Mónika Dóla & Anita Viszket

Conceptualizing cause as background:
The [N_{mental state}.Poss.Iness]_{cause} construction

Abstract

In the paper, we argue that expressions like *bánatomban* 'in my grief' and *ijedtében* 'in his/her fright' are instances of a construction in its own right within the Hungarian language system, which is used in text to make predication about the mental state of the Agent subject as a cause for their action. In the first half of the paper, we describe the formal and functional characteristics of the construction. We propose that the construction, which we call [N_{mental state}.Poss.Iness]_{cause} or, for ease, the mental-state-as-cause construction, is entrenched for the expression of cause in Hungarian, and that this status imposes several morpho-syntactical and lexical-semantic constraints on the construction and on the sentence. We also argue that in the construction, the possessive morpheme/phrase is subject to grammaticalization. In the second half of the paper, we investigate the cognitive-conceptual profile of the construction as an expression of cause, and we propose that in the construction as a cognitive unit, mental-state-as-cause is conceptualized as *background*.
Keywords: mental state, cause, predicative complement, possession, grammaticalization, conceptual metaphor

1   Introduction

Although expressions like *örömömben* 'in my joy', *mérgedben* 'in your anger', or *irigységében* 'in his/her envy' (1a)–(1c) have been the object of discussion in standard works of Hungarian grammar (e.g., Komlósy 1992, Hegedűs 2004, P. Lakatos 2006), no full account of the phenomenon has yet been given in any model of the Hungarian language.

(1) a. *örömömben*
        joy.Poss1Sg.Iness
        'in my joy'
    b. *mérgedben*
        anger.Poss2Sg.Iness
        'in your anger'
    c. *irigységében*
        envy.Poss3Sg.Iness
        'in his/her envy'

In the paper, we describe the characteristic features of the expressions in question, and we argue for them to be viewed as instances of a construction in its own right within the Hungarian language system. After that, we analyze the cognitive-conceptual profile of the construction as an expression of cause.

2 Description of the phenomenon

2.1 Earlier accounts

P. Lakatos (2006), following in the footsteps of Keszler's (2000) traditional descriptive grammar, lists expressions like (1a)–(1c) under the category of adverbial syntagmas of cause. The list also includes other nouns with the inessive suffix, but without the possessive morpheme (2a). Although causality is an important element of the expressions in question, it is essential to set them apart from similar expressions since in many respects, they behave differently in the sentence: for instance, while the expressions in (2a) and (2b) stand with the definite article, the one in (2c) cannot stand with it.

(2) a. *elfárad*   *a*   *munkában*
     vp.get-tired.Pr3SgIndef   the   work.Iness
     's/he gets tired from work'
   b. *elsárgul*   *az*   *irigységtől*
     vp.go-yellow.Pr3SgIndef the   envy.Ablat
     's/he turns green with envy'
   c. *elájul*   **a*   *félelmében*
     vp.faint.Pr3SgIndef   the   fear.Poss3Sg.Iness
     intended meaning: 's/he faints in her/his fear'

In his structuralist-generative work, Komlósy (1992) investigates the expressions at hand within a more special group, which he calls predicative complements. Predicative complements are constituents that, apart from the main predicate of the sentence, make further predications about single arguments in the sentence or about the proposition as a whole (3).

(3) *In his resentment, John served the soup cold.* (after Komlósy 1992: 411)
     → John served the soup. The soup is cold. John is resentful.

Komlósy (1992) defines five distinctive formal characteristics of expressions like *ijedtében* 'in his/her fright'. First, although they feature the possessive personal suffix and they formally look like "normal" possessive phrases, they can never stand with the definite article (4a) as it is customary for "regular" possessives in Hungarian (4b). This behavior, however, makes them similar to other predicative complements, which can never be referential and which, therefore, must always stand without the definite article, at least in Hungarian. In other words, although "regular" Hungarian possessive phrases allow for the appearance of the article before them even as predicative complements (4b), these expressions can never stand with the definite article (4a).

