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On the meaning of light verbs.
Hungarian light verb constructions within the system of verbal constructions with metaphorical meanings[1]

Abstrakt (O znaczeniu czasowników funkcyjnych. Węgierskie konstrukcje z czasownikami funkcyjnymi w ramach systemu konstrukcji czasownikowych o znaczeniu metaforycznym). Konstrukcje z czasownikami funkcyjnymi (LVC, „light verb constructions") stanowią szczególną kategorię w ramach systemu konstrukcji czasownikowych posiadających znaczenia metaforyczne, ponieważ ich semantyka jest przede wszystkim zdeterminowana nie przez czasownik, ale przez jego argument rzeczownikowy, która na ogół funkcjonuje jako dopełnienie. Jednakże kategoria LVC jest daleka od jednorodności. Cel niniejszej pracy jest dwojaki. Po pierwsze, staram się odpowiedzieć na pytanie o zróżnicowanie, które znajdujemy w kategorii LVC. Po drugie, analizuję strukturę semantyczną węgierskiego czasownika *köt wiązać*, aby dowiedzieć się, jak LVC z udziałem tego czasownika mogą być włączone do systemu konstrukcji czasownikowych o znaczeniu metaforycznym. Poprzez badanie sprawdzonych, rzeczywistych przykładów staram się również podkreślić fakt, że (w przeciwieństwie do popularnego założenia w literaturze specjalistycznej) elementy czasownikowe LVC nie mogą być uważane za elementy „bez znaczenia". Choć ich znaczenie jest w mniejszym lub większym stopniu abstrakcyjne, nie są one bynajmniej semantycznie „puste"; co więcej, ich znaczenie nie jest koniecznie i wyłącznie „gramatyczne".

Abstract. Light verb constructions (henceforth LVCs) constitute a peculiar category within the system of verbal constructions having metaphorical meanings, as their semantics is primarily determined not by the verb but rather by its nominal dependent, which generally functions as an object. However, the category of LVCs is far from being homogeneous. The goal of the present paper is twofold. Firstly, I attempt to account for the variability we find within the category of LVCs. Secondly, I analyse the semantic structure of the Hungarian verb *köt* 'tie, bind' in order to find out how LVCs involving this verb can be integrated into the system of verbal constructions with metaphorical meanings. By the study of attested, real-world examples, I also aim to highlight the fact that (contrary to a popular assumption in the specialized literature) the verbal components of LVCs cannot be considered "meaningless" elements. While their meaning is abstract to a lesser or higher degree, they are by

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no means semantically "empty"; moreover, their meaning is not necessarily and exclusively "grammatical".

1. Introduction

In the literature, LVCs are commonly defined as verbal constructions with two components (typically N-ACC V or N-ADV V) which can be substituted by single verbs and whose meaning is determined by the nominal element within the construction (e.g. *javaslat-ot tesz*, lit. *suggestion-ACC make* 'make a suggestion'). This approach suggests that light verbs appearing in such patterns are desemanticized elements rather than genuine verbs, whose function is confined to allowing the nominal to fulfil a predicative role (see e.g. Langer 2005; Keszler 2000, Hegedűs 2004: 246, Forgács 2007: 48, 85–87). However, more careful observation of the examples studied in the Hungarian literature reveals that expressions treated as LVCs are highly varied in terms of how general (and highly grammaticalized) the meaning of their verbal components really is. Among these examples, we find several expressions in which the verbal component can by no means be regarded as semantically "empty", and whose function is clearly not purely grammatical (e.g. *fogly-ul ejt*, lit. *captive-ADV drop* 'take into custody, capture'*, rendszer-be foglal*, lit. *system-ADV seize/occupy* 'put into a system, systematize' – Forgács 2007: 85–87; *barátság-ot köt*, lit. *friendship-ACC tie* 'make friends' – Hegedűs 2004: 248).[2] Moreover, my previous investigations also support the conclusion that LVCs constitute a heterogeneous, complex and open-ended category. Crucially, LVCs cannot be neatly separated from other types of metaphorical verbal constructions which involve verbs with more specific meanings. Accordingly, there is reason to assume that a more fine-grained description ought to proceed by distinguishing between several interrelated types of LVCs (cf. Hrenek 2016, 2017).

