A SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF ADESSIVE *-NÁL/-NÉL* ('AT') AND SUPERESSIVE *-N~ -ON/-EN/-ÖN* ('ON') IN HUNGARIAN

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Abstract

Synchronic studies in the framework of holistic cognitive linguistics have recently yielded convincing results, and the idea of utilizing that framework for purposes of historical linguistics has also emerged (e.g. Blank–Koch eds. 1999). At the moment, no complete studies of that sort are available for the Hungarian language, though Fazakas (2003) presented a brief account of the theoretical possibilities that arise. The present paper discusses a possible area of using cognitive semantics for historical purposes: the study of the semantic system of certain Hungarian case endings. In particular, this study attempts to describe the behaviour of adessive -nál/-nél *('at') and superessive* -n~-on/-en/-ön *('on') from a cognitive semantic perspective, considering diachronic aspects as well.*

1. Introduction

Synchronic studies in functional cognitive semantics have had many conclusive results recently (Langacker 1987, 1991; Lakoff 1987). Thus it would be preferable to use these results in historical language analyses (Blank 1999).

The present study is examining the semantic system of two Hungarian adverbial suffixes *(-nál/-nél* 'at' and *-n ~-on/-en/-ön* 'on'), and their description in the framework of cognitive semantics from a diachronic aspect.

According to functional cognitive theoretical and descriptive results, knowledge of a language cannot be separated from other cognitive skills. Language processes cannot be separated from mental processes and consequently, the meanings of linguistic expressions provide useful information about our conceptual system and the mental operation of language. Most theoreticians in cognitive linguistics suppose that the understanding process (conceptualization and the processing of linguistic expressions) is realised partly by schemas (Gestalts[1]) based on life experiences (Lakoff 1987). Spatial and visual information have an eminent role in conceptualization processes, but formal descriptions cannot investigate so deeply the connection between conceptualization and language.

It is important to notice, especially in the case of spatial conceptualization, that the original semantic content (or a part of it) based on experience is preserved in conceptual structures, and it is accessible for conceiving of other abstract situations, processes through metaphorization (Lakoff 1980). In the cognitive theoretical framework, the terms *metaphor*

1 A Gestalt is a mental image; it represents a typical example of individual things which is necessary for their categorization process. In this process, an image belonging to the phenomenon to be classified is being compared to the already saved mental image (Gestalts) and then it is put into the most appropriate category on the basis of resemblance (Lakoff 1987).

and *metaphorization* are not stylistic means but they refer to one specific method or strategy of processing the input information where one thing is understood in terms of another one.

Every element of a language – including adverbial suffixes – has its own meaning, and its grammatical category is considered as a symbolic item which is not just a simple mapping of the external objective world because the cognitive effort of the speaker/hearer always proceeds through a conceptual categorization (construal, in Langacker's term, 1991: 294). In the opinion of holistic researchers, the way we express our ideas in a linguistic situation is always subject to perspectivization, since the speaker/hearer is free to choose from his available conceptual schemas. These schemas may be conventionalized in different language communities and so they might generate some differences between languages. Variability within a language and between different languages corresponds to differences in the speakers' conceptual structures and their perspective when perceiving and conceptualizing a life situation

2. The categories of *Stable* and *Mobile* in expressions of spatial relations

Sándor N. Szilágyi and his students were the first to make some cognitive semantic tests on the Hungarian language at the end of the '90s. At the Faculty of Arts of Babes-Bolyai University in Kolozsvár these linguists explored the main semantic characteristics of certain Hungarian postpositions: *rajta* 'on' (Galaczi 1995), *alatt/fölött* 'under/over' (Somkereki 1999), *el* 'away' (Andor E. 1999), *át* 'across' (Imre A. 1999) and *benne* 'inside' (Páll 1999)[2].

During their investigations Sándor N. Szilágyi and his colleagues found that the basic principles of metaphorical conceptualization predominate not only in the mental lexicon but in the grammatical system, too. The semantic network of the analyzed Hungarian postpositions shows large metaphorical extensions, based on their primary spatial meanings. This result is in accordance with the classical cognitive theory of metaphor.

Approaching the semantics of Hungarian postpositions, the terms stable (S) and mobile (M) have been introduced by the linguists in Kolozsvár. If an object is static and fixed, it is named **stable** (S_o=stable object), but if an object is moveable or moving compared to the stable one, it is called **mobile** (M_o=mobile object). (The difference between stable and mobile objects is not always construed physically, i.e. in space, but it can also refer to temporal or entity relations.[3])

Szilágyi and his colleagues define the category of „stable" and „mobile" for the description of spatial relations, whereby the construal of an entity in space is understood in relation to another one. This model is similar to the concept of figure/base (more specifically trajector/landmark) alignment (cf. Langacker 1987: 231).