(4) a. *Mari (*a)   bánatában   sírva   fakadt.*
    Mary (*the)   grief.Poss3Sg.Iness   cry.PTCP   burst.Past3SgIndef
    'In her grief, Mary burst out crying.'
    → Mari burst out crying. Mary is in grief.

   b. *(A) megfázása   miatt   Mari otthon   maradt.*
    (the) vp.have-cold.NOM.Poss3Sg because-of Mary at-home   stay.Past3SgIndef
    'Mary stayed at home because of her cold.'
    → Mary stayed at home. Mary had a cold.

Second, the "subjects" of these expressions – just like the "subjects" of all predicative comple-ments – must always be referential; i.e., the constituents that they make predications about must always stand with the definite article in Hungarian (5a). (It must be noted though that the refer-ential nature of the "subject" is only a requirement in neutral sentences, i.e., sentences that con-tain no heavily stressed preverbal contrastive focused constituent (5b).)

(5) a. **Kislány   bánatában   sírva   fakadt.*
    little-girl grief.Poss3Sg.Iness   cry.PTCP   burst.Past3SgIndef
   b. *KISLÁNY fakadt   sírva   bánatában,   nem   KISFIÚ.*
    little-girl burst.Past3SgIndef cry.PTCP grief.Poss3Sg.Iness not   little-boy
    'It was some LITTLE GIRL that burst out crying, not some LITTLE BOY.'

Third, a distinguishing feature of the expressions under discussion is that they always relate to the subject of the sentence (6b), with whom they always show grammatical agreement for person and number. This is in contrast to other predicative complements, including "regular" possessive expressions, which are referentially free, cannot determine the morphological form of the subject, and do not show agreement with it (6a–6a''). In addition, while in "regular" possessive phrases the position for a possessor is filled with a pronounced or unpronounced possessor (6a–6a''), the position for a possessor in these expressions can never be filled (6b–6b'').[1]

(6) a. *A megfázása   miatt   Mari otthon maradt.*
    the vp.have-cold.NOM.Poss3Sg because-of Mary at-home stay.Past3SgIndef
    'Mary stayed at home because of her cold.'

  a'. *A megfázásom   miatt   Mari otthon   maradt.*
    the vp.have-cold.NOM.Poss1Sg because-of Mary at-home   stay.Past3SgIndef

 a''. *Az én megfázásom   miatt   Mari otthon   maradt.*
    the I   vp.have-cold.NOM.Poss1Sg because-of Mary at-home stay.Past3SgIndef
    'Mary stayed at home because of my cold.'

---

[1] Komlósy (1992) notes that there is another type of predicative free adjuncts also formed on a nominal base with a personal possessive suffix and the inessive case suffix, whose position for a possessor cannot be filled, either. This type includes expressions like *röptében* (fly.Nom.Poss3Sg.Iness, 'while in the air'), *futtában* (run.Nom.Poss3Sg.Iness, 'hastily'), or *siettében* (hurry.Nom.Poss3Sg.Iness, 'hurriedly') etc., i.e., movement-nouns formed with a very unique derivational process (with the *-(Vt)t* nominalizer, which must always be followed by a personal possessive suffix). These expressions, unlike our expressions, cannot be further complemented and are referentially free.

b. *Mari   bánatában   sírva   fakadt.*
    Mary   grief.Poss3Sg.Iness   cry.PTCP   burst.Past3SgIndef
    'In her grief, Mary burst out crying.'

b'. **Bánatomban   Mari   sírva   fakadt.*
    grief.Poss1Sg.Iness Mary   cry.PTCP   burst.Past3SgIndef

b''. **Az én bánatomban   Mari   sírva   fakadt.*
    the I   grief.Poss3Sg.Iness Mary   cry.PTCP   burst.Past3SgIndef
    *'In my grief, Mary burst out crying.'

