

Adverbs of Quantification, *It*-Clefts and Hungarian Focus

Ágnes Bende-Farkas
RIL–HAS Budapest
E-mail: agnesbf@nytud.hu

This contribution is about adverbs of quantification in English topic-clause *it*-clefts and Hungarian sentences containing syntactic Focus. The main examples are (1) and (2). They are understood in contrast with the ‘plain’ English sentence (3-a) and with the Hungarian sentence (3-b), which contains a stressed postverbal constituent that can be understood as Information Focus (Horvath (2002), among many other references).

- (1) a. It is JOHN_F who always beats Ben
b. JÁNOS_F veri meg mindig Benőt
JOHN_F beats MEG always Ben-Acc
— same as sentence *a* —
Quantification over games played by Ben and a unique individual (namely, John)
- (2) a. It is always JOHN_F who beats Ben
b. Mindig JÁNOS_F veri meg Benőt
Always JOHN_F beats MEG Ben-Acc
— same as sentence *a* —
Quantification over events of Ben being beaten
- (3) a. John always beats BEN_F
b. János mindig megveri "Benőt (például)
John always beats BEN-Acc_F (for-instance)
‘John always beats Ben (and maybe there are others whom he always beats)’

The principal aim of this contribution is to investigate what adverbs of quantification and cleft-style (or Hungarian style) Focus marking reveal about each other.

Where adverbs of quantification are concerned the following observations will be discussed.

(i) Semantic partition (the division into Restrictor and Nuclear Scope) can be determined by syntax (cf. the difference between (1) and (2)). The reason for this is that in these constructions the syntactic position of the adverb determines what material it can access for semantic partition. In (1) the adverb cannot access the Focus-frame, hence the ‘presupposition-driven’ reading (quantification over playing events). (2) is in a sense the converse of (1), as the adverb cannot access the verb’s subevent structure within the Focus-frame. (ii) Association with Focus and association with presupposition are not the only options for semantic partition. (This remark is to be understood in contrast with the theoretical debates of the 1990s and 1990s, cf. also Krifka (2001) and Beaver and Clark (2003).) Adverbs of quantification are perfectly felicitous in Hungarian sentences without overt Focus marking and (non-inert) presupposition triggers. In addition, many of the verbs that have a complex subevent structure and have been evoked in association with presupposition examples are not in fact presupposition triggers. (These include verbs like *beat*, *miss*, *land* and so on.) These facts do not support methodologically motivated moves to reduce association with Focus to association with presupposition.

Examples like (1) and (2) serve to reinforce the analogy between English (topic-clause) *it*-clefts and Hungarian syntactic Focus. Each of the Hungarian sentences in (1) and (2) has the same meaning as its English counterpart; on the other hand they mean something quite different from (3-b), which contains postverbal ‘information’ Focus. One problem at this point is that of semantic composition,

i.e. deriving the intuitively correct semantic representation for such sentences. Assuming that the English case is relatively clear (because of the presence of overt syntactic clues) several options will be discussed for the Hungarian case. These options involve either the insertion of a covert exhaustivity operator at *FocP* or a syntactic analysis that in essence turns post-Focus material into a copular construction (Kenesei (2007)).

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