



On right node raising in Hungarian

A Pruning approach

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Strange properties of RNR

“Right-node raising (RNR) is a construction that seems stranger the longer one considers its behaviour.” (Belk et al. 2023: 685)

(1) Alice wrote, and Beatrix read [a book]_{=pivot}.

- Among the many oddities, RNR¹:
 - does not respect (certain) islands (Wexler and Culicover 1980, Grosu 1981, McCawley 1982; though see Kimura 2022),
 - does not obey the *Right Roof Constraint*, unlike other rightwards extractions (Ross 1967),
 - can affect non-constituents (Abbott 1976),
 - can apply below the word-level (Booij 1985),
 - obeys a word order constraint, the *Right Edge Restriction*, that seems sui generis (e.g. Wilder 1999, Sabbagh 2007),
 - applies also in non-coordinate structures (Hudson 1976)

¹But see Chaves 2014 who challenges a lot of previous judgements.

Right Node Raising

- Rightward ATB-movement

(e.g. Ross 1967, Postal 1974, 1998, Grosu 1976, Abbott 1976, Sabbagh 2007)

(2) [Alice wrote t_1] and [Beatrix read t_1] [a book]₁

- Phonological deletion

(e.g. Wexler and Culicover 1980, Kayne 1994, Wilder 1997, Hartmann 2000, Ha 2008)

(3) [Alice wrote ⟨a book⟩] and [Beatrix read a book]

- Multidominance

(e.g. McCawley 1982, Radford 1988, Moltmann 1992, Wilder 1999, Bachrach and Katzir 2009, Gračanin-Yuksek 2013)

(4) [Alice wrote] and [Beatrix read]

[a book]

Dual approaches to RNR

Barros and Vicente (2011), Belk et al. (2023): Ellipsis and multidominance²

RNR-ellipsis

- morphological mismatches (Barros and Vicente 2011: 3)

(5) I usually don't ⟨wake up early every day⟩ but Alice wakes up early every day.

- vehicle change (Barros and Vicente 2011: 3)

(6) She_i hopes that he won't ⟨fire her_i/*Alice_i⟩, but I fear that the boss will fire Alice_i.

- non-coordinate RNR (Belk et al. 2023: 709)

(7) A man who likes ⟨opera⟩ met a woman who dislikes opera.

²See Larson (2012) for some criticism, and Lin (2025) for dual RNR in Korean.

RNR-multidominance

- cumulative agreement (Barros and Vicente 2011: 4)
 - (8) Alice is proud that Beatrix __, and Claire is happy that Diana {have/*has} travelled to Cameroon.
- internal readings of relational adjectives (Barros and Vicente 2011: 5)
 - (9) Alice composed __, and Beatrix performed different songs.

Dual approaches to RNR

no RNR-movement

- RNR from islands (Belk et al. 2023: 688)

(10) I know a man who buys, and you know a woman who sells, gold rings and raw diamonds from South Africa.

- no RNR with VP-ellipsis (Abels 2004)

(11) *Jane talked about t_1 , and/but Frank didn't $\langle$ talk about t_1 $\rangle$, [the achievements of the syntax students]₁.

- always order-preserving (Belk et al. 2023: 688, fn. 2)

(12) John bought ___ and Ryo gave [a book about opera] to Mary.

Tripartite approaches to RNR

Chaves (2014), Hirsch and Wagner (2015), Kimura (2022): also rightward (ATB-)movement³

RNR is in fact compatible with VP-ellipsis (Kimura 2022: 612)

(13) Prof. White has read t_1 , but Prof. Green hasn't $\langle \text{read } t_1 \rangle$, [a new book on gravity]₁.

Combining RNR and VPE is island-sensitive (Kimura 2022: 613)

(14) *Bill met a professor who has read t_1 , and Jack met a student who hasn't $\langle \text{read } t_1 \rangle$, [a book on gravity]₁.

³See Valmala (2013) for tripartite RNR in Catalan and Spanish.

This talk

- Most of the debate revolves around English (though see Valmala 2013 on Catalan and Spanish, and Lin 2025 on Korean).
- Here we will look at Hungarian right node raising.
- As we will show, there is no evidence for rightward movement nor for multidominance.
- However, RNR can also not be ‘backwards ellipsis’ as suggested in the literature on Hungarian (Bánréti 2022) as there are morphological differences from ‘forwards ellipsis’

**Hungarian RNR does not involve
movement**

Movement: Island immunity

- (15) *Extraction out of a RC yields an island violation*

*Ki-t ismer-sz egy ember-t aki lát ____?

who-ACC know-2SG DET man-ACC REL see-3SG

‘[Whom] do you know a man that sees ____?’

- (16) *RNR is immune to islands*

Peti ismer [valaki-t aki meg-ve-tt ____] és Mari ismer
Peti know.3SG someone-ACC who PV-buy-PST.3SG and Mary know.3SG
[valaki-t aki el-ad-ott ____] egy matematikakönyve-t.
someone-ACC who PV-sell-PST.3SG a mathematics.book-ACC.