The present paper aims to highlight the internal variability of the category of LVCs and the semantic complexity of light verbs appearing in them. After an overview of the most relevant theoretical background assumptions (2) and a possible semantically grounded classification of LVCs (3), I discuss the main semantic features of expressions like *szövet-ség-et köt*, lit. *alliance-ACC tie* 'forge an alliance' (with special regard to the meaning of their verbal components). This is followed by the corpus-based study of some meanings

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[2]   The characterization of such patterns as LVCs is presumably only justified by the fact that they are all replaceable by single verbs which are morphologically related to their nominal components (e.g. *rendszer-be foglal* 'put into a system' ⊃ *rendszerez* 'systematize', *összesküvés-t sző*, lit. *conspiracy-ACC weave* 'weave a conspiracy' ⊃ *összesküszik* 'conspire').

of *köt* 'tie, bind' with the aim of exploring the nature of light verb meaning, including the issue of how this type of meaning relates to other senses of the verb in question.

2. Theoretical background

For classifying and characterizing particular types of LVCs, a suitable theoretical framework is provided by the organic language theory developed by János Zsilka. This theory supplies a comprehensive, dynamic way of interpreting the semantic change of verbs, and of describing verbs and verbal constructions with metaphorical meanings.[3] Organic language theory, a little-known framework of Hungarian origin, was developed in the 1970s. It shows several affinities with widely disseminated and accepted functional linguistic schools of thought, including Langacker's Cognitive Grammar (cf. Langacker 1987, 1991), conceptual integration theory as formulated by Fauconnier and Turner (2002), and Goldberg's (1995, 2006) construction grammar.

Organic language theory conceives of language as an organic and dynamic system with ubiquitous two-way "movements"; accordingly, its language description has a fundamentally dialectic character. From this perspective, the interpretation of linguistic data serves not only as a basis but also as a result of theory construction. Over the course of describing linguistic phenomena, the paths from the concrete to the abstract and from the abstract to the concrete are closely intertwined and equally important (see e.g. Zsilka 1975).

Semantic studies couched in the framework primarily focus on the dynamic aspect of meaning, its processes of change, and attribute special significance to metaphors and metaphorization. The theory's treatment of metaphorization is informed by the notion of semantic integration; it is assumed that the metaphorical meanings of verbs, and the polysemous networks of verb senses, emerge from the integration of various semantic components of the relevant verbs.[4] On the basis of Zsilka (1978), the process of semantic integration can be outlined as follows:[5]

– there is a verb having a primary, literal meaning ($V_{(x)}$(lit)), which directly designates a particular situation;

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[3]   The presentation of organic language theory is beyond the scope of this paper. The best way to find out more about the theory is of course to consult the works of János Zsilka, who developed it (e.g. 1973, 1975, 1978, 1981, 1982). In addition, some of its aspects are discussed in detail by e.g. Horváth 1983, Ladányi 1997, 2016 and Kállay 2016.

[4]   According to the theory (and in line with the overwhelming majority of recent grammatical theories), meaning is not to be regarded as indivisible, rather it is composed of various components. It is assumed that such components can only be made explicit by examining the use of actual words, linguistic elements, i.e. from the language itself. In other words, organic language theory takes linguistic material as its point of departure, and (while emphasizing the continuous and dialectic relationship between thought and language) it considers meaning to be primarily linguistic rather than conceptual in nature.

[5]   Semantic integration can also proceed in other ways (see e.g. Zsilka 1978, Ladányi 2016); in the present paper, I only work with the type of semantic integration outlined above.

- $V_{(x)}$(lit) can be supplemented by various adverbial elements (supplying additive information);
- the additive components expressed by dependents, which receive less emphasis originally, are inherent aspects of another verb's meaning ($V_{(y)}$(lit));
- when a given situation is perceived from the perspective of these additive components (e.g. when these latter receive special prominence in construal), $V_{(y)}$ may be endowed with a metaphorical meaning, and replace $V_{(x)}$(lit);
- at this stage, the metaphorical meaning of the substituting verb ($V_{(y)}$(met)) comes to include the semantic content of the substituted verb as one of the components of its meaning.[6]

