Sluicing and pseudosluicing in Hungarian

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Main claims

- **sluicing**: isomorphic wh-sources followed by ellipsis (i.a. Ross 1969)
- **pseudosluicing**: not ellipsis, but a null subject + a null copula, whose restricted distribution explains the distribution of pseudosluicing – contra previous analyses

Hungarian sluices have an isomorphic source. Predicative copular sources are not available.

Roadmap

1. Basic facts (number agreement in adjectives) → evidence for copular sources?
2. Novel data: an argument for isomorphic sources
3. Case mismatches are disallowed: an argument against copular sources
4. Deriving pseudosluicing as null subject (pro) + null copula
   - Pseudosluicing in Hungarian: Evidence from the distribution of null copulas
   - Pseudosluicing cross-linguistically?

1. Background and basic facts

Larger context

Violations of the Left Branch Condition (LBC) are repaired by sluicing (1):

(1) Mary married a tall man, but I don’t know how tall.
    a. Mary married a tall man, but I don’t know [how tall], *she married a tall man.*
    b. Mary married a tall man, but I don’t know [how tall], *he was tall.*

What are such sentence derived from?

(1a): Island violating **isomorphic wh-source** (Merchant, 2018; Kennedy & Merchant, 2000).
(1b): Non-isomorphic **predicative copular source**: island repair is apparent (Barros, 2016).

Agreement patterns in Hungarian adjectives

**Predicative** adjectives show **number agreement** with the subject (2):

(2) A lány-ok | magas-* (ak) |
    The girl-PL- tall-* (PL)

‘The girls are tall.’

**Attributive** adjectives do **not show number agreement** with the noun they modify (3):

(3) Mari ismer | magas-(*ak) | lány-ok-at
Mary knows tall-* (PL) girl-PL-ACC

‘Mary knows tall girls.’

Remnants in adjectival sluices (4) pattern with (2), the predicative structure.

(4) Mari ismer néhány | magas- | lány-t,
Mary knows some tall girl-ACC, but not how tall.

‘Mary knows some tall girls, but I don’t know how tall.’

The **remnant adjective must bear plural marking**, even though the correlate of the adjective is in attributive position (Barros et al., 2015; Barros, 2016; Elliott, 2013).

→ Evidence for a copular source analysis of sluicing, cf. (5) (as well as (1b)):

(5) Mary knows some tall girls, but I don’t know how tall, *the girls that Mary knows are tall.*

Properties of NPE in Hungarian

Number and case marking in non-elliptical sentences only shows up on the noun (6):

(6) a. Mari a | magas lány-ok-at | ismeri.
    Mari the tall girl-PL-ACC she knows

b. *Mari a | magas-ak-at | lány-ok-at | ismeri
    Mari the tall-PL-ACC girl-PL-ACC she knows

c. *Mari a | magas-ak-at | lány ismeri.
    Mari the tall-PL-ACC girl she knows

‘Mari knows the tall girls.’

However, number and case obligatorily occur on the last remnant of ellipsis (i.e. the adjective) when NP-ellipsis (NPE) applies (7) - cf. crucially (3):

(7) Mari a | magas lány-ok-at | ismeri.
    *En az | alacsony-(*ak-at) |
    Mari the tall girl-PL-ACC she knows I the short-PL-ACC

‘Mari knows the tall girls. I know the short ones.’
2. An isomorphic source for adjectival sluices

Novel data: adjectival sluices with case marking

Remnant can be case-marked, matching the case of the noun its correlate modifies (8), cf. (4).

(8) Mari ismer néhány magas [lány-t] de nem tudom milyen [magas-ak-at].
Mary knows some tall girls-ACC, but not know.I how tall-PL-ACC

‘Mary knows some tall girls, but I don’t know how tall.’

Deriving the case-marked data

Proposal: wh-question + clausal ellipsis (9a, 10a) + NPE (9b, 10b).

(9) a. Sluicing (i.e. clausal ellipsis) (Merchant 2001):

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CP
  milyen magas
  lányokat
  T
  ... → TP ellipsis
  V
  ismer
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b. NP-ellipsis (simplified and adapted from Saab & Lipták 2016):

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DP
  NumP
  magas
  nP ellipsis
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Linearization → Leaning → Phonological Spell Out

magas * -k magas-k magasak

(10) Mari ismer néhány magas lány-t, de nem tudom...
Mary knows some tall girls-ACC, but not know.I
‘Mary knows some tall girls, but I don’t know...’

3. Case mismatches are disallowed in Hungarian

Apparent optionality in case-marking

(11) a. Non-matching:

Mari ismer néhány magas [lány-t], de nem tudom milyen [magas-ak-at].
Mary knows some tall girls-ACC, but not know.I how tall-PL-ACC

‘Mary knows some tall girls, but I don’t know how tall.’

b. Matching:

Mari ismer néhány magas [lány-t], de nem tudom milyen [magas-ak-at].
Mary knows some tall girls-ACC, but not know.I how tall-PL-ACC

‘Mary knows some tall girls, but I don’t know how tall.’