‘Peti knows someone who bought, and Mary knows someone who sold, a mathematics book.’

Movement: VP ellipsis compatibility

(17) VP ellipsis

János meg-hív-t-a a szomszéd-ok-at, de Mari nem $\langle$ hív-t-a meg a
János PV-call-PST-3SG DET neighbor-PL-ACC but Mari NEG call-PST-3SG PV DET
szomszéd-ok-at $\rangle$.

neighbor-PL-ACC

‘János invited the neighbors, but Mary did not $\langle$ invite the neighbors $\rangle$.’

(18) RNR is incompatible with VP ellipsis

a. János meg-hív-t-a __, de Mari nem hív-t-a meg, a szomszéd-ok-at.
János PV-call.PST.3SG but Mari NEG call-PST.3SG PV DET neighbor-PL-ACC
‘János invited but Mary didn’t invite, the neighbors.’

b. *János meg-hív-t-a __, de Mari nem $\langle$ hív-t-a meg __ $\rangle$ [a
János PV-call-PST-3SG but Mari NEG call.PST.3SG PV DET
szomszéd-ok-at].

neighbor-PL-ACC

Intended: ‘János invited but Mary did not $\langle$ invite __ $\rangle$ the neighbors.’

**Hungarian RNR does not involve
multidominance**

Multidominance: Cumulative agreement and internal readings

(19) *Unavailability of cumulative agreement*

Mari büszke, hogy **János** __, és Peti boldog, hogy **Kata** [utaz-**ott**/*-**tak** el
Mari proud COMP János and Peti glad COMP Kata travel.PST-3SG/*-3PL PV
Kamerun-ba].

Cameroon-ILL

‘Mari is proud that János, and Peti is glad that Kata, **has**/***have** traveled to
Cameroon.’

(20) *Unavailability of internal readings of relational adjectives*

Éva komponál-t __ és Bea előad-ott [különböző dal-ok-at].
Éva compose-PST.3SG and Bea perform-PST.3SG different song-PL-ACC

‘Éva composed and Bea performed different_{ext/*int} songs.’

**Hungarian RNR involves (some
form of) ellipsis**

Ellipsis: Morphological mismatches

(21) *NP ellipsis*

- a. Ő egy nagy sárga autót vesz-Ø/*-ek/*-ünk/ és én egy kicsi-t.
3SG DET big yellow car-ACC buy-**3SG**/1PL/1SG and 1SG DET small
'(S)he buys a big yellow car and I a small (one).'
- b. Én egy nagy sárga autót vesz-ek/*-Ø/*-ünk és ő egy kicsi-t.
1SG DET big yellow car-ACC buy-**1SG**/3SG/1PL and 3SG DET small-ACC
'I buy a big yellow car and (s)he a small (one).'

(22) *Right node raising*

- a. Ő egy nagy(-ot) és én egy kicsi sárga autót vesz-**ek**/*-ünk/*-Ø.
3SG DET big-ACC and 1SG DET small yellow car-ACC buy-**1SG**/1SG/1PL
'(S)he (buys) a big and I buy a small car.'
- b. Én egy nagy(-ot) és ő egy kicsi sárga autót vesz-Ø/*-ek/*-ünk.
1SG DET big-ACC and 3SG DET small yellow car-ACC buy-**3SG**/1SG/1PL
'I (buy) a big and (s)he buys a small yellow car.'

Ellipsis: Vehicle change

(23) *VP ellipsis*

Én az-t hisz-em, hogy ki fog-ják rúg-ni Évá-t, de ő az-t
1SG that-ACC believe-1SG that PV will-3PL PV-kick-INF Eva-ACC but 3SG that-ACC
remél-i, hogy nem <fog-ják ki-rúg-ni Évá-t /ő-t>.
hope-3SG that not will-3PL PV-kick-INF Eva-ACC 3SG-ACC
'I think that they will fire Éva_i, but she_i hopes that they won't <fire Éva/her>.'

(24) *Right node raising*

Ő az-t remél-i, hogy nem <fog-ják ki-rúg-ni Évá-t /ő-t>, de én
3SG that-ACC hope-3SG that not will-3PL PV-kick-INF Eva-ACC 3SG-ACC but 1SG
az-t hisz-em, hogy ki fog-ják rúg-ni Évá-t.
that-ACC believe-1SG that PV will-3PL PV-kick-INF Eva-ACC
'She_i hopes that they won't <fire Éva/her>, but I think that they will fire Éva_i.'

- Note that this test is likely confounded: Condition C is violable with overt pronouns in pro drop languages like Hungarian (Oikonomou et al. 2025).
- Pronoun bears contrastive focus, thus resisting pro drop.