[2] In the Hungarian language some adverbial relations (e.g. *alatt* 'under') can be expressed by postpositions:

a	*híd*	*alatt*
the	bridge	under

'under the bridge'

[3] Three kinds of relations can be realized between objects: spatial, temporal and entity. Spatial relations might be the first relation form, from which temporal and entity relations were created by way of metaphorization. Spatial relations express some kind of contact or contiguity in space between things, temporal relations – as the category of time is more abstract – denote contacts in time via metaphorization, and finally, entity relations reflect physical or non-physical contacts between entities and/or objects.

The stable/mobile alignment certainly has non-spatial semantic extensions, for instance:

		reference point				
(1)	Az	asztal	alatt	van	a	labda.
	the	table	under	is	the	ball.
		Stable				**Mobile**
		object (S_o)				**object** (M_o)

'The ball is under the table.'

In sentence (1), the reference point is the stable object (*asztal* 'table'). The postposition (alatt 'under') has the effect of focusing the speaker/hearer's attention to the entity considered as the reference point. Two objects are denoted by nouns in the sentence, and the postposition marks the one to the referent of which the speaker/hearer relates the other object. This means that the postposition has a special role, namely to identify the reference point for the speaker/hearer, which cannot be on the mobile object in any case.

This statement can be checked easily if we try to describe this spatial relation between the ball and the table in a different way by the following sentence, in a grammatically correct but semantically marked way:

		reference point?				
(2)	A	labda	felett	van	az	asztal.
	the	ball	over	is	the	table
		Mobile				**Stable**
		object ($\mathbf{M_o}$)				**object** ($\mathbf{S_o}$)

'The table is over the ball.'

In sentence (2), the reference point and the stable object do not coincide; therefore the speaker/hearer can find that sentence very strange or non-conventional. Thus the sentence *Az asztal alatt van a labda* 'The ball is on the table.' is perfectly acceptable, but the sentence *A labda felett van az asztal* 'The table is over the ball.' is non-conventional, although both sentences express the same spatial relation. In the speaker/hearer's interpretation process the stable object is always the reference point to which the participants in the conversation can relate other movable objects.

It is necessary to note that the terminology of Szilágyi is very similar to that of Langacker (1987: 231), because the terms „mobile" and „trajector" or „stable" and „landmark" mean basically similar concepts, although these are not only concepts for standing and moving things but abstract conceptualizations as well.

Like other agglutinative languages where the word meaning can be modified by adding different and multiple endings or affixes to the word, the Hungarian language expresses spatial, temporal and entity relations by way of using adverbial suffixes which can be added to different parts of speech (nouns, adjectives, numbers, pronouns, etc). The adverbial suffixes added to nouns are case endings at the same time. Nominal case signals the function a noun fulfils in a sentence or phrase, such as the subject, direct or indirect object. In English, these roles are generally the same but unmarked (with the exception of pronouns). In the Hungarian language, a word has to be marked according to its role using special endings, similarly to Latin.

The relation of the stem and affix was heavily discussed by certain linguistic theories and schools. In the opinion of linguists (including Anderson 1992, Katamba 1993, Beard 1995, Stump 2001 and Spencer 2001) supporting the ”word-based” theory, an affix is only a formal item or trace for abstract grammatical processes where words have meaning but affixes do not. Other linguists (Langacker 1987, 1991, Carstairs-McCarthy 1992, Kostic et al. 2003, Aronoff et al. 2005 and Enger 2005) suppose that both affixes and stems are meaningful, and they are on a par from the ”morpheme-based” theory's perspective.

The current study is based on the ”morpheme-based” theory, according to which the stem and the affix are in a semantic relationship, and the stem elaborates one schematic substructure of the affix. Thus, an affix is dependent semantically, i.e. it is relational, but a stem is autonomous. In Langacker's term, there is a special relationship between a stem and an affix, where a stem is the landmark, and the affix is the trajector (Langacker 1987).

As previously shown in sentence (1), adverbial suffixes designate the stable object out of the two related ones, because the suffix is always attached to the S_o-word in the sentence.

In order to construct a spatial relation, at least two entities are needed which are in an asymmetric relation: one of them is the static object (here referred to as ‘stable’), and the other is the movable or moving one (termed ‘mobile’ in what follows). If a third thing, object or person assists for these two objects to be in contact then that relation is trichotomic, and the mediator thing, object or person is called the actor (A), for instance:

(3) The boy threw off a pencil from the table.
A M_o S_o

Just like the objects in the spatial relationship (S_o and M_o), the relation-marking adverbial suffixes can also be separated into two categories, namely **stable suffixes** (S_s=stable suffix) and **mobile suffixes** (M_s=mobile suffix).

