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Hungarian idioms in the predicative adverbial participle construction

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to investigate the occurrence of Hungarian V+NP idioms in predicative adverbial participle constructions. The study is based on the cognitive treatment of idioms, which claims that only analyzable expressions allow the various syntactic variations. To test this hypothesis, I collected 100 Hungarian idioms and examined them with respect to their analyzability. Then I made a grammaticality judgement test in which the investigated idioms were put into the *lett+V+-va/ve* construction. The respondents of the test had to decide whether the expressions are grammatical or not in the given contexts. This paper reports the results of this investigation.
Keywords: idioms, Hungarian, predicative adverbial participle, cognitive

1   Introduction

The syntactic variability of idioms has always received a great amount of attention as even expressions that have the same structure show differences with respect to the possible alterations they allow.

(1) a.   *The hatchet has been buried by George and John.*
    b.   **The dust was bitten by Andrew yesterday.*
(2) a.   *A   stafétabot   át   lett   ad-va   Péter-nek.*
          the   baton   over became give-VA Peter-for
          'The baton has been given to Peter.'
    b.   **Mikor   a   betörő   meg-hall-ott-a   a   rendőrautó*
          when   the   burglar PERF-hear-PAST-3SG   the   police.car
          sziréná-já-t,   a   csík   rögtön   el   lett   húz-va.
          siren-POSS.3SG-ACC, the   stripe immediately away became pull-VA
          'When the burglar heard the siren of the police car, tracks were immediately made (by him).'

All the above examples contain a V+NP idiom. However, only those in the (a) sentences (*bury the hatchet* and *átadja a stafétabotot* 'pass the baton') can occur in passive and predicative adverbial participle constructions, whereas the other two (*bite the dust* and *elhúzza a csíkot*

'make tracks') lose their figurative interpretation in such structures.[1] This paper addresses this problem, and aims to investigate which Hungarian idioms allow the *lett+verb+-va/ve* ('became+V+-va/ve') predicative adverbial participle variation. The study will be based on the cognitive linguistic treatment of idioms, especially on Langlotz (2006a) and Lakoff (1987).

2   Theoretical framework

2.1   *Lexical units or phrases with internal semantic structure?*

It is a much-debated issue within linguistics whether idioms should be treated as lexical units or phrases with internal semantic structure. A great number of approaches – mainly generative grammars – claim that idioms are stored in the mental lexicon, and behave like words both syntactically and semantically. Moreover, in spite of the fact that these expressions are built out of more than one word, they cannot be considered compositional, as their overall figurative meaning is not deducible from the individual word meanings of the constituent parts. This view is supported by various psycholinguistic experiments. For instance, Ortony et al. (1978) and Swinney & Cutler (1979) investigate the accessibility time of certain expressions' idiomatic meaning. The findings of both studies show that the figurative interpretation is processed faster than the literal meaning of the same expression. This result correlates with the findings of another experiment in which various strings of words were shown to the respondents who had to decide whether the expressions were valid in English or not. The result was that idiomatic expressions were processed faster than the literal ones (Glass 1983). These timemeasurement studies are also supported by Gibbs' (1986) *direct access hypothesis*. According to this, the figurative interpretation of an idiom always has priority over the literal meaning. Consequently, idioms must have a lexical status and behave like any other words stored in the mental lexicon.

Given the fact that idioms have different transformational potentials, another group of linguistic approaches argue that the non-compositional treatment of idioms is problematic in many ways. Since native speakers are not taught which idioms can undergo a particular syntactic operation, and this competence cannot be explained by the frequency of occurrence of particular syntactic structures, either, Titone & Connine (1999) claim that the non-compositional view of idioms is not able to provide an explanation for the agreement between speakers about the possible syntactic variations. To solve this problem, semantics should also be involved, and, actually, put into the centre of the treatment of idioms (Chafe 1968, Burger 1973, Newmeyer 1974, Langlotz 2006a). This is only possible if we consider idioms phrases which have internal semantic structures.

The cognitive linguistic treatment of idioms is based on this idea. According to this approach, language use is determined by human cognition and the way speakers perceive the world and the events around them. This conceptualization process is especially important in the case of idioms, as these expressions arise from our background knowledge of the world being part of our conceptual system (Kövecses & Szabó 1996, Kövecses 2010). This idea is supported by a number of experiments in which the respondents were asked to describe what images they had in mind related to particular idioms. The results show that most people con-

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[1]   Morphological glosses of the Hungarian expressions can be seen in the Appendix.

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ceptualize the idioms examined roughly the same way, even with respect to very small details (Lakoff 1987, Gibbs & O'Brien 1990).[2] All of these suggest that conceptualization is a crucial factor in idiom processing, and it enables us to understand a certain idiom even if we have never encountered it before. On the basis of this, Cognitive Linguistics argues that idioms are not arbitrary but motivated parts of the language, and this motivation is facilitated by various cognitive mechanisms such as conceptual metaphors, metonymies, blending, or emblems.

Motivation plays a very significant role in that a great number of idioms can be considered analyzable.[3] Lakoff (1987) points out that when we hear an idiom, a mental image is evoked in our mind which facilitates a mapping process between the individual word meanings and the overall idiomatic meaning of the expression. Langlotz (2006a) points out that an idiom is isomorphic if correspondences can be found between the figurative and the literal meanings of its component parts, and this correspondence is granted by motivation.[4] For instance, the idiom *spill the beans* ('reveal a secret') is motivated by two conceptual metaphors: THE MIND IS A CONTAINER and IDEAS ARE ENTITIES.[5] On the basis of these, the verb *spill* can be mapped onto *reveal* whereas the noun *beans* corresponds to *secret*.[6] It is obvious that motivation and isomorphism have a dependency relationship, however, it should be emphasized that this is a one-way relationship: isomorphism depends on motivation whereas motivation can exist without isomorphism. As a consequence, two main groups of idioms can be distinguished: analyzable and unanalyzable. According to Langlotz (2006a), this distinction plays a very significant role in explaining why there are differences in the syntactic variability of idioms.