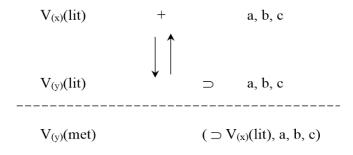The process of semantic integration may be illustrated as follows:

$$V_{(x)}(lit) \qquad + \qquad a, b, c$$

$$\downarrow \uparrow$$

$$V_{(y)}(lit) \qquad \supset \qquad a, b, c$$

$$V_{(y)}(met) \qquad (\supset V_{(x)}(lit), a, b, c)$$

Figure 1: The process of semantic integration

In the figure, the $+$ mark symbolizes supplementation (additive features), the $\supset$ mark stands for containment or inclusion (inherent features), and the letters of the alphabet pertain to various semantic components. The arrows represent analogical relations. Figure 2 below illustrates the process by the example of *kérdések-kel bombáz*, lit. *questions*-ADV *bombard* 'bombard with questions', a verbal construction which has a metaphorical meaning:

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[6]   However, semantic integration in certain cases does not unfold in precisely the same way as discussed in the works of János Zsilka referenced here. For example, in its metaphorical meaning, the $V_{(y)}$ verb sometimes foregrounds semantic components which are inherent aspects of the literal meaning of $V_{(x)}$ (cf. 4.1). It is worth analysing this process as a manifestation of attention shift or shift of perspective (see e.g. Tátrai 2011).
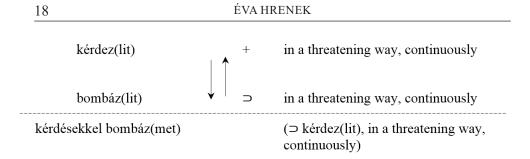
| kérdez(lit) | + | in a threatening way, continuously |
| bombáz(lit) | ⊃ | in a threatening way, continuously |

| kérdésekkel bombáz(met) | (⊃ kérdez(lit), in a threatening way, continuously) |

Figure 2: *Kérdésekkel bombáz* 'bombard with questions'

Kérdésekkel bombáz is used to refer to a situation in which several questions follow each other in quick succession. When the speaker assigns prominence not to the process of asking itself but rather to the manner in which it unfolds (including the speed, the threatening nature and high number of questions), the verb *kérdez* 'ask' may be substituted by *bombáz* 'bombard', which inherently includes the semantic components 'in a threatening way', 'quickly' and 'multiple times'. The verb *bombáz* 'bombard' actually only preserves these three components from its literal meaning; however, as a function of metaphorization, it also integrates (as an additional component) the meaning of the substituted verb *kérdez* 'ask'.

A further key feature of the theory, also shared by other functionally oriented frameworks, is the involvement of pragmatic factors in the description. As Zsilka puts it, "sentence structure can hardly be understood when the pragmatic viewpoint, the relationship between speaker and listener, is ignored" (Zsilka 1982: 10). The theory puts a premium on the pragmatic aspect of language, i.e. its bearing on (the construal of) reality. It is assumed that varied linguistic patterns represent reality from alternate perspectives; moreover, metaphorization and other processes of semantic change are fundamentally shaped by the way in which the speaker observes a particular situation (to which she attaches importance and prominence). When these assumptions are brought to bear on LVCs, it may be suggested that such patterns express characteristic ways of construing a situation, and are thus never completely equivalent to synonymous verbs.[7] Concomitantly, the role of (light) verbs appearing in them cannot be put down to the "verbification" of nominals.

3. The notion and types of LVCs

In my paper, I interpret Hungarian LVCs as a characteristic, heterogeneous group of verbal constructions having metaphorical meanings. I describe them as verbal constructions which can be substituted[8] by synonymous single verbs (usually but not necessarily

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[7]   Drawing on Horváth (1996), I interpret synonymy as replaceability, being mindful of the observation that two linguistic elements cannot have precisely the same meaning even in their use as synonyms.

