

All-in-One: Generic Inclusive Null Subjects in Hungarian

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1. Introduction¹

Roberts – Holmberg (2010: 12) give a typology of Null Subject Languages (NSLs) on the basis of what kinds of null subject they allow:

- (1) Type 1 Expletive null subject languages (German, Dutch)
- Type 2 Partial null subject languages (Finnish, Russian)
- Type 3 Consistent null subject languages (Italian, Greek)
- Type 4 Radical null subject languages (Chinese, Indonesian)

In order to understand how Hungarian differs from Type 1–Type 4 languages, we must look at Type 2 and Type 3 languages first.

Holmberg (2005, 2010) establishes the following correlation between 3SG generic vs. 3SG referential null subjects in Type 2 Partial NSLs and Type 3 Consistent NSLs:

- (2) Type 2 Partial NSLs: 3SG generic subjects must always be null, (4);
3SG referential subjects must not be null, (5);
- (3) Type 3 Consistent NSLs: 3SG referential subjects can be freely dropped, (6);
3SG generic subjects must not be null, (7)-(8).

Type 2 NSLs: 3SG generic null subject

- (4) Tässä *pro*_{GN/*i} istuu mukavasti.
here one/*he sits comfortably
'One can sit comfortably here.'

Type 2 NSLs: 3SG referential lexical subject

- (5) Hän/**pro*_{GN} istuu mukavasti tässä.
he/*one sits comfortably here
'He sits comfortably here.' (Finnish, Holmberg 2010: 204-211)

Type 3 NSLs: 3SG referential null subject

- (6) *pro* Ha telefonato.
PERF3SG telephone.PTCP
'He has telephoned.' (Italian, Rizzi 1982)

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¹ Abbreviations:

ACC = accusative case; COM = comitative case (together with); COP = copula; DAT = dative case; DEF = definite; FORM = formalis case (in a given form/way); GN = generic inclusive operator/feature; INESS = inessive case (in); INF = infinitive; NOM = nominative case; POT = potentialis mood; PASS = passive voice; PAST = past tense; PFX – prefix; POSS = possessive suffix; PRES = present tense; PTCP = participle; RFL = reflexive; SBJ = subjunctive mood; SBL = sublative case (onto); TOP = topic.

Type 3 NSLs : 3SG generic lexical subject

- (7) Se *si* è morti, non ci *si* muove piu.
 if one COP dead not RFL one move any more
 ‘If one is dead, one does not move any more.’
 (Italian, D’Alessandro – Alexiadou 2003: 35)

- (8) *Se *pro_{GN}* è morti, non ci *pro_{GN}* muove piu.
 if one COP dead not RFL one move any more
 ‘If one is dead, one does not move any more.’
 (Italian, D’Alessandro – Alexiadou 2003: 35)

3SG generic inclusive lexical vs. null subjects in Hungarian represent the free genericity-inducing vs. the bound variable occurrences of *one* identified by Moltmann (2006, 2010, 2012). The 3SG generic inclusive lexical subject *az ember_{GEN}* ‘the man’ instantiates genericity-inducing *one*, which does not require an antecedent and always receives widest scope interpretation; the 3SG generic inclusive null subject (*pro_{GN}*) represents the bound variable occurrence of *one*, which requires a 3SG generic inclusive, long-distance, lexical antecedent. Both kinds of 3SG generic inclusive subject are in the scope of GN.

2. Null subjects in Hungarian

Hungarian is a Null Subject Language in the sense of Jaeggli – Safir (1989: 29), which, however, does not fit in the typological system established by Roberts – Holmberg (2010: 12). It allows (i) expletive null subjects (ii) referential null subjects and (iii) generic exclusive null subjects, as Type 2 Partial NSLs do:

EXPLETIVE NULL SUBJECT

- (9) Már hajnal-od-ott *pro_{EXPL}*, amikor el-alud-tak_k
 already dawn-RFL-PAST3SG EXPL when PFX-sleep-PAST3PL
 a gyerekek.
 the children
 ‘It was already beginning to dawn when the children fell asleep.’

REFERENTIAL NULL SUBJECT

- (10) Vera_i félt, [hogy *pro_{ij}* le-kés-i a film-et].
 Vera fear-PAST3SG that s/he PFX-miss-PRES3SG the movie-ACC
 ‘Vera_i feared that she_{ij} (herself /someone else) would miss the movie.’

