

# The diachrony of the cognate object construction in Romanian and Hungarian<sup>†</sup>

Imola-Ágnes Farkas\*

Faculty of Letters, “Babeş-Bolyai” University, Str. Horea 31, 400202 Cluj-Napoca, Romania

## Article info

### History:

Received November 12, 2020

Accepted December 4, 2020

Published December 27, 2020

### Key words:

diachrony

cognate object construction

Romanian

Hungarian

## Abstract

Building on the cross-linguistic observation generally valid in the majority of languages according to which cognate object constructions are frequently subject to diachronic changes, this paper provides an analysis of the history of diachronic changes in the cognate constructions of two typologically unrelated languages. We demonstrate that, although the present stage of Romanian and Hungarian lacks the canonical (aspectual) cognate object construction illustrated in *to sleep a sound sleep*, this structure does exist in both languages but either at an earlier language stage (the case of Romanian) or at the present language stage, as a result of a clear increase in it towards the modern period, but the cognate nominal is expressed by a pseudo-object (the case of Hungarian). Consequently, the diachronic change in these constructions of these languages is in two different directions.

## 1. Introduction

Building on the cross-linguistic observation generally valid in the majority of languages according to which cognate objects (COs) and cognate object constructions (COCs) are frequently subject to diachronic changes (see Horrocks & Stavrou, 2010 or Lavidas, 2013b for (Ancient) Greek; Mittwoch, 1998 for Hebrew; Visser, 1963, Lavidas, 2013a, 2018 or van Gelderen, 2018 for English), this article offers an account of language change in these objects and these constructions in the history of Romanian and Hungarian. While it examines and compares the changes affecting them, the paper shows that these constructions in the two typologically unrelated languages have undergone diachronic change in two different directions: whereas the former language is characterized by a loss of the COC, the latter one is characterized by an increased use of the (especially aspectual) COC.

A COC is a construction where a verb takes an object expressed by a DP, the head noun of which is a nominalization of the verb stem. To put it differently, in such a structure the CO is both semantically and morphologically related to the verb as it is derived from (i.e., cognate to) it. We use the terms ‘cognate object’ and ‘cognate object construction’ in the narrowest sense; therefore, we only consider those canonical examples where the object is a semantic and morphological copy of the verb, and the CO is expressed by a DP/NP, cf. (1). Consequently, sentences such as the ones in (2)—where the object is only semantically related to the verb (2a) or the CO is expressed by a PP (adjunct) (2b)—will not be taken into consideration:

<sup>†</sup>An earlier version and different parts of this paper were presented at the following conferences: *Investigations into Romanian and European Biblical Traditions 9* (“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Romania, May 2019), *Nyelvelmélet és diakrónia 4* (Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary, November 2019), *The 19<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Department of Linguistics* (University of Bucharest, Romania, November 2019) and *Variation and Change in the Verb Phrase* (University of Oslo, Norway, December 2019). We thank the conference participants for their questions and suggestions, and the anonymous reviewers of the journal “Diacronia” for the observations. Part of this research was funded by *Domus Hungarica Scientiarum et Artium*, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

\*Email address: [farkas\\_imola\\_agnes@yahoo.com](mailto:farkas_imola_agnes@yahoo.com).

- (1) Mary slept a sound sleep.  
 (2) a. Mary slept a fitful slumber.  
       b. they rejoiced with exceeding great joy (KJV, *Matt*, 2, 10)

According to their most recent classification (see Horrocks & Stavrou, 2010; Lavidas, 2013a,b, 2014, 2018), these constructions are of three types. First, a transitive COC is built on a prototypical transitive verb, which selects a subject and obligatorily an object as well as in *to do deeds*. This object can be either a (singular/plural) regular direct object or a cognate object, which has a concrete meaning and can freely be passivized. Second, a transitivizing COC is built on a derived unergative verb of (re-)creation or consumption, which takes a subject and, optionally, an object as well, which can be a cognate or a non-cognate object (e.g. synonym or hyponym) as in *to sing a song/an anthem*. These cognate nominals are only accidentally morphological COs of the verb, they do not denote events, they are fully referential arguments, hence they do not share the properties of aspectual COs (see below); cf. Mittwoch (1998), Pereltsvaig (2002), de Swart (2007), Horrocks & Stavrou (2010), and Lavidas (2013a). Third, an aspectual COC is built on a prototypical unergative verb, which requires only a subject and, exceptionally, can also take an accusative nominal, which is exclusively a cognate object as in *to sleep a sound sleep*. The most important features of these constructions and these objects are the following: the CO is not a referential or thematic object and cannot be treated as a subcategorized (internal) argument, hence it fails the canonical tests applying to subcategorized, referential and thematic objects (e.g. passivization, *it*-pronominalization, *wh*-questioning or quantification with a strong determiner); it cannot be replaced by a similar noun such as a synonym or hyponym; and the main function of the entire construction is the expression of a limited event with beginning and end, hence the term ‘aspectual’.

