

Adjunct clauses under scrutiny: the case of complementizers

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Case is usually associated with nominal elements, in that various formulations of the Case Filter integrate the requirement that nominal elements be case-marked. It is also widely accepted that the role of case marking is to establish structural/semantic relations between the case-marked elements and the ‘case-assigner’, i.e. the head which governs them.

However, the issue of the one-to-one relation between nominal (rather than clausal) elements and case-marking has been raised in several contexts. On the one hand, the case-marking of clausal material has been described for a number of languages, mainly outside the (Indo-) European languages (see e.g. Aikhenvald 2008). On the other hand, studies on the nominalization – or nominal behaviour - of some subordinate clauses has also questioned the actual status of apparently clausal elements. Typically, Arsenijevic 2000a, 2009b a.o discusses the referential properties of subordinate clauses.

Hungarian is a language which exhibits a rich morphological case-marking in the nominal domain. In addition to its 15-17 morphological case markers, it also makes use of a number of postpositions which select non-case marked DPs (at least on the surface), appearing thus to substitute for case marking, as well as a small number of postpositions which select DPs with case-marking (Dékany and Hegedűs 2021).

Given (i) the observation that languages may exhibit case-marking on clausal elements, and (ii) the existence of a rich morphological case system in the language, the main research question this paper addresses is whether there is evidence of case marking on clauses in Hungarian and, if yes, what does that say about the structural and semantic relations in clausal dependencies.

The Hungarian data reveals a clear manifestation of case-marking on some adjunct clauses:

- (1) (ott) *ahól* meg bolygatták a talajt, meg jelenik a parlagfű PLACE
There det-where prt broke det soil-acc, prt appears the ragweed-nom
'Where the soil has been broken up, ragweed appears'
- (2) Akkorra, *amikorra* elmentek a vendégek, a háziak teljesen kimerültek TIME
(that-time) then- left-3pl the guests, the hosts completelygot.exhausted.3pl
'by the time the guests left, the hosts became completely exhausted.'

Spatial and temporal adjunct clauses are marked with a (det-)wh-case complementizer. Their nominal-like form is easily identifiable thanks to optional *a-* determiner form. Haegeman and Urögdi (2010) claim that in temporal clauses, the wh-like comp is actually moved from within the clause, an analysis which is reminiscent of the derivation of relative clauses as well, with which Hungarian spatial and temporal adjunct bear a strong resemblance:

- (3) Emlékszel arra a boltra, *ahól* ezt a finom kávét vettük ?
Remember.2sg that-subl the shp-subl, that-where this good coffee-acc bought.1pl
'Do you remember the shop where we bought this good coffee?'

However, other adjunct clauses also seem to exhibit some case marking, such as cause clauses and reason clauses:

- (4) Nem ment el hazulról, *mert* lázas volt. CAUSE
Neg went.3s prt home-delat wh-causal feverish was
'S/he did not home because s/he had a fever'
- (5) *Mivel* esett, felvette az esőkabátját, REASON
wh-instr rained.3s, prt.put-on the raincoat-poss-acc
'Since it was raining, s/he put on her/his raincoat'

Finally, a cluster of adjunct clauses, including purpose, manner, conditional and concessive clauses, appear to bear no overt case marking.

- (6) Budapestre utazott, *hogy* meglátogassa a rokonait, PURPOSE
 Budapest-subl travelled.3s that prt.visit.SUBJ the relatives.poss.acc
 ‘S/he travelled to Budapest to visit her/his relatives.’
- (7) *Ha* Budapesten vagy, mindenképpen keress fel! CONDITIONAL
 if Budapest.superess are, by all means seek.imp.2s up
 ‘If you are in Budapest, by all means look me up.’
- (8) Nem írtam a barátaimnak, *bár* gyakran gondoltam rájuk. CONCESSIVE
 Neg wrote.1s the friends-poss-dat, although often thought.1s them-superess
 ‘I didn’t write my friends, though I often thought of them.’

However, a closer look at some of these clauses reveals that even the apparently bare complementizer can be associated with a case-marked demonstrative-like element:

- (9) **Azért** jött, *hogy* közölje velem a hírt PURPOSE
 That-causal came-3s that inform-subj.3s pro.1.s-instr the news-acc
 ‘S/he came to inform me of the news’

A closer investigation of the “complementizers” allows us to identify their sub-parts, revealing a sequence of elements underlyingly organized in the following way:

- (10) (a) – WH– CASE – (CASE) – *hogy* – *ha* – *bár*

The distinctive forms of spatial and temporal, as well as cause and reason “complementizers” correspond to different case-markings. A detailed analysis of the case markers shows that clausal case-marking expresses specific relations between the event of the matrix clause and the subordinate prop/event. On the other hand, result, manner, purpose, conditional and concessive complementizers lack overt case-marking. They resort to what appears as bare complementizers (Bacskai-Atkari 2016, Bacskai-Atkari & Dékány 2014, E-Kiss 2020). In the light of the observations above and with the help of an analysis of the semantic properties of adjunct clauses, we propose that in adjunct clauses which appear to lack case marking, the relevant sense relations are also encoded in the comp domain.

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