2.2   *Hungarian predicative adverbial participle constructions*

According to several theories (e.g., Alberti 1998, Márkus 2008), the Hungarian predicative adverbial structure resembles the passive voice. Alberti (1998) argues that the passivization rule has two components: the suppression of the agent on the one hand, and the placement of the patient argument into the subject position on the other. On the basis of which component they apply, three groups of languages can be distinguished. To the first group those languages belong that employ both elements of the rule. This is a characteristic of the English language, which, as a consequence, allows the passivization of transitive verbs only. In the case of the

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[2]   For example, in Lakoff's (1987: 447) study, the mental image activated in most people's mind when hearing the idiom *keep someone at arm's length* can be described as the following: the arm is tense, positioned at the height of the chest and stretched forward with open palm toward the other person.

[3]   In Langlotz (2006a), *analyzability* is used interchangeably with another term, *isomorphism*.

[4]   Based on Geereart's (1995: 60) definition, as cited by Langlotz (2006a: 115): an expression is isomorphic if "a one-to-one correspondence between the parts of the semantic value of a compound meaning as a whole and the constituent parts can be detected".

[5]   The following mental image is based on these metaphors: the container in which beans are kept has a similar size to the human head (cf. Lakoff 1987: 449).

[6]   Lakoff (1993) and Kövecses & Szabó (1996) argue that two types of metaphoric mapping have to be distinguished: ontological and epistemic. The former refers to correspondences between the entities and the events of the source and target domains (illustrated in the example), whereas epistemic mapping carries over "knowledge about entities and events in the source domain onto entities and events in the target domain" (Kövecses & Szabó 1996: 336). Moreover, this type of mapping provides additional, more specific meanings than ontological mapping. For instance, *spill the beans* cannot fully be equated with reveal a secret, as it refers to an unintentional action that is not implied by its paraphrase. We know that beans are very small entities, and if they are spilled, it is very difficult to collect them. Thus, it rarely happens that someone spills beans deliberately. Assigning this additional meaning to the idiom is facilitated by epistemic mapping.

second type, the suppression of the agent argument is applied. This is the reason why, for instance, in Norwegian and German not only transitive verbs but unergative verbs can undergo the passivization process. Finally, there is a third group of languages in which only the second component of the Albertian rule is used. Hungarian belongs to this type, and, according to Alberti (1998), the predicative adverbial participle construction serves this function; therefore, the *copula+verb+-va/ve* structure can be considered passive. In addition, given the fact that this component of the passivization rule places the patient argument into the subject position of the sentence, both transitive and unaccusative verbs can be involved in the process. Consider the following examples:

(3) a. *A   tó   be-fagy-ott.*
       the   lake   into-freeze-PAST
       'The lake is frozen over.'
   b. *A   tó   be   van   fagy-va.*
       the   lake   into   is   freeze-VA
       'The lake is frozen over.'
(4) a. *János   meg-javít-ott-a   az   autó-t.*
       John   PERF-repair-PAST-3SG   the   car-ACC
       'John repaired the car.'
   b. *Az   autó   meg   van   javít-va.*
       the   car   PERF   is   repair-VA
       'The car is repaired.'

Laczkó (1995), however, points out that although the predicative adverbial participle construction is similar to the English passive voice with respect to its formal traits, the function of the two cannot be equated. According to him, the Hungarian version can only indicate a state that is a result of a preceding process, but the process itself is never denoted. Moreover, it cannot express the agent argument, either, whereas this function is served by the *by phrase* in English:

(5)   *Az   ablak   be   van   tör-ve   (*János által).*
       the   window   into   is   break-VE   (*John by)
(6)   The window is broken (by John).

On the basis of this, Laczkó (1995) claims that the Hungarian predicative adverbial participle structure can be regarded as adjectival rather than participial. Consider, however, the following sentences:

(7) a. *A   tó   be   van   fagy-va.*
       the   lake   into   is   freeze-VA
       'The lake is frozen over.'
   b. **A   tó   be   lett   fagy-va.*
       the   lake   into   became freeze-VA
       'The lake has become frozen over.'
(8) a. *Az   autó   meg   van   javít-va.*
       the   car   PERF   is   repair-VA
       'The car is repaired.' (state)

b. *Az   autó   meg   lett   javít-va.*
   the   car   PERF   became   repair-VA
   'The car has been repaired.' (process)

According to Laczkó (1995), if the future tense copula *lesz* 'become' or its past tense form *lett* 'became' is used instead of the copulas *van* 'be' and *volt* 'was/were', the structure becomes more dynamic and, thereby, more acceptable as a process-denoting construction. As a consequence, it resembles the passive to a greater extent than with the present or past tense copulas. There is, however, a difference between the behaviour of *lesz* and *lett*: the former is possible with both transitive and unaccusative verbs, whereas the *lett+V+-va/ve* structure is only used with transitives.

(9) a. *A   tó   be   lesz   fagy-va.*
     the   lake   into   become   frozen-VA
     'The lake will be frozen over.'
  b. *Az   autó   meg   lesz   javít-va.*
     the   car   PERF   become   repair-VA
     'The car will be repaired.'

In my investigation, the acceptability of the selected Hungarian idioms will be tested only in the *lett+V+-va/ve* predicative adverbial participle construction.

2.3   The cognitive treatment of idiom passivization

Above we have pointed out that idioms are motivated by various cognitive mechanisms. In the case of a huge number of idioms, this motivation facilitates the mapping between the expression's literal and abstract meanings. These are called analyzable or decomposable. There are, however, some idioms which are motivated but their literal and figurative interpretations are not isomorphic regarding either the syntactic or the semantic roles of their constituents. These are unanalyzable or non-decomposable expressions. According to Langlotz (2006a), the different variational potentials of idioms can be captured by this motivation-analyzability relationship. Now let me discuss how it can contribute to passivization.

