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Workshop on

**DEFINITENESS, POSSESSIVITY AND EXHAUSTIVITY: FORMALIZING
SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC CONNECTIONS**

**Hungarian possessors are definitely
different**

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1.1. Introduction

aims of this presentation

- the description of Hungarian possessive DPs
 - from the perspective of encoding
 - ✓ definiteness
 - ✓ exhaustivity
 - in a typological context
- presenting the essence of an analysis in the framework of Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG)

1.2. Introduction

structure of the presentation

1. Introduction
2. Typological context
3. The basic Hungarian facts
4. The essence of an LFG analysis
5. Conclusion

2.1. Typological context

Carlier et al. (2016)

WOKSHOP PROPOSAL

From the point of view of **morphosyntax**, there is a **typological split** between languages that allow **possessive** and **definiteness markers** to **co-occur** within one and the same DP (1), and those in which the markers in question are in **complementary distribution** (2) (for a rich typological survey see Haspelmath 1999).

RUSSIAN

(1) et-a moj-a podrug-a
this-F.SG my-F.SG friend-NOM.SG
‘this (female) friend of mine’

ENGLISH

(2) *this his friend / ^{OK} this friend of his

2.2. Typological context

Carlier et al. (2016)

On the semantic side, languages again are **split** in that some have markers of possession that impose an **exhaustive quantification** on the domain **denoted by the possessee nominal** (in the sense that the resulting DP is normally taken to denote the totality of individuals with the relevant nominal property related to a given possessor), while other languages do **not** have **such possessives**.

West Germanic prenominal possessors (3), **French** prenominal possessors, and **Hebrew** and **Arabic** construct state possessives (4) (e.g. Heller 2002, Dobrovie-Sorin 2004, Barker 2011) all encode **exhaustive quantification**. For instance English (3) is felicitous just in case all of Sam's daughters study in Great Britain, not just some of them, and Hebrew (4) in case the teacher has only one house.

ENGLISH

(3) Sam's daughters study in Great Britain.

HEBREW

(4) beyt-ha more

house-DEF teacher

“The teacher's house” (from Barker 2011)

2.3. Typological context

Carlier et al. (2016)

In languages and language groups such as **Italian**, **Spanish**, Slavic, Finno-Ugric, Austronesian (Chung 2008), there is no possessive configuration with an exhaustivity effect. For example, in (5) and (6) from **Russian** and **Beserman Udmurt** (Uralic, Finno-Ugric), respectively, the possessee NP is **not presupposed to denote all of the individuals** with the relevant nominal property related to the possessor, but possibly only some of them.

RUSSIAN (SLAVIC)

(5) nash petukh
 our rooster

“our rooster / one of our roosters”

BESERMAN UDMURT (URALIC)

(6) petuk-mā
 rooster-POSS. 1PL

“our rooster / one of our roosters”

2.4. Typological context

Carlier et al. (2016)

Moreover, there is evidence for the **typological alignment** of the morphosyntactic and semantic splits identified above. That is, on the one hand, it is precisely in those cases **where possessive markers trigger exhaustive quantification** that they are in **complementary distribution with definiteness markers**; on the other, languages which **do not have exhaustivity-triggering possessives**, seem to mark, if at all, **specificity** (in the sense of Enç (1991); **partitive type** in terms of von Heusinger 2002) **rather than definiteness**.

RUSSIAN (SLAVIC)

(5) nash petukh
 our rooster

“our rooster / one of our roosters”

BESERMAN UDMURT (URALIC)

(6) petuk-mê
 rooster-POSS.1PL

“our rooster / one of our roosters”

RUSSIAN

(7) et-ot nash petukh
 this-M.SG our rooster

“this rooster of ours”

BESERMAN UDMURT

(8) So korka-mê vuž n'i val.
 this house-POSS.1PL old already be.PST

“This house of ours became old”

2.5. Typological context

Haspelmath's (1999) generalization:

- the complementarity of definiteness marking and possessive marking for the encoding of definiteness (exhaustivity) is due to a simple **economy principle**
 - the presence of the possessor is a sufficient form of expressing the definiteness of the entire possessive DP
 - basis for this: possessive DPs have a very high chance of being definite (in an English sample: out of 1000 NPs, 33% indefinite & out of 311 possessed NPs 6% indefinite – similar results in Italian and Modern Greek samples)
 - therefore, the use of the definite article is redundant, hence uneconomical
- if a language doesn't have this complementarity: it ranks another principle (i.e. OT-style violable constraint) higher: **explicitness** (English vs. Italian)

3.1. The basic Hungarian facts

1. Hungarian possessive DPs have nominative or dative possessors, see (1a) and (1b), respectively, and when they are present in the possessive DP, the interpretation of this DP is always definite (exhaustive).
2. The possessed noun agrees with the possessor, see (1a-c), and possessor pro-drop is possible (typical), see (1c).
3. When the possessor is a nominative pronoun, the definite article must be present, see (1c). (Dative pronominal possessors very rarely occur *within* possessive DPs.) When the pronominal possessor is dropped, the definite article must be present under normal circumstances, see (1c). Optionally it can be absent when the possessive DP is a topic.

- (1) a. *Kati toll-a* b. *Kati-nak a toll-a* c. *a (te) toll-ad*
Kate.NOM pen-her Kate-DAT the pen-her the you pen-your
'Kate's pen' 'Kate's (*the) pen' '(*the) your pen'

3.2. The basic Hungarian facts

4. When the possessor is a non-pronominal nominative DP (whether definite or indefinite), the definite article must **not** be present in standard Hungarian, but the interpretation of the possessive DP is always definite (which is straightforwardly indicated by the definite objective conjugation of the verb), see (2).

(2)	<i>János</i>	<i>olvas-t-a</i>	<i>Kati</i>	<i>vers-é-t.</i>
	John.NOM	read-PAST-3SG.DEF	Kate.NOM	poem-her-ACC
			<i>a lány</i>	
			the girl.NOM	
			<i>egy lány</i>	
			a girl.NOM	

‘John read Kate’s / the girl’s / a girl’s poem.’

In (2), the possessors are in nominative case. When they are dative case-marked, they follow the pattern in (1b), in which case the definite article is standardly present; hence, the definiteness of the entire possessive DP is directly encoded.

