Long-distance agreement with intransitive verbs in Hungarian*

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I argue that intransitive verbs that do not take accusative objects can agree with the object of their infinitival complement more freely than is generally suggested in the literature on Hungarian object agreement. I illustrate this phenomenon using data from the internet and the Hungarian National Corpus and sketch an analysis according to which intransitive verbs are construed as transitive in analogy to transitive verbs in the same construction.

1 Introduction

Several types of verbs take infinitival complements in Hungarian. According to much of the literature, verbs which can take an ACC object (which I will refer to as transitive verbs) show object agreement with the definite object of their infinitival complement, while verb which do not have an ACC object (intransitive verbs) do not (É. Kiss 1987, 1989, Kálmán C. et al. 1989, Kenesei et al. 1998, É. Kiss 2002, den Dikken 2004, É. Kiss &

*This paper is an English version of Bárány (2020), which appeared in a special volume of the journal *Általános Nyelvészeti Tanulmányok*, celebrating Katalin É. Kiss' many contributions to linguistics. I also dedicate this paper to Katalin É. Kiss, from whom I have learned a lot in the past ten years and to whom I am grateful for many things. Since the early days of my linguistics studies, I have followed her work with great interest and will continue to do so.

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The 2023 August update fixes typos and a wrong table caption.

Van Riemsdijk 2004, Coppock 2012, Szécsényi 2017, Szécsényi & Szécsényi 2018). The construction in question is shown in (1), with examples in (2) and (3) (in this paper, I do not address more complex constructions involving several infinitives; for these see Szécsényi & Szécsényi 2020).[1]

(1) **Matrix verb with infinitival complement**
[… finite verb [$_{\text{INF}}$ infinitive (object-ACC)]]

(2) a. **Intransitive matrix verb, intransitive infinitive**

János igyekez-ett [$_{\text{INF}}$ *bemen-ni*].
János strive-3SG.PST enter-INF
'János strove to enter.'

b. **Intransitive matrix verb, transitive infinitive**

Anna igyekez-ett [$_{\text{INF}}$ *meg-tanul-ni a vers-et*].
Anna strive-3SG.PST VM-learn-INF the poem-ACC
'Anna strove to learn the poem.' (Kenesei et al. 1998: 33)

c. **Intransitive matrix verb, transitive infinitive**

Igyekez-lek [*meglátogat-ni (téged)*].
make.effort-1SG.SBJ>2.OBJ visit-INF you.ACC
'I am making an effort to visit you.' (É. Kiss 2002: 54)

(3) a. **Transitive matrix verb, intransitive infinitive**

János meg-próbál-t [$_{\text{INF}}$ *bemen-ni*].
János VM-try-PST.3SG.SBJ enter-INF
'János tried to go in.' (É. Kiss 1989: 153)

b. **Transitive matrix verb, transitive infinitive**

Anna meg-próbál-ta [$_{\text{INF}}$ *meg-tanul-ni a vers-et*].
Anna VM-try-PST.3SG.SBJ>3.OBJ VM-learn-INF the poem-ACC
'Anna tried to learn the poem.' (Kenesei et al. 1998: 33)

[1] Abbreviations: 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, ACC = accusative, ADJ = adjective, CMPR = comparative, COM = comitative, COND = conditional, COP = copula, DEF = definite, DO = direct object, ILL = illative, INDEF = indefinite, INE = inessive, INF = infinitive, LDA = long-distance agreement, MNSZ = Magyar Nemzeti Szövegtár (Hungarian National Corpus), OBJ = object, PL = plural, POSS = possessive, PST = past, REFL = reflexive, SBJ = subject, SG = singular, SUBL = sublative, SUPE = superessive, SUPL = superlative, TERM = terminative, VM = verbal modifier.

It is generally argued in the literature that if the matrix verb is intransitive, it will always show only subject agreement even if the direct object (DO) of its infinitival complement is a definite third person object, as in (2a,b). The only exception to this is claimed to occur with second person DOs, which allow the *-lak/-lek* object agreement form, as in (2c). With transitive matrix verbs, agreement on the matrix verb depends on the definiteness of the infinitive's DO, as shown in (3).