The present stage of the two languages investigated here lacks or severely restricts aspectual COCs as the exact counterpart of (1) is ungrammatical in both languages; cf. (3a) and (3b):

- (3) a. \**Maria a dormit o dormire profundă.*  
       Mary has slept a sleeping sound.  
       ‘Mary slept a sound sleep.’  
       b. \**Mari aludt egy mély alvást.*  
       Mary slept a sound sleep.ACC  
       ‘Mary slept a sound sleep.’

Integrating both our previous work and new research, we show that both of these languages have the structure corresponding to (1) but either at an earlier language stage (the case of Romanian) or at the present language stage, as a result of a clear increase in this type of construction towards the modern period, but the CO is expressed by a pseudo-object (the case of Hungarian). Although our main interest is the subclass of aspectual COCs, we also discuss and illustrate transitive and transitivizing COCs from Biblical texts and everyday language.

Before digging deep into our analysis, let us make a remark concerning the comparative approach taken in this paper as one may wonder whether such a contrastive endeavour would be legitimate on diachronic grounds. As mentioned before, the two languages under investigation here are typologically unrelated and, to the best of our knowledge, there are no common models in their history that shaped their evolution and from which they would have developed into different directions as far as COCs are concerned. In addition, the main aim of this comparative analysis is not, first and foremost, to contribute to understanding Romanian as a foreign language by a native speaker of Hungarian (or vice versa) or to gaining insights into the complexity of Romanian through Hungarian (or vice versa). But the primary and intended purpose of the present analysis is mainly to contribute to the cross-linguistic observation concerning the diachronic changes of COCs, whereby Romanian is similar to (Ancient) Greek (Horrocks & Stavrou, 2010; Lavidas, 2013b) and Hungarian is comparable to English (Visser, 1963; Lavidas, 2013a, 2018; van Gelderen, 2018). However, this similarity is not purely coincidental and is also mirrored, for

instance, in the morphosyntactic properties of events of transition in these languages. As such, whereas Ancient Greek patterns with earlier stages of some Romance languages such as Old French and Old Catalan and they are all considered to be weak satellite-framed languages, which allow PathP to be realized as an element morphologically different from *v*; English is akin to Finno-Ugric languages such as Hungarian and they are more generally considered to be strong satellite-framed languages, which allow not only PathP but also (adjectival and particle) ResP to be realized as an element morphologically different from *v* (Acedo-Matellán & Mateu, 2013; Burnett & Troberg, 2014; Acedo-Matellán, 2016 and Troberg & Burnett, 2017).

The structure of the paper is as follows: Section 2 presents the diachrony of Romanian COCs. Section 3 focuses on the Hungarian data. Section 4 concludes.

## 2. The diachrony of the COC in Romanian

Modern Romanian has a small class of (transitive and mostly) transitivity COCs in both Biblical texts, cf. (4), and everyday language, cf. (5), whereas aspectual COCs are extremely restricted in everyday speech, cf. (6a) and (6b), but may appear in poetry, cf. (6c); see also Creția (1956); Bejan (1972); Brâncuș & Saramandu (1998); Avram (2001); Dimitriu (2002); Guruianu (2005); Hill & Roberge (2006); Dragomirescu (2010, 2013); Dragomirescu & Nicolae (2013); Pomian (2015), *inter alia*:

- (4) a. și a suflat asupra lui suflare de viață (B.2001, *Gen*, 2, 7)  
and has breathed onto him breath of life  
'and he breathed onto him the breath of life'
- b. amândoi am visat atunci câte un vis (B.2001, *Gen*, 41, 11)  
both of us have dreamed then each a dream  
'and we each dreamed a dream'
- (5) a. Copiii au cântat cântece frumoase.  
children have sung songs beautiful  
'The children sang beautiful songs.'
- b. Pacientul a băut această băutură pe stomacul gol.  
patient has drunk this drink on stomach empty  
'The patient drank this drink on an empty stomach.'
- (6) a. Ion a muncit o muncă grea. (Dragomirescu, 2013, p. 76)  
John has worked a work hard  
'John worked hard.'
- b. \*Petru a oftat un oftat adânc.  
Peter has sighed a sigh deep  
'Peter sighed a deep sigh.'
- c. Și -am râs un râs de vagabond (BACOVIA, p. 134)  
and have laughed a laugh of vagabond  
'And I laughed a laugh of vagabond'

Present-day Romanian has mostly constructions where the object is only semantically related to the verb (see (7); cf. also Dragomirescu, 2010 or Dragomirescu & Nicolae, 2013); the object is both morphologically and semantically related to the verb but it is nested into a PP adjunct, see (8), or the verb is a light verb, see (9):

- (7) a. Maria a dormit un somn profund.  
Mary has slept a sleep sound  
'Mary slept a sound sleep.'

- b. Mihai a umblat o cale lungă.  
Michael has strolled a way/path long  
'Michael strolled a long distance.'
- (8) a. Maria a rîs cu un rîs isteric.  
Mary has laughed with a laugh hysterical  
'Mary laughed with a hysterical laugh.'
- b. Părinții se bucură de bucuria copiilor.  
parents REFL rejoice of joy children.GEN  
'Parents rejoice over their children's joy.'
- (9) a. Petru a scos un oftat adînc.  
Peter has let out a sigh deep  
'Peter let out a deep sigh.'
- b. Ion a făcut o plimbare/ o mărturisire.  
John has made a walk a confession  
'John took a walk/made a confession.'

In sharp contrast to this, Old Romanian has a wide variety of (aspectual) COCs, where the object is a semantic and morphological copy of the verb. More precisely, Romanian COCs are known to be extremely frequent in Old Romanian (OR), less frequent in Middle/Pre-Modern Romanian and very rare in Modern Romanian, where they are used especially in religious texts and popular speech; cf. Frâncu (2009); Dragomirescu (2010, 2013); Dragomirescu & Nicolae (2013); Pană Dindelegan (2014, 2016), or Nicula Paraschiv & Niculescu (2016).

The starting point for our diachronic analysis is the collection of OR texts established for *The Syntax of Old Romanian* (edited by G. Pană Dindelegan and published in 2016 by Oxford University Press), which contains both original texts and translations. Although some of them do not contain any COC that would correspond to the limitations imposed in this paper (see (2) above), most of them abound in these constructions<sup>1</sup>. The following examples serve to illustrate transitive, transitivizing (10) and aspectual (11) COCs:

- (10) a. carele v- au făcut această mare facere de bine (ACP, 389)  
those you.DAT have done this big deed of good  
'those who did this good deed to you'
- b. gătiră tunuri și altă gătire (PIST, 157)  
prepared cannons and other preparation  
'they prepared cannons and made other preparation'
- c. schimbarea carea au schimbat (PRAV<sub>2</sub>, 212)  
change that have changed  
'the change that they changed'
- d. cuvânt mare cuvîntară (DPV, 20)  
word big said  
'he said big words'
- e. cîți vor zidi orice fel de zidire (PRAV<sub>3</sub>, 142)  
how many will build any type of building  
'how many will build any type of building'

<sup>1</sup>Out of the 109 OR texts established for *The Syntax of Old Romanian*, so far we have selected and read 74 different texts representative for the two periods of OR and we have compiled a list of more than 200 verb–cognate object pairs. There are 19 texts which do not contain any COC that would conform to the above restriction but the remaining 55 texts—besides transitive, transitivizing and aspectual COCs—also have transitive constructions with two objects: a direct object denoting an animate entity (*pre el* 'him') and a cognate—also called secondary—object denoting an inanimate entity (*plîngere* 'crying') as in *Plinseră pre el plîngere mare* 'they shed many tears for him'; see Pană Dindelegan (2014, 2016).