3.3. The basic Hungarian facts

- in standard Hungarian, the crucial contrast is that between
 - (i) (droppable) nominative pronominal possessors**
 - (ii) dative possessors AND**
 - (iii) non-pronominal nominative possessors**(i) and (ii) require the presence of the definite article, while (iii) strictly reject it
- in a dialect: personal name possessors behave in the same way as pronominal possessors
- when [–overt possessor] & [+DA]:
 - pro-drop & definite interpretation
 - external dative possessor & definite interpretation
- when [–overt possessor] & [–DA]:
 - pro-drop
 - ✓ typically: indefinite interpretation
 - ✓ optionally: definite interpretation iff the DP is a topic
 - external dative possessor & indefinite interpretation

3.4. The basic Hungarian facts

Carlier et al.'s (2016) typological alignment generalization

where possessive markers trigger exhaustive quantification, they are in complementary distribution with definiteness markers

Hungarian:

YES:

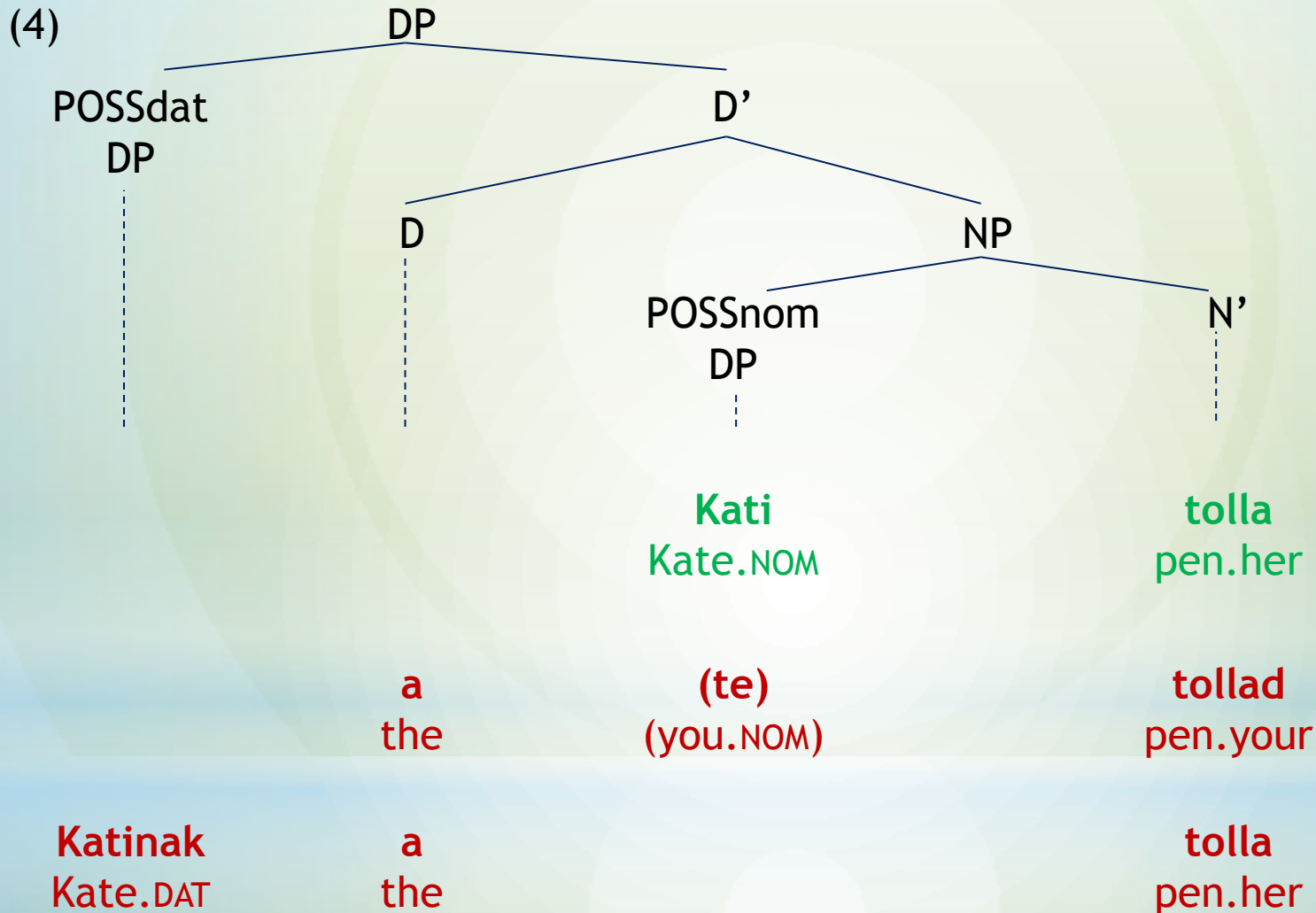
- in the case of non-pronominal nominative possessors

NO:

- in the case of pronominal possessors (\Leftrightarrow **OH**)
- in the case of dative possessors (\Leftrightarrow **OH**)

see Egedi (2014)

3.5. The basic Hungarian facts



4.1. The essence of an LFG analysis

my key ideas for capturing the (non-)complementarity of the definite article and the possessor

- a) the definite article always encodes the DEF=+ feature for the matrix DP
- b) the (either definite or indefinite) possessor **can** also encode this feature
- c) this feature is non-unifiable in Hungarian (cf. LFG is a unification-based theory)

NO GOOD: $(\uparrow \text{DEF}) = +$ & $(\uparrow \text{DEF}) = +$

OK: $(\uparrow \text{DEF}) = \mathbf{c} +$ & $(\uparrow \text{DEF}) = +$

$X = y$ is a **defining** equation

$X = \mathbf{c} y$ is a **constraining** equation

4.2. The essence of an LFG analysis

- *in the case of nominative possessors*

a) in the standard dialect

- non-pronominal possessors do encode this feature; therefore, the presence of the definite article is blocked
- pronominal possessors, by contrast, are “weak” in this respect: they cannot encode definiteness; therefore, the presence of the definite article is required

b) the special trait of the **Trans-Tisza dialect** is that it treats personal name possessors in the same way as pronominal possessors