Fourth, in neutral sentences these expressions may appear in the preverbal zone, where they take the position before the quantifier (7a–7a'). This sentence position is unusual for predicative complements relating to single arguments, which is what the expressions under analysis are: normally, these cannot appear preverbally amongst such topic-like elements as, for example, the subject and / or the adverb of time.[2] In addition, rather uniquely for constituents without an article, these expressions may also stand postverbally in neutral sentences (7b). Finally, if the expression appears in the preverbal zone after the quantifier, the sentence will be stressed (focused), where the exact expression is the heavily stressed preverbal contrastive focused constituent (7c).

(7) a. *Imre bánatában   mindig   leissza   magát.*
    Imre sorrow.Poss3Sg.Iness always   down.drink.Pr3SgDef self.Acc
    'Imre, in his sorrow, always drinks himself legless.'

   a'. *Bánatában   Imre mindig leissza   magát.*
    sorrow.Poss3Sg.Iness   Imre always down.drink.Pr3SgDef self.Acc
    'In his sorrow, Imre always drinks himself legless.'

   b. *Imre mindig   leissza   magát   bánatában.*
    Imre always   down.drink.Pr3SgDef self.Acc   sorrow.Poss3Sg.Iness
    'Imre always drinks himself legless in his sorrow.'

   c. *Imre mindig   BÁNATÁBAN   issza   le   magát.*
    Imre always   sorrow.Poss3Sg.Iness drink.Pr3SgDef down   self.Acc
    'It's in his sorrow that Imre always drinks himself legless.'

The fifth characteristic feature is again a unique one: mental-state-as-cause constructions always contain an element of causality. They express the subject's state of mind or change of state, and at the same time, they present it as the underlying cause for the new situation, i.e., the subject's actions. In his argument for the importance of the causality element, Komlósy (1992) demonstrates that if the semantics of the verb unables the interpretation of the situation as one caused by the subject, e.g., with static verbs (8a) or non-Agent subjects (8b), the use of the expression will render non-grammatical sentences.

(8) a. **Mari   bánatában   beteg   volt.*
    Mary   grief.Poss3Sg.Iness ill   be.Past3SgIndef

   b. **Mari   ijedtében   meglátta   Pétert.*
    Mary   fright.Poss3Sg.Iness vp.see.Past3SgDef Peter.Acc

---

[2] Those predicative complements that make predication about the proposition of the sentence as a whole may appear in the preverbal zone, before the quantifier (Komlósy 1992).

In sum, Komlósy (1992) defines the expressions under discussion as a special subgroup of predicative complements. As predicative free adjuncts, they express the subject's state of mind or change of state, and they present it as the underlying cause for the subject's actions. The most unique feature of this subgroup is the personal possessive suffix. Although the presence of this morpheme makes the expressions look like "regular" possessive phrases, in actual text they display a behavior different from what is customary for other possessives. They do not allow for the appearance of the definite article before them, their position for a possessor cannot be filled with a pronoun (either pronounced or unpronounced, as is customary in Hungarian), and they always relate to the subject of the sentence, with whom they must always show agreement through their personal possessive suffix.

2.2 The mental-state-as-cause construction

Based on the findings of the above-reviewed earlier accounts of the phenomenon, we conclude that expressions like *bánatában* 'in his/her grief' form a special group within the Hungarian language system. As for form, they consist of a noun and two suffixes: a personal possessive suffix and the inessive case suffix *-ban/ben*. In neutral sentences, their preferred position is in the preverbal zone, before the quantifier position, but they can also appear postverbally. As for function, the expressions act as predicative complements that relate to the subject of the sentence: they predicate the mental state of the subject of the sentence, and they also predicate that this mental state is the cause for the subject's action or change of state expressed in the main verb.

This special meaning/function imposes several restrictions on various constituents of the sentence and on the behavior of the expressions. First, they do not allow the definite article to appear before them, and their position for a possessor cannot be filled. Second, the noun in the expression must express the mental state of the subject of the sentence, which must be referential and must be an Agent, and with whom the expression must show agreement in person and number, through its personal possessive suffix. Third, the caused situation must be an action, an event or a change of state: the main verb of the sentence must be dynamic. If these requirements are not met, the sentence will be ill formed (4a), (5a), (8a), (8b), or the expression with the same morphosyntactical buildup will stop functioning as a mental-state-as-cause construction: it may be an argument of the verb, expressing circumstance other than cause (9).

