

**Theses of Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation**

**ON CLAUSE-INITIAL DISCOURSE-RELATED  
CONSTRUCTIONS IN ENGLISH AND  
HUNGARIAN**

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## 1. Aims, objectives and outline of the dissertation

The aims of the dissertation are to provide an analysis for such sentence-constructions in English and Hungarian where some discourse-prominent constituent is located at a clause-initial/left-peripheral position and to investigate how the proposed analyses fit into the landscape of theoretical syntax and crosslinguistic typology. The framework of the dissertation is Lexical-Functional Grammar (Bresnan et al. 2016). The constructions under consideration are the following<sup>1</sup>: Topicalization (TOP-Eng, (1)), Clause-initial adjuncts (CIADJ-Engs, (2)), Left-dislocation (LD-Eng, (3)) in English; Left-dislocation (LD-Hun, (4)) and Operator fronting (OF, (5)) in Hungarian.

- (1) *John, I like.*
- (2) *In New York, there is always something to do.*
- (3) *John, I like him.*
- (4) a *Jánost, azt Kati szereti.*  
John.ACC that.ACC Kate likes  
'As for John, Kate likes him.'
- b *Erre János az fogta magát, és elszaladt.*  
then John that took.3SG himself and away.ran.3SG  
'Then John, he went and ran away.'
- c *A könyvet, AZT olvastam a szobában (és nem az újságot).*  
the book.ACC that.ACC read.1SG the room.in and not the newspaper.ACC  
'The book, I read THAT in the room (and not the newspaper).'
- (5) *János(t) mondtam, hogy jön a partira.*  
John(ACC) said.1SG that(C) comes the party.to  
'(Of) John I said that he will come to the party.'

The dissertation is structured into six chapters. After some general introduction in chapter 1, the second chapter provides an overview of the theoretical framework, LFG. LFG has a parallel architecture and all main analytical levels are reviewed. As the target-constructions are all related to discourse-prominence, particular attention is paid to the level of information-

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<sup>1</sup> Such terms are only used as descriptive labels and do not indicate theoretical/analytical commitment on my part.

structure. After reviewing the theoretical background and the literature of the topic, a new taxonomy is offered.

The third chapter discusses those aspects of Hungarian syntax which are necessary for the purposes of the dissertation. For the analysis of simple sentences in Hungarian I build on the works of Laczkó (e.g. Laczkó 2014) and I supplement them with my proposals about information-structure. I also discuss subordinate clauses and argue that the pronoun associates (*az* ‘that’) of Hungarian subordinate clauses are not expletives, but contentful demonstratives.

The fourth and fifth chapter are devoted to the discussion and analyses of the English and Hungarian constructions under investigation. In each case, first I review their properties and the relevant literature then I provide an LFG-theoretic formal account. The primary representational tools for this are annotated constituent-structures and functional-structures. It is shown that the constructions necessitate analyses where the left-peripheral constituents are integrated into the sentence-structure in various ways and to different degrees. These differences manifest in connectivity-effects (binding, reconstruction, islands, formal matching) and restrictions on placement.

The final chapter of the dissertation is concerned with the theoretical and crosslinguistic ramifications of the proposal put forward in the dissertation. I show that “fronting”, “left-dislocation” and “proleptic” structures exist in various languages and substantial parallelisms may be observed with regards their properties. I compare and contrast these properties and outline a taxonomy. As one of the analytical proposals, prolepsis is a relatively little-studied phenomenon, I put special emphasis on its place in syntactic typology. I argue that it may be regarded as a type of finite control and substantiate this claim with providing an overview of such constructions. I also show the place of prolepsis in the typology of control.

## **2. Theoretical and analytical background**

The overall theoretical framework of my research is Lexical-Functional Grammar, although the dissertation makes a fair number of theory-neutral claims as well. Wherever possible, I make comparisons and draw parallels with other frameworks, primarily with the Chomskyan mainstream (Government-Binding Theory, the Minimalist Program).

LFG is a lexicalist, representational, non-transformational, constraint-based generative model with a parallel architecture. The main levels of analyses for the purposes of the dissertation are constituent-structure, functional-structure, argument-structure and information-structure.

I subscribe to standard LFG-assumptions for the constituent-structure of English and Hungarian. For English, the proposed constituent-structures are based on the ones presented in Bresnan et al. (2016) and Dalrymple (2001). As for Hungarian, I build on the works of Laczkó (e.g. Laczkó 2014) which are in turn adaptations of É. Kiss (1992) to LFG. While English has a fully endocentric, binary-branching structure, the Hungarian sentence is headed by the exocentric S node and postverbal area is assumed to be flat. The preverbal area is structured into the iterative topic and quantifier field and a unique Spec/VP position. I integrate my proposals regarding information-structure into these basic templates. As some of the discussed constructions involve subordinate clauses, I also investigate these in Hungarian. I review the literature and argue that contra the standardly assumed view (Kenesei 1992/1994) the pronoun associates of Hungarian subordinate clauses (*az* ‘that’ and its case-marked variants) are not expletives but contentful demonstratives, as also claimed by Tóth (2000) and Rákosi & Laczkó (2005).