Langacker (1994) argues that the alternation between the passive and active voices can be related to the so-called trajector/landmark alignment. In Cognitive Linguistics, the relationship between two or more participants is called a profiled relationship. In this relationship, depending on which is in the focus position, the participants are called trajector (primary figure) and landmark (secondary figure). The trajector is always the active participant (the subject), whereas the landmark is the affected participant of the event. Passivization means a trajector/landmark reversal, that is, the patient (the landmark of the active sentence) is put into the position of the trajector, while the agent (the trajector of the active construction) becomes the landmark of the passive sentence. Evans & Green (2006: 609) point out that this active/ passive alternation serves discourse functions: "the speaker intends to draw the hearer's attention to a given participant by making that participant prominent".

If we apply this to idioms with a lexically specified direct object slot, the following can be concluded. Given the fact that the cognitive linguistic treatment of idioms takes both the literal and the figurative meanings into account, the above-mentioned dynamic relation be-

tween the trajector and the landmark must be present at both levels of interpretation.[7] As isomorphism is only shown by decomposable idioms, Langlotz (2006a: 251-252) argues that only these allow passivization, whereas the unanalyzable expressions lose their idiomatic meaning when passivized. Consider the following example:

(10) a. *John has spilled the beans. = John has revealed the secret.*
     b. *The beans have been spilled by John. = The secret has been revealed by John.*

Obviously, both the literal and the idiomatic meanings of *spill the beans* express transitive situations. As pointed out earlier, the underlying conceptual metaphors of this expression are THE MIND IS A CONTAINER and IDEAS ARE ENTITIES. These facilitate the fact that the agents and the patients of the two levels are isomorphic, as *spill* can be identified with *reveal* on the one hand, and *beans* corresponds to *secret* on the other. Therefore, the trajector-landmark reversal can occur, and the idiom allows passivization.

In contrast, the expression *kick the bucket* does not meet the requirements. Although its literal meaning expresses a transitive relation, its figurative interpretation is an intransitive verb ('to die) which cannot be passivized.

(11) a. *John kicked the bucket. = John died.*
     b. *The bucket was kicked by John. ≠ John died.*

There is an additional difference between the two interpretations with respect to the thematic role of their subjects, as well: the first argument of *kick* is an agent whereas the one-place predicate *die* takes an experiencer. Given that an experiencer argument always refers to that participant of a particular event who is mentally involved, it can never be defocused (Langlotz 2006a: 252-253).

As pointed out above, the Hungarian predicative adverbial participle construction is similar to the passive. Therefore, my investigation in the following will be based on this cognitive model of idiom passivization.

3   Data analysis

In this study I investigated 100 Hungarian V+NP idioms whose direct object slot was lexically specified. As the literature deals mainly with English idioms, and the investigation of the Hungarian expressions' syntactic behaviour is a fairly neglected area within linguistics, my aim in this research was to test the cognitive linguistic hypothesis claiming that only analyzable idioms are open to syntactic variations.

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7   Burger (1998), as cited by Langlotz (2006a), criticizes this view and argues that isomorphism is highly dependent on the fact that idioms can be paraphrased in various ways. Langlotz (2006a) rejects this claim, and referring to Nunberg (1978: 125) he points out that the cognitive approach does not rely on particular paraphrases. For example, in the case of V + NP idioms, isomorphism is present only if the expression describes a state or an activity that can be identified as an open Rxb relation where 'R' stands for the relation referred to by the verb, 'x' is the referent for the subject, and 'b' refers to the object. That is, if the action denoted by verb of the idiom can be identified as R, and the referent of its NP object as b, the two scenes of interpretation will be isomorphic.

3.1   Research data and methods

For this study 100 Hungarian idioms have been selected form three collections of idioms (Bárdosi & Kiss 2005, Hadrovics 1995, O. Nagy 1979). Then, each idiom was analyzed with respect to how it is motivated and whether its literal and idiomatic meanings show isomorphism with one another.[8] On the basis of this, all expressions were classified into two types: analyzable and unanalyzable. Thus, I had an expectation for each idiom regarding its ability of forming the predicative adverbial participle structure.

The next step was to create a questionnaire in which all of the 100 idioms in the *lett+V+-va/ve* construction were placed into a one- or two-sentence context. The respondents had to decide whether they consider the structures acceptable or not. Given that the predicative adverbial participle construction in general sounds a bit strange for many native speakers of Hungarian, in addition to the answers 'it sounds natural' and 'it is not acceptable at all', I provided a third possible answer: 'it sounds a bit strange but it is acceptable'. When evaluating the results, I counted the number of the answers 'it sounds natural' and 'it sounds a bit strange but it is acceptable' together, as both imply that the structure is acceptable in that particular form. Finally, I compared the results of the test with the previous expectations.

Filling in the questionnaire was voluntary. The number of respondents was 36 (26 women and 10 men). Their age ranged from 21 to 47. Each educational level was represented from eight classes to postgraduate; however, the majority of the subjects were graduated people (12 BA and 18 MA).

3.2   Results and discussion

3.2.1   Analyzable idioms

On the basis of the investigation of motivatedness and isomorphism, 69 of the 100 selected idioms were considered analyzable. In most cases, a conceptual metaphor served as an underlying motivation (e.g., *kiveti a hálóját valakire*;[9] out-cast the net.POSS.3SG-ACC someone-onto; 'to set one's cap at someone'), but there were also some idioms that were based on other cognitive mechanisms. For instance, in the expression *elküldi valakinek a selyemzsinórt* (away-send someone-to the silk.cord-ACC; 'to give somebody the sack'), *selyemzsinór* functions as the emblem of ordering someone to resign. This symbol originates from the Ottoman Empire: if the sultan sent the silk cord to someone, it symbolized that he lost his trust in that particular person, and the person had to commit suicide. This tradition has disappeared and today we use this expression in a weaker sense, i.e. to refer to a command of resignation. The consequence of this disappearance, however, may be the fact that the motivation of this idiom is not clear to every native speaker, so some of them may consider it opaque.[10] As this research did not aim to investigate the respondents' analyzability judgements, it should be emphasized that the ex-

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[8]   For this analysis two sources of conceptual metaphors have been used: Lakoff, Espenson & Schwartz (1991) and Langlotz's (2006b) supplementary online material available at http://www.idiomatic-creativity.ch.