(9) *Félelmében   barátja   is   osztozott.*
      fear.Poss3Sg.Iness   friend.Poss3Sg   also   share.Past3SgIndef
      'His/her friend also shared in his/her fear.'

The unique characteristics described above authorize the expressions at hand to be regarded as instances of a construction in its own right within the Hungarian language system. We call this construction [N$_{mental\ state}$.Poss.Iness]$_{cause}$ or, for practical reasons, the mental-state-as-cause construction.

As a further evidence for the construction status, we argue that the phenomenon involves a process of grammaticalization,[3] whereby the possessive contained in the expression loses in syntactic freedom and semantic complexity (Lehmann 1985). Although the surface realization of

---

[3] Grammaticalization is defined here "as the development from lexical to grammatical forms, and from grammatical to even more grammatical forms", where "lexical or less grammaticalized linguistic expressions are pressed into service for the expression of more grammatical functions" (Heine & Song 2011, 590).

the construction, i.e., the fact that it contains a possessive morpheme, makes it look like "regular" Hungarian nominal possessive forms with a case suffix, it behaves unlike those (see above). The personal suffix is, in fact, grammaticalized in the construction, in the following sense. The semantic content of possession as represented in the morpheme is shifted from a more concrete and more easily accessible meaning (e.g., kinship and part/whole relations, or ownership) to a less concrete and less easily accessible meaning content: qualia (Heine and Song 2011: 590). Mental state is presented as possessum, and the person marker serves to ground the mental state to the Agent subject – see (10a) versus (10b).

(10) a. *Félelemből*   *megtámadtam.*
         fear.Elat   vp.attack.Past1SgDef
         'I attacked him/her out of fear.'
     b. *Félelmemben*   *megtámadtam.*
         fear.Poss1Sg.Iness vp.attack.Past1SgDef
         'In my fear, I attacked him/her.'

In parallel, the possessive morpheme and the possessive phrase also lose in syntactic freedom. The possessive suffix must obligatorily show agreement in person and number with the subject of the sentence, while the possessive phrase cannot stand with the definite article, and it "loses" its position for a possessor, furthermore, the expression can only relate to the subject of the sentence.

Finally, we propose that the [N$_{mental\ state}$.Poss.Iness]$_{cause}$ construction is, in fact, entrenched (Langacker 1987) for the expression of cause in Hungarian. We suggest that the special arrangement of the linguistic elements in the construction has by now acquired a status in Hungarian speakers' mind whereby it automatically activates a cause-reading. The [N$_{mental\ state}$.Poss.Iness]$_{cause}$ construction as a cognitive unit encodes the conceptualization of cause, and this conceptualization is what actually imposes the above-mentioned constraints on the behavior of the construction in text. The next section is devoted to the conceptualization of cause in the construction.

3   The construction as a conceptual metaphor

In her semantic-functional grammar of Hungarian as a second language, Hegedűs (2004) discusses the expressions in our focus under cause–effect relationships. She offers an attractive classification of adverbials that may be used in Hungarian simple sentences to express causality (Table 1), classifying the adverbials' case suffixes under the categories of *source* (where from?), *container* (where?), and *goal* (where to?).

Where from?	Where?	Where to?

*Hanyagság**ból** nem tanulta meg a leckéjét.*
 	
  'Out of sloppiness, he didn't
  do his homework.'
	*Fájdalm**ában** jajgatott.*
	
	  'S/he was shrieking in her/his
	  pain.'
	*Zavar**ában** a vonaljegyeket
	tépdeste.*
	
	  'S/he was tearing up the tickets
	  in her/his embarrassment.'
		***Bele**betegedett *a bánat**ba**.*
		
		  'S/he went sick with (lit. *into*)
		  grief.'