4.3. The essence of an LFG analysis

- ***in the case of dative possessors***
 - a) the dative non-pronominal possessor precedes the obligatory definite article – from this it follows that in our system (the presence of) this possessor in Spec,DP does not encode the definiteness of the matrix DP – this is the task of the definite article
 - b) pronominal dative possessors are vanishingly rare *within* possessive DPs

4.4. The essence of an LFG analysis

- *why are pronominal possessors too weak to encode [+DEF]?*

(5) a.	<table border="1"><tr><td><i>egy lány</i></td></tr></table> <i>toll-a</i>	<i>egy lány</i>	b.	<table border="1"><tr><td><i>Kati</i></td></tr></table> <i>toll-a</i>	<i>Kati</i>	c.	<i>az</i> <table border="1"><tr><td><i>ő</i></td></tr></table> <i>toll-a</i>	<i>ő</i>
<i>egy lány</i>								
<i>Kati</i>								
<i>ő</i>								
	a girl.NOM pen-her		Kate.NOM pen-her		the she pen-her			
	'a girl's pen'		'Kate's pen'		'her pen'			

- a) possessor pronouns are typically dropped (unless they have a discourse function) & Hungarian DPs/NPs are head-final → in a possessive DP with possessor **pro-drop** the definiteness of the DP would be recognized at the end of **processing** the entire DP
⇔ DPs with overt (definite/indefinite) non-pronominal possessors
- b) **1st and 2nd** person OBJ pronouns trigger **indefinite** agreement on the verb

(6) a.	<i>Kati</i>	<i>lát-ott</i>	<i>engem/téged.</i>
	Kate.NOM	see-PAST-3SG. INDEF	me/you
	'Kate saw me/you.'		
b.	<i>Kati</i>	<i>lát-t-a</i>	<i>őt.</i>
	Kate.NOM	see-PAST-3SG- DEF	him
	'Kate saw him.'		

4.5. The essence of an LFG analysis

- *why are pronominal possessors too weak to encode [+DEF]?*

c) in the case of **3PL possessors** (a simplified overview)

- a **non-pronominal possessor** (naturally) carries its **person & number** features and the nominal **head agrees** with it only wrt **3rd person** correctly (at most, analysis-specific), see (7a)
- the **pronominal possessor is 3sg** (informally: it **only** encodes **3rd person** correctly) and the **inflection** on the nominal head encodes the **person & number** features (3PL), see (7b)

→ the pronominal possessor is weaker than the non-pronominal one in this respect, too

- (7) a.

<i>a</i>	<i>lány-ok</i>
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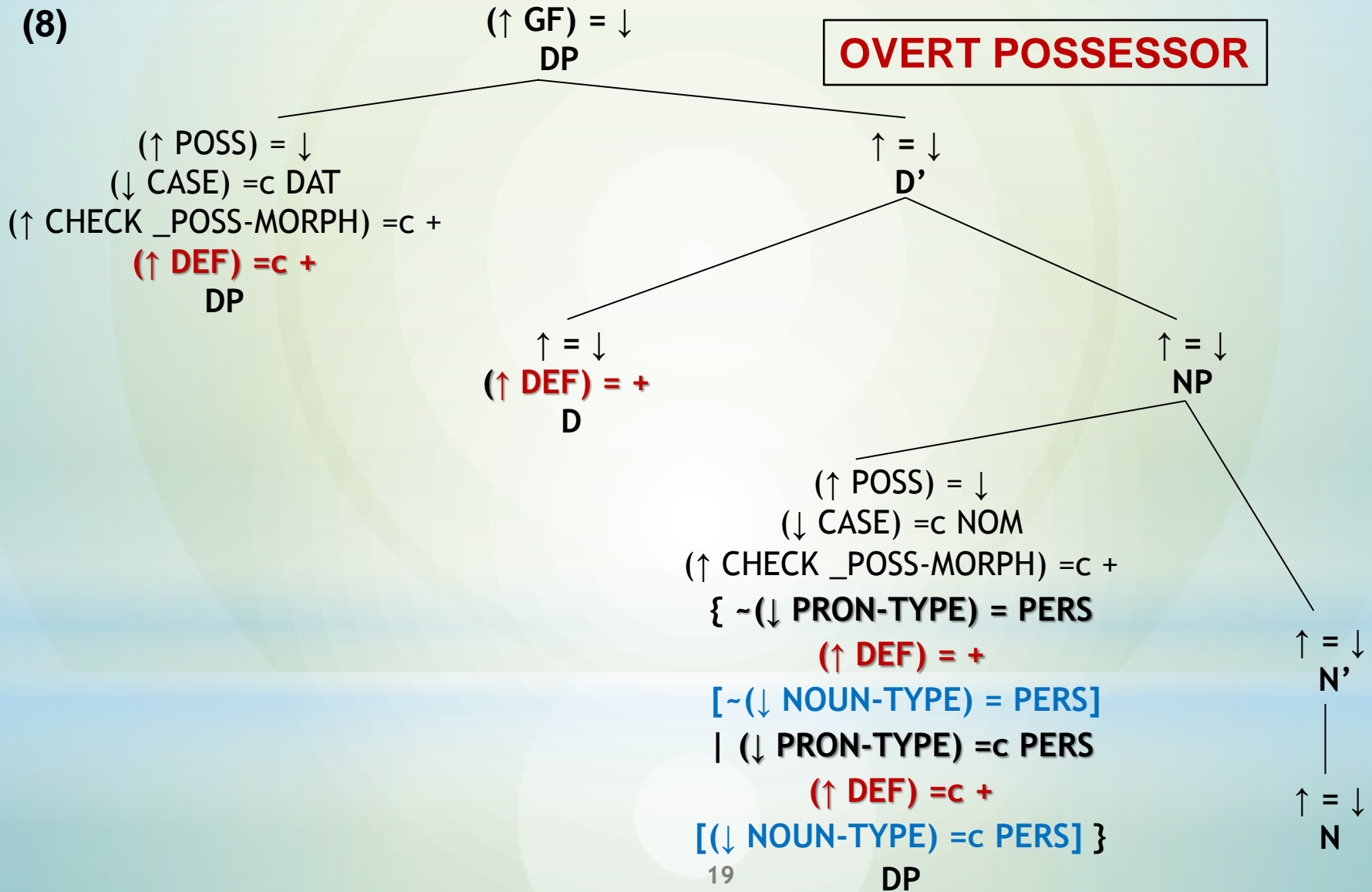
toll-a
the girl-PL.NOM pen-her
'the girls' pen'
- b. *az*