I also follow standard LFG-accounts in terms of functional structure. I assume the basic set of grammatical functions and well-formedness constraints. I minor modification of the basic framework is the use of Asudeh’s (2011) Unbounded Dependency Function (UDF), as an overlay function for “dislocated”/“extracted” elements.

For argument structure, I use Kibort’s (2007) version of Lexical Mapping theory which is based on the features [+/- r] (semantically restricted) and [+/- o] (object-like), a universal valency template and assumes morphosyntactic and morphosemantic operations. I also discuss some cases where an element may be analyzed neither as a standard argument nor a standard adjunct. Two such intermediate categories are distinguished: thematic adjuncts (Rákosi 2006) and derived arguments (Needham & Toivonen 2011). The first are adjuncts still within the thematic field of the predicate (thus having a closer relationship with the predicate than normal adjuncts) while the latter are arguments added to the standard argument list via some argument-structural operation.

Information-structure is a crucial level of analysis in the dissertation so I review its theoretical background and previous literature in depth. Among others, the ideas of Gundel’s (1999) ideas about referential vs. relational newness, Lambrecht’s proposals about pragmatic assertions vs. pragmatic presupposition (1994) and Titov’s (2013) distinction of semantic vs. pragmatic set of alternatives prominently influence how the key notions of information-structure (focus, topic, newness, contrastiveness) are conceptualized in the dissertation. I also draw from the ideas of Büring (2003), for whom discourse-structure is represented via discourse-trees. These

include questions, subquestions and answers to these. Sometimes there could be implicit subquestions, as in the case of contrastive topics (for instance, for the question *Who do you like?*, if the answer is the contrastive *John, I like (Mary, I do not)*, it indicates that the original question is split into implicit subquestions like *Do you like John?*, *Do you like Mary?*, *Do you like X?*).

Furthermore, I review a number of feature-based information-structural taxonomies, Gazdik (2011) being the most important. In her account, the set of discourse functions (thematic shifter, contrastive topic, hocus, focus, background information, completive information) are cross-classified as [+/- DISCOURSE-LINKED] and [+/- PROMINENT].

In the second half of the dissertation, I discuss and analyze the constructions illustrated in (1)-(5). While doing so, I rely on a number of previous accounts, compare and contrast my ideas with these. For the syntactic analysis of TOP, I build on Dalrymple (2001) and the proposed information-structure for this construction is influenced by Birner & Ward (1998). The way Frey (2003) distinguishes between event-external and event-internal adjuncts is incorporated into my treatment of English CIADJs. The information-structural role of LD-Eng is presented on the basis of Gregory and Michaelis (2001), who argue that it is a topic-promoter. LD-Eng, and CFLD-Hun are treated as syntactically unintegrated structures, which idea is prominently present in Shaer (2009).

LD-Hun is not prominently present in the literature, but Lipták (2011, 2012) offers some insights, which I incorporate into my account. For OF Gervain (2004) and Coppock (2003) are primary background literature for me, the latter being particularly important as it is an LFG-based account. Prolepsis as an analytical idea is argued for a subtype of Hungarian OF. This theoretical notion has been brought into the limelight by Davies (2005) and is also discussed in detail in Salzmann (to appear).

The data in the dissertation originates from various sources. The aforementioned literature is a primary source but I also relied on my judgments and discussions with native speakers. Also several empirical surveys with Hungarian speakers were made. These are detailed at the appropriate sections.

### 3. Summary of the results of the dissertation

#### i. A new taxonomy for information-structure

Information-structure is an independent level of linguistic analysis which represents how the elements of a sentence integrate into the discourse. Six distinct categories are to be distinguished, which may be cross-classified with the features [+/- NEW], [+/- DISCOURSE-STRUCTURING] and [+/- CONTRASTIVE] (for a possible analysis of question-words, the additional [+/- Q] is also invoked). The definitions of these features and the resulting taxonomy are shown in (6)-(8) and Table 1.

- (6) +/- NEW: A linguistic entity with a +NEW feature at information-structure provides relationally new information, by being part of the pragmatic assertion of the sentence. A linguistic entity with a -NEW feature at information-structure is relationally given, is part of the pragmatic presupposition of the sentence.
- (7) +/-DISCOURSE-STRUCTURING: a linguistic entity with a +DISCOURSE-STRUCTURING feature at information-structure participates in the structuring of the conversation, by being directly involved in the formation and resolution of questions under discussion of the discourse. A linguistic entity with a -DISCOURSE-STRUCTURING feature at information-structure is not directly involved in the formation and resolution of questions under discussion of the discourse.
- (8) +/-CONTRASTIVE: a linguistic entity with a +CONTRASTIVE feature at information-structure participates in discourse-structuring by evoking a contextually salient pragmatic set of alternatives. A linguistic entity with a -CONTRASTIVE feature at information-structure does not evoke a contextually salient pragmatic set of alternatives.