[8]   Of course, the notion of replaceability raises several further questions; however, it is beyond the scope of this paper to address these and other issues pertaining to the synonymy of verbs

with literal meanings) and whose nominal elements are clearly linked morphologically to the synonymous verbs in question (as is the case for example with *tanács-ot ad*, lit. *advice*-ACC *give* 'give advice', whose nominal part *tanács-ot*, lit. *advice*-ACC is morphologically related to the synonymous verb *tanácsol*[9] *'advise'*). In contrast with other assumptions made in the literature and referred to earlier in this paper, the proposed interpretation does not define the construction on the basis of how general the verb's meaning is. The degree to which the (light) verb's meaning can be considered general or grammatical is treated not as a defining criterion for LVCs but rather as an internal principle of classification. In terms of the functions of the (light) verbs appearing in them, their degrees of grammaticalization, and peculiarities of the processes of metaphorization, LVCs can be assigned to four major groups (for details, see Hrenek 2016):

1. Patterns in which the verb's meaning has undergone at most a very limited degree of grammaticalization; it is a metaphorical and specific meaning (e.g. *kérdésekkel* ***bombáz*** 'bombard with questions').
2. The second type involves LVCs in which the verb's meaning is less specific in comparison to the previous group (e.g. *szövetséget* ***köt*** 'forge an alliance', where *köt* is lit. 'tie'). These verbs typically foreground a general but not overly abstract aspect (e.g. 'connecting') of the meaning of a synonymous verb which directly profiles the portrayed situation (e.g. *szövetkezik* 'ally').
3. In the case of the third type (e.g. *tanácsot* ***ad*** 'give advice'), the light verb again profiles a general aspect of the meaning of the synonymous verb (e.g. *tanácsol* 'advise'); however, this semantic component (e.g. 'make something available to somebody') is somewhat more abstract than in the previous category. The (light) verbs appearing in such patterns have lexical but highly schematic meanings.
4. Finally, the fourth type comprises LVCs in which the verb's meaning is especially general (schematic) and highly grammatical (e.g. *vitá-t* ***folytat***, lit. *debate*-ACC *continue* 'engage in a debate'). Such expressions seem to constitute a transitional category between prototypical LVCs on the one hand, which can be considered as analytic verbs[10] containing verbs usually with highly grammatical meanings (e.g. *nehéz-zé tesz*, lit. *difficult*-ADV *make* 'make something difficult'), and synthetic verbs on the other, where the grammatical content is expressed by a grammatical (derivational) morpheme (e.g. *szép-ít,* lit. *beautiful*-DERIV.AFF. 'beautify').

In brief, the meanings of (light) verbs appearing in various kinds of patterns are general to varying degrees (cf. *bombáz* 'bombard' – *köt* 'tie' – *ad* 'give' – *folytat* 'engage in doing something'), and the meanings of the overall constructions also display the same variability. Hence, particular construction types portray narrower or broader

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and verbal constructions.

   [9]   The verb *tanácsol* 'advise' is formed by adding *-(V)l* derivational affix to the noun *tanács* 'advice'.

   [10]   From a syntactic perspective, LVCs as analytic verbs can also be described as clausal cores or proto-statements (cf. Imrényi 2017).

segments of reality (cf. Zsilka 1978). The verbal component of constructions like *kérdésekkel bombáz* 'bombard with questions' does not only designate the process which is unfolding but rather also foregrounds a circumstance of the process which the speaker regards as important or prominent in a given speech situation. By contrast, in patterns like *szövetséget köt* 'forge an alliance' (where *köt* is lit. 'tie'), *tanácsot ad* 'give advice' and *vitát folytat* 'engage in debate' (where *folytat* is lit. 'continue'), the light verb highlights a (supposedly) inherent aspect of the portrayed event; thus, it refers to the process itself without also expressing its manner of unfolding or circumstances. At the same time, the three types also differ in terms of the level of specificity with which they construe relationships of observed reality.

Needless to say, the types cannot be neatly separated from each other. The interrelated types outlined above can be arranged on a scale as shown in Figure 3 below. As can be seen, the scale is open-ended toward verbal constructions with highly specific meanings on the one hand, and to syntactic patterns involving a highly schematic (grammatical) verb as well as morphologically complex verbs containing a derivational morpheme on the other.[11]
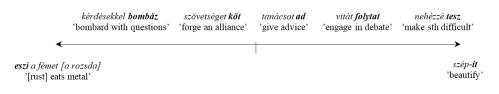

Figure 3. LVCs within the system of verbal constructions
with metaphorical meanings

In Section 4 below, I focus in on one of the four types mentioned above. I begin with a brief overview of the semantic features of expressions like *szövetséget köt* 'forge an alliance'. Subsequently, I address the question as to how general or abstract the light verb's meaning is when evaluated against the overall semantic structure of the verb *köt* 'tie'*,* and compared to other meanings of this lexeme. Through the analysis of a few selected meanings of *köt* 'tie'*,* I attempt to find out whether the verb's function as a light verb can be considered so general and highly grammaticalized that it deserves to be sharply distinguished from other meanings, or else this function is integrated into the semantic structure of *köt* 'tie' just like other metaphorical senses.