<i>ő</i>

toll-uk
the she pen-their
'their pen'

4.6. The essence of an LFG analysis

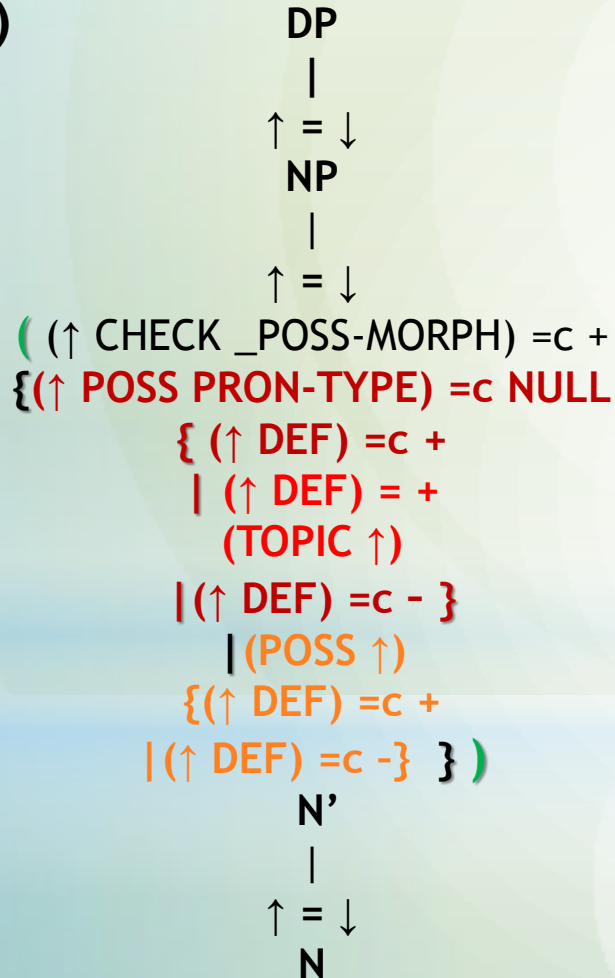
(8)



4.7. The essence of an LFG analysis

NO OVERT POSSESSOR WITH OR WITHOUT THE DEFINITE ARTICLE

(9)



- pro-drop
- external possessor

5.1. Conclusion

the essence of my modelling the (non-)complementarity of the definite article and the possessor

- a) the definite article always encodes the DEF=+ feature for the matrix DP
- b) the (either definite or indefinite) possessor **can** also encode this feature
- c) this feature is non-unifiable in Hungarian:

NO GOOD:	$(\uparrow \text{DEF}) = +$	&	$(\uparrow \text{DEF}) = +$
OK:	$(\uparrow \text{DEF}) = c +$	&	$(\uparrow \text{DEF}) = +$

- d) nominative non-pronominal possessors are associated with $(\uparrow \text{DEF}) = +$
→ the definite article is blocked

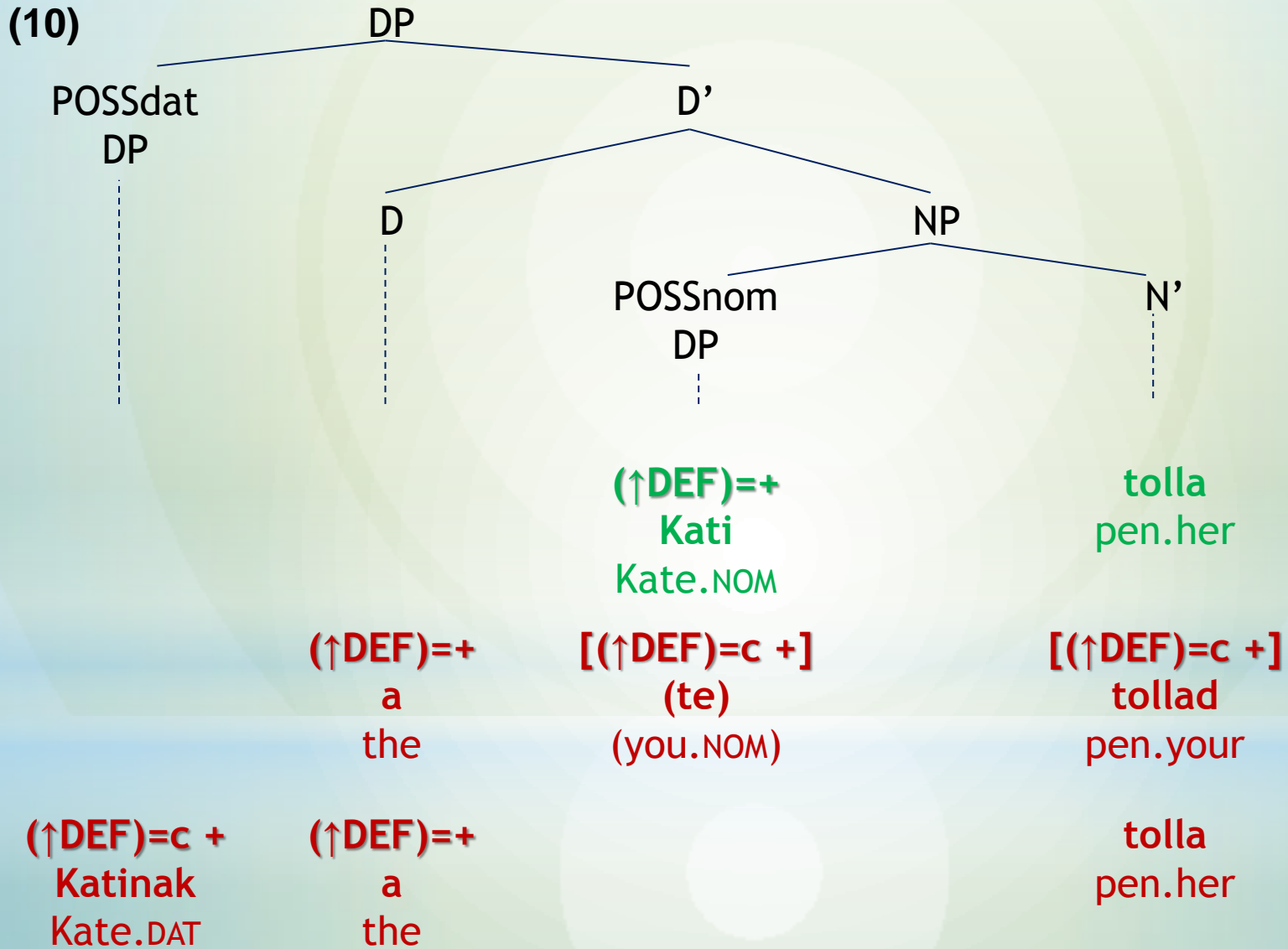
5.2. Conclusion

the essence of my modelling the (non-)complementarity of the definite article and the possessor