GENERIC EXCLUSIVE NULL SUBJECT

- (11) Itt nem beszél-nek *pro_{arb}* magyar-ul.
 here not speak-PRES3PL (people) Hungarian-FORM
 ‘People do not speak Hungarian here.’

In addition, it also allows any referential argument to be null², just like Type 4 Radical NSLs:

² Hungarian verbs show agreement with definite objects, see Bartos (1997). A referential object can be null only if it is definite (see Farkas 1998).

REFERENTIAL NULL OBJECT

- (12) Lát-tam *pro*₁, hogy ver-ik a gyerekek *pro*₃.
 see-PAST1SG (I) that beat-PRES3PL[+DEF] the children (him/her)
 'I saw that the children were beating him/her.'

3SG generic inclusive subjects are expressed by the generic inclusive DP *az ember* 'the man' in Hungarian³:

GENERIC INCLUSIVE LEXICAL SUBJECT

- (13) *Az ember* mindig fél-0, hogy le-zuhan-0
 the man always fear-PRES3SG that PFX-crash-PRES3SG
 a repülőgép.
 the airplane
 'One always fears that the airplane will crash.'

Due to the fact that 3SG referential subjects can be freely dropped, 3SG null subjects do not normally receive the generic inclusive interpretation in this language:

GENERIC INCLUSIVE NULL SUBJECT

- (14) *Mindig fél-0 *pro*_{GEN}, [hogy le-zuhan-0
 always fear-PRES3SG (one) that off-crash-PRES3SG
 a repülőgép].
 the airplane
 'One always fears that the airplane will crash.'

One could easily infer from these facts that Hungarian is a Type 3 Consistent NSL, where 3SG referential subjects can always be null and 3SG generic subjects must be lexical, see (8a,b). This is, however, not the case. Generic inclusive *si* 'one' in Italian cannot serve as an antecedent for *pro*, (15), (see Chierchia 1995), however the 3SG generic inclusive lexical subject *az ember* 'one' in Hungarian can happily do so, irrespective of whether the lexical antecedent itself functions as a canonical nominative subject, as in (16), or a dative experiencer subject, shown in (17) (see Dalmi 2000, 2005):

- (15) **Si*_i a detto che *pro*_i vinceranno.
si PERF said that (they) win.PTCP.3PL
 'People_i say that (they)_i will win.' (Italian, Chierchia 1995: 109)
- (16) *Az ember*_{GN} nem készül-0 arra, hogy meg-hal-0 *pro*_{GN}.
 the man not prepare-PRES3SG it.SPR that PFX-die-PRES3SG (the man)
 'One is not prepared (for it) that one would die.'
- (17) *Az ember-nek*_{GN} kínos 0 ha izzad-0 *pro*_{GN}.
 the man-DAT embarrassing COP.PRES3SG if sweat- PRES3SG (the man)
 'It is embarrassing (for one) if one sweats.'

2.1. Generic inclusive lexical vs. null subjects in Hungarian

The fact that 3SG generic inclusive null subjects require a 3SG generic inclusive lexical antecedent in the left-adjacent clause excludes Hungarian from Type 3 Consistent NSLs, where generic inclusive

³ On the syntactic and semantic differences between 3SG generic inclusive vs. 3PL generic exclusive subjects in Hungarian see Bródy (2011) and Tóth (2010).

null subjects are absent altogether. In Type 2 Partial NSLs, on the other hand, generic inclusive null subjects can appear without a lexical antecedent in their own right⁴:

GENERIC INCLUSIVE NULL SUBJECT

- (21) Ranka-ssa *pro*_{GN/*i} syö-0 hyvin.
 France-INESS (one)/*he eat-PRES3SG well
 ‘One/*He eats well in France.’ (Finnish, Holmberg 2010: 203)

As 3SG referential subjects can never be null in Type 2 Partial NSLs, alternation with 3SG generic null subjects is impossible.

The Hungarian 3SG generic inclusive lexical subject *az ember* ‘the man’ has the following properties:

- (22) 3SG generic inclusive *az ember* ‘the man’
 (i) it serves as an antecedent for reflexives (see Chierchia 1995 on Italian *si*);
 (ii) it serves as a long-distance antecedent for 3SG generic inclusive *pro*_{GN} but not for 3SG unique reference *pro*;
 (iii) it serves as an antecedent for the null subject of depictive adjunct predicates (see Kratzer 2000 on German *man*);
 (iv) it controls the *PRO*_{GN} subject of infinitival clauses⁵ (see Giannakidou – Merchant 1997 on Greek *PRO*_{GN}).