The main claim of this paper is that the empirical picture is more complex than indicated by (2) and (3). In particular, there is evidence that intransitive matrix verbs **can agree with the definite third person object of the infinitive**. An example is shown in (4):

(4) **Intransitive matrix verb, transitive infinitive and object agreement**
OBJ— finite verb — INF [312]; MNSZ/doc#2886

… *hogy*	*élet-em*	*egyik*	*legnagyobb*	*hülyeség-é-t*	***készül-öm***
that	life-1SG.POSS	one	biggest	idiocy-3SG.POSS-ACC	get.ready

véghez vin-ni.
bring.about-INF

'… that I am getting ready to bring about one of the biggest idiocies of my life.'

I suggest that speakers who produce and allow structures like (4) do so in analogy to the structure in (3). The verbs in (2) and (4) do not generally have ACC DOs and do not agree with any non-subject argument, but the verbs in (3) have ACC DOs of their own and agree with them, or straightforwardly agree with the DOs of their infinitival copmlement (hence 'long-distance' agreement).

In addition, I argue that the data shown below and found in corpora indicate that second person DOs of infinitival complements do not trigger object agreement more readily than third person objects, suggesting that there is a single agreement mechanism responsible for both (Bárány 2017). Differences in acceptability of second vs. third person objects in these contexts as reported by É. Kiss (1987: 227, 2002: 54), Kálmán C. et al. (1989: 61) and den Dikken (2004: 451) are weaker than expressed there or they might be due to other factors, including verb morphology.

At the same time, it is clear that corpus data and data from other sources on the internet do not shed light on inter-speaker variation in this question (as pointed out by one of the reviewers). Independently of this point, the goal of the paper is empirical, namely to show systematically that nearly all types of examples that are said to be ungrammatical in the existing literature on long-distance object agreement in Hungarian can be found in several sources.

2 Data

The intransitives predicates listed in (5) are said not to agree with the ACC object of their infinitival complement (see e.g. É. Kiss 1987: 226, É. Kiss 2002: 54, Kálmán C. et al. 1989: 60–61, Szécsényi & Szécsényi 2018: 79 on *igyekszik*, Kálmán C. et al. 1989: 61, den Dikken 2004: 449, 451 on *jön*, Szécsényi & Szécsényi 2018: 79 on and *készül*).

(5) **Intransitive verbs (no ACC DO) taking infinitival complements**
igyekszik 'strive', *jár* 'go (regularly)', *(el)jön* 'come', *készül* 'prepare', 'get ready', *próbálkozik* 'attempt', *siet* 'hurry', …

The transitive verbs listed in (6) allow object agreement; whether agreement appears or not depends on syntactic and semantic properties of the object (Bartos 1999, É. Kiss 2002, den Dikken 2006, Coppock & Wechsler 2012, Coppock 2013, Bárány 2015, 2017).

(6) **Transitive verbs (ACC DO) taking infinitival complements**
akar 'want', *fog* (future auxiliary), *megpróbál* 'try', *un* 'find boring', *utál* 'hate', …

2.1 Agreement of intransitive verbs with 3rd person objects

The intransitive verbs in (5) lacking ACC DOs can appear with both SBJ and OBJ agreement when they have infinitival complements, in what seem to be the exact same environments that are relevant for the transitive verbs in (6). In this section, I illustrate a selection of attested examples with the predicates listed in (5) and subjects with different φ-features. The data are from the Hungarian National Corpus, the 'Magyar nemzeti szövegtár' (MNSZ; `http://corpus.nytud.hu/mnsz/`) and other sources on the internet (see Appendix A). Each example is coded with a permutation of the digits '1', '2', and '3' in square brackets, indicating the order of the finite matrix verb (1), the infinitive (2) and the object (3).

2.1.1 First person singular subject, third person object

Clear examples of intransitive predicates that agree with a first person singular subject, as well as the object of the infinitival complement (glossed as 1SG.SBJ>3.OBJ) were only found for the predicate *készül* 'get ready'. This is partly for morphological reasons: the *-m* suffix is the syncretic exponent of 1SG.SBJ agreement in the past tense, where the distinction between object agreement and its absence is neutralised, as well as the single exponent for first person singular subjects (with or without object agreement) for the class of *-ik*-verbs, which have a 3.SG marker *-ik* in place of the regular null marker. This rules out finding relevant examples for *igyekszik* and *próbálkozik*, for example. With *készül*, I have found a total of nine examples with the form *készülök*

out of a total of 30 examples with *készül* (29 with third person objects). An example is shown in (7).