[9]   The motivating metaphors are purposeful activity is fishing, means of the activity is the tool, the aim of the activity is the fish (cf. Langlotz's (2006b) supplementary online material available at http://www.idiomatic-creativity.ch/).

[10]   As I was not sure that the respondents of the grammaticality judgement test are familiar with *elküldi valakinek a selyemzsinórt* ('give somebody the sack') and *elhányja a rezet* ('get cold feet'), I also provided their meanings in brackets.

pectations regarding the analyzability of the selected idioms were based on my intuitions. However, it could also be useful to carry out analyzability judgement tests in order to have more reliable results.

Under the cognitive hypothesis of idiom passivization, my expectation was that expressions belonging to the analyzable class are able to form the predicative adverbial participle construction. However, the results of the grammaticality judgement test show that the respondents consider only 58 of the 69 decomposable idioms grammatical in this structure. To find out why the remaining 11 expressions are unacceptable, I investigated them from several aspects.

In the case of four idioms, a possessive relationship can be found in which the possession in the object position is the property of the agent. This, itself, would not block the use of the *lett+V+-va/ve* structure, since the similar *kijátssza az utolsó kártyáját* (out-play the last card-POSS.3SG-ACC; 'play one's last card') can occur in the construction.[11] Consider, however, the four idioms:

(12) a. *jól   meg-rág-ja   a   sza-va-i-t*
    well   PERF-chew-3SG   the   word-POSS.3SG-PL-ACC
    'to weigh one's words'

   b. **Mivel   senki-t   nem akar-t   meg-bánt-ani, János*
    as   nobody-ACC   not   want-PAST   PERF-hurt-INF,   John
    sza-va-i   jól   meg   lett-ek   rág-va.
    word-POSS.3SG-PL   well   PERF   became-3PL   chew-VA
    'As he did not want to hurt anyone, his words have been weighed.'

(13) a. *ki-önt-i   a   szív-é-t*
    out-pour-3SG   the   heart-POSS.3SG-ACC
    'to pour one's heart'

   b. **Miután   a   szív-e   ki   lett   önt-ve   Évá-nak,*
    after   the   heart-POSS.3SG   out   became   pour-VE   Eve-for,
    Mária   sok-kal   jobb-an   érez-te   magá-t.
    Mary   much-with   better-AN   feel-PAST.3SG herself-ACC
    'After her heart was poured to Eve, Mary felt much better.'

(14) a. *le-nyel-i   a   büszkeség-é-t*
    down-swallow-3SG   the   pride-POSS.3SG.ACC
    'to swallow one's pride'

   b. **Mivel János-nak szükség-e   volt a   pénz-re,   a*
    as   John-for   need-POSS.3SG   was   the   money-onto   the
    büszkeség-e   le   lett   nyel-ve,   és   el-fogad-ta
    pride- POSS.3SG   down   became   swallow-VE   and   PTCL-accept-3SG.PAST
    az   állás-t.
    the   job-ACC
    'As John needed money, his pride was swallowed and he accepted the job.'

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[11] The underlying metaphors are: purposeful activity is a card game, means of activity is card, the quality of means is the quality of card, employing means is playing card (cf. Langlotz's (2006b) supplementary online material available at http://www.idiomatic-creativity.ch/).

(15) a. *ki-mutat-ja   a   fog-a   fehér-jé-t*
       out-show-3SG   the   teeth-POSS.3SG   white-POSS.3SG-ACC
       'to show one's true colours'

   b. **Mióta   főnök   lett,   Béla   mindenki-vel   durvá-n viselked-ik.*
       since   boss   became,   Béla   everyone-with   rude-ly behave-3SG
       Végre   ki   lett   mutat-va   a   fog-a   fehér-je.
       at last   out   became   show-VA   the   tooth-POSS.3SG   white-POSS.3SG
       'Since he became the boss, Béla behaves with everyone rudely. At last his true colours have been shown.'

In these idioms, the relationship between the possessor and the possession is much stronger than in the expression *kijátssza az utolsó kártyáját* ('to play one's last card'). That is, (12)-(15) contain a possession inalienable from the agent. Given the fact that the agent is defocused in the predicative adverbial participle structure, these idioms become ambiguous, since there is no reference to the person who performs the activity. There would be two possibilities: the doer is identified with the possessor (it would be the correct reading), or it refers to someone else. But neither is implied by the context. For this reason, idioms containing an inalienable possession seem to block such syntactic changes.

In the case of the other 7 expressions, other explanations should be found for the incompatibility.

(16) a. *a   bolhá-ból   elefánt-ot   csinál*
       the   flea-from   elephant-ACC   make
       'to make a mountain out of a molehill'

   b. **A   bolhá-ból elefánt   lett   csinál-va. János   mindig   minden-t*
       the   flea-from elephant   became make-VA. John   always everything-ACC
       túl-reagál.
       over-reacts
       'A mountain has been made out of a molehill. John always overreacts to everything.'

The expression in (16) is motivated by the following conceptual metaphors: IMPORTANCE IS A PHYSICAL PROPERTY, IMPORTANCE IS SIZE, and BIG SIZE IS BIG IMPORTANCE, SMALL SIZE IS SMALL IMPORTANCE, cf. Lakoff, Espenson & Schwartz (1991). These metaphors facilitate the isomorphism between the figurative and literal meanings of the idiom: *elephant* corresponds to 'something with a big importance', whereas *flea* refers to 'something with small importance'. Nevertheless, 21 of the 36 respondents considered the expression unacceptable in the investigated construction (16b). My assumption was that this unacceptability can be explained by the fact that the verb *csinál* ('do') is very rarely used in the *copula+V+-va/ve* structure. In the *Hungarian National Corpus*, I checked the frequency of the phrases *csinálva lett* and *lett csinálva*. The results seem to support my assumption, as *csinálva lett* occurred only once in the corpus, and the sentence in which it was found expresses a contrast:[12]

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[12] According to Kertész (2005), verbs that otherwise would not occur in such structures allow the predicative adverbial participle construction if the sentence has a contrastive focus.

