

Hungarian pronominal case and the dichotomy of content and form in inflectional morphology

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Abstract Hungarian nouns take some seventeen or so suffixal case inflections, e.g. *ház* ‘house (nominative)’ ~ *ház-ban* ‘in a house (inessive)’. Personal pronouns have corresponding case-marked forms but these are not formed by means of suffixal case inflections. Instead, postposition-like stems expressing the individual cases are inflected for each pronoun’s person and number in exactly the same way that nouns inflect for possessor agreement or true postpositions inflect for a pronominal complement (inessive *benn-e* ‘in him’, *benn-ük* ‘in them; cf. *könyv-e* ‘his book’, *könyv-ük* ‘their book’ from the noun *könyv*; *mögött-e* ‘behind him’, *mögött-ük* ‘behind them’ from the postposition *mögött*). This manner of case marking embodies a highly unusual pattern of ‘functor-argument reversal’, which is problematic for many models of morphosyntax. In our account of this phenomenon, we adopt the modification of Stump’s (2001) Paradigm Function Morphology proposed by Stump (2002); this modification (‘PFM2’) distinguishes form paradigms (expressing morphological properties) from content paradigms (expressing syntactic properties). We also distinguish absolute forms from (bound) conjunct forms of the case postpositions. Pronominal case forms are built on the case postpositions’ absolute forms and a rule of paradigm linkage that effects functor-argument reversal guarantees that their person-number inflection realizes the content of each pronoun.

Keywords Paradigm Function Morphology · Hungarian case · Pronoun · Rule of referral · Paradigm linkage · Functor-argument reversal

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