- f. mirosîm miros de mir scump (DVS, 79)  
 smell smell of anointment expensive  
 ‘we smell the smell of expensive anointment’
- (11) a. dormire fără dormire să dormitedze (CII<sub>2</sub>, 35)  
 sleeping without sleeping CONJ sleep  
 ‘he should sleep a sleep without sleeping’
- b. și de odihna voastră care odihneți (NÎNV, 339)  
 and of rest your that rest  
 ‘and of your rest that you take’
- c. aceste umblete de demult le umbla (PIST, 171)  
 these strolls of long time CL.3.FEM.PL strolled  
 ‘he had taken these strolls for a long time’
- d. călătorește călătoria ei (AD, 53)  
 travels travelling his  
 ‘he travels his travelling’
- e. toți alergă o alergătură (SVI, 93)  
 all run a running  
 ‘all run a run’
- f. de va boli vreo boală a trupului copilul vostru (MĂRG, 17)  
 if will ail any sickness of body child your  
 ‘if your child has any sickness of the body’

In addition, it is not unusual in these texts that the referent of the CO is an (affected) animate entity and the DP object is accompanied by the differential object marker *p(r)e*; cf. the following example:

- (12) gîndește -te la bogați, pe care eu îi îmbogățesc (CD, 34)  
 think REFL at the rich whom I CL.3.M.PL enrich  
 ‘think of the rich that I make rich’

In the case of OR translated texts, the large number of these constructions can be explained by the influence of and the fidelity to the source language, as they copy the cognate structures occurring in the original Slavonic religious texts, which, in turn, are taken over literally from the Greek and Hebrew versions of the texts (Gamanovich, 2001; Arvinte, 2006; Pană Dindelegan, 2016; Nicula Paraschiv & Niculescu, 2016). However, there are also original (that is, non-translated)—religious, literary or historical—texts in the corpus that contain a COC. Some relevant examples are given below:

- (13) a. greșit- au acesta greșală mare (AD, 107)  
 mistake have this mistake big  
 ‘they made this big mistake’
- b. sfat adevărat prietinesc au sfătuit (CII<sub>1</sub>, 61)  
 advice true friendly have advised  
 ‘they gave a truly friendly piece of advice’
- c. poruncă să- i poruncească (CII<sub>2</sub>, 108)  
 order CONJ him order  
 ‘he should give him an order’
- d. pe lângă făgăduința ce- i făgăduise (ULM, 162)  
 besides covenant that him covenanted  
 ‘besides the covenant that he made to him’
- e. de acele amestecături, ce- l amestecasă (CLM, 112)  
 of those mixtures that CL.3.M.SG mixed  
 ‘of those mixtures that he made’

Furthermore, it has been remarked that COCs in OR have a wider stylistic distribution (Pană Dindel-egan, 2016), with a slight variation between the two periods: between 1521 and 1640 they are extremely frequent in diverse (but especially religious) texts, and between 1640 and 1780 they are less frequent and are slowly replaced by a verbal or nominal synonym/hyponym, or take on a light verb (Frâncu, 2009). In this respect, Farkas (2020c) takes a close look at the syntactic and semantic features of Romanian COCs in two different Bible translations: *The Bucharest Bible*, dated at 1688 (BB.1688), and *The Bible from Blaj*, dated at 1795 (B.1795), and confirms the direction of their change as already highlighted in the previous literature (see above). Considering the distinctions between the two (Greek) source texts these two Romanian translations have as a point of departure (i.e., the *Septuagint* published in Frankfurt in 1597 and the *Septuagint* published in Franeker in 1709), the study identifies the following techniques used in B.1795, which all aim to gradually reduce the redundancy between the verb and the CO: the introduction of a light verb (14), the introduction of a verbal synonym (15), the introduction of a non-cognate object such as a hyponym (16), the replacement of the DP/NP object with a PP (adjunct) (17), and the omission of the CO (18):