(17) | *Ez* | *a* | *topic* | *elég* | *régi,* | *a* | *közelmúlt-ban* | *nem* | *csinál-va* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| this | the | topic | quite | old, | the | recent past-in | not | make-VA |

      lett,   *hanem*   *ki-ás-va.*
      became,   but   out-dig-VA

      'This topic is quite old, recently it has not been made, but dug out.'

The other phrase *lett csinálva* occurred four times. In three cases, however, the input verb was the particle verb *megcsinál*, not *csinál* as in (18a):

(18) a. *Ki-jött-ek,*   *és*   *6-ra*   *meg*   *lett*   *csinál-va.*
           out-came-PAST-3PL, and   six-by   PERF   became   do-VA
           'They came, and it was done by 6.'

      b. *Mikor* *lett*   *az*   *a*   *gyerek* *csinál-va* *magá-nak?*
           when   became that the child   make-VA you-for
           'When was that child fathered for you?'

In the case of *lenyeli a békát* (down-swallow the frog-ACC; 'to swallow the bitter pill'), I assume that although the idiomatic meaning 'elfogad egy kellemetlen helyzetet' (away-accept an unpleasant situation-ACC; 'accept an unpleasant situation') would allow the investigated structure, the literal equivalent does not.[13] The reason for this is the fact that the input verb *lenyel* ('swallow') blocks the predicative adverbial participle construction. On the basis of Vendler's (1967) aspectual classification of verbs, *lenyel* belongs to the achievement type. Kertész (2005: 48-49), however, points out that, out of the four classes of verbs, accomplishments are the most likely to form the *copula+V+-va/ve* structure. Although some achievements (e.g, *megír*; PERF-write) are also open to this syntactic change, these also have to express the process which led to the final state of the patient. But the verb *lenyel* does not refer to such preceding process.

    Átszakítja a gátat (through-tear the dam-ACC; 'to overcome a stumbling block') is also a transparent idiom as the underlying conceptual metaphors − PROGRESS IS FORWARD MOVEMENT, INTERFERING FACTOR IS OBSTRUCTION ON THE PATH, PROBLEM IS A FORCE, and SOLVING THE PROBLEM IS OVERCOMING THE FORCE − facilitate the isomorphism between the two levels of interpretation.[14] Nevertheless, the majority of the respondents (24 people) considered this expression ungrammatical in the *lett+V+-va/ve* structure:

(19) **János*   *nem*   *akar-t-a*   *el-adni*   *a*   *ház-at,*   *de*
        John   not   want-PAST-3SG away-sell   the   house-ACC,   but

        hosszas *győzködés*   *után*   *a*   *gát*   *át*   *lett*   *szakít-va,*
        long   persuasion   after   the   dam   through   became   tear-VA

        és   *tegnap*   *már*   *meg* *is*   *egyez-ett*   *a*   *vevő-vel.*
        and   yesterday already PERF also   agree-PAST.3SG   the   buyer-with

        'John did not want to sell the house, but after long persuasion the stumbling block was overcome, and yesterday he agreed with the buyer.'

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[13] The underlying metaphors are: DEALING WITH AN ISSUE IS EATING, TACKLING AN ISSUE IS SWALLOWING, ACCEPTING IS SWALLOWING (cf. Langlotz's (2006b) supplementary online material available at http://www.idiomatic-creativity.ch/)

[14] cf. Langlotz's (2006b) supplementary online material available at http://www.idiomatic-creativity.ch/

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Barbara Bakó:
Hungarian idioms in the predicative adverbial participle construction
Argumentum 10 (2014), 144-163
Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó

The reason for the unacceptability of (19) may be the fact that the literal meaning of this expression is never used in the investigated construction. In the *Hungarian National Corpus* no occurrences were found; this phrase is always used in the original form like in (20):

(20)   *A   magyar   határ   közel-é-ben   át-szakít-ott-a*
        the   Hungarian border   near-POSS.3SG-in through-tear-PAST-3SG
        gát-já-t   a   Temes   folyó.
        dam-POSS.3SG-ACC the   Timis   river
        'Near the Hungarian border River Timis broke its dam.'

In the case of the remaining four exceptions of analyzabe idioms, *megtalálja a kulcsot valamihez* (PERF-find the key-ACC something-to; 'to find a solution to a problem'), *valakinek a fülébe teszi a bogarat* (someone-'s the ear-POSS.3SG-into put the beetle-ACC; 'to put a bee in someone's bonnet'), *feltöri a kemény diót* (up-break the hard nut-ACC; 'to crack the hard nut'), and *megfizeti valaminek az árát* (PERF-pay something-'s the price-POSS.3SG-ACC; 'to pay the price for something'), I have encountered some difficulties. All of these expressions are well-motivated and isomorphic idioms, but the vast majority of the respondents considered their predicative adverbial participle form unacceptable. Since the above-mentioned explanations cannot be applied to these idioms, I contacted some of the respondents and asked them why they did not accept these expressions. Their answers were the same: the word order of the sentences in which these idioms were used in the grammaticality judgement test sounded very strange to them, that is the reason why they considered them unacceptable. However, with a change in the word order, the sentences would be regarded more acceptable by them. Consider, for example, (21) in which (a) is the sentence from the grammaticality judgement test, while (b) is the structure suggested by the respondents:

(21) a. *János-nak bele lett   té-ve   a   fül-é-be   a   bogár,   és*
          John-'s   into became put-VE the   ear-POSS.3SG-into the   beetle   and
          most   saját   vállalkozás-t   akar   indít-ani.
          now   own   enterprise-ACC   wants start-INF
          'A bee has been put in John's bonnet, and now he wants to start his own enterprise.'
    b. *János-nak a   fül-é-be   lett   té-ve   a   bogár…*
          John-'s   the ear-POSS.3SG-into   became put-VE the   beetle…
          'A bee has been put in John's bonnet…'

The results regarding analyzable idioms suggest that the cognitive hypothesis on the syntactic variation of idioms works in the case of Hungarian idioms. Nevertheless, there seem to be some factors that can block the rule even if the literal and the idiomatic meanings of a particular expression are isomorphic. In the case of the idioms examined, the following tendency is shown:

  (i) Idioms containing a possessive construction, in which the possession is inalienable from the agent, do not allow the predicative adverbial participle construction.
 (ii) If the verb in the literal interpretation of the expression cannot occur in the investigated structure, the figurative counterpart will not, either.
(iii) The word order may also have an influence on the acceptability of such syntactic variations of idioms.