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[11]   The scale presented here is intended to capture synchronic relationships between the verbal constructions under study. In this paper, I do not address the issue of how light verbs emerge by grammaticalization, and how they can be accounted for from a diachronic perspective (see e.g. Ittzés 2015, 2016; Bowner 2008, Butt–Lahiri 2013).

4. LVCs of the *szövetséget köt* 'forge an alliance' type

4.1. A general characterization of LVCs of the *szövetséget köt* 'forge an alliance' type

LVCs of the *szövetséget köt* 'forge an alliance' type comprises patterns in which the verb has a basically lexical meaning; however, this meaning is less specific than is the case with verbal components of the *kérdésekkel bombáz* 'bombard with questions' type. In the type under study, the light verb foregrounds one or more inherent and fairly specific aspects of the meaning of a synonymous verb which directly denotes the situation (this is illustrated below in 4.2.3 with examples of *köt* 'tie').

Accordingly, (light) verbs belonging to this group do not foreground the manner or circumstances of the profiled processes, activities, but rather highlight, and draw attention to, a characteristic and inherent aspect of the process; on the other hand, in its metaphorical (light verb) sense, the $V_{(y)}$ verbs foreground semantic components which are inherent aspects of the literal meaning of $V_{(x)}$ (cf. footnote 5). For example:

(1) Fannius Caepio (? – Kr. e. 22.) római összeesküvő, aki Aulus Terentius Varro Murena consularisszal közösen **összeesküvést szőtt** Augustus ellen.[12]
'Fannius Caepio (? – 22BC), Roman conspirator, who **wove a conspiracy** against Augustus together with the consul Aulus Terentius Varro Murena.'

(2) Ez egy nagyon különleges, új, csak az emberre jellemző tulajdonság, hogy a legrosszabb helyzetben is **táplál reményt**, és próbál valamit tenni.
'This is a very special, new, specifically human property that one **nourishes hope** even in the worst situation and attempts to do something.'

(3) Az intézményben hivatalosan szombaton jelentik be, hogy milyen **döntést hozott** a tanács.
'In the institution, it is officially announced on Saturday what **decision** the council **has made**.'

The verbal constructions in (1)–(3) designate the same reality-configurations as synonymous verbs. However, analytic (e.g. *összeesküvés-t sző*, lit. *conspiracy*-ACC *weave* 'weave a conspiracy', *reményt táplál*, lit. *hope*-ACC *nourish* 'nourishes hope', *döntést hoz*, lit. *decision*-ACC *bring* 'make a decision') and synthetic modes (e.g. *összeesküszik* 'conspire', *reménykedik* 'hope', *dönt* 'decide') of expression crucially differ in terms of what perspective the situation is observed from, and which aspects of the scene receive prominence.

Conspiring has the distinctive, inherent feature of being intricate (*szövevényes* in Hungarian; an adjective whose root is the verb *sző* 'weave'), intransparent (see also the noun *cselszövés* 'intrigue', lit. 'trick-weaving'), conscious and constructive activity.

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[12] All examples presented in the paper come from the Hungarian National Corpus (HNC2) (Oravecz–Váradi–Sass 2014).

These semantic features are made explicit by the verb *sző* 'weave' appearing in the construction in (1).

The expression *reményt táplál* 'nourishes hope' construes hoping as a continuous, volitional and (at least partly) conscious activity (cf. *táplál* 'nourish' ⊃ 'keep alive'), i.e. it implies a certain degree of proactivity on the part of the subject referent, as highlighted by the verb *táplál* 'nourish'.