(7) OBJ — finite verb — INF [312]; Appendix A

A Windows XP-t ***készül-öm*** *levált-ani linux-ra …*
the Windows XP-ACC prepare-1SG.SBJ>3.OBJ change-INF linux-SUBL
'I am planning to switch from Windows XP to Linux.'

2.1.2 Second person singular subject, third person object

The verb forms expressing agreement with a second person singular subject and a third person object *-od/-ed/-öd* are not syncretic in the relevant configurations, and it is easier to find relevant examples for different predicates, for example *igyekszik*, *készül*, *próbálkozik*, and *siet*. In (8), the object triggering agreement is the *hogy*-CP. In (9), the infinitive's object is *pro*, licensed by object agreement on the finite verb. In addition, the verbal modifier *meg*, selected by the infinitive *nyitni*, is spelled out in a higher position in the matrix clause, a property of some but not all transitive verbs in (6) (see É. Kiss & Van Riemsdijk 2004: 18–22 for discussion).

(8) finite verb — INF — OBJ (CP) [123]; MNSZ/doc#972

Hiszen mindig ***siet-ed*** *kikér-ni magad-nak, hogy*
since always hurry-3SG.Sbj>3SG.OBJ protest that
ál-magyar len-né-l.
fake-Hungarian be-COND.3SG-SBJ
'Since you always hurry to protest that you're a fake Hungarian.'

(9) finite verb — INF — *pro* [12*pro*]; VM-climbing; Appendix A

… de most teljes üresség van, ha meg ***próbálkoz-od*** *nyit-ni.*
but now complete emptiness COP if VM try-2SG.SBJ>3.OBJ open-INF
'… but now it's completely empty if you try to open it'

2.1.3 Third person singular subject, third person object

Intransitive predicates are also attested showing agreement with a third person singular subject and the third person object of their infinitival complement. The following example illustrates *készül*. Analogous constructions with *igyekszik*, *szándékozik*, and *jár* are also attested in the data set.

(10) finite verb — INF — OBJ [123]; Appendix A

… *birtok-ba* ***készül-i*** *ven-ni az új föld-jé-t.*
possession-ILL prepare-3SG.SBJ>3.OBJ take-INF the new land-3SG-ACC
'… he wants to take his new plot of land into possession.'

2.1.4 First person plural subject, third person object

First person plural subjects n the relevant constructions are shown here for *készül* and *siet*, and are also attested for *igyekszik* and *szándékozik*.

(11) INF— finite verb — OBJ [213]; Appendix A

… *megválaszt-juk a ruhá-nk-at, megcsinál-juk a*
choose-1PL.SBJ>3.OBJ the clothes-1PL-ACC do-1PL.SBJ>3.OBJ the
frizurá-nk-at, az internetes húspiac-on is ugyanúgy elad-ni
hair-1PL-ACC the internet.ADJ meat market-SUPE too likewise sell-INF
készül-jük *magunk-at.*
prepare-1PL.SBJ>3.OBJ REFL.1PL-ACC
'… we choose our clothes, we do our hair, and in the same way we prepare to sell ourselves on the online meat market.'

(12) finite verb — INF — OBJ [123]; Appendix A

Egy-egy ugrás-sal ***siet-t-ük*** *utolér-ni a civilizáció-ban és a*
one-one jump-COM hurry-PST-1PL catch up-INF the civilisation-INE and the
politikai előhaladás-ban a többi európai nemzet-ek-et …
political progress-INE the other European nation-PL-ACC
'We hurried to catch up the other European nations in civilisation and political progress with one step or another …'

2.1.5 Second person plural subject, third person object

The following examples have second person plural subjects. (13), with *készül*, again shows a *pro* object.

(13) finite verb — INF — *pro*; Appendix A

Mennyi-ért ***készül-itek*** *ven-ni?*
how much-for prepare-2PL.SBJ>3.OBJ buy-INF
'For how much are you preparing to buy it [a computer]?'

