leader   dismiss-NLZR-PX3SG concerning protest.PRS.3SG
        'He is protesting because of the dismissal of the two union leaders.'

(26b) általános volt   a   rendőri   vezető-k   kirúg-ás-a[11]
        general   be.pst.3sg the   police   leader-pl   dismiss-NLZR-PX3SG
        'Dismissal of police chiefs was common.'

As for temporality, the verbal grounding elements do not characterise the process as a possessee, temporal relations can be expressed metaphorically in ANC by spatial postpositions (see (27a-b)) and the [X$_N$-*kor*] 'at the time of X' morphological construction also known as temporal case in Hun-garian (see (27c)). (27a) and (27b) make the originally sequential concept of running accessible as a whole. It is worth highlighting that there are 37 nouns with -*Ás* suffix among the 50 most frequent lexemes that represent the temporal case according to the HNC, that is to say, temporalis might be strongly associated with ANs. However, it can be decided only by qualitative analysis how many instances are actual action nominals with a 'process' meaning (complex event nominal) and how many have metonymically extended 'event' meanings (simple event nominal).

(27a) a   fut-ás-om   előtt   (27b) a   fut-ás-om   után
        the run-NLZR-PX1SG efore   the   run-NLZR-PX1SG after
        'before my run'   'after my run'

(27c) a   fut-ás-om-kor
        the   run-NLZR-PX1SG-TEMP
        'when I run'

Finally, it is important to highlight those characteristics of ANC that the input spaces do not pos-sess, in other words, the particular role that the ANC plays in the Hungarian constructicon. Firstly, since there is no passive construction in Hungarian on the clausal level (a passive-like meaning is usually expressed by 3rd person plural forms of active verbs), an essential advantage of using ANC is the possibility of backgrounding the agent and foregrounding the patient. In examples (26a) and (26b), the trajectors of the dismissal event are the ones who have been dismissed (the union leaders and police chiefs) and the landmark (those who fired them) are not elaborated at all. Secondly, complex events involving several processes are usually expressed by subordinated interclausal relations in Hungarian, see examples (28a) and (28b). The ANC makes the embedding of a process possible within a clause, see again examples (26a) and (26b). This means that though the clausal core (Imrényi 2017; 2022) does not involve the particular scene in the ANC (unlike (28a) and (28b),

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[10] Source: Hungarian National Corpus.
[11] Source: Hungarian National Corpus.

where firing is the process designated by the core of a subordinated clause), multiple actions are compressed into one clause in ANC.

(28a) Tiltakozik   azért,   mert   két szakszervezeti vezetőt   kirúgtak.
      protest.PRS.3SG for that because   two union   leader.SG.ACC fire.PST.3PL
      '(S)he is protesting because two union leaders were fired.'

(28b) Általános volt   az,   hogy a   rendőri vezetőket   kirúgták.
      common   be.PST.3SG   that   that the police chief.PL.ACC   fire.PST.3PL
      'It was common for police chiefs to be fired.'

5. Summary

This paper investigated the semantics of action nominal constructions (ANCs) in Hungarian. Our theoretical assumptions concerning grammatical structures were defined in the framework of usage-based construction grammar. ANCs were investigated in the model of conceptual integration.

The input spaces of the ANC network are intransitive and transitive syntactic constructions characteristic of nominative-accusative languages on the one hand, and nominal possessive constructions on the other. Agent and patient semantic roles correspond to the formal components of certain possessive constructions. The ergative nature of mapping can be explained by the symbolic structure and the grammaticalization of the possessor in Hungarian. Although the use of dative case is claimed in the literature to be a secondary (marked) way to express the possessor, it proved to be dominant before the reform era (1773–1825) according to our corpus analysis. The motivation behind the mapping between constructions can be captured by a generic space. The constructions share a mental path semantic structure and an inflectional pattern that makes the grounding of a person possible. However, the emergent nature of the meaning of ANC is also reflected in grounding, as instead of the asymmetric reference-point structure of possession, it holistically serves to refer to a person or thing. Finally, compression and passivation are further functions that cannot be simply traced back to possessive or verbal constructions. These cognitive advantages might also motivate the use of ANC.

Acknowledgements

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