These properties indicate that 3SG generic inclusive null subjects in Hungarian share the [+phi] person/number features with their 3SG generic inclusive lexical antecedent, in addition to the [+GN] feature:

- (23) Manapság *az ember*_{GN} lát-hat-ja *magá-t*_{GN/*i}
 nowadays the man.3SG.NOM see-POT-3SG self-3SG.ACC

az internet-en.
 the internet-SBL
 ‘Nowadays *one* can see *oneself*/**himself* on the internet.’

- (24) *Az ember*_{GN} nem vizsgál-0 beteg-et_j, ha
 the man.3SG.NOM not examine-PRES3SG patient-ACC when

részeg 0 *pro*_{GN/*j} / **ő*_{GN}.
 drunk COP.PRES3SG (the man)/he_i / he_{GN}
 ‘*One* does not examine patients when *one* / **he*_{j/GN} is drunk.’

- (25) Ha *az ember* *isz-ik*, *pro*_{GN} / **ő*_{GN} *nem* *vezet-0*.
 if the man drink-PRES3SG (the man) /he not drive-PRES3SG
 ‘If one drinks, *one*/**he* does not drive.’

⁴ Finnish uses a special impersonal passive construction for the 3PL generic exclusive reading:

GENERIC EXCLUSIVE

- (i) Ranka-ssa *syö-dään* *hyvin*.
 France-INESS eat-PASS.PTCP.PRES3SG well
 ‘People eat well in France.’ (Finnish, Holmberg 2010: 203)

⁵ On the syntactic and semantic differences between unique reference PRO and generic PRO see O’Neil (1997, Chapter 5).

- (26) Azok-ban az idők-ben az ember_{GN} nem akar-t
 those-INESS the times-INESS the man not want-PAST3SG
- [meg-operál-ni PRO_{GN} egy halálos beteg-et].
 PFX-operate-INF a lethally_ill patient-ACC
 ‘In those times, *one* would not want [*PRO*_{GEN} to operate on lethally ill patients].’

The 3SG generic inclusive null subject, *pro*_{GN}, always requires a 3SG generic inclusive antecedent in the adjacent clause.

2.2. The semantic interpretation of generic inclusive lexical and null subjects

Generic inclusive *one* in English induces first person-oriented genericity and is always interpreted with widest scope (Moltmann 2006, 2012).⁶ This, however, does not turn generic inclusive *one* into a quantified DP. GN cannot be a universal quantifier as it allows for exceptions and has modal force (Moltmann 2006, 2012). Furthermore, in contrast to existentially quantified DPs, generic inclusive *one* never takes narrow scope with respect to true quantifiers (examples from Moltmann 2006: 260-262):

- (27) *Most* books that *one* buys are not about *oneself*. ONE > MOST
 (28) *Most* books that *someone* buys are not about *himself*. MOST > ∃

The sentence in (27) cannot be interpreted as ‘the majority of the books someone or another buys...’. It can only have the interpretation ‘for any person, the majority of the books that person buys are not about him’. In this respect, first person-oriented genericity-inducing *one* resembles ‘free choice’ *any* (Kadmon – Landman 1993).

The fact that GN always has widest scope indicates that it is a sentential operator, which takes scope over the whole proposition. This motivates accommodating GN in SpeechActPhrase (SAPP) within the C-domain (see D’Alessandro – Alexiadou (2003), Sigurðsson (2004) and Bianchi (2006)).⁷

Generic inclusive *one* cannot be existentially bound because it appears in syntactic environments where existentially quantified DPs do not normally appear. For instance, it may serve as an antecedent for another occurrence of generic inclusive *one* in *donkey*-sentences and in Weak Cross-Over (WCO) contexts, where existentially quantified DPs are banned (Moltmann 2006: 261).

Existentially quantified DPs do not qualify in those contexts in Hungarian, either, though generic inclusive lexical subjects are perfectly grammatical. Let us now consider WCO-contexts.

