

Repetitive adverbs in Hungarian: Syntactic and semantic variation

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The issue. Hungarian has three productive equivalents of the repetitive *again*: *megint*, *újra* and *ismét*. The talk compares these equivalents and shows that they have different syntactic and semantic properties. These must, therefore, be options allowed universally for repetitive adverbs. Some of these properties (e.g. only repetitive interpretation for *ismét*) are novel to my knowledge (see Cardinaletti 2003, Marantz 2007, Sportiche 2012, a.o. for crosslinguistic variation). In the discussion, I adopt the syntactic approach to the repetitive/ restitutive ambiguity (e.g. Stechow 1996, but see Patel-Grosz and Beck 2014).

Megint and ismét. Let us consider *megint* and *ismét* first. The denotation of these Hungarian adverbials is the same as that of *again*. The syntactic distribution is different: only *megint* allows a restitutive interpretation (*ki*, lit. ‘out’ is a particle, obligatory here with the verb *számol* ‘calculate’):

- (1) Feri *megint*/ *ismét* *(*ki*) számolta az összeget
Feri *megint*/ *ismét* out calculated the sum-acc
‘Feri calculated the sum again’
 - i) Restitutive: Someone calculated the sum earlier (*megint*, **ismét*);
 - ii) Repetitive: Feri calculated the sum earlier (*megint*, *ismét*)

Hungarian is well known for the fact that (preverbal) surface order mirrors scope relations. This is true for *megint* and *ismét* as well. In Hungarian, preverbal elements are ordered as shown in (2); * indicates recursive elements.

- (2) Topic_T* Quantifier_Q* Focus_F negation [_{vP} verb]

Megint and *ismét* must occur below topics, but they can occupy a variety of positions. The position correlates with scope interpretation. Subscripts below indicate the types in (2). Only *megint* is illustrated below: *ismét* behaves the same way.

- (3) a. Feri_T (*megint*₁) mindenkit_Q (*megint*₂) meg hívott
Feri again everyone-acc again perf invited
‘Feri invited everyone again’
 - 1: (invited everyone as a group before); again > everyone
 - 2: (invited everyone individually before); everyone > again
- b. Feri_T (*megint*₁) MARI_F hívta meg (*megint*₂)
Feri again Mari-acc invited perf again
‘Feri invited MARI again’
 - 1: (before: it was Mari he invited (and nobody else)); again > MARI_F
 - 2: (before: he invited others as well; only Mari invited again); MARI_F > again

The surface order does not distinguish repetitive and restitutive adverbials (see (1)). Nevertheless, restitutive adverbials are interpreted in a low, vP-internal position. The unavailability of restitutive interpretation in (4) illustrates this point. In (4) restitutive interpretation is not possible because a) restitutive adverbials must scope inside vP (over the result subevent) and b) indefinites take scope at least as high as vP (thus above *megint*).

- (4) Feri megint evett egy szendvicset
 Feri megint ate one sandwich-acc
 ‘Feri ate a sandwich again’ (* if restitutive: someone ate a sandwich before)

Újra. The adverbial *újra*, like *megint*, allows both a repetitive and a restitutive interpretation. Note, however, that while the particle *ki* is obligatory in (1), it is optional in (5).

- (5) Feri újra (ki) számolta az összeget
 Feri again out calculated the sum-acc
 ‘Feri calculated the sum again’ (Someone_{restitutive}/ Feri_{repetitive} calculated it earlier)

Ki is not truly optional. Usually, when a repetitive adverb precedes the verb (V) in Hungarian, V has word stress. If *ki* is absent in (5), then only *újra* is stressed, not V (*‘újra számolta’*). With immediately preverbal particles (e.g. *ki*) V is unstressed (*‘ki számolta’*); thus I suggest that *újra* with an unstressed V is a particle. Particles occur fairly low, in the vP; it is not surprising then that particle *újra* allows a restitutive interpretation. In addition, particle *újra* has a restricted distribution: it must appear with an event-homomorphic object. I suggest that this restriction arises because particle *újra* must merge with such an object – the requirement is checked at the vP phase level, where semantics applies. Merging with the object is an option available for *újra* (and not for the morphologically simple *megint* and *ismét*) because *újra* is morphologically a resultative: *új* ‘new’ + *-ra* ‘onto’. The result interpretation is that of maximality. Without a particle, event descriptions with an incremental theme have non-maximal interpretation in Hungarian.

Finally, it must be noted that all occurrences of *újra* require the existence of a gap between the presupposed and the asserted event (unlike *again*, see Stechow 1996). Thus the denotation of *újra* is different from that of *again*, *megint* and *ismét*; specific entries will be given for the adverbials.

- (6) Feri megint / ismét / #újra alszik
 Feri megint / ismét / újra sleeps
 ‘Feri is sleeping again’ (Juli saw that Feri was asleep at midnight and she sees Feri sleeping at 6 am as well.)

Conclusion. The Hungarian equivalents of *again* show divergent behavior, with some novel properties. The restitutive reading is unavailable for *ismét*, even though its semantics is identical to *megint*. *Újra* has a different type of denotation and its vP-internal occurrences have specific morphological and syntactic characteristics. In addition, Hungarian provides further support to a structural approach to the restitutive/ repetitive ambiguity and it also shows that these adverbials can take even higher scope above vP.

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