(14) finite verb — OBJ — INF [132]; Appendix A

… *azon kívül, hogy* ***igyeksz-itek*** *ez-t a rémálm-ot*
that apart that strive-2PL.SBJ>3.OBJ this-ACC the nightmare-ACC
elfelejt-eni, …
forget-INF
'… apart from the fact that you strive to forget this nightmare …'

2.1.6 *Third person plural subject, third person object*

Finally (15) illustrates a third person plural subject and agreement with third person definite objects (3PL.OBJ):

(15) OBJ — INF — finite verb [321]; MNSZ/doc#901

… *hogy valaki-k a Fővárosi Önkormányzat-ot meg-károsít-ani*
that someone-PL the capital.ADJ local.government-ACC VM-harm-INF
szándékoz-zák *vagy* ***szándékoz-t-ák***
intend-3PL.SBJ>3.OBJ or intend-PST-3PL.SBJ>3.OBJ
'that some people intend or intended to harm the General Assembly of Budapest'

3 Distribution of agreement

3.1 Agreement and person

Table 1 shows that object agreement with third person definite objects is found with intransitive verbs, in contrast to many claims in the literature. This is true for any combination of person of subject and object where object agreement is overtly coded. In particular, the difference between agreement with second and third person objects is not categorical: both can trigger object agreement. Each cell in Table 1 has at least one attested instance of agreement with an object of that person, with a reference to the examples in this paper. In the empty cells in Table 1, there are no distinct object agreement forms in the first place.

It is clear, however, that the overall frequency of long-distance agreement with these predicates that do not take ACC DOs is much lower than with transitive verbs like *akar*, for example. Table 2 shows the distribution of different person combinations for *igyekszik*, *készül* and *szándékozik* as well as *akar* from the MNSZ (disregarding examples

SBJ / OBJ	1	2	3
1SG		(2c)	(7)
1PL			(11), (12)
2SG			(8), (9)
2PL			(13), (14)
3SG			(10)
3PL			(15)

Table 1 Distribution of LDA with intransitive matrix verbs

from other sources). For the intransitive verbs, these are the total number of occurrences in both present and past tense, while for *akar* I randomly sampled 500 occurrences for each tense, with 371 present and 416 past occurrences remaining after removing misclassified examples and duplicates. 1SG>3 is not taken into account because of syncretism of the relevant forms.

	1PL>3	1SG>2	2SG>3	2PL>3	3SG>3	3PL>3
igyekszik	84 (24.2%)	17 (4.9%)	13 (3.8%)	0	84 (24.2%)	148 (42.8%)
készül	2 (20%)	0	0	0	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
szándékozik	43 (11.8%)	0	8 (2.2%)	1 (0.3%)	156 (42.9%)	173 (47.5%)
akar	50 (6.5%)	13 (1.7%)	31 (3.9%)	3 (0.4%)	437 (55.5%)	253 (32.1%)

Table 2 Distribution of person configurations for different verbs from the MNSZ

While the totals for each row differ strongly, the distribution of person forms in each row is relatively similar. Third person subjects are the most frequent for each verb. While this is probably partly due the nature of the texts in the corpus, it is worth noting that 1PL>3 forms are more frequent than 1SG>2 for each verb as well, even though 1SG>2 has been claimed to be the only grammatical form of long-distance agreement for intransitive verbs such as *igyekszik*.

3.2 Word orders

The examples in Section 2 show five of the six possible permutations of the order of the finite matrix verb (1), the infinitive (2) and the object (3), shown in Table 3.

Orders 312 and 213 indicate movement of either the object (312) or the infinitive (213) into the matrix clause, often as a focus. It is clear that the resulting adjacency is not necessary for object agreement to occur. Order 231 involves fronting both the

	123	132	213	231	312	321
Ex.	(8), (10), (12), (19)	(14)	(11)		(4), (7)	(15)

Table 3 Distribution of word orders in the examples in this paper

infinitive, as a (contrastive) topic, and the object, as a matrix focus; an attested example with the transitive verb *akar* is shown in (16):

(16) INF — OBJ — finite verb [231]; MNSZ/doc#2201

... de legyűr-ni ők-et valójában nem akar-t-ák.
but overcome-INF 3PL-ACC really not want-PST-3PL.SBJ>3.OBJ
'... but they really did not want to overcome them.'

I do not see a principled reason for ruling out 231 (as in (16)) with an intransitive verb like *igyekszik*, *készül*, etc., given the range of data found with other orders shown in Table 3. This is arguably supported by the fact that, among the 787 examples of *akar* with infinitival complements, (16) was the only example with 231 order, suggesting that this order is generally rare, not just when the matrix verb is intransitive.