Ellipsis: Sloppy readings

(25) *NP ellipsis*

Tud-om, hogy Éva kedvel-i a szomszéd-**já**-t, és biztos vagy-ok, hogy
know-1SG COMP Éva like-3SG DET neighbor-POSS.**3SG**-ACC and sure be-1SG COMP
én utál-om ⟨a szomszéd-**já**-t /*szomszéd-om-at⟩.
1SG hate-1SG DET neighbor-POSS.**3SG**-ACC neighbor-POSS.1SG-ACC
'I know that Éva likes her neighbor and I am sure that I hate ⟨**her**/*my neighbor⟩.'

(26) *Right node raising*

Tud-om hogy Éva kedvel-i ⟨a szomszéd-**om**-at /*szomszéd-já-t⟩,
know-1SG COMP Éva like-3SG DET neighbor-POSS.**1SG**-ACC neighbor-POSS.3SG-ACC
és biztos vagy-ok, hogy én utál-om, a szomszéd-**om**-at.
and sure be-1SG COMP 1SG hate-1SG DET neighbor-POSS.**1SG**-ACC
'I know that Éva likes ⟨**my**/*her neighbor⟩ and I'm sure that I hate, **my** neighbor.'

Ellipsis: Non-coordinative structures

(27) *Right node raising*

Egy ember aki meg-ve-tt egy drága-t találkoztott egy nő-vel, aki
DET man REL PV-buy-PST DET expensive-ACC meet-PST-3SG DET woman-INS REL
el-adott egy olcsó lakás-t.
PV-sell-PST DET cheap apartment-ACC
'A man who bought an expensive met a woman who sold a cheap apartment.'

Inflection in Hungarian NP-ellipsis and RNR

Some properties of DP in Hungarian

- Base order: determiner-(numeral/quantifier)-adjective-noun (28)
- Number and case are marked on the noun only, other elements are uninflected (29)

(28) a kék autó-k-at
 DET blue car-PL-ACC
 ‘the blue cars’

(29) a.*a kék-ek-et autó-k-at
 DET blue-PL-ACC car-PL-ACC
 b.*a kék-ek-et autó
 DET blue-PL-ACC car

Licensing conditions of NP ellipsis in Hungarian

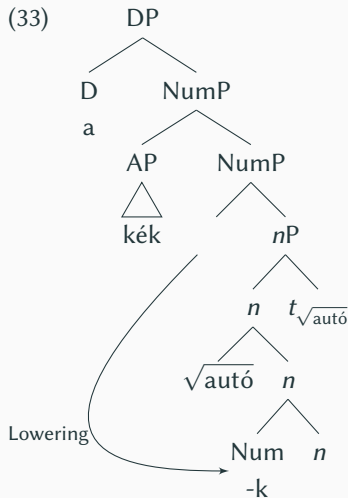
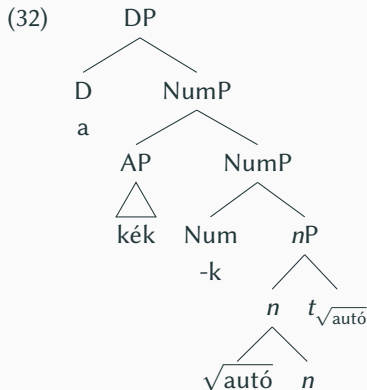
- Number and case obligatory on linearly last remnant before NPE gap.
- Number specifications of antecedent and elided NP can differ $\Rightarrow$ NumP is not deleted (Saab and Lipták 2016):

(30) Én meg-ve-tt-em a piros autó-k-at és te el-ad-t-ad a kék
1SG PV-buy-1SG DET red car-PL-ACC and 2SG PV-sell-PST-2SG DET blue
<autó>*(-ek-et).
car-PL-ACC
'I bought the red cars and you sold the blue ones.'

(31) Én meg-ve-tt-em a piros autó-k-at és te el-ad-t-ad a kék
1SG PV-buy-1SG DET red car-PL-ACC and 2SG PV-sell-PST-2SG DET blue
<autó>*(-Ø-et).
car-SG-ACC
'I bought the red cars and you sold the blue one(*s).'

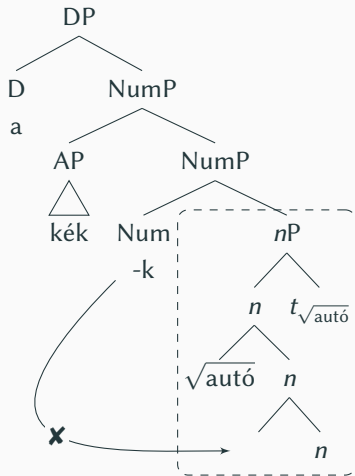
The structure of DP in Hungarian

(É. Kiss 2002, Dékány 2011, Bartos 2000, Saab and Lipták 2016)



Deriving exceptional inflection (Saab and Lipták 2016)

(34)



- *nP*-ellipsis blocks Lowering
- after linearization, *-k* attaches to the item to its left via Local Dislocation (Embick and Noyer 2001, Embick 2007)