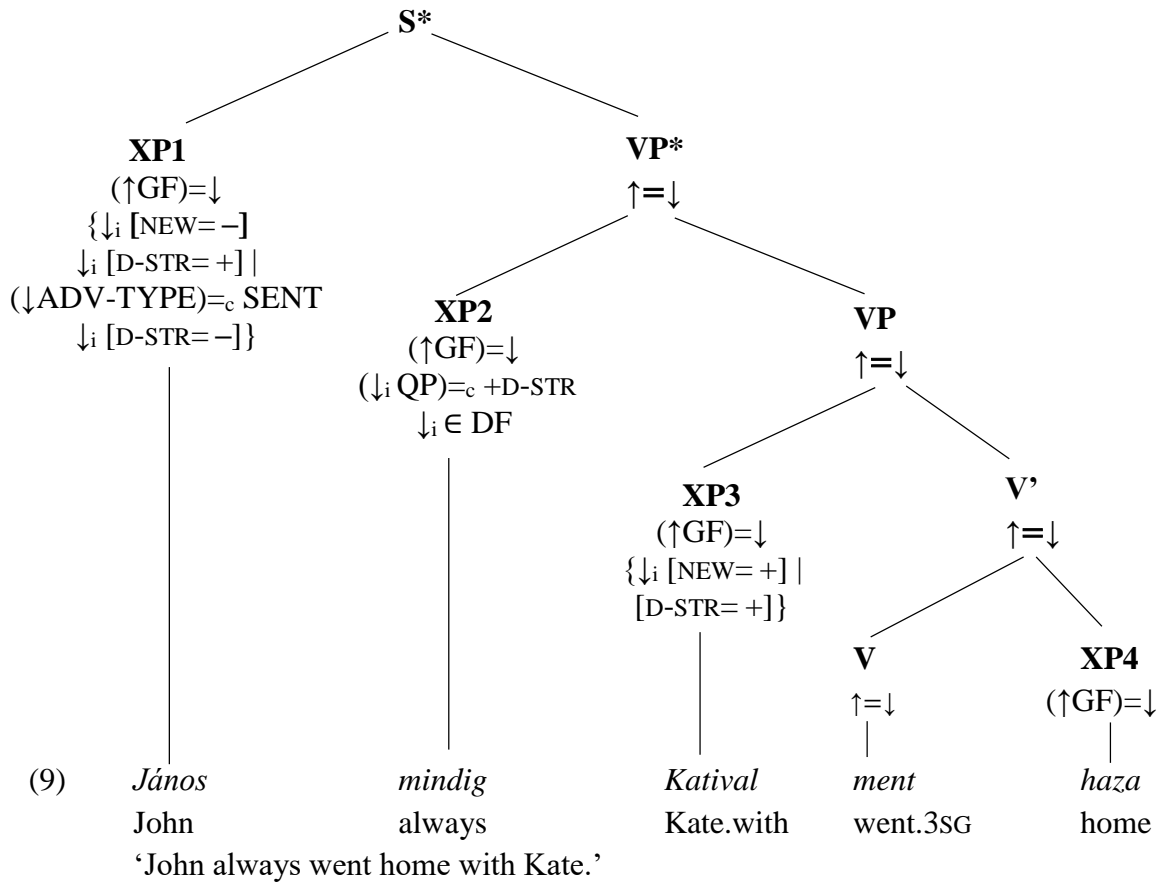
		+NEW	-NEW
+D-STRUCTURING	+CONTRASTIVE	Contrastive focus	Contrastive topic
	(-CONTRASTIVE)	Information focus	Topic
-D-STRUCTURING		Completive information	Background information

**Table 1.**

The proposed taxonomy for information-structure.

## ii. The structure of simple and subordinate clauses in Hungarian

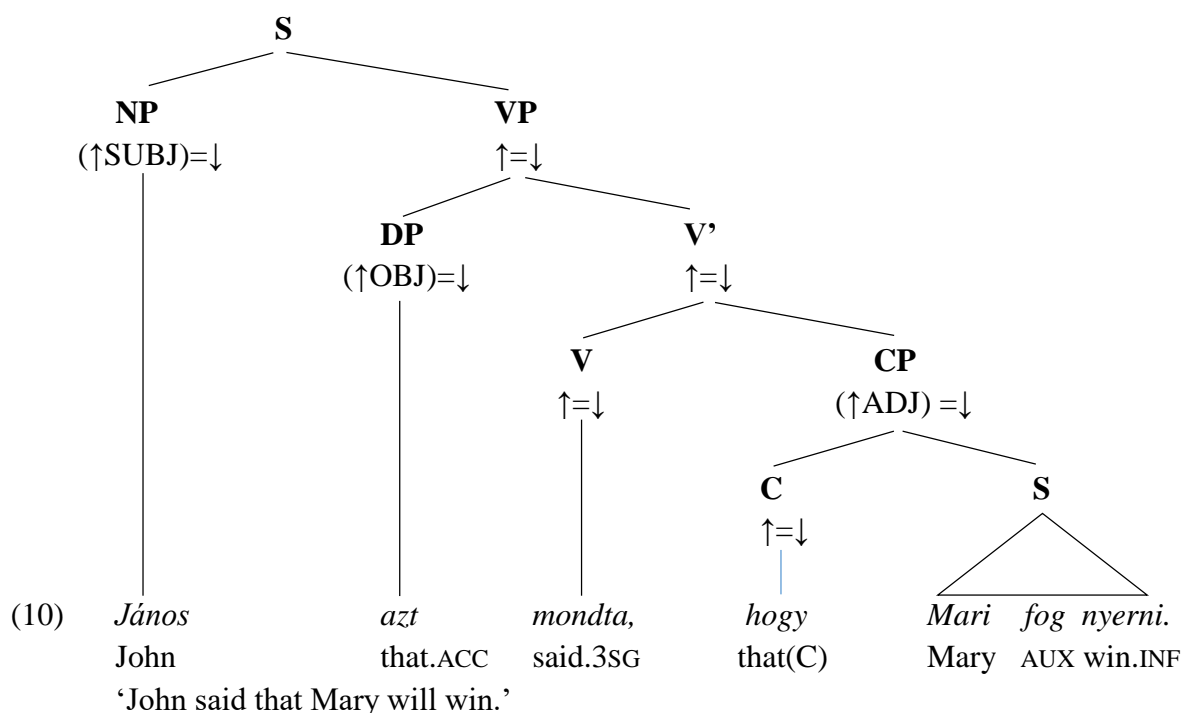
As mentioned earlier, I follow Laczkó (e.g. Laczkó 2014) with regards to the basic structure of the Hungarian. I supplement this with my proposals about information-structure. The analysis put forward is shown in Figure 1, with an example sentence. (\*: Kleene-star, “zero or more”).