Stable suffixes express the notion of „staying at one point in space/time” and they do not refer to events that involve any kind of movement. They designate one point or period in space and time, and show simple spatial, temporal or substantive relations. Mobile suffixes, by contrast, refer to the existence, realisation and termination of continuous movement and dynamic relations.

3. The nature of adverbial suffixes

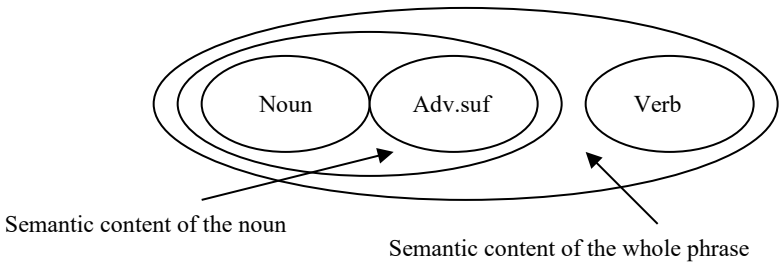
In several languages, relationships between cognitive categories are reflected in different ways. These differences are particularly typical for grammatical expressions of spatial and temporal relations, as in some languages affixes and postpositions are used, while in others mainly prepositions. The use of grammatical forms shows various speaker/hearer viewpoints on the interpretation of events in the world, and different strategies of coding/decoding actions, objects and entities in the language.

Since movements and actions normally have directions and orientations when compared with objects and entities, verbs (the typical part of speech to denote movements and actions) can have spatial and temporal factors in their semantic structures. Nevertheless, some languages (mainly agglutinative ones) express spatial and temporal relations by way of affixes and postpositions added to the words which typically refer to objects and entities (nouns). In a phrase which includes a noun, a verb and an adverbial suffix, the adverbial suffix as a grammatical form to express a spatial relation is attached to the noun:

(4) Hungarian:	[õ]	a	könyvtár+**ba**	ment.
		the	library + to	went
			noun + adv.suff.	verb
'(S/he) went to the library.'				
(5) Finnish:	[hän]	meni	kirjasto+**on.**	
		went	library + to	
		verb	noun + adv. suff.	
(6) Japanese:	[anohito wa]		toshokan+**ni**	ikimashita.
			library + to	went
			noun + adv.suff.	verb

The phrase structures in (4) – (6) can be demonstrated schematically in Figure 1:

Figure 1
Relationships between the verb, noun and adverbial suffix
from the structural point of view



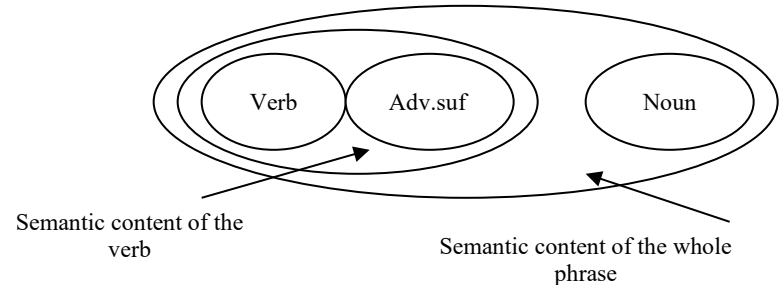
As shown, the meaning of the noun and the adverbial meaning of the noun and the adverbial suffix is represented together, in the same frame. But the semantic perspective suggests that in the conceptual system there are different relationships between the noun, the verb and the adverbial suffix. If we consider other languages, we can find that these different relationships are clearer and more directly reflected than in Hungarian/Finnish/Japanese, and not only expressed by affixes, but prepo- sitions, too:

(7) English:	[he]	went	**to**	the	library.
		verb	prepos.		noun
(8) German:	[er]	ging	**in**	die	Bibliothek
		went	to	the	library
		verb	prepos.		noun
(9) Russian:	[on]	poshol	**v**	biblioteku	
		went	to	library	
		verb	prepos.	noun + inflexion (-u)[4]	

[4] This process is harder to demonstrate in the Russian language, because this language is mixed (it is fusional, with some agglutinative characteristics). Here the inflection (*-u*) and preposition (*-v*) together participate in the structure. The prepo-

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, adverbial suffixes may be seen to have different relations to the verb and the noun, as demonstrated in Figure 2:

Figure 2
Relationships between the verb, the noun and the adverbial suffix
from the cognitive point of view



In Figure 2, the verb and the adverbial suffix mutually draw upon each other's meaning, even though the suffix is attached to the noun in the oral realization.

4. Classification of three-way adverbial suffixes

From a diachronic aspect, the key to understanding the operation of adverbial suffixes is the historical three-way system of spatial relations in Hungarian and the distinction based on the type of spatial relation.[5]

sition conflating several spatial parameters is represented together with the verb, but a suffix is added to the noun as well, to denote feminine gender. R eference of gender is added to the nouns, therefore the suffix includes a gender parameter.

