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A syntactic solution to the "inverse scope" puzzle in Hungarian based on extraction¹

In Hungarian, the scope order of preverbal (non-*in-situ*) constituents corresponds to their surface order (1a-b); as is shown by the proposed paraphrase of (1c), however, quantifiers in contrastive topic position (in (Spec,CTopP)) give the impression of having inverse scope, apparently violating this generalization (É. Kiss 2002: 25).

- (1) a. [_{FocP} Kevés diák látott [_{QP} minden filmet [_{AspP} ...]]].
 few student saw each film.Acc
 ‘It holds for few students that they saw every film.’
- b. [_{QP} Minden filmet [_{FocP} kevés diák látott [_{AspP} ...]]].
 each film.Acc few student saw
 ‘In the case of each of the films, it holds for few students that they saw it.’
- c. [_{CTopP} ^[Minden filmet látott] [_{FocP} kevés diák látott] ...].
 each film.Acc saw few student saw
 ‘^Every film was seen by few students.’
 that is, cca. ‘It holds for few students that they saw every film.’

The solution to the "scope inversion" puzzle in Hungarian proposed by Gyuris (2009: 150) rests upon this, *unexplained*, observation: "only those Hungarian sentences containing a contrastive topic are well-formed that have well-formed counterparts with the contrastive topic expression in postverbal position." Our explanation can be based upon the extraction of a right branching constituent in the same way as in the case of the complex-event denoting nominal expression *both colleagues' sending away* in (2): it is assumed for semantic reasons that the remnant of this entire expression is hosted in (Spec,CTopP) but only the phonetic material of *the possessor* appears preverbally, after extracting *its right branching complement* (Alberti 2004).

- (2) [_{CTopP} [_{PosP} ^Mindkét kollégának Ø] ellenzem [_{DP} az elküldését]_i]!
 both colleague.Dat oppose.DefObj.1Sg the away.send.Nmn.Poss.3Sg.Acc
 ‘As for the option according to which both colleagues would be sent away, I am definitely against that [but there are options that I am not against, e.g., as for me, one of them can be sent away].’

Our analysis of (1c) is then as follows:

- (1a) serves as a point of departure
- the Foc>Q scope order is "finalized" here
- the event-denoting expression *minden filmet látott* is topicalized in the way that only the remnant *minden filmet* 'each film.Acc' appears phonetically in (Spec,CTopP)
- with the AspP *látott* 'saw' extracted.

Alberti 2004. "Climbing for Aspect...". In *Verb Clusters...* Amsterdam: Benjamins. 253–289.

É. Kiss 2002. *The Syntax of Hungarian*. CUP.

Gyuris 2009. *The Semantics and Pragmatics of Contrastive Topics...* Budapest: Lexica.

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