Linearization:

kék * -k

Local Dislocation:

kék-k

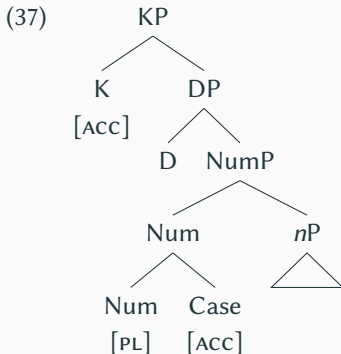
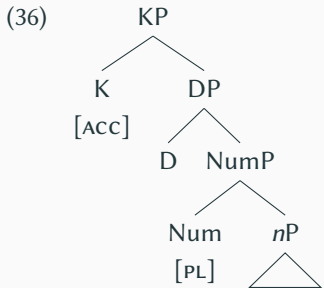
Phonological realization:

kékek

What about case?

- KP above DP (É. Kiss 2002, Dékány 2011)
- postsyntactic ‘sprouting’ of Case-head on Num when c-commanded by valued K-head; case value is copied from K to Case (Choi and Harley 2019; cf. dissociated morpheme insertion, Halle and Marantz 1993, Bobaljik 2007)

(35) $\text{Num}^0 \rightarrow [\text{Num}^0 \text{ Case}^0] / [\text{K}_{[\text{CASE}]} \dots [\dots __ \dots]]$



Exceptional inflection in NPE vs. RNR

- **NPE:** case and number obligatory on remnant preceding NPE gap.
- **RNR:** case and number on remnant are optional (38) (cf. Hein 2025 for German)
- Selectively ‘suspending’ a subset of the affixes is ungrammatical (39).

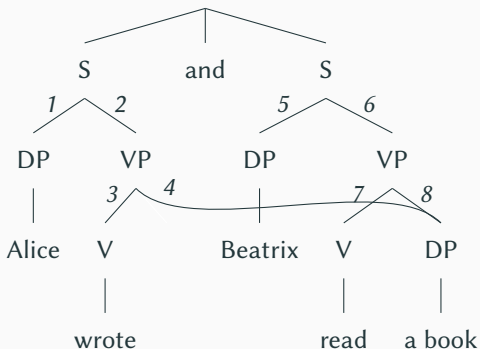
(38) Én meg-ve-tt-em a piros(-ak-at) és te el-ad-t-ad a kék autó-k-at.
1SG PV-buy-1SG DET red(-PL-ACC) and 2SG PV-sell-PST-2SG DET blue car-PL-ACC
‘I bought the red and you sold the blue cars.’

(39) Te meg-ve-tt-ed a piros*-ak/ *-at/ *autó-k/ *autó-t és én el-ad-t-am
2SG PV-buy-PST-2SG DET red-PL -ACC car-PL car-ACC and 1SG PV-buy-PST-1SG
a kék autó-k-at.
DET blue car-PL-ACC
Intended: ‘You bought the red and I sold the blue cars.’

Hungarian RNR: A pruning analysis

Duality of structure, unity of process (Belk et al. 2023)

RNR-MD creates a linearization problem due to the *No-Tangling Condition* (Partee et al. 1993: 437).



Belk et al. (2023) suggest that a very restricted pruning operation (40) at PF resolves this issue by pruning branch 4 in (42).

(40) *Pruning*

Let S_α and S_β be parallel structures. A branch α in S_α may be pruned if

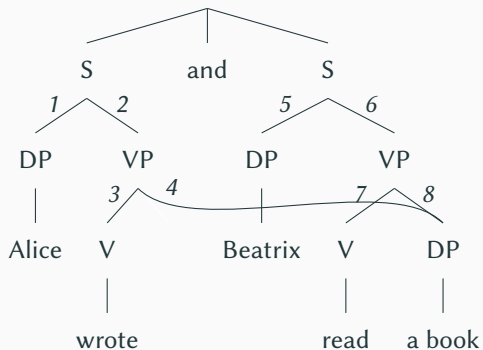
- a. S_α precedes S_β ,
- b. α corresponds to a branch β in S_β , and
- c. β 's yield satisfies the ordering statements that hold of α 's yield in S_α .

(41) *Parallelism* (Hartmann 2000: 117)

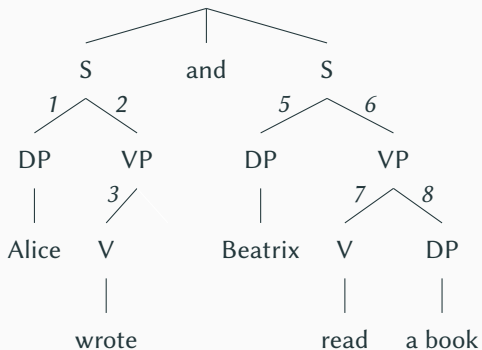
A and B are parallel clauses iff $\llbracket A \rrbracket_o \in \llbracket B \rrbracket_f \wedge \llbracket B \rrbracket_o \in \llbracket A \rrbracket_f$.