Table 4 shows the distribution of word orders for the four verbs from Table 2 with their proportions. Once again, the total numbers considerably differ for the intransitive verbs vs. *akar*, but the distributions are similar: 123 is the most common order for *igyekszik*, *szándékozik* and *akar*, with 312 the second most frequent.

	123	132	213	231	312	321	*pro*
igyekszik	174 (50%)	36 (10.4%)	5 (1.4%)	0	93 (26.9%)	6 (1.7%)	32 (9.2%)
készül	3 (27.3%)	0	6 (54.5%)	0	1 (9%)	0	2 (18.2%)
szándékozik	102 (26.7%)	22 (5.8%)	35 (9.2%)	0	161 (42.3%)	30 (7.9%)	31 (8.1%)
akar	361 (45.8%)	50 (6.4%)	35 (4.4%)	1 (0.0%)	221 (28.1%)	7 (0.9%)	112 (14.2%)

Table 4 Distribution of word orders for different verbs from the MNSZ

3.3 Agreement and past tense

Den Dikken (2004) points out that the grammaticality of object agreement, in particular 2nd person agreement, depends on tense with verbs forming 'come/go verb aspectual constructions'. For example, *jön* can form a 1SG>2.OBJ form in the past but not the present tense, as shown in (17).

(17) *Jö-tt-elek* / * *jö-lek* *meg-látogat-ni* (*téged*).
come-PST-1SG>2.OBJ come-1SG>2.OBJ VM-visit-INF you.ACC
'I came to visit you.' (den Dikken 2004: 451)

Other verbs with similar semantics and argument structure, like *jár* 'go (regularly)' can form 1SG>2.OBJ:

(18) *Jár-lak* / *jár-ta-lak* *meg-látogat-ni* (téged).
go-1SG>2.OBJ go-PST-1SG>2.OBJ VM-visit-INF
'I go to visit you regularly.'

One reason for why past tense forms like *jö-tt-elek* 'come-PST-1SG>2.OBJ' are more acceptable than their present tense counterparts **jö(l)-lek* 'come-1SG>2.OBJ' lies in morphology. The present tense forms of *jön*, *megy*, *van* are irregular, while their past tense forms are regular, based on a single stem ending in *-t*. It is straightforward to form analogical (agreeing) patterns based on transitive forms in the past; this is not possible in the present tense — cf. Table 5.

	Present	Past	Present	Past
1SG	*jöv-ök*	*jö-tt-em*	*jár-ok*	*jár-t-am*
2SG	*jö-sz*	*jö-tt-él*	*jár-sz*	*jár-t-ál*
3SG	*jön*	*jö-tt*	*jár*	*jár-t*
1PL	*jöv-ünk*	*jö-tt-ünk*	*jár-unk*	*jár-t-unk*
2PL	*jöt-tök*	*jö-tt-etek*	*jár-tok*	*jár-t-atok*
3PL	*jön-nek*	*jö-tt-ek*	*jár-nak*	*jár-t-ak*

Table 5 Present and past tense forms of *jön* 'come' (irregular) and *jár* 'go (regularly)'

As den Dikken (2004) also mentions, *jár*, while generally intransitive, can be used transitively with locational objects straightforwardly (also with different verbal modifiers), for example in *jár-ja az útját* 'she/he is going her/his way'. In contrast to the predicates in Section 2, however, it agrees with the object of the infinitive in even fewer cases. An attested example is shown in (19).

(19) finite verb — INF — OBJ [123]; Appendix A

Két nap-ig a falu nép-e jár-t-a néz-ni a
two day-TERM the village people-3SG go-PST-3SG.SBJ>3.OBJ watch-INF the
fölakasztott ember-t.
hung person-ACC
'The villagers went to watch the hung person for two days.'

It is not clear what causes different frequencies of long-distance agreement in the present and past tense, although morphological regularity arguably plays a role. For *igyekszik*, *szándékozik* and *akar*, past tense forms are more frequent in the MNSZ, although this is probably again influenced by the nature of the texts in the corpus. The ratios of past tense to present are roughly equal for *szándékozik* (1.14) and *akar* (1.18) but higher for *igyekszik* (6.69). This could be related to morphology as well: *igyekszik* has less regular present tense forms than *szándékozik* and *akar*.