**Figure 1.**  
Basic Hungarian sentence structure.

As can be seen, the sentence is headed by an exocentric and iterative S node, which dominates what might be referred to as the “topic field” (XP1) and an iterative VP. The topic field contains Topics, Contrastive topics and sentence adverbs (e.g. *probably*, *luckily*). These adverbs are either Completive or Background information at information structure. The VP dominates the “quantifier field” (XP2), which is not specified with regards information-structure, elements here may bear any discourse function (DF). There is also a lower VP the specifier of which host elements that are either +NEW or +DISCOURSE-STRUCTURING (inclusive “or” is intended). Thus, any discourse function except Background information may be positioned here. The postverbal part does not play a significant role in the dissertation, so its elaboration is left for further work.

The analysis of a sentence with a subordinate clause is shown in Figure 2. As can be seen, the pronoun associate of the subordinate clause (*azt* ‘that.ACC’) is treated as the object of the main verb and the embedded *that*-clause itself is regarded as an adjunct. More precisely, I argue that the pronoun is a thematic dependent of the verb. This goes against the theory of Kenesei (1992), where such pronouns are expletives which form a syntactic chain with the CP, which is the true semantic arguments of the verb.



**Figure 2.**

A Hungarian sentence with a subordinate clause.

A support my position with several pieces of evidence: a) these pronouns do not pattern with expletives with regards to quantification and focussing; b) these pronouns are sensitive to pragmatic considerations (replaceable with the proximal counterpart *ez* ‘this’ in certain contexts). For these first two points, see also Tóth (2000) and Rákosi & Laczkó (2005); c) parallel constructions exist with the pronoun bearing inherent case-marking, where the semantic vacuousness can be excluded; d) contra Kenesei’s (1992/1994) claim, these pronouns do alternate with regular DP objects; e) the proposed analysis fits into the crosslinguistic typology much better than the expletive-account.

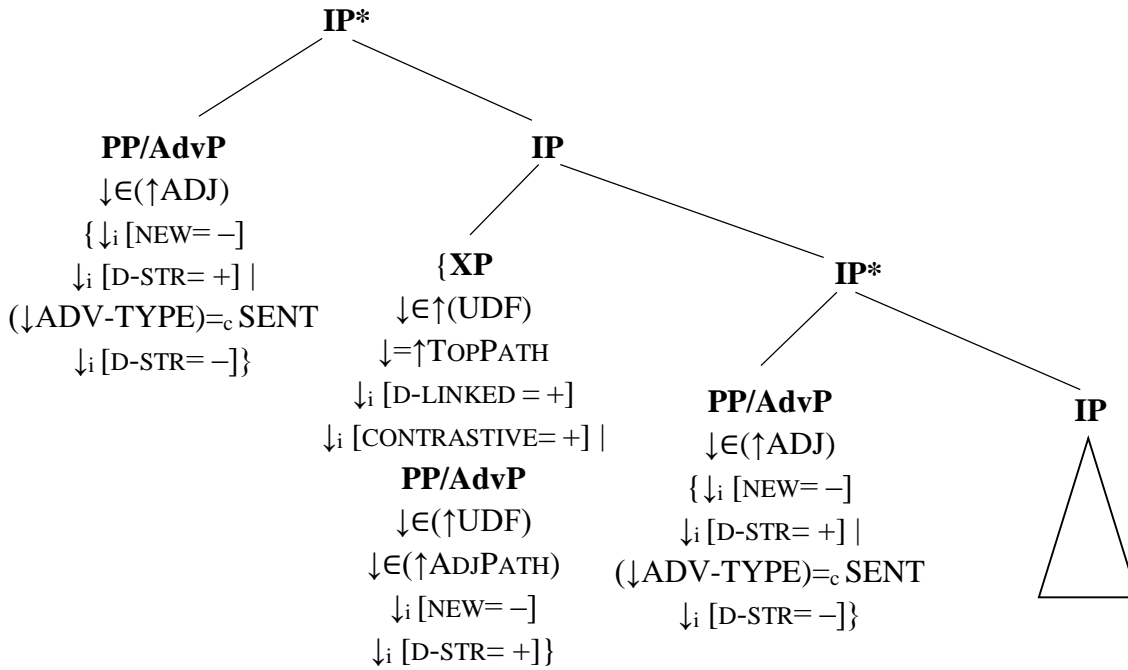
If no pronoun is present in a sentence like (10), then the subordinate clause assumes the grammatical function that the pronoun would have. Thus, the CP may either be an adjunct (as