- (14) a. jîrtvuiră jîrtfă (BB.1688)  
sacrificed sacrifice  
b. au adus jertvă (B.1795, *Jonah*, 1, 15)  
have brought sacrifice  
'offered a sacrifice'
- (15) a. numi Adam numele (BB.1688)  
named Adam name  
b. au chemat Adam numele (B.1795, *Gen*, 3, 20)  
have called Adam name  
'Adam called (his wife's) name'
- (16) a. mîncare am să mănînc (BB.1688)  
food have CONJ eat  
b. am a mânca bucatele (B.1795, *John*, 4, 32)  
have to eat bites  
'I have food to eat'
- (17) a. mă miraiu mirare (BB.1688)  
REFL wondered wonder  
b. m -am mirat cu mirare (B.1795, *Rev*, 17, 6)  
REFL have wondered with wonder  
'I wondered with great wonder'
- (18) a. să ne îmbătăm beție (BB.1688)  
CONJ REFL get drunk drunkenness  
b. să ne îmbătăm (B.1795, *Isa*, 56, 12)  
CONJ REFL get drunk  
'we will fill ourselves with strong drink'

As for the last pair of examples, the note attached to this verse makes explicit reference to BB.1688, with this particular verb–CO pair not existing in either of the two Greek source texts. Hence, there are (at least) two ways to render the above verse in (18a): either translate it with great fidelity to BB.1688, or leave out the entire verse, with other previous translations already setting a precedent for this technique. Interestingly, B.1795 relies on a third option by leaving out only the CO, a case of justified omission as a translation strategy since it does not lead to an ambiguous or unclear sentence. Crucially, as the verb *a se îmbăta* 'to get drunk' is a result verb (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 2010; Beavers & Koontz-Garboden, 2020) or a telic, inherently change-of-state verb (Dragomirescu, 2010; Farkas, 2013), the result state is

already encoded in the meaning of the verb, hence the CO only functions as an intensifier or emphazier of this result state but its absence does not generate an incomplete or incoherent VP.

In sum, in this section we presented the diachrony of the COC in Romanian. We contributed to the relatively rich literature on this topic by completing it with the results of our research. In what follows, we turn to the diachrony of the cognate object construction in Hungarian and show that, at least as far as aspectual COCs are concerned, the direction of their evolution is opposite to that of the Romanian aspectual COCs.

### 3. The diachrony of the COC in Hungarian

In the same manner as modern Romanian, present-day Hungarian has a small class of transitive and transitivity-marking COCs both in Biblical texts (19) and in everyday language (20):

- (19) a. *áldozatok igaz áldozatokat* (SZJ, Ps, 4, 6)  
sacrifice true sacrifices.ACC  
'offer the sacrifices of righteousness'
- b. *akkor énekelte Izrael ezt az éneket* (SZJ, Num, 21, 17)  
then sang Israel this.ACC the song.ACC  
'then Israel sang this song'
- (20) a. *A diákokkal megpályáztunk egy nagy pályázatot.*  
the with students PRT.applied a big application.ACC  
'We applied for a big grant with the students.'
- b. *Játszd a saját játékodat!*  
play the own game.POSS.2SG.ACC  
'Play your own game!'

In addition to the Biblical texts of Greek (Gianollo & Lavidas, 2013), Hebrew (Mittwoch, 1998; Pereltsvaig, 2002; Horrocks & Stavrou, 2010), Early Modern English (Lavidas, 2018) or Romanian (Teleoacă, 2012, 2013), Biblical Hungarian has transitive and transitivity-marking COCs, which are frequently associated with a stylistic choice and are claimed to have an emphatic function. They reflect the influence of and the fidelity to the source texts, as they take over the cognate structures occurring in the source (Greek or Hebrew) texts. Furthermore, in everyday speech the CO denoting a referential entity in a transitive or transitivity-marking COC can be accompanied by a verbal particle (20a) or appear as a definite and specific noun (i.e. with a definite determiner) (20b), and exhibits all the syntactic properties of a non-cognate thematic direct object (e.g. it can constitute the answer to a *mit* 'what.ACC' type of question).

But crucially, aspectual COCs are only found in diverse translations of the Holy Bible, see (21a), or in poetry, see (21b), as the everyday language blocks them almost completely, see (21c):

- (21) a. *minden munkámat, melyet munkálkodom* (KG, Ecc, 2, 19)  
every labour.POSS.1SG.ACC that.ACC labour  
'all my labour wherein I labour'
- b. *Mosolyognék egy boldog, új mosolyt* (TÓTH, 188)  
would smile a happy new smile.ACC  
'I would smile a happy, new smile'
- c. *\*Péter sóhajtott egy öreges sóhajt.*  
Peter sighed an elderly sigh.ACC  
'Peter sighed an elderly sigh.'