Deriving RNR-MD

(42) *RNR multidominance: Pruning of branch 4*



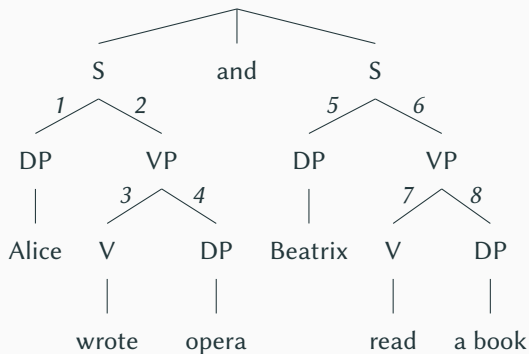
(42) *RNR multidominance: Pruning of branch 4*



Deriving RNR-E

Once adopted, Pruning permits a straightforward account of RNR-E.

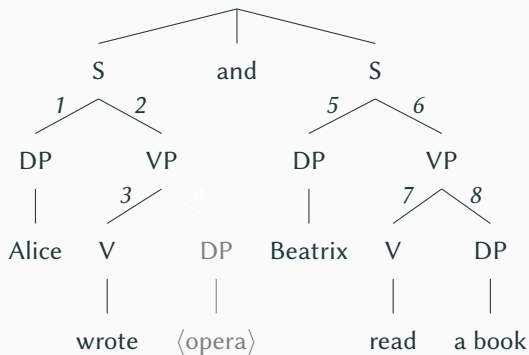
(43) *RNR ellipsis: Pruning of branch 4*



Deriving RNR-E

Once adopted, Pruning permits a straightforward account of RNR-E.

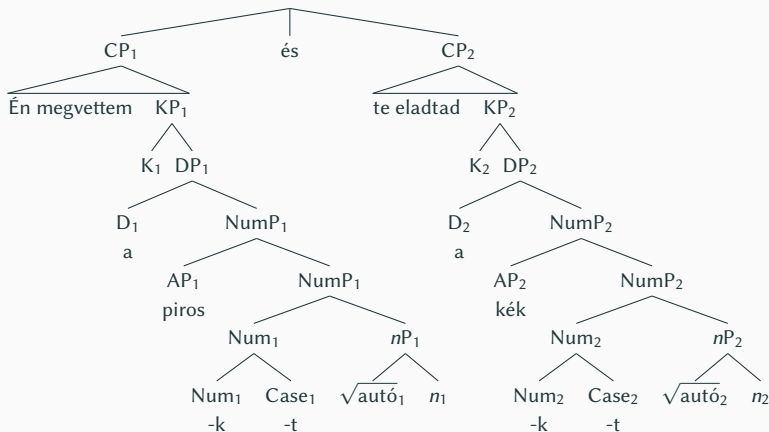
(43) *RNR ellipsis: Pruning of branch 4*



Pruning = 'backwards' ellipsis

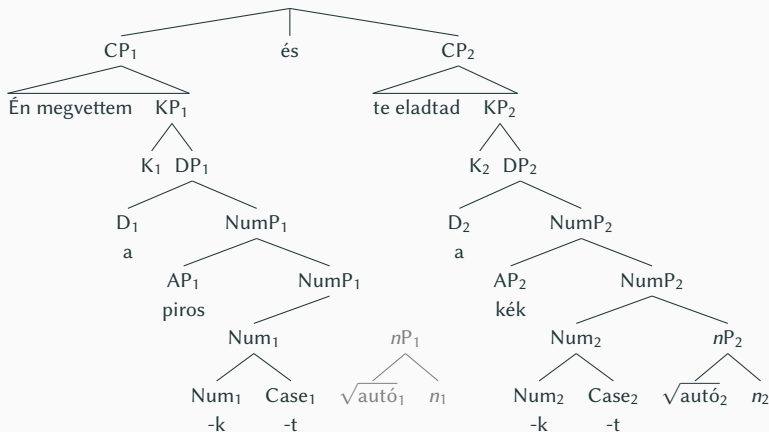
Hungarian: Pruning of nP strands inflection

- (44) Én megvettem a piros-ak-at ⟨autó⟩ és te eladtad a kék autók-at.
 I bought the red-PL-ACC and you sold the blue car-PL-ACC
 'I bought the red and you sold the blue cars'



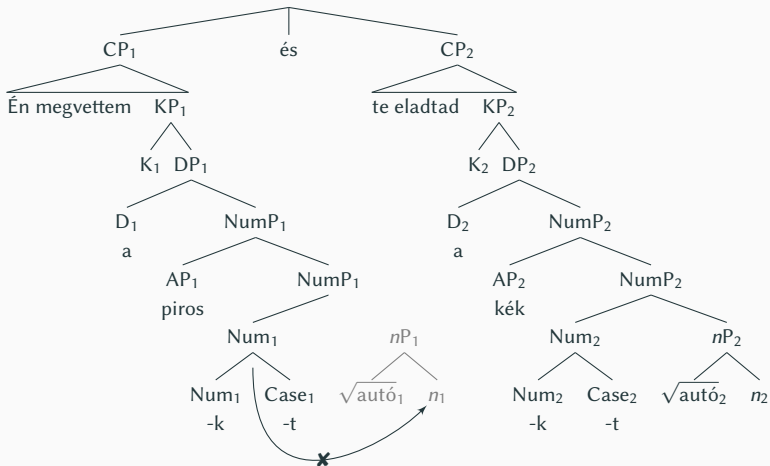
Hungarian: Pruning of nP strands inflection