[5] In traditional grammars, by the category 'orientation', the Hungarian language is characterized by a three-way opposition. E.g. in case of orientations 'to/at/from', 'at' is the starting/central point for defining the other two directions ('to' and 'from'):
alá/alatt/alól 'to under/under/from under'
elé/elõtt/elõle 'to the front of/in front of/ from the front of'
felé/–/felõl 'toward/-/from'
fölé/fölött/fölül 'to over/over/from over'
To a certain extent, this opposition is relevant for the case system,
-ba/-ban/-ból 'into/in/from in'
-ra/-on/-ról 'onto/on/from on'
-hoz/-nál/tól 'to/at/from'
and for certain adjectival pro-forms:
ide/itt/innen 'to here/here/from here'
oda/ott/onnan 'to there/there/from there'
hova/hol/honnan 'where to/where/where from (Kornai 1994: 77–78).

Figure 3
Classification of adverbial suffixes in the three-way system of spatial relations
(Korompay 1992)

Three-way system of spatial orient. / Type of relations	Where?	Where to?	Where from?
Internal spatial relation	*-ban/-ben* (’in’)	*-ba/-be* (’into’)	*-ból/-bõl* (’out of’)
Closer external spatial relation	*-n/-on/-en/-ön* (’on’)	*-ra/-re* (’onto’)	*-ról/-rõl* (’from the surface of sg’)
Less close external spatial relation	*-nál/-nél* (at’)	*-hoz/-hez/-höz* (’to’)	*-tól/-tõl* (’from’)

What does „closer” and „less close” mean in a spatial relationship? How can we interpret them and what is the basis for comparison? These groups are not defined precisely enough, thus some corrections should be made drawing on findings from cognitive semantics:

Figure 4
Classification of suffixes with the three-way system of spatial relations
by the cognitive semantics

Three-way system of spatial orientations / Type of relations		S_s (=stable suffix)	M_s (=mobile suffix)	
		Being in sg	Getting closer to sg (+)	Getting away from sg (–)
Contact relation	INTERNAL	*-ban/-ben* (’in’)	*-ba/-be* (’into’)	*-ból/-bõl* (’out of’ i.e. ‘from+in’)
	EXTERNAL	*-n~-on/-en/-ön* (’on’)	*-ra/-re* (’onto’)	*-ról/-rõl* (’from the surface of sg’ i.e. ‘from+on’)
Uncertain-contact relation		*-nál/-nél* (’at’)	*-hoz/-hez/-höz* (’to’)	*-tól/-tõl* (’away from’)

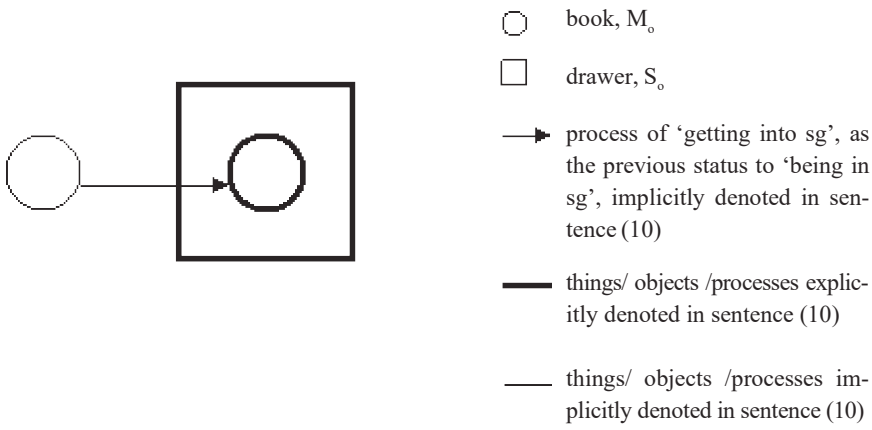
The previous three categories have been merged into two groups: **contact relations** and **uncertain-contact relations** can be distinguished. Within the category of contact relations there are external and internal relations. Internal relations are characterized by their ability to refer not only to spatial relations, but (via metaphorization) to temporal and entity relations, too. In such a case, there is a relationship between S_o and M_o on the external or internal surfaces, physically realized. E.g.:

		M_o		S_o	
(10)	A	könyv	a	fiók**ban**	van.
	the	book	the	drawer+**in**	is
	‘The book is in the drawer.’				