in 10) or an argument (10 without the pronoun, *János mondta, hogy Mari fog nyerni*). This duality is reflected in crosslinguistically well-attested contrasts with regards to extraction-possibilities (adjuncts are syntactic islands, whereas arguments are not).

### iii. An analysis of English clause-initial discourse-related constructions

The proposed overall structure of the English left-periphery is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.**

The English left periphery.

Topicalized elements and event-internal adjuncts share a unique IP-adjoined position (the middle, XP-PP/AdvP node in Figure 3). Both are regarded as standard “extraction”-like dependencies, where the fronted element is functionally identified with a clause-internal grammatical function. The identification is established and constrained by the TOPPATH and ADJPATH equations, detailed in (11) and (12) (LDD: long-distance dependency feature, an alternative label for the “bridge”-quality of certain verbs, →TENSE: has “tense” feature). TOP is always contrastive at information-structure, while CIADJ may also function as neutral Topics. These two contrast with event-external adjuncts, which are not identified with internal grammatical functions and fully belong to the left periphery, at the PP/AdvP positions at the sides in Figure 3. The contrast can clearly be seen in connectivity effects.

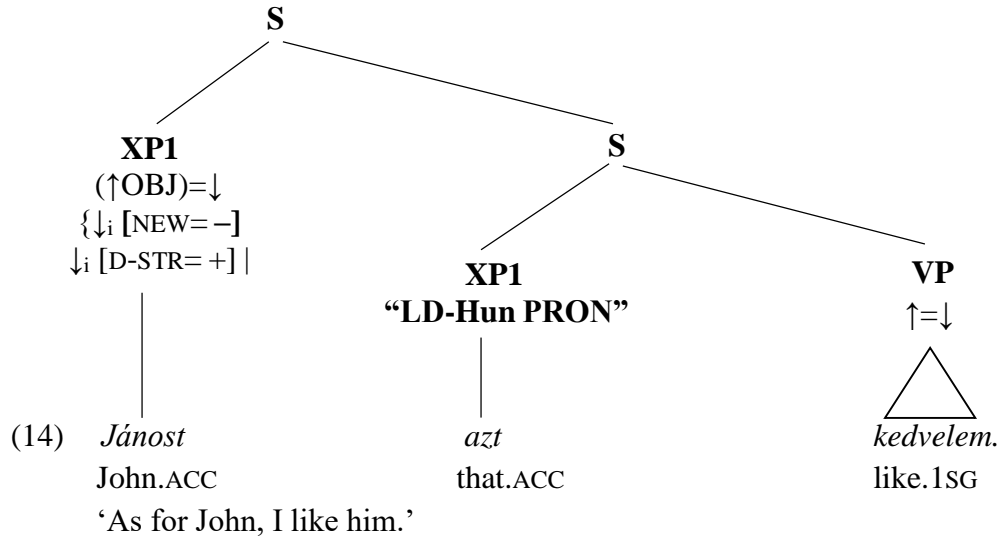
- (11)  $\text{TOPPATH} \equiv \{ \text{XCOMP} \mid \text{COMP} \mid \text{OBJ} \}^* \{ (\text{ADJ} \in ) \mid (\text{GF}) \mid (\text{GF}) \}$   
 $(\rightarrow \text{LDD} \neq -) \quad (\rightarrow \text{TENSE}) \quad \neg(\rightarrow \text{TENSE})$
- (12)  $\text{ADJPATH} \equiv \{ \text{XCOMP} \mid \text{COMP} \mid \text{OBJ} \}^* \text{ADJ}$   
 $(\rightarrow \text{LDD} \neq -) \quad (\rightarrow \text{TENSE})$

Left-dislocated elements in English are argued to be constituents that are syntactically unintegrated into the host sentence. This is evidenced by the lack of connectivity effects and the fact that they are grammatically degraded if placed in a clause-internal position (e.g. after topicalized entities or in subordinate clauses). Both of these properties clearly contrasts them with TOP and CIADJs.

