# NP ellipsis bleeds allomorphy in Hungarian

**Eszter Ronai** · The University of Chicago
**Laura Stigliano** · The University of Chicago

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In Hungarian, the (otherwise) obligatory accusative suffix *-(V)t* (1a) is optionally realized as -Ø in the context of 1st or 2nd person possessor agreement, as (1b) shows (Bacskai-Atkari 2017; É. Kiss 2014). We analyze this as optional contextual allomorphy triggered by the possessor features.

(1) a. Mari kölcsönkért egy toll{-at/*-Ø}.
Mary borrowed a pen{-ACC}
'Mary borrowed a pen.'

b. Mari kölcsönkérte egy toll-am{-at/-Ø}.
Mary borrowed a pen-POSS.1SG{-ACC}
'Mary borrowed a pen of mine.'

What has gone unnoticed in existing literature is that in NP ellipsis (NPE), the accusative suffix *-(V)t* must appear on the remnant (*kék-et* 'blue-ACC'), regardless of the form of the case suffix in the correlate. Compare (2b) to its counterpart without NPE (2a).

(2) a. Mari kölcsönkérte egy piros toll-am{-at/-Ø},
Mary borrowed a red pen-POSS.1SG{-ACC},
Zsuzsi pedig egy kék toll-am{-at/-Ø}.
Susie and a blue pen-POSS.1SG{-ACC}
'Mary borrowed a red pen of mine, and Susie a blue pen of mine.'

b. Mari kölcsönkérte egy piros toll-am{-at/-Ø},
Mary borrowed a red pen-POSS.1SG{-ACC},
Zsuzsi pedig egy kék{-et/*-Ø}.
Susie and a blue{-ACC}
'Mary borrowed a red pen of mine, and Susie a blue (pen of mine).'

Crucially, although possessive morphology (*-(V)m*) does not show up on the remnant adjective (Saab and Lipták 2016), the remnant in (2b) can only be interpreted as referring to the speaker's blue pen, not just any blue pen. (This judgement is shared by one author of the present paper and five other native speaker consultants.) This provides evidence that possessive morphology was present and subsequently elided.

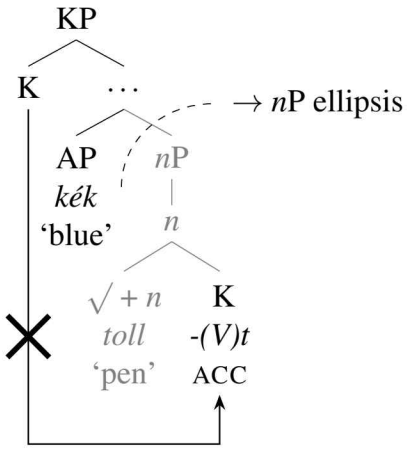
If ellipsis were just non-pronunciation (e.g. Merchant 2001; Aelbrecht 2009), the possessive features that condition the contextual allomorphy of the accusative suffix would still be present in the remnant, predicting the adjective (*kék*) to also display the *-(V)t*/-Ø allomorphy. This, however, is not what we find (2b). Therefore, ellipsis bleeds allomorphy.

However, the pattern in (2b) complies with the Ellipsis-Morphology (ELMO) Generalization (3) (Saab and Lipták 2016):

(3) For every morphological operation MO that affects the domain of X, where X contains the target of MO, MO cannot apply in X if X is subject to ellipsis.

On Saab and Lipták's account, in non-elliptical contexts, case affixes lower onto the noun. In NPE, however, this operation is blocked; the affixes get stranded and need to find another host. In (2b) in particular, the ACC suffix in the remnant gets stranded, and ends up being hosted by the material that precedes the elided noun (i.e. the adjective). This is schematized in (4). On this analysis, then, because the suffix does not attach to a possessive noun that conditions allomorphy, no allomorphy is predicted.

(4)




Another way to implement ELMO and capture the fact that ellipsis bleeds allomorphy is via an obliteration analysis (Banerjee 2020, following Arregi and Nevins 2007; see also Murphy 2018). In Distributed Morphology (Halle and Marantz 1993, 1994), obliteration is the deletion of all features of a terminal prior to Vocabulary Insertion. Obliterated terminals (here, the possessed noun) thus cannot condition allomorphy.

Similar observations regarding ellipsis bleeding allomorphic possibilities have been made for Irish (Bennett et al. 2019) and Bengali (Banerjee 2020). The Hungarian data are novel evidence for such an interaction in the nominal, rather than the clausal, domain.

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The authors contributed equally to this work and are listed alphabetically.

Eszter Ronai
ronai@uchicago.edu
1115 E. 58th Street
Rosenwald Hall, Room 203
Chicago, IL 60637

Laura Stigliano
laurastigliano@uchicago.edu
1115 E. 58th Street
Rosenwald Hall, Room 203
Chicago, IL 60637