Table 1. Selection of case suffixes for cause–effect relationships (after Hegedűs 2004: 185)

174

Mónika Dóla & Anita Viszket:
Conceptualizing cause as background: The [N mental state.Poss.Iness] cause construction
Argumentum 15 (2019), 168-178
Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó

According to Hegedűs (2004), in Hungarian simple sentences, cause is most often expressed with the help of case endings belonging to the *where from?* group – that is, cause is most often conceptualized as *source* or *motion from*. However, in the mental-state-as-cause construction, cause is conceptualized as *being in a container*. In fact, certain mental-state nouns can be used both with the elative and with the inessive case suffix, as predicative complements expressing cause (11a)–(11d).

(11) a. *Irigységből*　　　　　　　*elloptad?!*
　　　　envy.Elat　　　　　　　　vp.steal.Past2SgDef
　　　　'Did you steal it out of envy?!'
　　b. *Irigységedben*　　　　　　*elloptad?!*
　　　　envy.Poss2Sg.Iness　　　　vp.steal.Past2SgDef
　　　　'Did you steal it in your envy?!'
　　c. *Gyávaságból*　　　　　　　*hazudtam.*
　　　　coward.ness.Elat　　　　　lie.Past1SgIndef
　　　　'I lied out of cowardice.'
　　d. *Gyávaságomban*　　　　　*hazudtam.*
　　　　coward.ness.Poss1Sg.Iness　lie.Past1SgIndef
　　　　'In my cowardice, I lied.'

Apart from the obvious structural difference that the elative construction cannot take the possessive personal suffix while the inessive construction must always feature it, the functional difference between the two constructions is rather subtle and presumably conceptual. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) offers a possible explanation for this difference (Lakoff & Johnson 1980).

Conceptual Metaphor Theory claims that *cause* and *motion* are inseparable in the human mind (Woźny 2013): *cause* is often conceptualized as *force*, i.e., something powerful enough to make a *change*, and *change* is often viewed as *motion* (Cserép 2014: 265). In addition, humans experience *cause–effect* relationships in time, as *antecedent–consequence* relationships (Hegedűs 2004: 185), and conceptualize time as *motion in space*. Based on this, it seems plausible why the conceptualization of cause can be encoded in *source* or *motion from* endings in (the Hungarian) language. As for mental states, CMT proposes that "emotional states are very commonly conceptualized as containers" (Cserép 2014: 265). In addition, due to the general experience that humans respond to their emotions or to the fact that humans attribute mental states to themselves and to each other, assuming a causal relationship between mental states and actions/behavior (theory of mind), emotions are also often conceptualized as forces (Kövecses 2014: 16–17; Martsa 2007: 209). As a result, the conceptualization of mental states as causes can also be encoded in *container* or *where?* endings in (the Hungarian) language. This is in line with CMT, which claims that concepts are not tied to source domains on a one-and-only basis; one target domain may be linked to several source domains (Andor 2004: 371).

Hypothetically, we can infer that the elative case suffix *-ból/ből*, due to its dynamism and direction (*motion from*), is indeed a more plausible way of expressing cause than the inessive *-ban/ben* ending, which, due to its static nature, lends itself more to the expression of condition (*being in a container*). It is only through association (condition as cause) that the inessive case suffix may have come to express cause with mental-state nouns. And maybe this is exactly why it "needs" the possessive suffix in Hungarian: to disambiguate its two uses of when it predicates condition (12a) and when it predicates condition as cause (12b).

175

Mónika Dóla & Anita Viszket:
Conceptualizing cause as background: The [N$_{mental\ state}$.Poss.Iness]$_{cause}$ construction
Argumentum 15 (2019), 168-178
Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó

(12) a. *Haragban*   *vannak.*
     wrath.Iness   be.Pr3PlIndef
     'They are on bad terms.'

     b. *Haragjukban*   *összeverekedtek.*
     wrath.Poss3Pl.Iness   vp.fight.Past3PlIndef
     'In their rage, they got into a fight.'