Instead, in the absence of aspectual COCs, where the object is literally cognate to the prototypical unergative verb it accompanies, Hungarian has accusative-marked (*-t*) pseudo-objects (POs) (Piñón, 2001;

É. Kiss, 2004; Kiefer, 2006; Csirmaz, 2008; Halm, 2012), that is, non-subcategorized, non-thematic and non-referential nominals, which take on the role of the aspectual CO in the language, as convincingly demonstrated and argued in Farkas (2019, 2020a). More precisely, these latter studies show that POs should be classified into three, where the motivation behind the following ternary division—instead of a binary one, which merges the POs of class (b) and (c)—is syntactically supported<sup>2</sup>.

- a) the—very frequently used—PO with reduced lexical content *egy* ‘one/a(n).ACC’<sup>3</sup>;
- b) a closed class of—frequently used—POs with more lexical content such as *egy jót* ‘one/a good.ACC’, *egy nagyot* ‘one/a big.ACC’, *egy hatalmasat* ‘one/a huge.ACC’ and *egy óriásit* ‘one/a gigantic.ACC’;
- c) an open class of—less frequently used—POs with lexical content such as *egy mélyet* ‘one/a sound.ACC’, *egy öregeset* ‘one/an elderly.ACC’, *egy széleset* ‘one/a wide.ACC’, *egy félelmeteset* ‘one/a dreadful.ACC’, *egy szelidet* ‘one/a tender.ACC’, *egy hangosat* ‘one/a loud.ACC’, *egy vidámat* ‘one/a joyful.ACC’, *egy gyorsat* ‘one/a quick.ACC’, *egy hirtelent* ‘one/a sudden.ACC’, *egy intenzívet* ‘one/an intensive.ACC’, *egy hosszút* ‘one/a long.ACC’, *egy bájosat* ‘one/a charming.ACC’ or *egy kellemeset* ‘one/a pleasant.ACC’.

Hence, the counterpart of the English canonical aspectual COC in (1) or the correspondent of (21c) are the sentences below:

- (22) a. Mari aludt egy mélyet.  
Mary slept a sound.ACC  
‘Mary slept a sound sleep.’
- b. Péter sóhajtott egy öregeset.  
Peter sighed an elderly.ACC  
‘Peter sighed an elderly sigh.’

If we take a close look at different Bible translations in Hungarian, we notice that, towards the modern period, they display a strong tendency to drop the cognateness between the verb and the object, although this used to be a distinctive feature of these religious texts. The following two translations from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, printed in 1908 (*Károli Gáspár Revideált Biblia*, KG), and in 1973, respectively (*Szent István Társulati Biblia*, SZIT), reveal the following techniques used in the latter version: the introduction of a light verb (23), the introduction of a verbal synonym (24), the introduction of a non-cognate object such as a hyponym (25), the omission of the verb (26) or the omission of the CO (27):

- (23) a. fogad fogadást az Úrnak (KG)  
vows vow.ACC the Lord.DAT
- b. fogadalmat tesz az Úrnak (SZIT, Num, 30, 3)  
vow.ACC makes the Lord.DAT  
‘vows a vow unto the Lord’
- (24) a. álom amelyet álmodtál (KG)  
dream that.ACC dreamed
- b. az álom, amit láttál (SZIT, Gen, 37, 10)  
the dream that.ACC saw  
‘the dream that you dreamed’

<sup>2</sup>Although members of the three classes of POs exhibit uniform behaviour with respect to most cognate tests (e.g. passivization, quantification with a strong determiner, theta-role assignment, pronominalization, indefiniteness restriction, restrictive relative clause modification, *mit* ‘what.ACC’ type of questioning and aspectual contribution), they behave differently with respect to some other diagnostics (e.g. contrastive topicalization, focusing and adverbial interpretation).

<sup>3</sup>The PO *egy* ‘one.ACC’ is formally the accusative-marked (*-t*) numeral or indefinite article *egy* ‘one/a(n)’, with *-e-* being the linking vowel on the stem ending with a consonant, in accordance with the vowel harmony characteristic of this language. Similar linking vowels (*-o-* or *-a-*) are found in all the accusative adjectives of class (b) and (c) that end in a consonant.