In sentence (10), the book (mobile object, M_o) is in physical contact with one or more internal sides of the drawer (stable object, S_o). The adverbial suffix as a special ‘guide’ for the speaker/hearer indicates the stable object, in order to define the reference point, according to the *cognitive map* of spatial relations. The theory of Cognitive Map is suggested by Edward Tolman (1948), who described the cognitive map as an internal representation that

guides all the elements of behaviour, including conceptualization as well. Based on his results, it can be assumed that users of a language create and apply such kind of maps when they conceptualize spatial relations. This cognitive map of spatial relations includes the most important information about spatial orientations with relationships between objects and/or entities in a very compressed and simplified form.

Figure 5
The cognitive 2D-map of spatial relations in sentence (10)



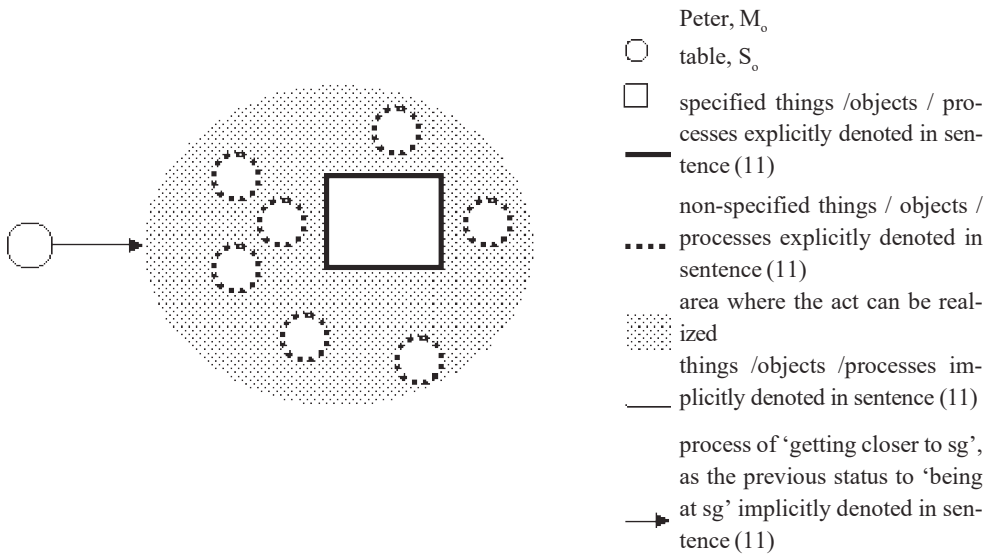
As shown in Figure 5, the stable object (drawer) contains the mobile object (book), i.e. internal physical contact has been established between them. Explicit information is marked in bold. In Figure 5, this means that the book is inside the drawer, this is the status of 'being inside something'. But there are also pieces of implicit information as preconceptions regarding the connecting process between the objects, because if the mobile object is included in the stable one, then the act of 'border crossing' must have happened as the mobile object changed into the status of 'being inside something'.

Uncertain-contact relationships show that S_o and M_o are in contact with each other, but their physical contact may not always be realized. This uncertainty is very important, because it means that the speaker/hearer has incomplete information about the actual situation.

	M_o		S_o	
(11)	Péter	az	asztal**nál**	áll.
	Peter	the	table+**at**	stands
	'Peter is standing at the table.'			

In sentence (11), it is unsure where exactly Peter as the mobile object is in the space around the table (stable object). We do not even know whether or not there is some physical contact between the stable object (*asztal* 'table', S_o) and the mobile object (Péter, M_o). The speaker/hearer cannot or would not like to give sufficient information about the situation, and the adverbial suffix *-nál/-nél* 'at' receives an extra function: to express this intention of the speaker/hearer, showing his partly informed knowledge. Therefore, adverbial suffixes of uncertain-contact relations contain non-specified information about the spatial relations.

Figure 6
The cognitive 2D-map of spatial relations in sentence (11)



As shown in Figure 6, because of the lack of sufficient information, no fixed and exact position is defined for the mobile object (Peter), only a larger area where it may be located. What could be the reason of this uncertainty? In order to find the answer, the conceptual category system of adverbial suffixes will be presented in the next part, and then two stable suffixes, the adessive *-nál/-nél* (‘at’) and the superessive *-n~ -on/-en/-ön* (‘on’) will be investigated.

5. Characteristics of three-way adverbial suffixes

According to theories of cognitive semantics, conceptualization is based on the experiences of users of a language (Langacker 1987, Lakoff 1987). This means that objects, entities, acts and relations occurring in our world are specially coded in languages. For instance, relations between spatial orientations are reflected in the meaning of adverbial elements (e.g. suffixes).

If we decode this knowledge hidden in a language, then we can get some information about the nature of conceptualization.

In order to understand the main difference between the use of adverbial suffixes symbolizing contact and uncertain relations, it is necessary to investigate the main difference between them: the presence or absence of uncertainty.