Again hypothetically, with time and through frequent use with the meaning element of causality, the formation with the possessive morpheme may have become "taken" for the expression of mental-state-as-cause. Finally, by now, it has become a much more productive way (13b), (13d) of expressing mental-state-as-cause than the elative version (13a), (13c). The latter is more productive with a narrower range of mental states such as stable, inner-personality-quality type emotions (11a), (11c) and knowledge and thoughts (13e), (13g), and other non-mental-state nouns.

(13) a. **Feszültségből*   *ordítani*   *kezdett.*
     tenseness.Elat   scream.Inf   start.Past3SgIndef

     b. *Feszültségében*   *ordítani*   *kezdett.*
     tenseness.Poss3Sg.Iness   scream.Inf   start.Past3SgIndef
     'In her/his tenseness, s/he started to scream.'

     c. **Depresszióból*   *megölte*   *magát.*
     depression.Elat   vp.kill.Past3SgDef   self.Acc

     d. *Depressziójában*   *megölte*   *magát.*
     depression.Poss3Sg.Iness   vp.kill.Past3SgDef   self.Acc
     'In her/his depression, s/he killed herself/himself.'

     e. *Hirtelen*   *elhatározásból*   *lemondott.*
     sudden   decision.Elat   resign.Past3SgIndef
     lit. 'S/he_resigned_out of_a_sudden_decision.'
     'His/her resignation was his/her sudden decision.'

     f. **Hirtelen*   *elhatározásában*   *lemondott.*
     sudden   decision.Poss3Sg.Iness   resign.Past3SgIndef

     g. *Milyen*   *megfontolásból*   *döntött*   *így?*
     what-kind   consideration.Elat   decide.Past3SgIndef   so
     lit. 'Out of_what_consideration_did_s/he_decide_that way?"
     'What made him/her decide that way?

     h. **Milyen*   *megfontolásában*   *döntött*   *így?*
     what-kind   consideration.Poss3Sg.Iness   decide.Past3SgIndef   so

Returning to the difference between the alternatives in (11a)–(11b) and (11c)–(11d), in line with CMT, it may be described as follows: although both versions express the mental state of the Agent subject as a cause for their action, and although this mental state is conceptualized in both versions as *container*, in the elative construction, cause is conceptualized as *motion out of a container*, while in the [N$_{mental\ state}$.Poss.Iness]$_{cause}$ construction, it is conceptualized as *being in a container*. Thus, mental-state-as-cause conveys more dynamism in the former version than in the latter one, where it is profiled similar to static conditions. We propose, therefore, that in the elative construction, mental-state-as-cause is conceptualized as *dynamic force*, while in the [N$_{mental\ state}$.Poss.Iness]$_{cause}$ construction, it is conceptualized more as *background*. Mental-state as

background-type of cause is posited in the intersection of *condition*, on the one hand, and *cause as dynamic force*, on the other hand.

The idea that the [N$_{mental\ state}$.Poss.Iness]$_{cause}$ construction portrays mental-state-as-cause as *background*, i.e., as something halfway between *condition* and *cause as dynamic force*, is also supported by the "question–answer" test. In this test drawing on the "questioning"-strategy used in traditional approaches to grammar, we make questions about the sentence and we answer them with the appropriate constituents of the sentence. As (14) demonstrates, although we know that we must use a *why*? question for the mental-state-as-cause construction,[4] we cannot answer it by repeating the constituent as it appears in the sentence: we can only answer with a *because*-clause in which we make predication about the mental state of the subject as their condition.

(14)　　*Megalázottságában*　　　*Gabi　lehajtotta*　　　*a　　fejét.*
　　　　humiliation.Poss3Sg.Iness　Gabi　vp.bow.Past3gDef　the　head.Poss3Sg.Acc
　　　　'In her humiliation, Gabi bowed her head.'
→　　*Miért hajtotta le Gabi a fejét? '*
　　　　'**Why** did Gabi bow her head?'
→　　***Megalázottságában.**
　　　　*'In her humiliation.'
→　　**Mert** megalázottnak érezte magát. / Mert megalázott volt.
　　　　'**Because** she felt humiliated.' / 'Because she was humiliated.'