e) dative (non-pronominal) possessors within the possessive DP and nominative pronominal possessors are associated with $(\uparrow\text{DEF})=c +$

→ the definite article must be present

5.3. Conclusion



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Appendix (1)

- Haspelmath's (1999) basic typological generalization:
 - definite article (DA) – possessor (POSS) complementarity: only in the case of languages with relatively young articles (i.e. DA is younger than POSS)
 - when a new possessive construction is created by grammaticalization in a language with an established DA, the DA is obligatory – 9 languages, including Hungarian: *a barát könyve* vs. *a barátaknak **a** könyve*
 - related phenomena:
 - demonstratives: *this (*the) house* vs. *ez a ház* (in this case the presence of the DA is “truly redundant”)
 - proper names: *(*the) Mary* vs. *i Maria* (Greek)

Appendix (2)

5. In addition to the standard pattern, there is a **dialectal variant** (mainly in the **Trans-Tisza region**): when the possessor is expressed by a personal name, the definite article must be present in the possessive DP, see (3).

(3)	<i>János</i>	<i>lát-t-a</i>		<i>Kati-t.</i>	
	John.NOM	see-PAST-3SG.DEF		Kate-ACC	
				<i>a Kati</i>	<i>toll-á-t.</i>
				the Kate.NOM	pen-her-ACC
	'John saw Kate / Kate's pen.'				

⇔ "Budapest dialect": **a Kati-t**

The peculiarity of this dialect is that personal names are normally used without the definite article, but when they are possessors, they must be preceded by the definite article. In this dialect then the definite article clearly belongs to the entire possessive DP (and not to the possessor), thereby following the pattern of nominative personal pronoun possessors, see (1c).

Appendix (3)

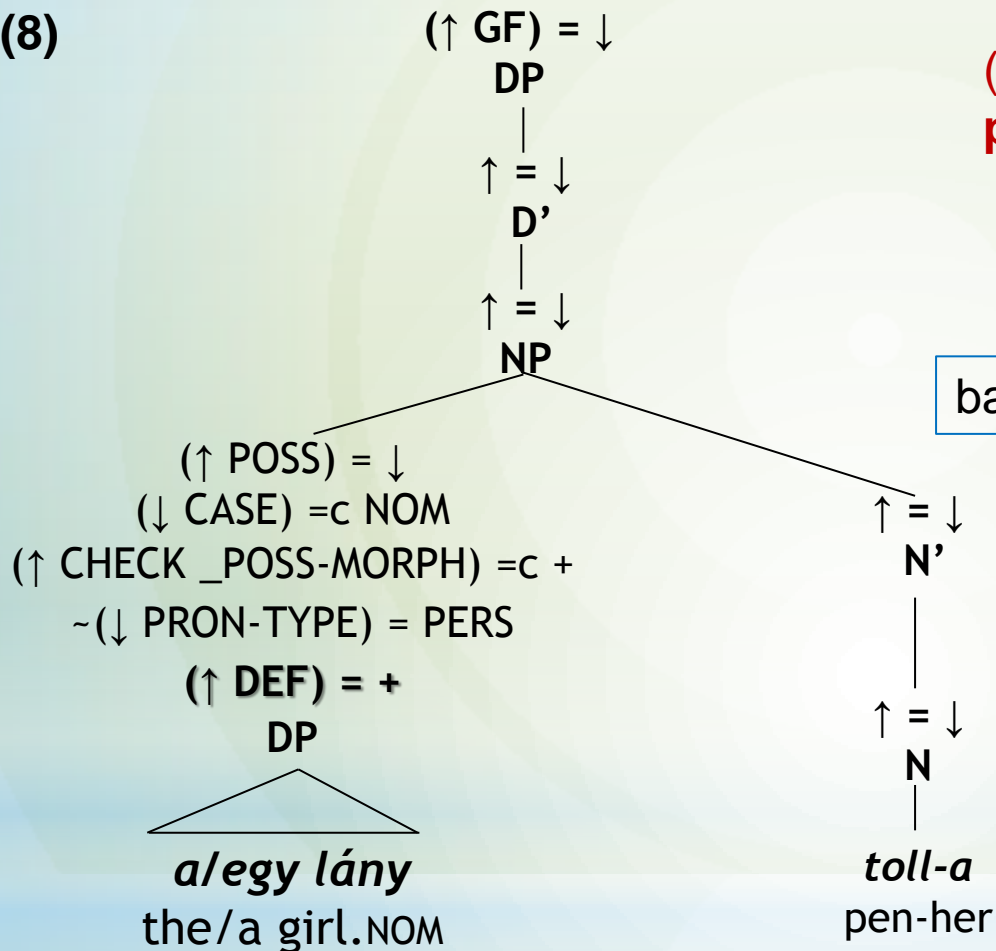
5. The (always dative-marked) possessor can occur externally to the possessive DP. In such cases, when the possessed DP contains the definite article, the interpretation is definite, as usual, see (3a). When it does not contain the definite article, the interpretation of the possessed DP is indefinite. This is partially supported by the morphology of the verb: a great number of speakers use the indefinite object marking paradigm of the verb (while others keep the definite marking paradigm, although the interpretation of the noun phrase is indefinite here, too), see (3b).