3.4 Summary

The main difference between typical long-distance agreement with a transitive verb like *akar* and the intransitive verbs surveyed in Section 2 is in the overall frequency of the constructions. The total occurrences of *igyekszik* (346) and *szándékozik* (381) with long-distance agreement in the MNSZ are a fraction of the total for *akar*. The distribution of long-distance agreement with respect to the person of the object (and the subjcet) as well as word orders does not seem to differ strongly for different verbs (see Tables 2 and 4). The fact that a range of verbs that do not take ACC objects appear in a long-distance agreement construction in the MNSZ and other sources clearly indicates that there is no general ban on object agreement with these verbs.

4 Towards an analysis

The data in the previous sections showed that agreement between an intransitive matrix verb and the infinitive's object, albeit much less frequent than with transitive verbs, is nevertheless *regular*, i.e. a definite second or third person object can trigger object agreement. The attested patterns are schematically shown in (20).

(20) a. [V-SBJ … [$_{\text{INF}}$ V DP-DEF]] ✔
b. [V-OBJ … [$_{\text{INF}}$ V DP-DEF]] ✔
c. [V-SBJ … [$_{\text{INF}}$ V DP-INDEF]] ✔
d. [V-OBJ … [$_{\text{INF}}$ V DP-INDEF]] ✘

Transitive matrix verbs show types (20b,c). Intransitive verbs can additionally show type (20a). But neither class would show (20d), e.g. object agreement with an indefinite object.

The intransitives verbs discussed so far include both unergative verbs (*igyekszik* 'strive to do sth.', *siet* 'hurry') and unaccusatives (*jön* 'come'). The contrast between unergativity and unaccusativity can therefore not explain which verbs can show long-distance object agreement. Instead, I suggest that variation is due to the nature of the *v* head involved in these structures (and I assume, with Adger 2003 for example, that *v*

is found with unaccusatives as well). Transitive *v* in Hungarian generally has a probe and when this probe agrees with a definite goal (the direct object), the verb shows object agreement (Bárány 2017).

A reviewer stresses that unergative verbs can also have a probe, as they can show object agreement in both long-distance and simple constructions. In (21a), provided by the anonymous reviewer, the verbal modifier *ki* 'out' arguably changes the argument structure and aspect of the root *fütyül* 'whistle' (cf. É. Kiss 2004, Csirmaz 2008, Szécsényi & Szécsényi 2020), but similar examples are found without verbal modifiers as well, for example (21b) or (21c).

(21) a. *Ki-fütyül-t-ék* *a* *színész-t* *a* *színpad-ról.*
out-whistle-PST-3PL.SBJ>3.OBJ the actor-ACC the stage-SUBL
'They whistled the actor off the stage.'

b. *Mari* *tüsszent-ett* *egy* *nagy-ot.*
Mari sneeze-PST a big-ACC
'Mari sneezed a big sneeze.'

c. *Mari* *tüsszent-ett-e* *a* *leg-nagy-obb-at.*
Mari sneeze-PST-3SG.SBJ>3.OBJ a SUPL-big-CMPR-ACC
'Mari sneezed the biggest sneeze.'

On the one hand, this suggests that with unergative verbs, we *expect* there to be long-distance object agreement, when they have a probe. On the other hand, it remains unclear whether object agreement in examples like (21a,c) really indicates that unergative verbs *always* feature a probe, since in certain cases even unaccusative verbs can show object agreement in Hungarian (Csirmaz 2008: §5.3 treats the adjective in (21b,c) and (22) as modifying the degree argument of a predicate expressing an activity):[2]

(22) *Csökken-t* *a* *rettegés,* *de* *megint* *a* *BUX* *es-t-e* *a*
lessen-PST.3SG the terror but again the BUX fall-PST-3SG.SBJ>3.OBJ the
leg-nagy-obb-at
SUPL-big-CMPR-ACC
'The terror lessened, but again the BUX fell the biggest fall.'

In (22), the verb *esik* is unaccusative — yet it has an object it agrees with. It seems, then, that both unergative and unaccusative verbs can show object agreement, even though they usually do not select a direct object.

[2](22) is taken from `https://privatbankar.hu/reszveny/csokkent-a-retteges-de-megint-a-bux-este-a-legnagyobbat-316541`.