In addition, the proposition above is further supported by a number of borderline cases, where the [N$_{mental\ state}$.Poss.Iness]$_{cause}$ construction partly expresses condition, and partly cause – occasionally even with illness/symptom-nouns (15a), non-Agent subjects (15b), and static verbs with the modifier *csak* 'just' (15c)–(15d).

(15) a. *Lázában*　　　　　　*félrebeszélt.*
　　　　fever.Poss3Sg.Iness　　aside-speak.Past3SgIndef
　　　　'In her/his fever, s/he talked nonsense.'
　　b. *Rémületében*　　　　　*félt*　　　　　　　　*megszólalni.*
　　　　terror.Poss3Gg.Iness　be-scared.Past3Sg.Def　vp.speak.Inf
　　　　'In her/his terror, s/he was scared to speak up.'
　　c. *Rettegésében*　　　　　*csak　ült*　　　　　　*szótlanul.*
　　　　dread.Poss3Sg.Iness　　just　sit.Past3Sg.Indef　word.without.ly
　　　　'S/he just sat there speechless in dread.'
　　d. *Meglepetésében*　　　　*csak　nézett.*
　　　　surprise.Poss3Sg.Iness　　just　　　　　　look.Past3Sg.Indef
　　　　'S/he was just staring in surprise.'

In these examples, the "question–answer" test works even less: there is not even a "good" question word or phrase to use. One might try several different options, e.g., *when?*, *why?*, *how?*, *feeling what?*, only to find that in actual fact none of them seems to be a truly good solution alone.

---

[4]　In fact, this test also highlights the unscientific nature of the traditional *questioning*-technique in parsing: we only know what question to ask (*why?*) because we already know that the constituent expresses cause in the sentence.

Finally, the possible translations for (15a)–(15d) are also suggestive of a *background*-type conceptualization of mental-state-as-cause in the [N$_{mental\ state}$.Poss.Iness]$_{cause}$ construction. Sentence (15a), for instance, could be translated into English both as 'S/he talked nonsense because s/he had fever' (cause) and also as 'Sick with fever, s/he talked nonsense' (condition). Furthermore, (15c) and (15d) cannot feature the possessive pronoun (e.g., *'S/he was just staring in his/her surprise'), as opposed to all other English translations in this paper, which highlights the problem from a different angle.

In English, a similar construction to [N$_{mental\ state}$.Poss.Iness]$_{cause}$ is available for the expression of mental-state-as-cause, where the mental-state noun stands with the preposition *in* and (in lack of sufficient data, presumably optionally) with a possessive pronoun (16a)–(16b).

(16) a. *In embarrassment, Jane covered her face.*
   b. *In her embarrassment, Jane covered her face.*

Without analyzing the English construction(s), we raise the following questions: Are the short and the long *in*-prepositional phrases (PP) interchangeable (e.g., *in fury* vs. *in my/your/his etc. fury*) in the expression of mental-state-as-cause? Is there any difference between them? What is the function of the possessive pronoun in the long *in*-PP? How do the *in*-PPs behave compared to adverbs of manner (e.g., *Embarrassedly, Jane covered her face*), participles (e.g., *(Being) Embarrassed, Jane covered her face*) and adverb clauses of cause (e.g., *Jane covered her face because she was embarrassed*)? Is it possible that these expressions present a cline between condition and cause? We leave these questions to further research. Here, we only wish to point out some of the problems that the construction also presents in English. We also wish to raise the idea that the curious case of the two English *in*-PPs with mental-state nouns might support our proposal that in the [N$_{mental\ state}$.Poss.Iness]$_{cause}$ construction, mental-state is profiled as *background*, sharing the features of both cause and condition.