Contact relations show that the speaker/hearer is sure about the exact relationship between two objects or entities, while uncertain-contact relations indicate that there is only a possibility for contact, but its realization is not certain. But where does the uncertainty come from? Most probably, it comes from the lack of complete information. Therefore, we have to study what kind of information is needed to define spatial relations.

5.1. Characteristics of three-way adverbial suffixes classified into contact relations

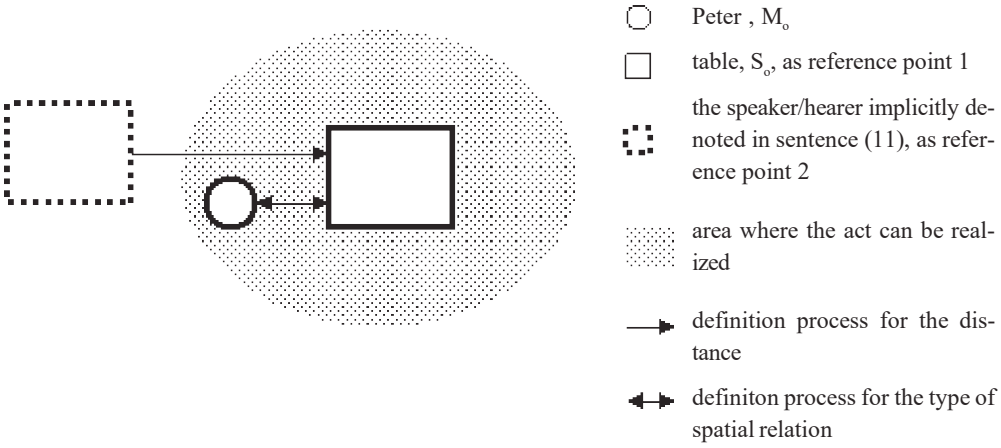
A spatial relation specifies how an object is located in space in relation to a reference object which becomes the reference point for the language user. Since the reference object (stable object / landmark) is usually larger than the object (mobile object / trajector) referred to, the latter is often represented by a smaller circle.

In order to define a spatial relation in the easiest way, at least two objects are needed. The speaker/hearer considers the relation between the two objects, where the reference point is always construed as the stable object – see sentence (1), i.e. **only one reference point** is used for defining the contact relation (S_o – M_o).

5.2. Characteristics of three-way adverbial suffixes classified into uncertain-contact relations

When using adverbial suffixes belonging to uncertain-contact relations, the speaker/hearer considers not only the relationship between the stable and mobile objects, but also the spatial position of the mobile object related to him and the stable object, i.e. **two reference points** (the speaker/hearer and S_o) are used for defining these spatial contacts. For example, in sentence (11) (*Péter az asztalnál áll* 'Peter is standing at the table'), the speaker/hearer considers the relationship between the table (reference point 1) and Peter, and the spatial position of Peter in the space between the speaker himself (reference point 2) and the table:

Figure 7
Reference points in spatial relations expressed by sentence (11) /2D/



In general, defining the type of a spatial relation is much faster and easier than giving the exact calculation for the distance between objects/entities, which would require the use of measures as well. Therefore, in actual conversations the speaker/hearer cannot define these distances, they can only arrive at a rough estimation. Insufficient information, thus, causes the uncertainty which is reflected in the linguistic expressions.

6. The categorization of three-way adverbial suffixes

In cognitive semantics, the concept of metaphor has been re-interpreted. Metaphorization is not a literary or rhetoric term here, but a way in which we understand unknown and/or abstract ideas (Langacker 1987, Lakoff 1987).

As we know from the history of the Hungarian language, three-way adverbial suffixes were originally individual words and only later became suffixes via grammaticalization (Korompay 1992), these elements should be categorized by their meanings despite the fact that their forms have changed and that they lost their syntactic autonomy.