In Hungarian, the possessor within the possessive DP can be null. The 3SG generic inclusive dative beneficiary argument in (29) takes scope over the whole proposition including the 3SG generic null possessor, therefore no WCO-effect is observed:

⁶ Krifka and al. (1995) take GN to be a universal quantifier. In discourse-configurational Hungarian (see É.Kiss 1994), the widest scope interpretation of a quantifier can be obtained by overtly moving the relevant quantified XP to the leftmost position of the C-domain (see Bródy – Szabolcsi 2006). By this definition, generic inclusive lexical items could only appear sentence-initially, contrary to the evidence (see (i) in footnote 7).

⁷ In the cartographic model (Rizzi 1997, 2004, 2006) all clauses show a tripartite division. The split C-domain is responsible for quantificational and illocutionary functions, the T-domain hosts functional projections related to verbal inflection, while the V-domain is the lexical layer hosting the verb and its arguments: [_{ForceP}*...[_{TopP}*...[_{FOCP}*...[_{FinP}*...[_{TP}*...[_{VP}*...]]]]]]]. Recently several proposals have been made to split the C-domain further (Frascarelli – Hinterhölzl 2007, Sigurðsson 2004, Cardinaletti 2004 and Dalmi 2013):

(i) [_{CP} hogy [_{ForceP} vajon INT [_{SAPP} GN [_{TopP}*...[_{FOCP} meddig FOC [_{FinP} él-0 FIN [_{VP} az ember]]]]]].
 that whether till when live-PRES3SG the man
 (Who knows) ‘...how long one lives.’

NO WCO-EFFECT

(29) [_{SAPP}Az *ember-nek*_{GN} GN [_{TOPP...}[_{QP} mindig ad-0 ajándék-ot
 the man-DAT always give-PRES3SG present-ACC

az *pro*_{GN} any-ja [_{DP} *t*_{GN}]]].
 the (the man.NOM) mother-POSS3SG
 'One's mother always gives a present to one.'

The existentially quantified beneficiary *valaki* 'someone' in (30), on the other hand, cannot take scope over the 3SG referential null possessor (*pro*), which it does not c-command. This leads to weak ungrammaticality:

WCO-EFFECT

(30) ??*Valaki-nek*_i mindig ad-0 ajándék-ot az *pro*_i
someone-DAT always give-PRES3SG present-ACC the s/he-NOM

any-ja [_{DP} *t*_i].
 mother-POSS3SG
 'His_i mother always gives *someone*_i a present.'

Moltmann (2010: 445) takes GN to be a complex operator consisting of a universal quantifier that ranges over possible worlds and is restricted by an accessibility relation R from the actual world to "normal" worlds, plus a universal quantifier ranging over individuals and restricted by a normality condition N and a contextual relevance condition C.⁸ This suggests that generic inclusive *one* is a context-dependent genericity-inducing item whose interpretation involves the interlocutors. This is a property linking generic inclusive *one* and PRO_{arb} (Moltmann 2006).

2.3. PRO_{GN} ≠ PRO_{arb}

Moltmann (2010) claims that generic inclusive *one* has a phonologically empty counterpart, PRO_{arb}, in non-finite clauses. Indeed, finite clauses with generic inclusive *one* can often be replaced by nonfinite clauses with PRO_{arb}:

(32) John knows [how *one* should behave in Buckingham Palace].

(33) John knows [how PRO_{arb} to behave in Buckingham Palace].

Yet, there are other environments where such interchangeability is impossible:

(34) John reminded us [that *one* shouldn't lose *one's* belongings on the train].

(35) John reminded us [*PRO_{arb} not to lose *PRO_{arb}'s belongings on the train].

PRO_{arb} in (33) does not require an antecedent. The bound variable occurrence of controlled PRO, PRO_{GN}, always requires a lexical or null 3SG generic inclusive antecedent in the higher clause, which clearly distinguishes it from PRO_{arb}:

(36) It is fun (for *one*_{GN}) [PRO_{GN} to walk in the park for hours].

In Hungarian, where genericity-inducing *one* vs. bound variable *one* are realized as two lexically distinct forms, it is not surprising that the PRO subject of infinitival clauses also displays such duality:

⁸ (i) $\forall w \forall x (wRw_0 \ \& \ x \in D(w) \ \& \ N(w)(x) \ \& \ C(w)(x) \rightarrow P(w)(x))$

- (36) Nem volna lehetséges (*az ember-nek) [valami-t
not would_be possible the man-DAT something-ACC
ten-ni PRO_{arb}]?
do-INF
'Wouldn't it be possible (*for one/*for people) [PRO_{arb} to do something]?'