#### iv. An analysis of Hungarian clause-initial discourse-related constructions

LD-Hun is classified into three subtypes: Contrastive topic left-dislocation (CTLD, (4a)), Noncontrastive left-dislocation (NCLD, (4b)) and Contrastive focus left-dislocation (CFLD, (4c)). Of the three, only the first two should receive an integrated syntactic analyses, as the left-peripheral entity in CFLD is argued to be an extra-sentential “syntactic orphan”, akin to elements in LD-Eng. The annotated tree-structure is shown in Figure 4, an (13) shows the annotations of the associate pronoun, which is an optional element in the topic field. The annotations establish a standard anaphoric dependency between some constituent in the topic field and the associate pronoun, with minor differences between CTLD (13a) and NCLD (13b) with regards to formal matching. The presence of the pronouns also imposes certain referentiality-constraints on the left-dislocated constituents, which are derivable from basic principles of pronoun usage.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>(13) a     <math>\downarrow \in ((\uparrow \text{GF}_\alpha) \text{ADJUNCT})</math><br/> <math>(\downarrow \text{PRED FN}) =_c \text{PRO}</math><br/> <math>(\downarrow \text{PRON TYPE}) =_c \{ \text{DEM} \mid \text{PERS} \}</math><br/> <math>(\downarrow \text{INDEX}) =_c (\uparrow \text{GF}_\alpha \text{INDEX})</math><br/> <math>\{ (\downarrow \text{CASE}) =_c (\uparrow \text{GF}_\alpha \text{CASE})</math><br/> <math>(\downarrow \text{NUM}) =_c (\uparrow \text{GF}_\alpha \text{NUM}) \mid</math><br/> <math>\neg (\downarrow \text{CASE})</math><br/> <math>\neg (\downarrow \text{NUM}) \}</math></p> | <p>b     <math>\downarrow \in ((\uparrow \text{GF}_\alpha) \text{ADJUNCT})</math><br/> <math>(\downarrow \text{PRED FN}) =_c \text{PRO}</math><br/> <math>(\downarrow \text{PRON TYPE}) =_c \{ \text{DEM} \mid \text{PERS} \}</math><br/> <math>(\downarrow \text{INDEX}) =_c (\uparrow \text{GF}_\alpha \text{INDEX})</math><br/> <math>(\downarrow \text{CASE}) =_c (\uparrow \text{GF}_\alpha \text{CASE})</math></p> |
|--|--|



**Figure 4.**  
CTLD-Hun/NCLD-Hun in a Hungarian sentence.

Operator fronting is also divided into two distinct types: one which is a “fronting”/“extraction”-like dependency like TOP-Eng (shown in Figure 5), and another which is analyzed as prolepsis (Figure 6). In the first case, a functional dependency is established through the OFPATH equation (15). In the latter case, the argument-structure of the base-predicate is augmented via a morphosemantic operation, which turns a delative-marked thematic adjunct into a derived “proleptic” argument, bearing a “subject matter” theta-role. An obligatory anaphoric dependency is lexically induced with an embedded grammatical function, much like in the case of control/equi-type sentences (16). The details of this process are outlined within the framework of Lexical Mapping Theory. Once the new lexical entry is derived, standard sentence structure delivers the proleptic construction without additional rules. The two types show contrasts with respect to connectivity-effects.

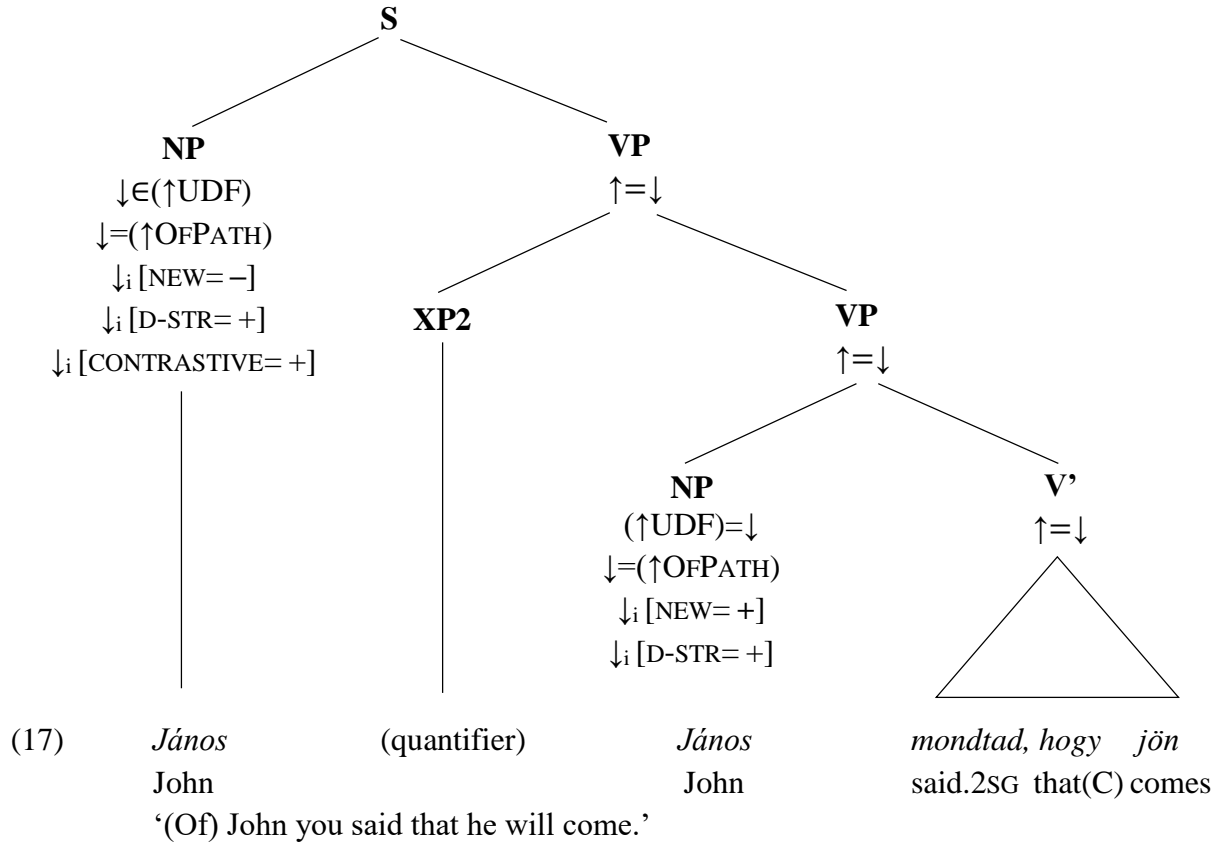
$$(15) \quad \text{OPATH} \equiv \{ \text{OBJ} \mid \text{SUBJ} \}^+ \quad \text{GF} \quad (^+ \text{ Kleene-plus, “one or more”})$$