3.2.2   *Unanalyzable idioms*

In my 100-idiom collection, I found 31 unanalyzable idioms. These expressions are not iso-morphic as their figurative meaning is a one-place predicate. On the basis of Langlotz's (2006) treatment of idiom passivization, this type should not allow the given syntactic varia-tion. I assume that, in the case of 10 of the 31 idioms, the underlying motivation may be less unequivocal than that of the other 21 expressions. Let us consider (22):

(22)   *el-húzz-a*   *a*   *csík-ot*
       away-pull-3SG   the   stripe-ACC
       'to make tracks'

The meaning of this idiom is 'to run away', and its origin is the following: as planes are the fastest means of transport today, the person who runs away fast is identified with it, and *stripe* in this phrase refers to the contrail behind an aircraft (O. Nagy 1979). My guess is that this mental image and explanation might be less familiar to the speakers, and it is also reflected by the grammaticality judgement test. That is, with these 10 idioms, the vast majority of respond-ents do not accept the given syntactic structure (morphological glosses and meanings can be seen in the Appendix):

Idiom	It sounds natural	It sounds a bit strange, but it is acceptable	It is not acceptable at all
beadja a kulcsot	0	5	30
megissza a levét	1	6	29
beteszi az ajtót	2	5	29
elhányja a rezet	0	2	32
elhúzza a belét	0	3	33
feldobja a bakancsot	0	1	35
felkapja a vizet	0	1	35
megüti a bokáját	2	5	27
otthagyja a fogát	0	2	34
elhúzza a csíkot	0	3	33

Table 1: Number of answers in the case of the ten idioms with unclear origin

It should, however, be noted that the origin of an idiom is not the same as its motivation, and given the fact that speakers are able to re-motivate an idiom, it is not certain that the same mental image is evoked in every person's mind when encountering an expression. In addition, it should be emphasized again that this investaigation did not include a separate analyzability judgement task completed by the respondents; therefore the analyzability of the idioms examined was based on my own intuitions.

The remaining 21 expressions are motivated by obvious mental images and cognitive mechanisms. For instance:

(23)   *görcs-öt*   *köt*   *a*   *nyelv-é-re*
       knot-ACC   tie   the   tongue-POSS.3SG-onto
       'to bite one's tongue'

(23) is based on the metonymy TONGUE FOR SPEECH FACULTY and the additional conventional knowledge that we cannot produce speech if our tongue is hindered in any way, cf. Steen (2007: 212). Although the motivation behind this idiom is absolutely clear, it is not analyzable, as its idiomatic meaning 'csendben marad' ('remain silent') is a one-place predicate and does not show isomorphism with the literal interpretation. Therefore, it cannot be put into the predicative adverbial participle structure, either:

(24)   **Mária   nyelv-é-re   görcs   lett   köt-ve; senki-nek   nem*
       Mary   tongue-POSS.3SG.onto knot   became tie-VE; nobody-for   not
       akart   a   történt-ek-ről   beszélni.
       wanted   the   happening-PL-about   talk
       'Mary's tongue had been bitten; she did not want to talk to anyone about what happened.'

The results of the grammaticality judgement test show that 20 of the 21 investigated expressions behaved as expected on the basis of the cognitive linguistic theory. There was, however, one exception:

(25)   *be-húzza   fül-é-t   − fark-á-t*
       into-pulls   ear-POSS.3SG-ACC   − tail-POSS.3SG-ACC
       'to make oneself small'

Although the figurative interpretation of this idiom also refers to a one-place predicate 'meghunyászkodik' ('quail'), the number of the "acceptable" answers in the test is higher than that of the "unacceptable" ones. It should, however, be noted that the difference between the answers is not huge: 17 respondents consider it unacceptable whereas 18 acceptable. In addition, its acceptability is also interesting if we take into account that this idiom also contains an inalienable possession, cf. (12)-(15). Although the fact that this expression is highly motivated by both the metaphor HUMANS ARE ANIMALS and the metonymy VISIBLE SIGN OF ANIMAL POSTURE FOR ANIMAL FEELING may contribute to an explanation for this phenomenon, this and other similar idioms require further investigation. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the tested hypothesis, it is promising that 30 of the 31 unanalyzable idioms behaved as expected.

4   Conclusion

In this paper I investigated the occurrence of Hungarian idioms in predicative adverbial participle structures. This investigation was based on Langlotz's (2006a) and Lakoff's (1987) cognitive linguistic treatment of idioms, according to which, depending on the existence of isomorphism between their literal and figurative meanings, two classes of idioms can be distinguished: analyzable and unanalyzable. As the Hungarian predicative adverbial participle construction with the copula *lett* is similar to the passive in some sense, in my research I followed the principles of the cognitive linguistic approach to idiom passivization. This theory claims that only analyzable idioms can be passivized as only these expressions are isomorphic. The results of the grammaticality judgement test show that this hypothesis seems to work in the Hungarian language. There are, however, some factors that block the forming of this syntactic

variation even if the isomorphism between the two levels of interpretation is present. Moreover, it is also possible that an idiom considered to be unanalyzable allows the predicative adverbial participle construction. The issue of idiom variability requires further research investigating other syntactic variations and including analyzability judgements gathered from native speakers, as well.