(37) Élvezetes 0 pro_{GN} [eb-ben a park-ban
enjoyable COP.PRES3SG (for one) this-INESS the park-INESS
sétálni PRO_{GN}].
walk-INF
'It is enjoyable (for one) to walk in this park.'

The 3SG generic inclusive lexical or null subject in the matrix clause serves as an antecedent for PRO_{GN}. Therefore this occurrence of PRO is cannot be an instance of PRO_{arb} (Chomsky 1981).

2.4. 3SG generic inclusive subjects with psych-impersonal predicates in Hungarian

As was mentioned in section 1, Hungarian is a Null Subject Language in which any argument (including the dative experiencer argument of *psych*-predicates) can become null.⁹ In such languages, null subjects can always remain in their VP-internal position and can have their syntactic features licensed VP-internally (see Alexiadou – Anagnostopoulou 1998 and Holmberg – Nikanne 2002). The verbal head carries all the syntactic and semantic features to be licensed in the course of the derivation.¹⁰ XPs preceding the verb occupy the relevant structural position of the C-domain, reserved for quantificational and illocutionary functions:

- (38) [TOPP A lány-ok-nak_i [FinP kellemetlen volt, [CP hogy
the girl-PL-DAT unpleasant was that
táncol-j-anak pro_i a részeg tanár-ral]].
dance-SBJ-3PL (they) the drunk teacher-COM
'It was unpleasant for the girls that they should dance with the drunk teacher.'
- (39) [TOPPA lányok-nak_i kellemetlen volt [ForceP táncol-ni
the girl-PL-DAT unpleasant COP.PAST3SG dance-INF
PRO_i a részeg tanár-ral]].
the drunk teacher-COM
'It was unpleasant for the girls to dance with the drunk teacher.'

3SG generic inclusive lexical subjects syntactically resemble 3SG referential lexical subjects in that they move to the relevant position of the C-domain overtly, to fulfil their discourse-semantic role. GN is a complex generic operator (Moltmann 2006, 2010, 2012). It ensures the widest scope interpretation of generic inclusive subjects:

⁹ Dalmi (2005) takes Hungarian to be a VSO type of language in the sense of Alexiadou – Anagnostopoulou (1998). Surface word order in this language is discourse-semantically determined (see É. Kiss 1994). The canonical [Spec,TP] subject position need not be filled at all, providing that there is a potential candidate, other than the subject, to satisfy EPP on the left periphery of the clause (see Holmberg – Nikanne 2002 for satisfying EPP in Finnish, Frascarelli – Hinterhölzl 2007 for German and Italian, Sigurðsson 2010 for Icelandic).

¹⁰ The “structural dative” account of dative experiencer subjects (Tóth 1999) is highly questionable as it presupposes a rigid SVO clause structure in Hungarian finite and non-finite clauses, where subjects receive “structural case” in the canonical subject position (see Dalmi 2000, 2005 for arguments against this view).

- (40) [S_{APP} Az ember-nek_{GN} GN [TOPP... [FinP kellemetlen 0, [ha
the man-DAT unpleasant COP.PRES3SG if

pro_{GN} kölcsönkér-0]]]].
(one) borrow-PRES3SG
'It is unpleasant (for one) if one borrows money.'
- (41) [S_{APP} Az ember-nek_{GN} GN [TOPP... [FinP kellemetlen 0
the man-DAT unpleasant COP.PRES3SG

[kölcsönkér-ni-e PRO_{GN}]]]].
loan.ask-INF-3SG (one)
'It is unpleasant (for one) [PRO_{GN} to borrow money].'

3. Summary

In this short paper I outlined the syntactic properties of 3SG generic inclusive lexical and null subjects in Hungarian. While 3SG generic inclusive lexical subjects are genericity-inducing, context-dependent referential expressions, always free in their minimal binding domain; their null counterparts are variables, which must always be bound by a 3SG generic inclusive antecedent in the higher clause. 3SG generic inclusive lexical and null subjects represent the two occurrences of generic inclusive *one* in English, identified by Moltmann (2006, 2010, 2012).

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