Returning to cases of long-distance object agreement, how can we derive the pattern in (20)? I suggest that in the grammars of the majority of Hungarian speakers (only) the following structures are grammatical:

(23) a. [*v*[φ] V_1 … [$_{INF}$ V_{INF} (DP)]] (V_1 = *akar*, *fog*, …)

b. [*v*[ ] V_2 … [$_{INF}$ V_{INF} (DP)]] (V_2 = *igyekszik*, *készül*, …)

The predicates *akar*, *fog* etc. generally select an object and we can assume that the *v* appearing with them always has a φ-probe. In contrast, *igyekszik*, *készül* etc. do not generally select an object and their *v* therefore does not have a φ-probe.

I suggest that this difference in selectional properties is the main difference between the two types of verbs. Consequently, (23) is 'regular' and therefore arguably the most common representation of agreement.

However, (23) does not explain the agreement patterns of the data shown in Section 2. I propose that speakers who accept and produce those data generalised the pattern in (23a) to all structures in which the main verb has regular morphology and the infinitival complement has an ACC object, independently of whether the main verb is transitive or intransitive. For these speakers, (24) is also grammatical:

(24) [*v*[φ] V_1 … [$_{INF}$ V_{INF} (DP)]] (V_1 = *akar*, *igyekszik*, *készül*, …)

I assume that generalising the pattern might work along the following lines: since the generalisation involves not only single lexical items, but larger structures, it is possible that a minority of speakers generalises (23a) as a *construction* (cf. Croft & Cruse 2004: §§9–10, Blevins & Blevins 2009: 8–11). It might also be possible to interpret (23a) as a *conventionalized expression* (in terms of Bruening 2020), that is a schematic collocation such as *igyekszik* + V_{INF} + DP or *akar* + V_{INF} + DP, which is more complex than a single lexical item. Bruening (2020) argues that in addition to non-literal idioms such as *to kick the bucket* meaning *to die*, non-idiomatic phrases can also be taken to have complex representations. I therefore assume that a minority of speakers generalise (24) *with* a φ-probe, independently of whether the main verb (V_1) is transitive or intransitive. It follows that in the grammar of these speakers, object agreement happens 'regularly' and in the same manner it does in the majority's grammar: the only difference is whether *v* has a probe or not.

Based on (24), the following patterns arise:

(25) a. Agreement with a definite third person object

… [$_{vP}$ *v*[uφ] [$_{VP}$ [$_{XP}$ V.INF DP.DEF]]]

✔ Agree

b. No agreement with an indefinite third person object

… [$_{vP}$ *v*[uφ] [$_{VP}$ [$_{XP}$ V.INF DP.INDEF]]]

✖ Agree

c. No probe on intransitive *v*
... [$_{vP}$ *v* [$_{VP}$ [$_{XP}$ V.INF DP.DEF/INDEF]]]

5 Conclusions

My aim in this paper was to show that long-distance object agreement in Hungarian is more variable than generally claimed in the literature. According to the most common view, intransitive main verbs can only show subject agreement (or the *-lak/-lek* suffix indicating a first person subject agreeing with a second person object), independently of the definiteness of the object of their infinitival complement.

In contrast, in this paper I presented data from the Hungarian National Corpus and other online sources in which an intransitive matrix verb can agree with the object of its infinitival complement. This agreement can appear with any (otherwise valid) configuration of subject and object person and number and is available independently of whether the verb is unergative or unaccusative. I suggested that these data could indicate that for some speakers there is a single mechanism underlying agreement with second and third person objects (in accordance with Bárány 2017, but *contra* Szécsényi & Szécsényi 2020 who argue for distinct agreement mechanisms).

I hypothesised that agreement between the intransitive verb and the definite object arises through syntactic analogy. Even with transitive verbs, the matrix verb does not select the object of its infinitival complement, yet it can agree with it. I suggested that a minority of Hungarian speakers generalises these structures so that they formally treat intransitive verbs as transitive (that is, as having a φ-probe) in the relevant constructions, thus giving rise to 'regular' object agreement.

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A Sources

See http://github.com/andrasbarany/hungarian-lda/ for the full data set which also includes the search terms used in the MNSZ as well as their document identifiers, and URLs for the data from other sources on the internet.

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