4   Conclusions

In the paper, we established that Hungarian expressions like *megdöbbenésében* 'in his/her astonishment' and *izgalmamban* 'in my excitement' behave in the sentence as predicative complements that both predicate the mental state of the Agent subject and that this mental state is the cause for the subject's action or change of state expressed in the main verb. We described the morpho-syntactical and lexical-semantic restrictions that this special meaning/function imposes on the expressions themselves and on the sentences in which they appear. We argued that in the expressions, the possessive morpheme/phrase is subject to grammaticalization in that it loses in syntactic freedom and semantic complexity. Based on our findings, we proposed that these expressions should be viewed as instances of a construction in its own right within the Hungarian language system. We called this construction the mental-state-as-cause construction or [N$_{mental\ state}$.Poss.Iness]$_{cause}$. We formulated that this particular construction is, in fact, entrenched for the expression of cause in Hungarian: as a cognitive unit, it encodes the conceptualization of cause, and it is this conceptualization that imposes the various constraints on the behavior of the construction in text. Finally, we proposed that in the construction, the concept of mental-state is metaphorically defined and conceptualized as *being in a container* and, due to the theory of mind, it is also conceptualized as *force*. As a result of this "double-sidedness", mental-state-as-

cause is conceptualized in the [N$_{mental\ state}$.Poss.Iness]$_{cause}$ construction in the intersection of condition and cause as dynamic force, as *background*.

The findings of the paper point towards several topics to be addressed in the future. Possible directions for future research include the assessment of the boundaries of the construction. What mental states are relevant for the [N$_{mental\ state}$.Poss.Iness]$_{cause}$ construction? What is the scope of nouns that the construction can feature? How can we describe the role of pragmatics in the relationship between the mental state and the caused situation? Much research also remains to be done on the productivity of the construction. Last, but not least, it would be worth looking at similar constructions in other languages, both to broaden and to deepen our understanding of the phenomenon.

References

Andor, J. (2014): Tolcsvai Nagy Gábor, Bevezetés a kognitív nyelvészetbe. *Magyar Nyelv* 3, 366–372.

Cserép, A. (2014): Conceptual metaphor theory: In defence or on the fence? *Argumentum* 10, 261–288.

Hegedűs, R. (2004): *Magyar Nyelvtan. Formák, Funkciók, Összefüggések* [Hungarian Grammar. Forms, Functions, Relations]. Budapest: Tinta Könyvkiadó.

Heine, B. & Song, K. (2001): On the grammaticalization of personal pronouns. *Journal of Linguistics* 47, 587–630.

Keszler, B. (2000): *Magyar Grammatika* [Hungarian Grammar]. Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó.

Komlósy, A. (1992): Régensek és vonzatok [Predicates and their arguments]. In: Kiefer, F. (ed.): *Strukturális Magyar Nyelvtan 1. Mondattan* [Structuralist Hungarian Grammar 1. Syntax]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 299–529.

Kövecses, Z. (2014): Conceptualizing emotions. A revised cognitive linguistic perspective. *Poznan Studies in Contemporary Linguistics* 50.1, 15–28.

Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980): *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Langacker, R.W. (1987): *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Lehmann, C. (1985): Grammaticalization: Synchronic variation and diachronic change. *Lingua e Stile* 20, 303–318.

Martsa, S. (2007): Emotion concepts in a cross-linguistics perspective: The case of disgust. In: Muráth, J. & Oláh-Hubai, Á. (eds.): *Interdisziplinäre Aspekte des Übersetzens und Dolmetschens. Interdisciplinary Aspects of Translation and Interpreting*. Wien: Praesens Verlag, 203–218.

P. Lakatos, I. (ed.) (2006): *Grammatikai Gyakorlókönyv* [Grammar Practice Book]. Budapest: Bölcsész Konzorcium.

Woźny, J. (2013): Force-motion schemas in metaphors of motion. *Studia Linguistica Universitatis Iagellonicae Cracoviensis* 130, 351–368.

Mónika Dóla and Anita Viszket
University of Pécs, Department of Linguistics
H-7624 Pécs
Ifjúság útja 6.
{dola.monika, viszket.anita}@pte.hu