In (3), the verbal component of *döntést hoz* 'make a decision', namely the verb *hoz* 'bring', foregrounds the fact that the decision is brought into existence, in other words it construes the decision as a thing-like entity that appears, comes to be manifested as a result of the activity performed by a given person. The process of bringing is of course to be interpreted at an intellectual rather than physical level; what is referred to is an intellectual operation whereby a previously non-existent thought, decision comes into being (appears in an intellectual-psychological sphere).

An important aspect of verbal constructions of the *szövetséget köt* 'forge an alliance' type is that the meanings of $V_{(x)}$, $V_{(y)}$ and the construction involving $V_{(y)}$ can all be interpreted as the elaboration/concretization of a shared general semantic component (in the case of *szövetséget köt* 'forge an alliance' ~ *szövetkezik* 'ally', *összeesküvést sző* 'weave a conspiracy' ~ *összeesküszik* 'conspire', and *döntést hoz* 'make a decision' ~ *dönt* 'decide', this is 'bring into existence'[13]). The meaning of $V_{(y)}$ (e.g. *köt* 'tie') is usually somewhat more general than the meaning of the integrated verb $V_{(x)}$ (e.g. *szövetkezik* 'ally'). At the same time, the LVC containing $V_{(y)}$ has a more specific meaning compared to the meaning of either verb, as it integrates semantic features of both $V_{(x)}$ and $V_{(y)}$ which are perceived as relevant by the speaker in the current discourse space.

4.2. The meaning of *köt* (lit. 'tie') as a light verb in the overall system of the verb's meanings

In what follows, I attempt to give an overview of the system of meanings associated with *köt* 'tie', in order to find out to what extent and how the verb's meaning as a light verb is related to other metaphorical meanings of this lexeme. Within the scope of the present paper, it is not possible to take into account all meanings of the verb, therefore the analyses below merely serve to explore some selected meanings which are closely connected to the verb's function as a light verb.

In the course of analyses, I make a distinction between occurrences of verbs as **light verbs** (i.e. as components of LVCs) and their occurrences in a **light verb meaning**. I consider this important because (light) verbs do not only manifest their light verb meanings in LVCs (which are capable of being substituted by single verbs; cf. Section 3) but rather also in other verbal constructions resulting from metaphorization. For example, the verb *tesz* 'make', which occurs in the LVC *bolonddá tesz* 'make [somebo-

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[13]   In these constructions the nominal (in the accusative) refers to the result of the agents' (creative) activity as a thing-like entity, which emerges from the process denoted by the (light) verb.

dy] a fool', 'turn [somebody] into a fool' (synonymous with *bolondít*) is used with the same meaning (considered to be a light verb meaning) in the expression *bolhacirkusszá tesz* 'turn [something] into a flea circus'. However, the latter cannot be regarded as an LVC, as present-day Hungarian has no verb which would correspond morphologically to the nominal element of the multiword expression (in Hungarian there is no such verb as e.g. **(el)bolhacirkuszosít*). In other words, a verb necessarily has a light verb meaning in LVCs but this light verb meaning need not be linked in all its occurences to a light verb, i.e. to a component of an LVC.

The examples presented in the analyses below all come from the Hungarian National Corpus (henceforth HNC2), and a significant subset of them were retrieved by the Mazsola search tool (cf. Sass 2009). For semantic analyses, I used the entries of several monolingual dictionaries of Hungarian (ÉrtSz., ÉKsz.[2] and TESz.). However, in my attempts to separate and characterize particular meanings of the verb under study, I relied primarily on the corpus data rather than the definitions supplied by these dictionaries.[14] As noted above, the analyses follow the methodology of Zsilka (1978) and the semantic analyses of the Research group on the dialectics of the motion forms in language (NyMDK. 1–11). (In the remainder of the paper, I take this as a given, only noting any departures from it.)

