

Clausal ellipsis has an isomorphic source: Evidence from Hungarian adjectival sluicing

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Main claims

We argue for the existence of two different configurations:

- *sluicing*: **isomorphic wh-sources** followed by ellipsis (i.a. Ross 1969)
- *pseudosluicing*: not ellipsis, but **null subject + 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
 - Evidence from the distribution of null copulas: tense and person contrast, locatives

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]_i ~~she married a t_i man~~.
 - b. Mary married a tall man, but I don't know [how tall]_i ~~he was t_i~~.

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, de nem tudom milyen **magas-*(ak)**.
Mary knows some tall girl-ACC, but not know.I how tall-*(PL)
'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 t_i~~

Properties of NPE in Hungarian

Number and case marking in non-elliptical sentences only show 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. Én 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

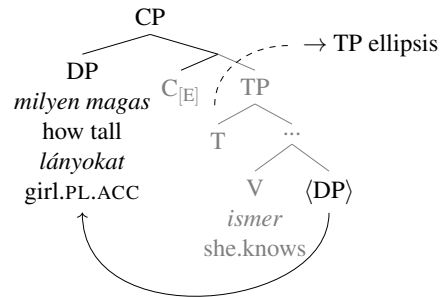
Remnant can be case-marked, matching the case of the noun its correlate modifies (8), cf. (4).

- (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.’

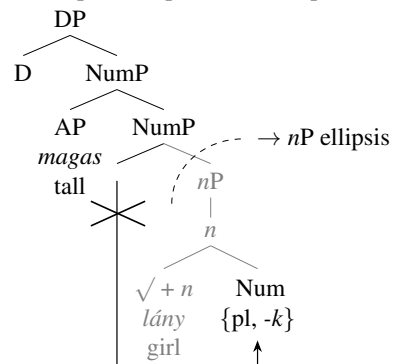
Deriving the case-marked data

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

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



- b. NP-ellipsis (simplified and adapted from Saab & Lipták 2016):



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...’

- a. ...milyen magas lány-ok-at (ismer). clausal ellipsis
 how tall girl-PL-ACC she.knows
 (literal) ‘...how tall girls she knows.’
 ‘... how tall are the girls that she knows.’
- b. ...milyen magas-ak-at (lány) ismer. NP ellipsis
 how tall-PL-ACC girl she.knows
 (literal) ‘...how tall (girls) she knows.’
 ‘... how tall are the girls that she knows.’
- c. ...milyen magas-ak-at (lány) (ismer). clausal ellipsis + NP ellipsis
 how tall-PL-ACC girl she.knows
 ‘...how tall.’

3. The distribution of apparent case mismatches in Hungarian

Apparent optionality in case-marking

- (11) a. Non-matching:
 Mari ismer néhány magas lány-t, de nem tudom milyen magas-ak.
 Mary knows some tall girl-ACC, but not know.I how tall-PL
- 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**.

→ Free optionality?

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-mismatches 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):

- (13) Mari ismer valaki-t, de nem tudom ki-*(t) az/ő.
 Mary knows someone-ACC, but not know.I who-*(ACC) that/(s)he
 ‘Mary knows someone, but I don’t know who they are.’

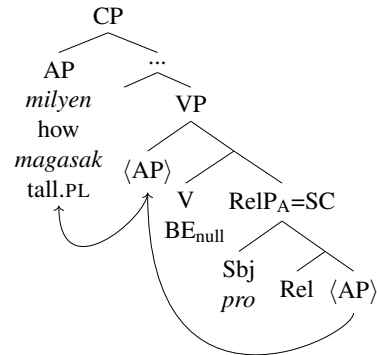
Solution: adjectival sluices can have a copular source, but regular sluices cannot? — unappealing

4. Apparent case mismatches are not elliptical

Proposal

Non-matching adjectival sluices in Hungarian are derived from the combination of a **null subject** (*pro*) and a **null copula** (BE_{null}) (i.a. É. Kiss 2002, Hegedűs 2013):

- (14) Mari ismer néhány magas lány-t, de nem tudom milyen magas-ak BE_{null} *pro*.
 Mary knows some tall girl-ACC, but not know.I how tall-PL



(adapted from Hegedűs 2013)

→ 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

Distribution of null copulas

Null copulas in adjectival predicates: restricted to **3rd person + present tense** (É. Kiss 2002):

- ✓ present vs. past tense
- ✓ third vs. second person
- ✓ possessed vs. non-possessed locatives

(novel observation)

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.
 not know.I how tall-PL be.PRES-PL the girl-PL
 ‘I don’t know how tall the girls are.’