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Appendix

át-ad-ja a stafétabot-ot
over-give-3SG the baton-ACC
'to pass the baton'

át-szakít-ja a gát-at
through-tear-3SG the dam-ACC
'to overcome a stumbling block'

be-dob-ja a törölköző-t
into-throw-3SG the towel-ACC
'to throw in the towel'

ki-vet-i a csali-t
out-cast-3SG the bait-ACC
'to make favorable promises to lure someone'

tisztá-ra mos-sa valaki nev-é-t
clean-onto wash-3SG someone name-
POSS.3SG-ACC
'to clear someone's name'

el-ás-sa a csatabárd-ot
PTCL-dig-3SG the hatchet-ACC
'to bury the hatchet'

a bolhá-ból elefánt-ot csinál
the flea-from elephant-ACC make
'to make a mountain out of a molehill'

el-vág-ja a gordiuszi csomó-t
PTCL-cut-3SG the Gordian knot-ACC
'to cut the Gordian knot'

el-varr-ja a szál-ak-at
PTCL-sew-3SG the thread-PL-ACC
'to tie up loose ends'

be-mocskol-ja valaki nev-é-t
into-mess-3SG someone name-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to drag someone's name through the mud'

fel-kava-rja az állóviz-et
up-stir-3SG the still.water-ACC
'to stir up the hornet's nest'

fel-tör-i a kemény dió-t
up-break-3SG the hard nut-ACC
'to crack the hard nut'

le-csap-ja a magas labdá-t
down-slap-3SG the high ball-ACC
'to seize the opportunity'

jól meg-rág-ja a szav-a-i-t
well PERF-chew-3SG the word-POSS.3SG-PL-
ACC
'to weigh one's words'

két legy-et üt egy csapás-ra
two fly-PL hit one slap-onto
'to kill two birds with one stone'

kez-é-be ad-ja valaki-nek a gyeplő-t
hand-POSS.3SG-into give-3SG someone-to the
rein-ACC
'to give free rein to someone'

ki-enged-i a gőz-t
out-let-3SG the steam-ACC
'to let off steam'

ki-fordít-ja a világ-ot a sark-a-i-ból
out-turn-3SG the world-ACC the corner-
POSS.3SG-PL-from
'to turn something upside down'

ki-hagy-ja a ziccer-t
out-miss-3SG the chace-ACC
'to let the chance slip by'

ki-húz-za valaki láb-a al-ól a talaj-t
out-pull-3SG someone leg-POSS.3SG under-
from the ground-ACC
'to cut the ground from under someone's feet'

ki-kövez-i az ut-at valaki számára
out-pave-3SG the way-ACC someone for
'to pave the way for someone'

ki-önt-i a szív-é-t valaki-nek
out-pour-3SG the heart-POSS.3SG-ACC
someone-to
'to pour one's heart to somebody'

ki-ugraszt-ja a nyul-at a bokor-ból
out-leap-3SG the rabbit-ACC the bush-from
'to make somebody spill the beans'

valaki-nek a száj-á-ba ad-ja a szav-ak-at
someone-'s mouth-POSS.3SG-into give-3SG the word-PL-ACC
'to put words into someone's mouth'

ki-vet-i valaki-re a háló-já-t
out-cast-3SG someone-onto the net-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to set one's cap at someone'

le-harap-ja valaki fej-é-t
down-bite-3SG someone head-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to bite someone's head off'

le-nyel-i a beká-t
down-swallow-3SG the frog-ACC
'to swallow the bitter pill'

le-nyel-i a büszkeség-é-t
down-swallow-3SG the pride-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to swallow one's pride'

le-tesz-i valami-nek az alapkö-vé-t
down-put-3SG something-'s the foundation.stone-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to lay the foundations for something'

le-tör-i valaki szarv-á-t
down-break-3SG someone horn-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to take the conceit out of somebody'

le-vesz-i valaki-nek a váll-á-ról a terh-et
down-take-3SG someone-'s the shoulder-POSS.3SG-from the burden-ACC
'to take a weight off someone's mind'

meg-fizet-i az ár-á-t
PERF-pay-3SG the price-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to pay the price for something'

meg-húz-za a vészfék-et
PERF-pull-3SG the emergency.cord-ACC
'to stop an activity because it is risky or dangerous'

meg-talál-ja valami-hez a kulcs-ot
PERF-find-3SG something-to the key-ACC
'to find a solution to a problem'

meg-tör-i a jeg-et
PERF-break-3SG the ice-ACC
'to break the ice'

minden adu-t ki-játsz-ik
all trump-ACC out-play-3SG
'to play one's trump'

minden kö-vet meg-mozgat
all stone-ACC PERF-move
'to leave no stone unturned'

olaj-at önt a tűz-re
oil-ACC pour the fire-onto
'to add fuel to the fire'

túl magas-ra tesz-i a léc-et
too high-onto put-3SG the slat-ACC
'to set the bar too high'

túl-feszít-i a húr-t
over-strain-3SG the string-ACC
'to go too far'

újra-gombol-ja a mellény-t
again-button-3SG the vest-ACC
'to go back to square one'

valaki-nek a fül-é-be tesz-i a bogar-at
someone-'s the ear-POSS.3SG-into put-3SG the beetle-ACC
'to put a bee in someone's bonnet'

fej-én talál-ja a szög-et
head-on find-3SG the nail-ACC
'to hit the nail on the head'

ki-tereget-i valaki szennyes-é-t
out-hang-3SG someone laundry-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to wash someone's dirty linen in public'

ki-játssz-a az utolsó kártyá-já-t
out-play-3SG the last card-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to play one's last card'

el-rabol-ja valaki szív-é-t
away-steal-3SG someone heart-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to steal someone's heart'

meg-tesz-i az első lépés-ek-et
PERF-take-3SG the first step-PL-ACC
'to get one's foot in the door'

fel-vesz-i a kesztyű-t
up-take-3SG the glove-ACC
'to pick up the gauntlet'

meg-kér-i valaki kez-é-t
PERF-ask-3SG someone hand-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to ask for someone's hand'