- (44) Én megvettem a piros-ak-at ⟨*autó*⟩ és te eladtad a kék *autó*-k-at.
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 'I bought the red and you sold the blue cars'



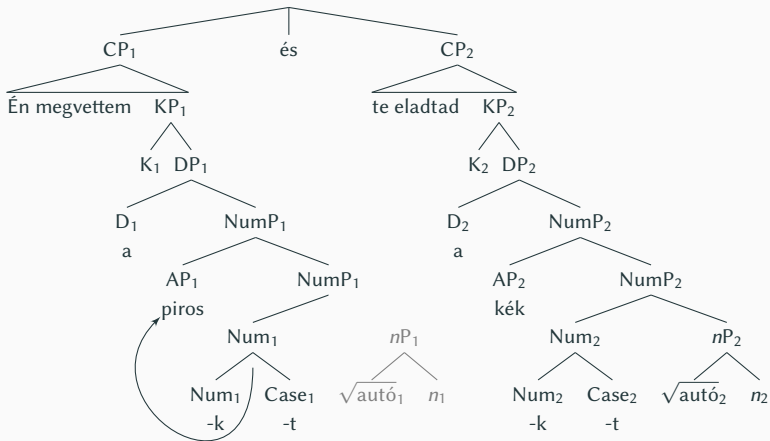
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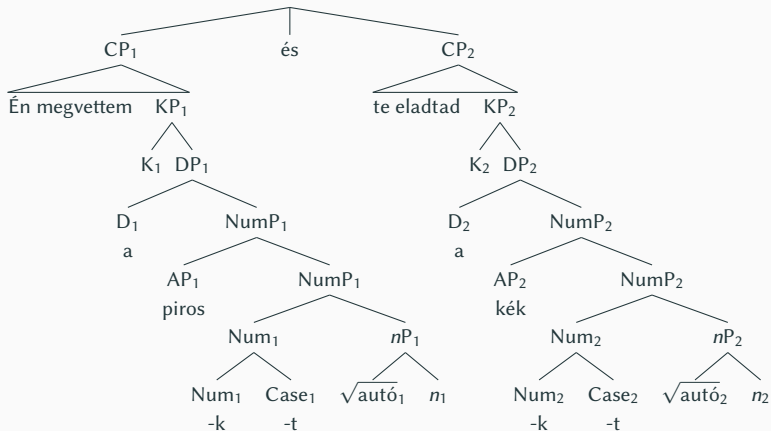
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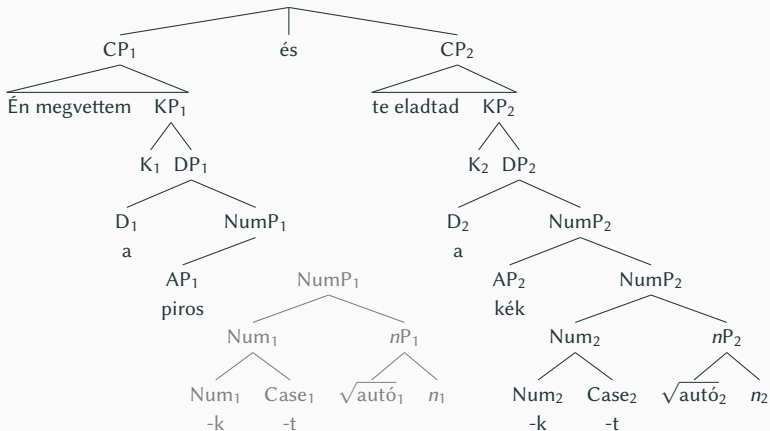
Hungarian: Pruning of NumP deletes inflection

- (45) Én megvettem a piros <autó-k-at> és te eladtad a kék autó-k-at.
 I bought the red and you sold the blue car-PL-ACC
 'I bought the red and you sold the blue car'



Hungarian: Pruning of NumP deletes inflection

- (45) Én megvettem a piros <autó-k-at> és te eladtad a kék autó-k-at.
 I bought the red and you sold the blue car-PL-ACC
 'I bought the red and you sold the blue car'