4.2.1. The literal meaning of *köt* 'tie'

The semantic structure of *köt* 'tie' is basically determined by the interrelated semantic components shown in Figure 4, all of which are organically linked to the verb's literal meaning. (By literal meaning I refer to the meaning which is central for the purposes of the analysis. In the case of *köt,* this also coincides with the most concrete meaning from a synchronic perspective.)
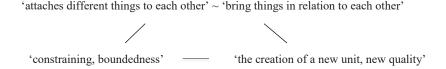
'attaches different things to each other' ~ 'bring things in relation to each other'

'constraining, boundedness' —— 'the creation of a new unit, new quality'

Figure 4: Major components of the meaning of *köt* 'tie'

In examples (4), (5) and (6), *köt* is used in its literal meaning ('tie'). In each case, the verb designates the same kind of (tying) process and directly profile the process in question. However, not independently from the semantic contribution of object

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[14]   The material of the analysis is supplied by a 500-token random sample retrieved from HNC2, and the full list of tokens found by the Mazsola search tool for the search [*köt* + nominal in the accusative].

arguments, these utterances vary in terms of which aspects of particular reality-configurations receive attention.

(4)   Édes fiam, ne kösse az asztalkendőt a nyakába!
       'Dear boy, don't tie the tablecloth to your neck!'

(5)   Aztán a szék lábához kötötte gondosan a kecskét.
       'Then he tied the goat carefully to a leg of the chair.'

(6)   csokrot kötnek hét különböző fajta mezei virágból
       'they tie a bouquet from seven different kinds of wild flowers'

In (4), the object argument refers to the thing which the action is directly targeted at. Accordingly, the verb *köt* portrays the situation whereby the thing profiled by the object (i.e. the tablecloth) is tied to another entity (in the case at hand, to the addressee, more particularly his neck), with the result that the two are connected. In this case, the semantic component 'bring [something] in relation to [something else]' is foregrounded within the semantic structure of the verb.

In (5), the object referent is less closely related to the event profiled by the verb; in this case, the action (the process of tying) is only indirectly targeted at the entity designated by the object.[15] Within the meaning of *köt,* the semantic components 'fix, attach' and 'constrain' become prominent.

In (6), the object argument is of a fundamentally different nature: in contrast with the previous examples, it denotes the result of the agents' activity, which emerges from the process denoted by the verb. In other words, this pattern profiles an activity during which the agent creates something new, a new quality or new unit through the process of tying (see e.g. Horváth 1983: 20, 31–35) – hence, the 'create' semantic component is highlighted. I will discuss this issue in more detail in Section 4.2.3; however, it is already worth mentioning that LVCs based on *köt* can be primarily interpreted in relation to constructions in which the object argument is of the result type.

4.2.2. Some metaphorical meanings of *köt* (lit. 'tie')

As noted above, metaphorical uses of *köt* typically do not highlight a circumstance or the manner of the profiled process, but rather foreground an inherent aspect in the meaning of the verb $V_{(x)}$ which directly designates the situation in its literal meaning. For example:

(7)   A harkályféléket csaknem minden tevékenységük a fákhoz köti.
       'Almost all of their activities link [lit. tie] woodpeckers to the trees.'

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[15]   The action is directly targeted at a rope (or chain) that is not explicity mentioned in the sentence, i.e. at the object which, by virtue of the agent tying a knot in it, connects the two entities (the goat and the table's leg) whose relation is profiled by the sentence.

In (7), tying and being tied can be interpreted as a strong relationship, with the verb *köt* also expressing the asymmetrical nature of the connection between woodpeckers and trees. The dependence is one-sided in the sense that the life and activities of woodpeckers are fundamentally determined and shaped by their dependence on the existence of trees, but the reverse is not true: trees do not adjust their lifestyles to woodpeckers. At the same time, the semantic component of 'constraining' may also be activated within the meaning of the verb, as the habitat of woodpeckers is significantly constrained by the fact that their lives are bound up with trees; they cannot break away from them. Key components of this sense of the verb therefore include:[16]
– tight connection,
– asymmetrical relationship,
– constraining.

In (8), another aspect of being connected becomes prominent; here, the verb expresses the adjustment of something to a phenomenon.

(8)   A helyi időket a Nap járásához kötjük.
        'Local times are linked [lit. tied] to the movement of the Sun.'

Here again, *köt* profiles an asymmetrical relation: local times are adjusted to the movement of the Sun,[17] the former being determined with respect to the latter; by contrast, the Sun's position is in no way influenced by the measurement of time. The movement of the Sun, or more precisely changes in the relative position of the Sun with respect to the Earth, constitutes a predictable, recurring change, therefore it is a suitable reference point for the measurement of time.