$$(\rightarrow \text{TENSE})$$

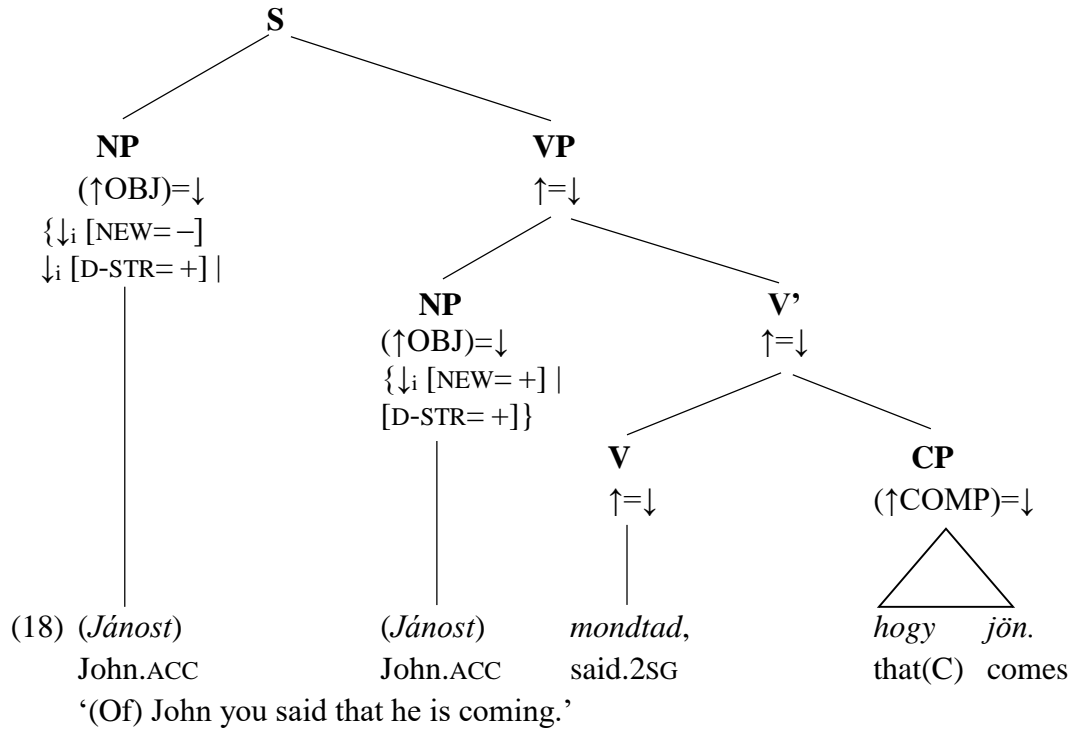
$$(\rightarrow \text{LDD} \neq -)$$

$$(16) \quad \text{mond} \quad \langle (\text{SUBJ})(\text{OBJ})(\text{COMP}) \rangle$$

$$\text{OBJ INDEX} = \{ \text{COMP}^+ \text{ GF}^* \} \text{ GF INDEX}$$



**Figure 5.**  
“Fronting”-like OF.



**Figure 6.**  
OF in the proleptic scenario.

**v. Theoretical and crosslinguistic perspectives on clause-initial discourse-related constructions**

The constructions discussed throughout the dissertation fall into three basic categories, with distinct properties. Table 2 summarizes their properties. TOP-Eng, event internal CIADJ-Engs and the “fronting”-like OF are labelled as “Fronting proper”. Here, although the constituent-structural position of the fronted element is left-peripheral, functionally it is plugged into its canonical position. It is shown with German and Finnish data that such frontings are often but not always contrastive.

Left-dislocations are constructions where some left peripheral element is associated with a pronoun: LD-Eng and LD-Hun. Again with German data, it is observed that such constructions bifurcate into a syntactically non-integrated (LD-Eng, CFLD-Hun) and an integrated subtype (CTLD-Hun, NCLD-Hun). This latter type is optionally contrastive.