Previous analysis (e.g. Barros et al. (2015)) argue that (11a) has a copular source. We argue that (11b) has an isomorphic wh-source. → this prediction is not borne out

**Prediction:** if copular sources are available as a source for ellipsis in Hungarian, then case-mismatches should also be allowed in regular sluicing. → this prediction is not borne out

Case-mismatches are ungrammatical

Case-matches in regular sluicing are impossible (12)...

(12) Mari ismer [valaki-t] de nem tudom [ki-*t].
Mary knows someone-ACC, but not know.I who-*ACC

‘Mary knows someone, but I don’t know who.’

...despite the fact that copular continuations are possible with a nominative wh-phrase (13):

Mary knows someone-ACC, but not know.I who-*ACC that/she

‘Mary knows someone, but I don’t know who they are.’

Solution: adjectival sluices can have a copular source, but regular sluices cannot? – unappealing
4. Apparent case mismatches are not elliptical

Non-matching adjectival sluices in Hungarian are derived from the combination of a null subject (pro) and a null copula (BE<sub>null</sub>) (i.a. É Kiss 2002, Hegedűs 2013):

(14) Mari ismer něhány magas lány-t, de nem tudom milyen magas-ak BE<sub>null</sub> pro. Mary knows some tall girl-ACC, but not know.I how tall-PL

→ Both operations are independently available in Hungarian.

**Prediction:** pseudosluicing will be available only in contexts where null copulas are independently allowed in the language.

4.1. Pseudosluicing is only allowed when null copulas are allowed

Null copulas in adjectival predicates: restricted to 3rd person + present tense (É. Kiss 2002):
- present vs. past tense
- third vs. second person

**Present vs. past**

Copulas are absent in the present tense (15a), but obligatory in the past tense (15b):

(15) a. Nem tudom milyen magas-ak [*(van-nak)] a lány-ok. I don’t know how tall the girls are.

b. Nem tudom milyen magas-ak [*(voltak)] a lány-ok. I don’t know how tall they are.

5 Prediction: when a past reading is enforced pseudosluicing will be ruled out.
→ this prediction is borne out, compare (16a) to (14).

(16) Mari ki-vágott něhány magas fá-t mult nyář-on...
Mary out-cut some tall tree-ACC last summer-SUPERESSIVE...

a. ...de nem tudom milyen [magas-ak *(voltak)] but not know.I how tall-PL be.PAST.PL the girl-PL

...but I don’t know how tall they were.’

b. ...de nem tudom milyen [magas-ak-at]. but not know.I how tall-PL-ACC

...but I don’t know how tall.

Sluicing with case-matching, which we derive from a wh-source, is of course available (16b).

**Third person vs. Second person**

Copulas are absent in third person (17a), but obligatory in second person (17b):

(17) a. Nem tudom milyen magas-ak [*(van-nak)] a lány-ok I don’t know how tall the girls are.

b. Nem tudom (te) milyen magas [*(vagy)] I don’t know how tall you are.

**Prediction:** third person will allow pseudosluicing, second person won’t allow it.
→ this prediction is borne out

Third person allows pseudosluicing (as well as case-matched sluicing from a wh-source):

(18) Magas-nak k´epzelem a lányokat...
I imagine.I the girls

‘I imagine the girls (to be) tall...’

a. ...de nem tudom valójában milyen [magas-ak *(van-nak)] but not know.I in.reality how tall-PL be.PRES.PL the girl-PL

‘...but I don’t know how tall (they actually are).’

b. ...de nem tudom pontosan milyen [magas-nak] but not know.I exactly how tall-DAT

‘...but I don’t know exactly how tall (I imagine them to be).’
Second person doesn’t allow pseudosluicing (only case-matched sluicing from a wh-source):

(19) Magas-nak képzellek...
    tall-DAT imagine.I→you...
    ‘I imagine you (to be) tall…’
    a. ...de nem tudom valójában milyen [magas *(vagy)]
    ...but not know.I in.reality how tall be.PRES
    ‘...but I don’t know how tall you actually are.’
    b. ...de nem tudom pontosan milyen [magas-nak]
    ...but not know.I exactly how tall-DAT
    ‘...but I don’t know exactly how tall (I imagine you to be).’

4.2. Pseudosluicing is only allowed in languages with null copulas

Hungarian vs. English

Copular source analysis makes the wrong prediction about (20b):

(20) (Context) A: Does Mary know any tall people? B: Well... Mary knows a basketball player...
    a. ...but I don’t know how tall he is.
    b. ...*but I don’t know how tall.

Parallel examples are available in Hungarian, as predicted by the existence of null copulas:

(21) Mari ismer egy kosárlabdázó-t, de nem tudom milyen [magas-(at)]
    Mary knows a basketballplayer-ACC but not know.I how tall-(ACC)
    ‘Mary knows a basketball player but I don’t know how tall.’

5. Conclusions

• (Apparent) adjectival sluices arise from 2 configurations → different number/case marking:
  – Sluicing = true cases of clausal ellipsis → case-matching and number/case marking
    on the adjective (predicted by properties of NPE).
  – Pseudosluicing = combination of null subjects and null copulas; not derived from
    ellipsis → no case marking on the adjective.

• The analysis is supported i.a. by evidence from the restrictions on null copulas: whenever
  the copula is obligatory, pseudosluicing is ruled out.


• No need to posit two different sources of ellipsis within the same language.

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**References**


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