- (25) a. semmi szőlőből csinált italt se igyék (KG)  
 nothing from grape made drink.ACC not drink  
 b. nem szabad semmiféle szőlő levét sem innia (SZIT, Num, 6, 3)  
 not allowed no sort of grape liquid.ACC neither drink.INF  
 ‘neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes’
- (26) a. Van nékem eledelem, a mit egyem (KG)  
 have I.DAT food.POSS.1SG that.ACC eat  
 b. Van eledelem (SZIT, John, 4, 32)  
 have food.POSS.1SG  
 ‘I have food to eat’
- (27) a. nevezék nevét Edomnak (KG)  
 called name.POSS.3SG.ACC Edom.DAT  
 b. elnevezték Edomnak (SZIT, Gen, 25, 30)  
 PRT.called Edom.DAT  
 ‘his name was called Edom’

More interestingly, Hungarian aspectual COs or, more precisely, POs fulfilling the function of the aspectual CO in the language, have been shown to be non-existent in Old Hungarian (OH), rare in Middle Hungarian (MiH), more increasingly frequent in Early Modern Hungarian (EMH) and extremely frequent and quite numerous in Modern Hungarian (MH), where they are used both in everyday speech and in literary contexts; cf. Farkas (2020b). For the presentation of our diachronic analysis, we rely on the following three online corpora of the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences: OH corpus containing OH codices and miscellaneous minor texts (*Ómagyar Korpusz, ÓK*)<sup>4</sup>; the database containing OH and MiH records and private correspondence (*Történeti magánéleti korpusz, TMK*)<sup>5</sup> and the New Hungarian historical database, a collection of diverse texts belonging to different genres and written in different styles in the EMH and MH periods (*Új Magyar történeti szövegtár, MTSzt*)<sup>6</sup>.

One striking, verb-related characteristic that a close corpus analysis can reveal is that more and more intransitive(ly) used verbs can take the PO *egyet* ‘one.ACC’ (or its variants *eggyet, edjet, edgyet, egjet, egiet, eggiet, egyetis* or *édgyetis*). In this sense, whereas only one single (semelfactive) verb and 12 different (semelfactive and activity) verbs take this PO in the ÓK corpus and in the diverse texts included in TMK, respectively, there is a significant increase in the verbs that take the same PO in the MTSzt texts. And this becomes evident if we compare the first versus the last decades of this latter period: whereas at the beginning of this period—more precisely, in the texts written between 1801 and 1850—there are fewer than 60 different instances of verbs that take this PO, at the end of the same period—more precisely in the texts written between 1951 and 2000—there are more than 200 different instances of verbs that co-occur with the same PO. The following examples are taken from TMK (28) and MTSzt (29):

- (28) a. egyet a jövő Tavaszra Disputáljok  
 one.ACC the next on spring dispute  
 ‘I should have a dispute by next spring’  
 b. edgyet aluván föl édet nagy sirva  
 one.ACC sleeping PRT woke big weeping  
 ‘after sleeping a sleep, he woke up weeping bitterly’  
 c. hát az uram egyet sem szólhat  
 well the husband.POSS.1SG one.ACC neither can utter  
 ‘well, my husband cannot utter a word’

<sup>4</sup>*omagyarkorpusz.nyttud.hu*, see also Simon (2014) and Simon & Sass (2012).

<sup>5</sup>*tmk.nyttud.hu*, see also Dömötör et al. (2017) or Novák et al. (2018).

<sup>6</sup>*clara.nyttud.hu*.

