

The argument structure of Hungarian BE-possessives

Dalmi Gréte

Predicative possession in Hungarian is expressed by the help of existential BE, a dative possessor and a nominative theme. As copular BE is zero in the present indicative, it is excluded from possessive sentences, where BE is always lexicalized. Szabolcsi (1992, 1994) derives possessive BE-sentences in Hungarian from existential BE with a single possessive DP argument, in which the possessor appears either in the nominative or in the dative case.

The paper argues that Hungarian possessive BE and existential BE are both dyadic unaccusatives, whose VP-layer resembles *psych*-predicates of the *piacere*-type (Belletti&Rizzi 1988). The proposed analysis derives the Definiteness Restriction from the lexical-semantic properties of possessive and existential BE, preserving the structural difference between monadic unaccusative copular BE vs. dyadic unaccusative possessive and existential BE.