Analysis: Forward NPE

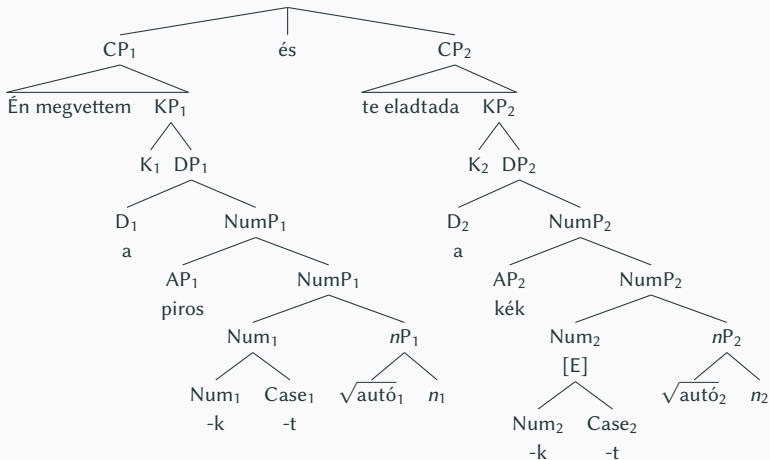
- We do not observe the same variability in forward NPE.

- (46) a. *Én meg-ve-tt-em a piros autó-k-at és te el-ad-t-ad a*
1SG PV-buy-1SG DET red car-PL-ACC and 2SG PV-sell-PST-2SG DET
kék-ek-et *⟨autó⟩*.
blue-PL-ACC car
'I bought the red cars and you sold the blue ones.'
- b.* *Én meg-ve-tt-em a piros autó-k-at és te el-ad-t-ad a*
1SG PV-buy-1SG DET red car-PL-ACC and 2SG PV-sell-PST-2SG DET
kék *⟨autó⟩*.
blue car
'I bought the red cars and you sold the blue ones.'

- Pruning by definition does not apply to the right conjunct.
- Forward NPE is triggered by an [E]-feature on Num₂ (Merchant 2001)
- Only phases can be elided (Holmberg 2001, Gengel 2007, 2008, Bošković 2014, Aelbrecht 2016) and *nP* is a phase (Marantz 2001, Marvin 2002)

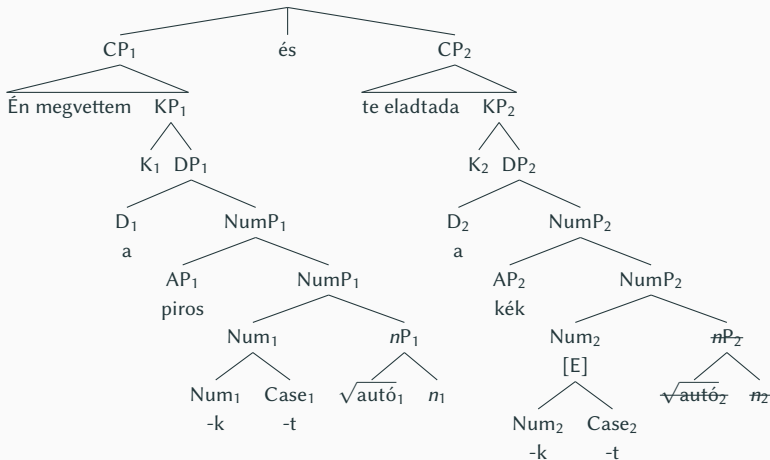
Analysis: Forward NPE

- (47) Én meg-ve-tt-em a piros autó-k-at és te el-ad-t-ad a kék-ek-et ⟨autó⟩.
1SG PV-buy-1SG DET red car-PL-ACC and 2SG PV-sell-PST-2SG DET blue-PL-ACC car
'I bought the red cars and you sold the blue ones.'



Analysis: Forward NPE

- (47) Én meg-ve-tt-em a piros autó-k-at és te el-ad-t-ad a kék-ek-et ⟨autó⟩.
 1SG PV-buy-1SG DET red car-PL-ACC and 2SG PV-sell-PST-2SG DET blue-PL-ACC car
 'I bought the red cars and you sold the blue ones.'



Conclusion

- Hungarian RNR seems to involve neither rightward movement nor multidominance, but ellipsis.
- This ellipsis, in contrast to regular ‘forward’ ellipsis, only optionally strands number and case inflection.
- This can be modelled as Pruning in the sense of Belk et al. (2023) such that the pruned part either contains inflection hosting head or does not contain them.
- Note that other languages with obligatory exceptional inflection in ellipsis contexts, like German and Moksha Mordvin, exhibit the same optionality of inflection in RNR contexts.

Thank you for your attention.

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Appendix

Absence of case mismatches in NPE and RNR

(48) *NP ellipsis: case markers must be spelled out whether they match or not (Saab and Lipták 2016).*

- a. Te be-jelentkez-t-él a hosszú maraton-**ra** és én fel-készül-t-em a
2SG PV-sign-PST-2SG DET long marathon-**SUBL** and 1SG PV-prepare-PST-1SG DET
rövid***(-re)**.
short-**SUBL**
'You signed up for the long marathon and I prepared for the short (one).'
- b. Én le-fut-ott-am a rövid maraton-**t** és te be-jelentkez-t-él a hosszú***(-ra)**.
1SG PV-run-PST-1SG DET short marathon-**ACC** and 2SG PV-sign-PST-2SG DET long-**SUBL**
'I ran the short marathon and you signed up for the long (one).'