- b. Nem tudom milyen magas-ak ***(volt-ak)** a lány-ok.
 not know.I how tall-PL be.PAST-PL the girl-PL
 ‘I don’t know how tall the girls were.’

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 néhány magas fá-t múlt nyár-on...
 Mary out-cut some tall tree-ACC last summer-SUPERESSIVE...
 ‘Mary cut down some tall trees in last summer...’

- a. ...de nem tudom milyen **magas-ak ***(volt-ak)****. ✗ *pseudosluicing*
 ...but not know.I how tall-PL be.PAST-PL
 ‘...but I don’t know how tall they were.’
- b. ...de nem tudom milyen **magas-ak-**at****. ✓ *sluicing*
 ...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
 not know.I how tall-PL be.PRES-PL the girl-PL
 ‘I don’t know how tall the girls are.’
- b. Nem tudom (te) milyen magas ***(vagy)**
 not know.I you how tall be.PRES.2SG
 ‘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-(ak)-**nak** képzelem a lányokat...
 tall-PL-DAT imagine.I the girls.ACC
 ‘I imagine the girls (to be) tall...’
- a. ...de nem tudom valójában milyen **magas-ak **(*van-nak)****. ✓ *pseudosluicing*
 ...but not know.I in.reality how tall-PL be.PRES-PL
 ‘...but in fact I don’t know how tall (they are).’
- b. ...de nem tudom pontosan milyen **magas-(ak)-**nak****. ✓ *sluicing*
 ...but not know.I exactly how tall-PL-DAT
 ‘...but I don’t know exactly how tall (I imagine them to be).’

Note: plural marking (-ak) is optional in (18) and (18b), i.e. the antecedent and sluicing remnant — another correlation between number and case marking, as predicted by our analysis.

Second person doesn't allow pseudosluicing (only case-matched sluicing from a wh-source):

- (19) Magas-**nak** képzelek...
tall-DAT imagine.I→you...
'I imagine you (to be) tall...'
- a. ...de nem tudom valójában milyen magas ***(vagy)**. ✗ pseudosluicing
...but not know.I in.reality how tall be.PRES.2SG
'...but I don't know how tall you actually are.'
- b. ...de nem tudom pontosan milyen magas-**nak**. ✓ sluicing
...but not know.I exactly how tall-DAT
'...but I don't know exactly how tall (I imagine you to be).'

Possessed vs. non-possessed locatives

Novel observation: **possessed locatives don't allow null copulas**, though regular locatives do.

- (20) Hol ***(van)** Mari ház-a?
where be.SG Mary house-POSS
'Where is Mary's house?'

Obligatory presence of copula in wh-question **predicts the unavailability of pseudosluicing**.

- (21) Mari ház-á-hoz megyünk, de nem tudom hol ***(van)**.
Mary house-POSS-ALL we.go, but not know.I where is
'We're going to Mary's house, but I don't know where it is.'

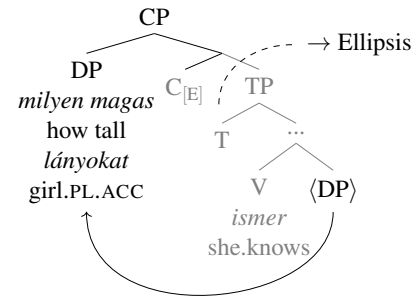
A sluicing derivation (case-marking (ALL) on the remnant) is grammatically possible, but infelicitous because the question 'Where are we going?' constitutes a contradiction with the antecedent:

- (22) #{Mari ház-á-hoz/ A ház-hoz} megyünk, de nem tudom **hov-a**.
Mary house-POSS-ALL The house-ALL we.go, but not know.I where-ALL
'We're going to {Mary's house/ the house}, but I don't know where.'

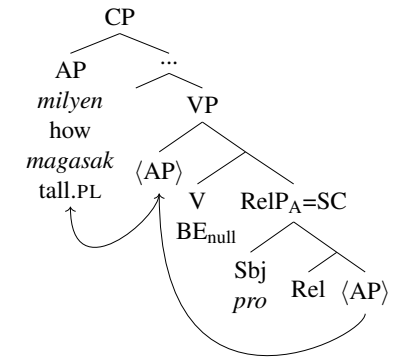
5. Conclusions

- (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.
- Non-isomorphic sources aren't possible in Hungarian ellipsis - cf. i.a. Barros *et al.* (2015).
- No need to posit two different sources of ellipsis within the same language.

Sluicing:



Pseudosluicing:



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