- (29) a. Ki mert leg alábbis egyet sóhajtani?  
 who dared at least one.ACC sigh.INF  
 ‘Who dared to sigh at least a sigh?’
- b. néki is adjon egyet inni belőle  
 him also give one.ACC drink.INF from it  
 ‘he should also allow him to drink a little from it’
- c. majd befordultam egyet alunni ismét  
 then PRT.turned in one.ACC sleep.INF again  
 ‘then I turned in to get some sleep again’
- d. hogy nevéthessünk már egyet rajta  
 so that can laugh already one.ACC on him  
 ‘so that we can finally have a laugh at him’
- e. verekedtek egyet a rakparton  
 fought one.ACC the on quay  
 ‘they had a fight on the quay’
- f. úsztak egyet, majd lefeküdtek a fűzfa mellé napozni  
 swam one.ACC then PRT.lay the willow near sunbathe.INF  
 ‘they had a swim and then lay down near the willow to sunbathe’

Moreover, a careful examination of the occurrences of the above PO with reduced lexical content reveals a gradual numerical increase and frequency in use in it, with the number of this PO increasing dramatically by the MH period, where there is over twice as many *egyed* ‘one.ACC’ POs as in the EMH period<sup>7</sup>.

Similarly, the same gradual numerical increase and frequency of use is remarked in the case of the POs of class (b) and (c) as well, with the former registering their first occurrences in the EMH period, and the first—albeit still very rare—occurrences of the latter dating to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In a similar way to *egyed* ‘one.ACC’, the number of the few POs of class (b) is doubled by the MH period, where there are over twice as many *egy jó* ‘one/a good.ACC’, *jókat* ‘good.PL.ACC’ or *egy nagyot* ‘one/a big.ACC’, *nagyokat* ‘big.PL.ACC’ as in the EMH period.

The following examples taken from MTSzt show that POs of class (c) can occur either alone, see (30) or with another PO, see (31):

- (30) a. Ijedt föl Izidóra éleset sikoltva (1875)  
 scared PRT Isadore sharp.ACC screaming  
 ‘Isadore woke up scarily, screaming a sharp scream’
- b. sóhajtott keserveset Péter Dániel, s megvakarta a fejét (1931)  
 sighed painful.ACC Peter Daniel and PRT.scratched the head.POSS.3SG.ACC  
 ‘Peter Daniel sighed a painful sigh and scratched his head’
- (31) a. Olyan keserveset és nagyot sohajt (1867)  
 so painful.ACC and big.ACC sighs  
 ‘he sighs such a painful and big sigh’
- b. nedveset és boldogát ásítva (1952)  
 wet.ACC and happy.ACC yawning  
 ‘yawning a wet and happy yawn’

In sum, while the very frequently used PO *egyed* ‘one.ACC’ appears in the MiH period, POs of class (b) are first identified in diverse texts belonging to the EMH period and the first—albeit still very rare—occurrences of POs of class (c) date to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In other words, the (beginning

<sup>7</sup>An important caveat is in order here: the above two observations are not unexpected or surprising considering that we deal with corpora of different length, with the number of written texts being doubled by the MH period. Still, the generalization remains that even if we focus only on the MTSzt texts, we have a general overview of the diachronic change and the direction of this change in the PO constructions of the language.

of the) MH period is characterized not only by the emergence of POs of class (c) but, after a gradual numerical increase during the EMH period, also by a (very) high frequency in use of the PO of class (a) and, to a lesser degree, the POs of class (b).

In Romanian the high frequency of transitive, transitivity and aspectual COCs in the OR period is ascribed to the fact that the texts containing this type of construction are mostly faithful translations of (Greek or Hebrew) religious texts but, as we have seen, these constructions gradually disappear by the Modern Romanian period. In sharp contrast to this, in Hungarian the emergence of (especially aspectual) COCs can be linked to the diachronic evolution of verbal (and telicizing) particles, which together contributed to the reduction of complex tense forms such as the past perfect illustrated in *mondtam vala* 'I had said' or the past imperfective illustrated in *mondom vala* 'I had been saying' (É. Kiss, 2008, 2017); cf Farkas (2020b).

#### 4. Conclusions

The point of departure in this study was the observation that the exact counterpart of the canonical aspectual COC *to sleep a sound sleep* is ungrammatical at the present stage of Romanian and Hungarian. However, we have shown that both of these languages have the corresponding structure but either at an earlier language stage (the case of Romanian) or at the present language stage but the cognate nominal is expressed by a pseudo-object (the case of Hungarian). More importantly, we have cast light on the fact that these constructions diachronically change in the opposite direction: whereas Romanian is characterized by a gradual loss of the three types of COCs, Hungarian is characterized by an increased use of the aspectual COC, although Biblical Hungarian tends to gradually drop or replace parts of the transitive or transitivity COC.

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