(3) a. *Kati-nak olvas-t-ad a vers-é-t?*
Kate-DAT read-PAST-2SG.DEF the poem-her-ACC
'Did you read Kate's poem?'

b. *Kati-nak olvas-t-ad/-ál vers-é-t?*
Kate-DAT read-PAST-2SG.DEF/-2SG.INDEF poem-her-ACC
'Did you read one / several poem(s) by Kate?'

Appendix (4)

(8)



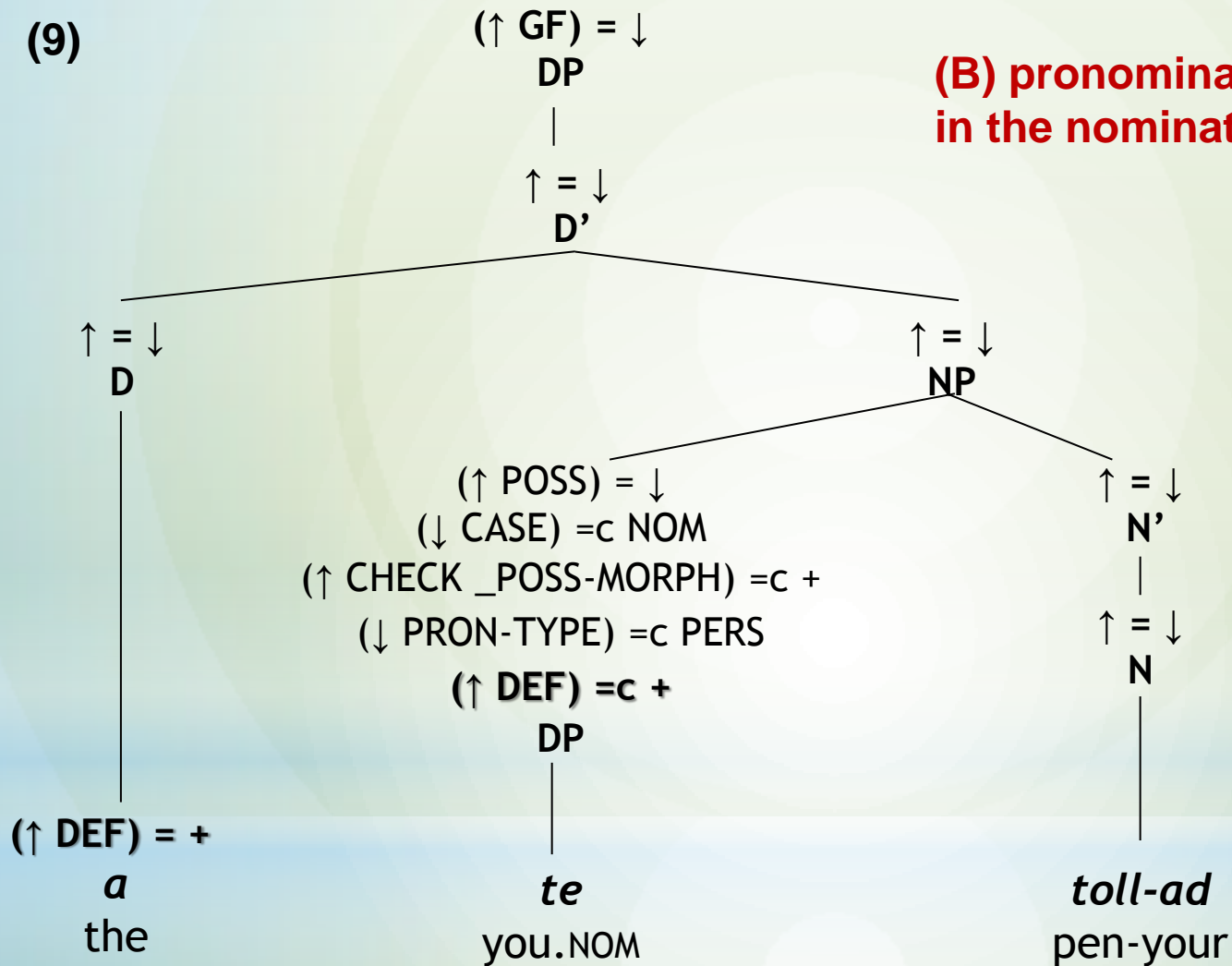
**(A) non-pronominal, ordinary
 possessor in the nominative**

basic structure: Szabolcsi (1994), GB

Appendix (5)

(9)

**(B) pronominal possessor
in the nominative**



Appendix (6)

(10)

(↑ GF) = ↓
DP

**(C) non-pronominal, ordinary
possessor in the dative**

(↑ POSS) = ↓
(↓ CASE) =c DAT
(↑ CHECK_POSS-MORPH) =c +
(↑ DEF) =c +

DP

↑ = ↓
D'

↑ = ↓
D

↑ = ↓
NP

↑ = ↓
N'