Figure 8
The cognitive category system of three-way adverbial suffixes /3D/

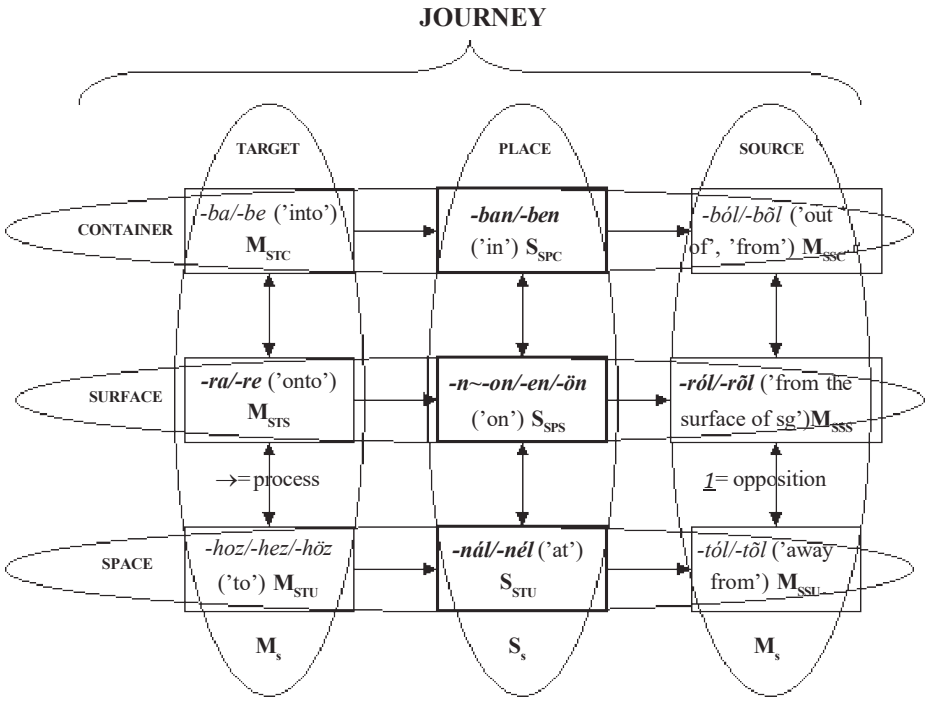


Figure 8 shows the categorization of three-way adverbial suffixes. As can be seen, all suffixes belong to the main conceptual category of JOURNEY. Inside this conceptual area, there are six sub-categories (TARGET, PLACE, SOURCE, CONTAINER, SURFACE, SPACE), to which nine three-way adverbial suffixes are related. In the centre of the 3D-system, there are stable suffixes (inessive *-ban/-ben*, superessive *-n~-on/-en/-ön* and adessive *-nál/-nél*), to which mobile suffixes are compared (see the case of stable and mobile objects in Section 2).

Horizontally, we can see the processes between the suffixes which are parts of one complex act (journey in the metaphorical sense), completing each other, but vertically, suffixes are in opposition.

7. The meaning of inessive *-nál/-nél* (‘at’) and superessive *-n~-on/-en/-ön* (‘on’) as semantically opposite pairs

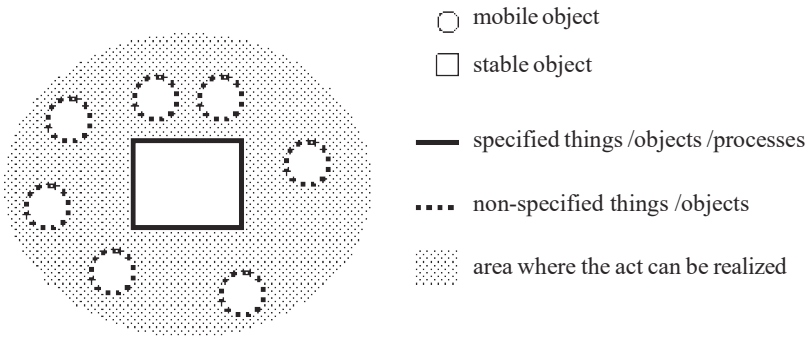
Having seen that a spatial orientation can be defined in space only in relation to another one, this method can be applied for defining the meaning of adverbial suffixes as well, i.e. comparing their meanings to each other and studying them in opposite pairs. In the following part I will give a short presentation of this method, comparing the adessive suffix *-nál/-nél* (‘at’) and the superessive *-n~-on/-en/-ön* (‘on’) to each other, using theories of language history and cognitive semantics.

7.1. The meaning of *-nál/-nél* (‘at’)

The adessive *-nál/-nél* (‘at’) is a stable suffix for expressing uncertain contacts, to which the metaphor of SPACE and PLACE can be related. This means that the concept of ‘being in not-close contact’, i.e. ‘keeping a short distance (i.e. space) between the objects’ is included in the meanings of *-nál/-nél* (‘at’).

Therefore, the meaning of *-nál/-nél* (‘at’) is ‘being at something’, ‘being definable in relation to something without physical contact’, as it can be seen in Figure 9 below:

Figure 9
The relation of adessive *-nál/-nél* /2D/



As this is an uncertain-contact suffix, the exact place of the mobile object is defined only in the actual situation by the speaker/hearer, by use of two reference points. For this reason, the objects marked by the circles are only possibilities for the location of the mobile object. In Figure 9, there is a specific area (in the dotted grey background) which is located around the stable object.

As known from research on language history, the suffix *-nál* comes from the adverb *nál* ‘proximity/nearness’ used in the Ugrian (or Uralian) period of the Hungarian language. This word was formed from the Ugrian basic word **na*[6] ‘proximity/nearness’ with *-l* as an ancient ablative suffix. We can find similar examples in other Finno-Ugrian languages, the most interesting for our analysis is the Samoyed yur. *nā* ‘to’, *nāna* ‘at’/‘with’ (TESz).