(49) *Right node raising: if the cases match, EI is optional.*

- a. Te be-jelentkez-tél a hosszú-**(ra)** és én fel-készül-t-em a rövid
2SG PV-sign-PST-2SG DET long-**SUBL** and 1SG PV-prepare-PST-1SG DET short
maraton-**ra**.
marathon-**SUBL**
'You signed up for the long and I prepared for the short marathon.'
- b. Te be-jelentkez-t-él a hosszú***(-ra)** és én le-fut-ott-am a rövid maraton-**t**.
2SG PV-sign-PST-2SG DET long-**SUBL** and 1SG PV-run-PST-1SG DET short marathon-**ACC**
'You signed up for the long and I ran the short marathon.'
- c. Én le-fut-ott-am a rövid***(-et)** és te be-jelentkez-t-él a hosszú maraton-**ra**.
1SG PV-run-PST-1SG DET short-**ACC** and 2SG PV-sign-PST-2SG DET long marathon-**SUBL**
'I ran the short and you signed up for the long marathon.'

Absence of wide scope in RNR

(50) *Hungarian multiple quantifiers are unambiguous (É. Kiss and Pafel 2017)*

- a. Minden könyv-et el-lop-ott egy professzor.
every book-ACC PV-steal-PST.3SG DET professor
'For every book there is a professor who stole it.' ($\forall > \exists$)
- b. Egy professzor el-lop-ott minden könyv-et.
DET professor PV-steal-PST.3SG every book-ACC
'There is a professor who stole every book.' ($\exists > \forall$)

(51) *No wide scope in RNR*

Egy professzor el-lop-ott vagy egy diák kölcsönve-tt minden könyv-et
DET professor PV-steal-PST or DET student borrow-PST.3SG every book-ACC
erről a polc-ról.
this-DEL DET shelf-DEL
'A professor stole, or a student borrowed, every book from this shelf.'
= There is either a professor who stole or a student who borrowed every book. ($\exists > \forall$)
 $\neq$ For every book there is a professor who stole or a student who borrowed it. ($*\forall > \exists$)

(52) *NPI ‘egyk sem’ is licensed by negative operators ‘nem/sem’*

- a. Jani élvez-t-e az előadás-t.
Jani enjoy-PST-3SG DET talk-ACC
‘Jani enjoyed the talk.’
- b. Jani *(**nem**) élvez-t-e **egyk** előadás-t *(**sem**).
Jani NEG enjoy-PST-3SG any talk-ACC NEG
‘Jani did not enjoy any talk.’

(53) *RNR-ed NPI requires*

- a. Jani **nem** élvez-t-e és Mari **sem** kedvel-t-e **egyk** előadás-t **sem**.
Jani NEG enjoy-PST-3SG and Mary NEG like-PST-3SG any talk-ACC NEG
‘Jani did not enjoy and Mary did not like any talk.’
- b. ??Jani élvez-t-e de Mari **nem** kedvel-t-e **egyk** előadás-t **sem**.
Jani enjoy-PST-3SG but Mary NEG like-PST-3SG any talk-ACC NEG
‘Jani enjoyed but Mary did not like any talk.’
- c. *Jani **nem** élvez-t-e de Mari kedvel-t-e **egyk** előadás-t **sem**.
Jani NEG enjoy-PST-3SG but Mary like-PST-3SG any talk-ACC NEG

The cross-linguistic picture

(54) *Moksha Mordvin* (Privizentseva 2023: 359, M. Privizentseva p.c.)

- a. Mon andin^{jə} mazi akšə*(-t^j) ⟨katə⟩.
I fed nice white-DEF cat-DEF
‘[Q: Which cat did you feed?] I fed the beautiful white one.’
- b. Mon andin^{jə} akšə(-t^j) ⟨katə⟩ i ton andit^j ravžə katə-t^j
I fed white-DEF and you fed black cat-DEF
‘I fed the white and you fed the black cat.’

(55) *German* (Lobeck 1995, Hein 2025)

- a. Ich löse mein Problem und du löst dein*(-s) ⟨Problem⟩.
I solve my problem and you solve your-INFL
‘I solve my problem and you solve yours.’
- b. Ich löse mein(-s) ⟨Problem⟩ und du löst dein Problem.
I solve my-INFL and you solve your problem
‘I solve my and you solve your problem.’

(56) *Dutch* (cf. Kester 1996b,a, Corver and van Koppen 2009, 2011)

- a. Ik koop een klein huis maar jij koopt een grot*(-e) ⟨huis⟩.
I buy a small house but you buy a big-INFL
‘I buy a small house and you buy a big one.’
- b. Ik koop een klein(-e) ⟨huis⟩, maar jij koopt een groot huis.
I buy a small-INFL but you buy a big house
‘I buy a small (one), but you buy a big house.’