meg-köt-i valaki kez-é-t
PERF-tie-3SG someone hand-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to tie someone's hand'

el-hint-i valami-nek a mag-vá-t
PTCL-sow-3SG something-'s the seed-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to sow the seeds of something'

el-húz-za valaki nótá-já-t
PTCL-pull-3SG someone song-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to give somebody a sound thrashing'

el-jár-at-ja valakivel a kállai kettős-t
PTCL-dance-CAUSE-PRES.3SG somebody-with the kállai double-ACC
'to give somebody a sound thrashing'

el-küld-i valaki-nek a selyemzsinór-t
away-send-3SG someone-for the silk.cord-ACC
'to give somebody the sack'

ki-mutat-ja a fog-a fehér-jé-t
out-show-3SG the tooth-POSS.3SG white-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to show one's true colours'

ki-nyit-ja Pandóra szelencé-jé-t
out-open-3SG Pandora box-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to open Pandora's box'

ki-tesz-i valaki-nek a szűr-é-t
out-put-3SG someone-for the coat-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to give someone the gate'

ki-kapar-ja valaki-nek a gesztenyé-t
out-scratch-3SG someone-for the chestnut-ACC

'to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for somebody'

meg-mos-sa valaki-nek a fej-é-t
PERF-wash-3SG someone-'s head-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to give somebody a lecture'

rá-húz-za valaki-re a vizes lepedő-t
onto-draw-3SG someone-onto the wet sheet-ACC
'to make someone the scapegoat for something'

rossz fá-t tesz a tűzre
bad wood-ACC put the fire-onto
'to get into hot water'

valaki malm-á-ra hajt-ja a viz-et
someone mill-POSS.3SG-onto drive-3SG the water-ACC
'to play into somebody's hands'

kecské-re bíz-za a káposztá-t
goat-onto trust-3SG the cabbage-ACC
'to set a wolf to mind the sheep'

meg-húz-za a nadrág-szíj-at
PERF-pull-3SG the trousers.belt-ACC
'to tighten one's belt'

fátyl-at borít valami-re
veil-ACC cover something-onto
'to let bygones be bygones'

el-kap-ja valaki grabanc-á-t
PTCL-get-3SG someone collar-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to let somebody have it'

borsó-t hány a fal-ra
pea-ACC cast the wall-onto
'to flog a dead horse'

el-ér-i a végállomás-t
PTCL-reach-3SG the final.station-ACC
'to die'

el-veszt-i a fej-é-t
PTCL-lose-3SG the head-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to lose one's head'

el-veszt-i a fonal-at
PTCL-lose-3SG the thread-ACC
'to lose the thread'

el-veszt-i a hideg-vér-é-t
PTCL-lose-3SG the cold.blood-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to lose one's cool'

el-vet-i a sulyk-ot
away-cast-3SG the maul-ACC
'to lay it on thick'

fel-köt-i a nyúl-cipő-t
up-tie-3SG the rabbit.shoe-ACC
'to cut and run'

görcs-öt köt a nyelv-é-re
knot-ACC tie the tongue-POSS.3SG-onto
'to bite one's tongue'

két vég-é-n éget-i a gyertyá-t
two end-POSS.3SG-on burn-3SG the candle-ACC
'to burn the candle at both ends'

meg-üt-i a főnyeremény-t
PERF-hit-3SG the jackpot-ACC
'to hit the jackpot'

nagy fá-ba vág-ja a fejszé-jé-t
big tree-into cut-3SG the axe-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to bite off more than one can chew'

fel-üt-i a fej-é-t
up-hit-3SG the head-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to rear its head'

ki-szellőztet-i a fej-é-t
out-air-3SG the head-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to get some fresh air'

ki-teker-i valaki-nek a nyak-á-t
out-twist-3SG someone-'s the neck-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to wring someone's neck'

tűz-be tesz-i valaki-ért a kez-é-t
fire-into put-3SG someone-for the hand-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to stake one's life on something/someone'

meg-lát-ja a napvilág-ot
PERF-see-3SG the daylight-ACC
'to be born'

össze-szed-i a sátor-fá-já-t
together-pick-3SG the tent.wood-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to pull up stakes'

be-húz-za fül-é-t – fark-á-t
in-pull-3SG ear-POSS.3.SG-ACC – tail-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to make oneself small'

be-mond-ja az unalmas-t
in-say-3SG the boring-ACC
'to break down'

be-köt-i valaki fej-é-t
into-tie-3SG someone head-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to marry someone'

ki-köszörül-i a csorbá-t
out-whet-3SG the chip-ACC
'to make amends for something'

meg-pecsétel-i valaki sors-á-t
PERF-seal-3SG someone fate-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to seal someone's fate'

imá-ba foglal-ja valaki nev-é-t
prayer-into take-3SG someone name-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to be grateful to somebody for something'

le-húz-za a roló-t
down-pull-3SG the blinds-ACC
'to put up the shutters'

be-ad-ja a kulcs-ot
into-give-3SG the key-ACC
'to break down'

meg-issz-a a lev-é-t valaminek
PERF-drink-3SG the liquid-POSS.3SG-ACC something-for
'to pay the price for something'

be-tesz-i az ajtó-t
into-put-3SG the door-ACC
'to cook someone's goose'

el-hány-ja a rez-et
away-cast-3SG the copper-ACC
'to get cold feet'

el-húz-za a bel-é-t
away-pull-3SG the gut-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to bugger off'

fel-dob-ja a bakancs-ot
up-throw-3SG the boot-ACC
'to kick the bucket'

fel-kap-ja a viz-et
up-pick-3SG the water-ACC
'to hit the ceiling'

meg-üt-i a boká-já-t
PERF-hit-3SG the ankle-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to get one's fingers burnt'

ott-hagy-ja a fog-á-t
there-leave-3SG the tooth-POSS.3SG-ACC
'to bite the dust'

el-húz-za a csík-ot
away-pull-3SG the stripe-ACC
'to make tracks'