↑ = ↓
N

(↑ DEF) = +

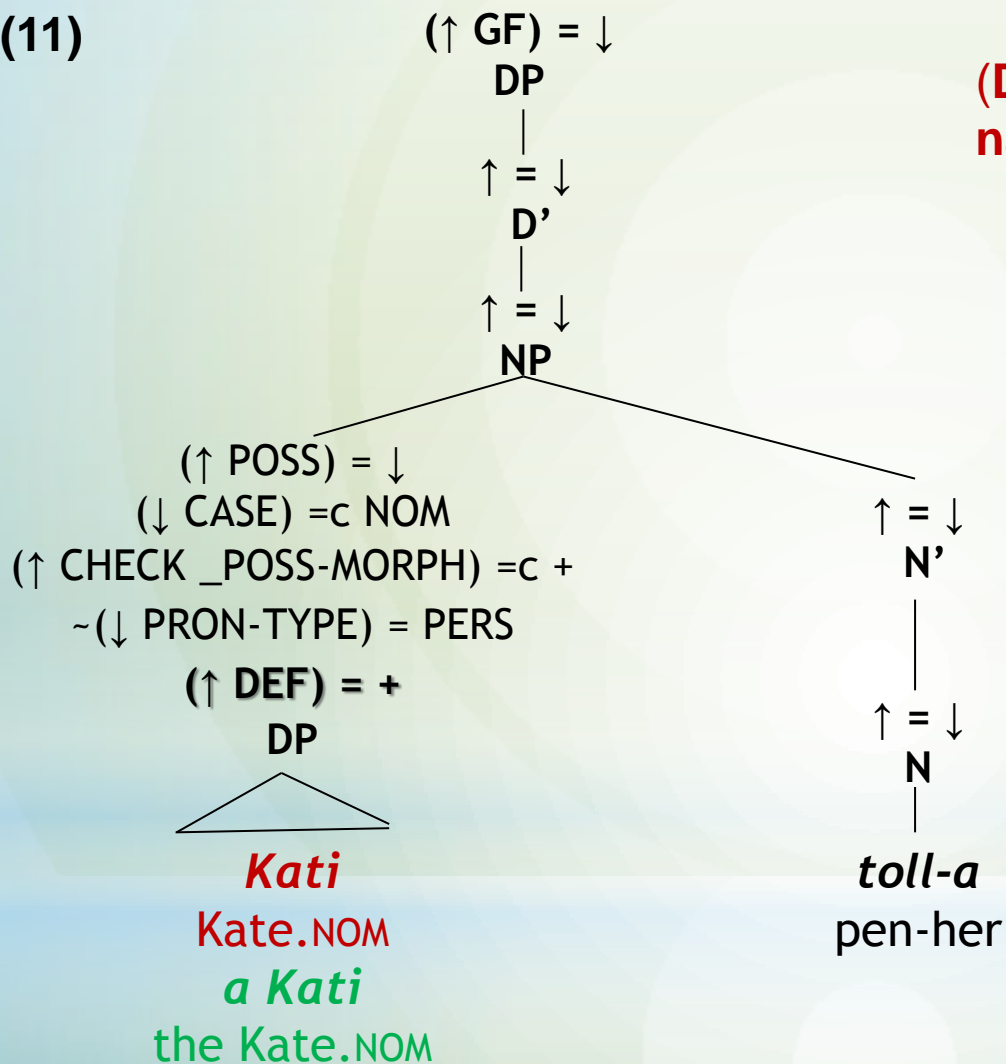
a/egy lány-nak
the/a girl-DAT

a
the

toll-a
pen-her

Appendix (7)

(11)



(D1) non-pronominal, personal name possessor in the nominative

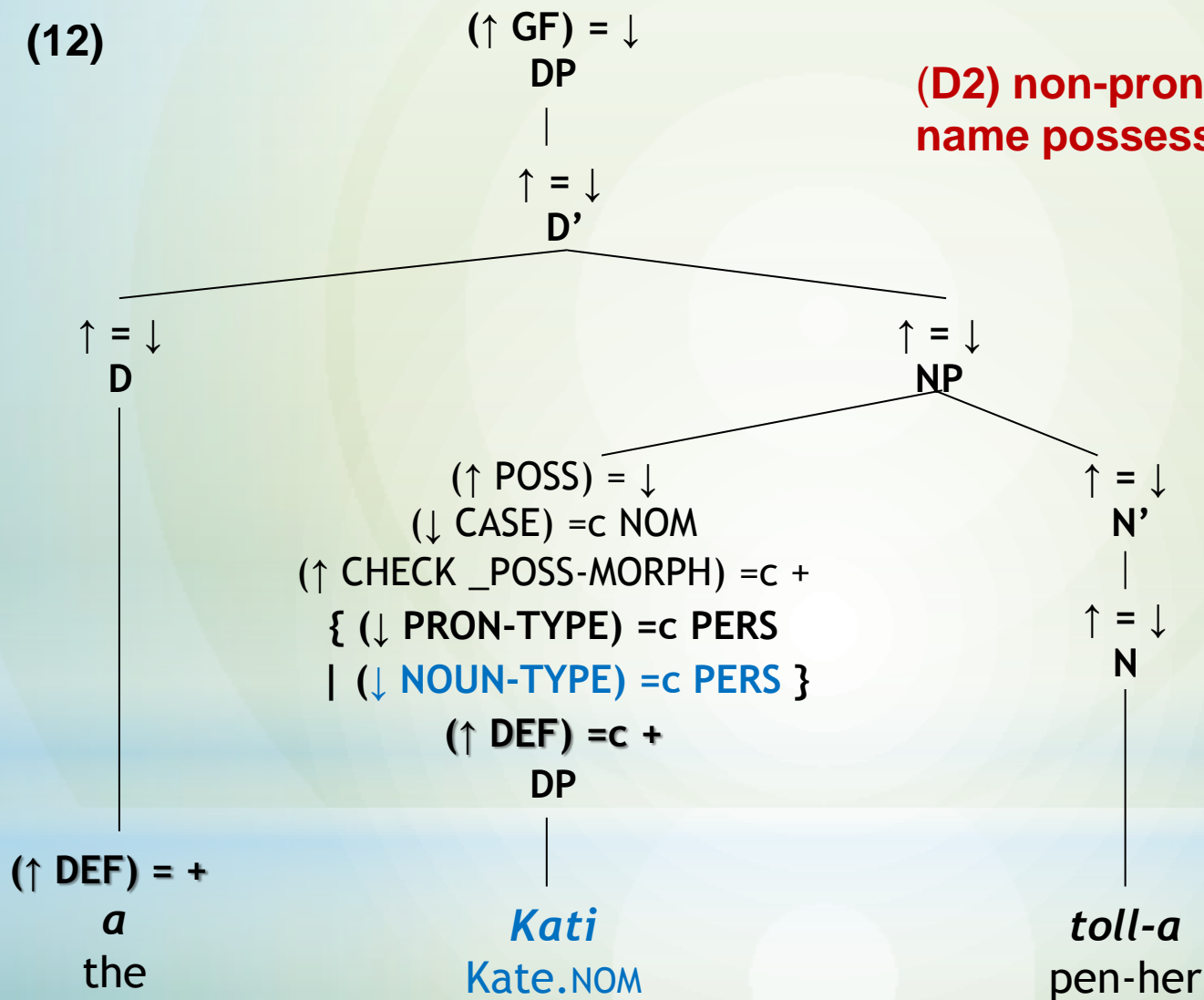
Kati: standard dialect

a Kati: Budapest dialect

Appendix (8)

(12)