The last type is prolepsis. Prolepsis is argued to be a kind of control-construction: finite equi (the main clause controller is thematically related to the main verb), with obligatory anaphoric identification. This suggests a typology of control, which is shown in Table 3. I discuss the theoretical background of control and investigate various structures in Hungarian, English, Bantu, Greek, Serbo-Croatian and Turkish that fit into the taxonomy.

	<b>Syntactically integrated</b>	<b>Pronoun associate</b>	<b>Nature of association</b>
<b>TOP-Eng</b>	yes	no	functional
<b>LD-Eng</b>	no	not necessarily	pragmatic
<b>CTLD-Hun</b>	yes	yes (by definition)	anaphoric (structurally encoded)
<b>NCLD-Hun</b>	yes	yes (by definition)	anaphoric (structurally encoded)
<b>CFLD-Hun</b>	no	yes (by definition)	pragmatic
<b>“Fronting”-like OF</b>	yes	no	functional
<b>Proleptic OF</b>	yes	possibly (usually no)	anaphoric (lexically encoded)

**Table 2.**  
Clause-initial discourse-related constructions.

CONTROL-TYPE			Example
Thematicity of controller	Nature of identification	Finiteness	
Equi	Anaphoric identification	Finite complement	argumental prolepsis, inflected infinitives in Hungarian, Greek and Serbo-Croatian control
		Non-finite complement	“agree-type” canonical control
	Functional identification	Finite complement	Turkish object control
		Non-finite complement	“try-type” canonical control, standard Hungarian control
Raising	Anaphoric identification	Finite complement	not expected
		Non-finite complement	not expected
	Functional identification	Finite complement	Copy raising in English, Bantu Hyperraising
		Non-finite complement	canonical raising

**Table 3.**  
An LFG-taxonomy of control.

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## **5. The author's papers, talks and posters accepted for presentation in the subject matter of the dissertation**

### **i. Papers**

- Szűcs Péter (2013). A fókuszemelésről új adatok tükrében. In Zsuzsanna Gécseg (ed.), *Lingdok 12: Nyelvészdoktoranduszok dolgozatai* (pp. 257-278). Szeged: SZTE Nyelvtudományi Doktori Iskola, JATE Press.
- Szűcs Péter (2014). A magyar „operátoremelés” mint prolepszis. In Zsuzsanna Gécseg (szerk.), *Lingdok 13: Nyelvészdoktoranduszok dolgozatai* (pp. 185-204). Szeged: Szegedi Tudományegyetem Nyelvtudományi Doktori Iskola.
- Szűcs Péter, (2014). On English Topicalization and Left-Dislocation from an Information-Structural Perspective. In Surányi Balázs & Turi Gergő (szerk.), *Proceedings of the Third Central European Conference in Linguistics for Postgraduate Students* (pp. 114-127). Budapest: Pázmány Péter Catholic University.
- Szűcs Péter (2014). Information structure and the English left periphery. In Butt, Miriam & King, Tracy H. (szerk.), *Proceedings of the LFG14 Conference* (pp. 545-565). Stanford: CSLI Publications.
- Szűcs Péter (2015). On pronouns in Hungarian complex sentences. *Argumentum* 11(2015):292-313.
- Szűcs Péter (2017). „Balra kihelyezések” a magyarban. In Zsuzsanna Gécseg (szerk.), *Lingdok 16: Nyelvészdoktoranduszok dolgozatai* (pp. 81-101). Szeged: Szegedi Tudományegyetem Nyelvtudományi Doktori Iskola.



Szűcs Péter (2017). *English left-peripheral constructions from an LFG-perspective*. *Linguistica Brunensia* 65(1): 67-80.

## **ii. Talks**

Szűcs, Péter. A fókuszemelésről új adatok tükrében. *Nyelvészdoktoranduszok 15. Országos Konferenciája*. Szeged: Szegedi Egyetem. 18 November 2012.

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## **iii. Posters**

Szűcs, Péter: The Hungarian Operator Raising Revisited. *LFG13*. Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem. 18 July 2013.

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### List of publications related to the dissertation

#### Foreign language scientific articles in Hungarian journals (1)

1. **Szűcs, P.:** On pronouns in Hungarian complex sentences.  
*Argumentum (Debr.).* 11, 292-313, 2015. EISSN: 1787-3606.

#### Foreign language scientific articles in international journals (1)

2. **Szűcs, P.:** English left-peripheral constructions from an LFG-perspective.  
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#### Hungarian conference proceedings (3)

3. **Szűcs, P.:** "Balra kihelyezések" a magyarban.  
*LingDok.* 16, 81-101, 2017. ISSN: 1587-3226.
4. **Szűcs, P.:** A magyar operátoremelés mint prolepszis.  
*LingDok.* 13, 185-204, 2014. ISSN: 1587-3226.
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*LingDok.* 12, 257-277, 2013. ISSN: 1587-3226.





Foreign language conference proceedings (2)

6. **Szűcs, P.:** Information Structure and the English Left-Periphery.

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