The meaning ‘with’ in the above-mentioned Samoyed example suggests that the word *nál* could mean not only ‘proximity/nearness’ but also ‘being close to sg/sy’ i.e. ‘being **with** sg/sy

[6] Supposed basic form of the word from the Uralic period.

by non-physical contact, keeping a short disctance – SPACE – between the objects’, despite the fact that the suffix *-nál/-nél* is not used for expressing the meaning ‘with’ today.

This idea is confirmed by the other form of the adessive suffix as well (*-nél*), because the first occurrence of *-nél* in Hungarian written documents (Jókai Codex 1416 a./1466) is an element of the postpositional composite structure ***nél****kül* ‘without’. This postposition is composed of two morphs, *-nél* and *-kül*, from which *-nél* might mean ‘with’ and *-kül* (today: ‘external’) should mean ‘out’.

However, the word *nál* is not used in Hungarian today, as it became a suffix via grammaticalization, but supposedly this process did not totally delete the semantic pole of the word and its meanings could be preserved in the suffix, too. Based on this idea and using the theories of cognitive semantics, meanings of *-nál/-nél* can be given as follows:

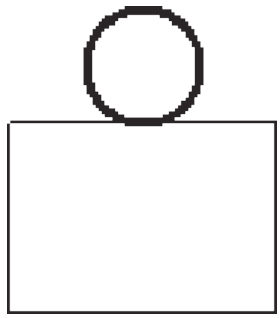
Meanings of *-nál/-nél* (‘at’):

a) Non-exact or non-defined circumstances
b) Metaphor of PLACE WITH SPACE
c) Being with sg/sy by non-physical contact, keeping a short distance
d) Non-limited status in movement
e) Pre-supposing of realized process of ‘getting closer to sg/sy’
f) Uncertain contact with M_o

7.2. The meaning of *-n~-on/-en/-ön* (‘on’)

This suffix refers to external contacts including the metaphor of ‘being on the surface of sg’. The superessive *-n~-on/-en/-ön* (‘on’) assigns ‘being on something by physical contact without border-crossing events on S_o’s body’, thus M_o only touches it on the surface.

Figure 10
Relations of *-n~-on/-en/-ön* (‘on’) /2D/



Meanings of *-n ~-on/-en/-ön* (‘on’):

a) There is external contact without restriction
b) Metaphor of SURFACE with PLACE
c) Moving without obstacles
d) Prediction and result of events without border-crossing
e) S_o touches the surface of M_o on surface, this relation can be turned with 90° and 180° in the space

In the conceptual and grammatical system, three-way adverbial suffixes are represented in oppositional pairs, and they designate and construe spatial, temporal and entity relations compared to each other. In the opposition between adessive *-nál/-nél* (‘at’) and superessive *-n ~ -on/-en/-ön* (‘on’), the focus is on the difference of uncertainties of the contact as shown in the next phrase:

(12) *a sínnél van* – ‘sg is at the rails’

The adessive *-nál/-nél* (‘at’) means ‘being at sg with short distance (i.e. space)’, where the uncertain contact shows the non-limited status in movement, because S_o has uncertain contact with M_o. Therefore, it is not sure whether physical contact is realized between them, but M_o is somewhere around S_o.

(13) *sínen van* – ‘sg is on the rails’

This phrase, besides its direct meaning, metaphorically expresses that ‘some case is under way with an expected positive end’. In this phrase the superessive *-n~-on/-en/-ön* (‘on’) means straight moving without obstacles in space when it refers to things and objects on the surface of a stable object. In this relation, S_o comes into contact with M_o but only externally. The abstract meaning of this phrase: ‘getting to somewhere by a continuous movement (without obstacles)’, i.e. ‘getting to be successful’.

8. Conclusions

This study aimed to show the semantic system of adverbial suffixes in the three-way system of spatial relations in the Hungarian language, mainly with two suffixes: the adessive *-nál/-nél* (‘at’) and the superessive *-n~-on/-en/-ön* (‘on’). The analysis was completed within the framework of holistic cognitive semantics with a diachronic orientation.

I investigated the meanings of three-way adverbial suffixes, and made a proposal on their cognitive category, together with the related conceptual domains and cognitive metaphors. From the nine three-way adverbial suffixes, two (*-nál/-nél* ‘at’ and superessive *-n~-on/-en/-ön* ‘on’) were analysed semantically and a possible explanation for their origin was suggested. It was found that in the semantic system of adessive *-nál/-nél* the original meaning ‘with’ can be assumed, which justifies its relation to the metaphorical uses of SPACE and PLACE (i.e. short distance).

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