(D2) non-pronominal, personal name possessor in the nominative



Appendix (9)

no overt possessor and definite article

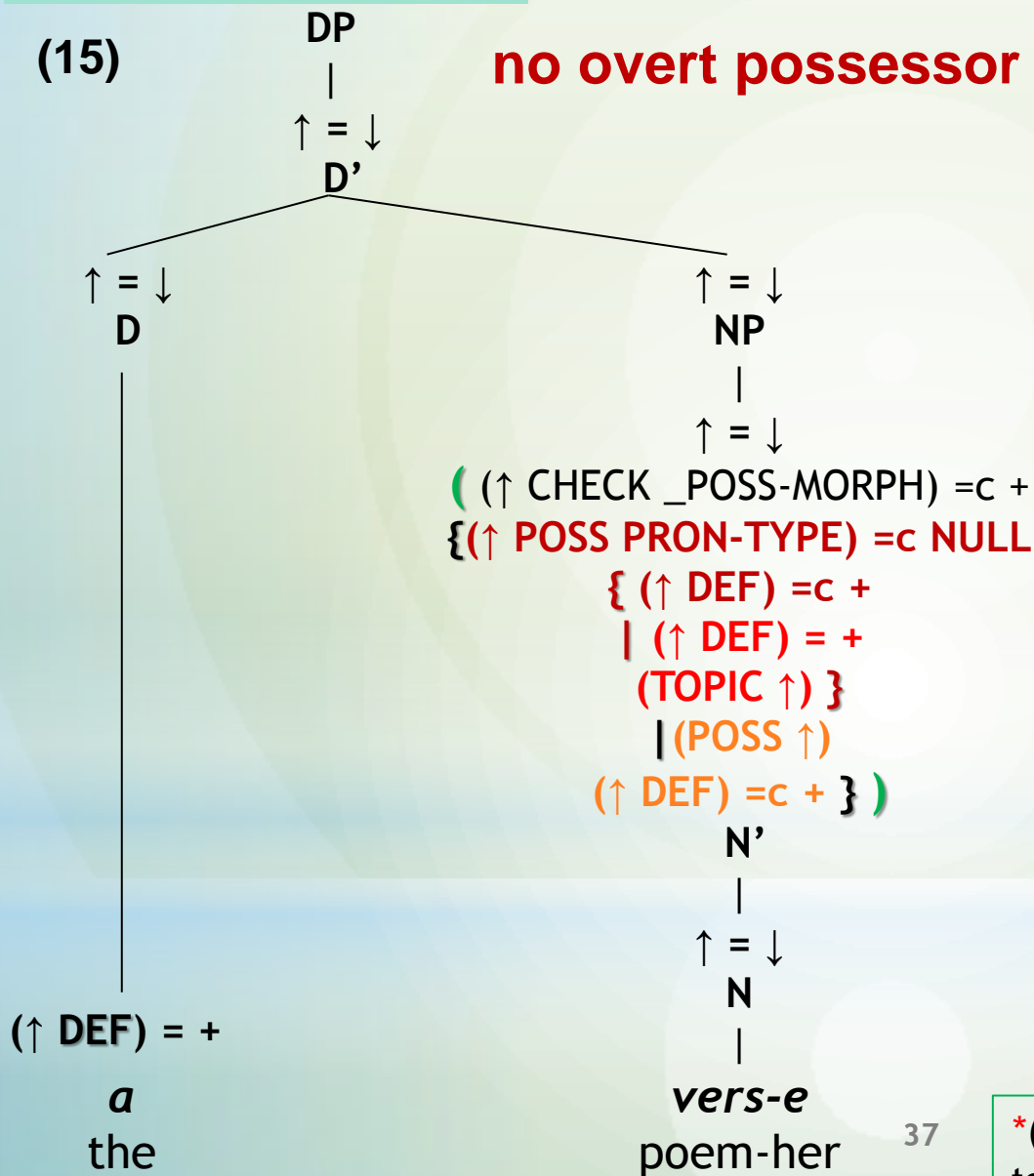
- a) simple pro-drop (14a)
- b) external possessor in the dative (14b)

(14) a. *Olvas-t-ad* *a* *vers-é-t?*
read-PAST-2SG.DEF the poem-her-ACC
'Did you read her poem?'

b. *Kati-nak olvas-t-ad* *a* *vers-é-t?*
Kate-DAT read-PAST-2SG.DEF the poem-her-ACC
'Did you read Kate's poem?'

Appendix (10)

(15) **no overt possessor and definite article**



- pro-drop (14a) &
- the definite article is optional if the possessive DP is a topic*
- external possessor (14b)

{ (↑ GF POSS) = ↓ | (↑ GF) = ↓ }
(↓ CASE) =c DAT
DP

GF={SUBJ|OBJ|OBL}

* (general) specificity/definiteness of topics facilitates the definite interpretation

Appendix (11)

no overt possessor and no definite article

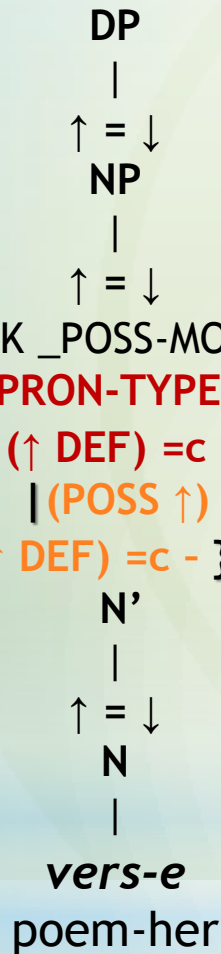
- the interpretation is indefinite
 - a) simple pro-drop (16a)
 - b) external possessor in the dative (16b)

(16) a. *Olvas-t-ál* *vers-é-t?*
read-PAST-2SG.INDEF poem-her-ACC
'Did you read any of her poems?'

b. *Kati-nak olvas-t-ál* *vers-é-t?*
Kate-DAT read-PAST-2SG.INDEF poem-her-ACC
'Did you read any of Kate's poems?'

Appendix (12)

(17)



no overt possessor and no definite article

- pro-drop (16a)
- external possessor (16b)

{ (↑ GF POSS) = ↓ | (↑ GF) = ↓ }
 (↓ CASE) =c DAT
 DP

GF={SUBJ|OBJ|OBL}