It is also worth noting, however, that this meaning of *köt* pertains to a link conventionally established by humans or rather human communities, i.e. the link does not exist *a priori*, of physical necessity. The main features of this meaning of *köt* include:
– adjustment: making something dependent on a (predictably recurring) phenomenon,
– asymmetrical relationship.

In other instances, *köt* may also foreground stability and insistence on something. For example:

(9)   A fiatal helytartó kötötte magát ezekhez a látogatásokhoz.
        'The young lieutenant insisted on [lit. tied himself-ACC to] these visits.'

Here again, the state of being 'fixed' becomes prominent; however, this semantic component does not concern attachment in a concrete, physical sense, nor is it the result of external circumstances. Rather, it is the result of pressure from within (as

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[16]   While discussing particular metaphorical meanings, I focus on the additive/integrative components making possible semantic integration.

[17]   The basis of the conceptualization expressed by the phrase *a Nap járása* 'the movement of the Sun' is that (even though it has been long established that the Earth is orbiting around the Sun) for human perception, the Earth serves as a point of reference, and the Sun seems to be moving in relation to it. This conceptualization crucially informs the interpretation of sentence (8) and the meaning of *köt* within it.

expressed by the reflexive pronoun *magá-t* 'himself-ACC' in the example. In this case, *köt* highlights the stubborn insistence of a person (the lieutenant) on something, the stability and firmness of his will. Thus, the main semantic features are:

– insistence on something ($\supset$ the state of being fixed/attached to something$_{(met)}$),
– firmly.

However, the metaphorical expression *köti magát valamihez* may also be interpreted as resulting by metaphorization from a verbal construction (as Gestalt) having a literal meaning, i.e. it can be regarded as an allegorical expression as well.[18]

– [*köti magát vmihez*]$_{(lit)}$ 'physically fixes (ties) oneself to a given object' $\supset$ 'creates a firm connectio

[*köti magát vmihez*]$_{(met)}$ 'firmly insists on something'

In the metaphorical, allegorical pattern, the verb only preserves some of the semantic components which it has in its literal sense as part of the original construction; only a few aspects of the process denoted by $V_{(y)}$(lit) play a role in the new meaning (e.g. *köt* $\supset$ 'creates a firm connection'). In other words, the metaphorical verb appearing in the pattern no longer profiles an actually occurring action (i.e. no tying takes place in a concrete physical sense). Rather, by preserving some characteristic aspects of its literal meaning, the verb foregrounds one or more crucial features of the designated process (e.g. directing attention at the firmness of insistence).

4.2.3. Aspects of the meaning of *köt* in its use as a light verb

The light verb meaning of *köt* is manifested for example in the LVCs below:

(10) És ugyebár kegyelmed szövetséget kötött az ördöggel?
'And so actually your lordship formed an alliance [lit. tied an alliance] with the devil?'

(11) A pénzintézet megállapodást kötött a szigetország legnagyobb internetes portáljával.
'The bank made a deal [lit. tied an agreement] with one of the biggest internet portals of the UK.'

(13) találkozik Winnetou-val, és a kezdetben drámai események után igaz barátságot kötnek
'he meets Winnetou, and after a few dramatic events they become true friends [lit. they tie a true friendship]'

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[18]   In the framework of organic language theory, the term *allegory* typically refers to metaphorical verbal constructions having unit status. An allegory may result from the metaphorization of a verbal construction having literal meaning. Alternatively, it may also emerge when a construction involving a metaphorically interpreted verb comes to behave as a (tighter) unit, serving as a starting point for further processes of metaphorization (cf. NyMDK. 11).

In the light verb meaning of *köt*, the 'create' semantic component is foregrounded. More precisely, the verb *köt* and constructions containing it are subordinated to this general semantic content, so that they are interpretable as its instantiations. However, the recognition of this 'create' meaning (and the prominence it receives) is also inextricably linked to the meaning of object arguments appearing in the patterns (cf. 4.2.1).

Constructions featuring *köt* in its meaning as a light verb either designate the establishing of a new connection or the complete overhaul/reconfiguration of a previously existing relationship (with the emergence of a new quality as the nature of the relationship changes fundamentally). (At the same time, the verb also highlights the firmness/stability of the established connection.) In such patterns, the object dependent names the new unit (new relationship) arising from the process profiled by the verb.

However, the key aspect of *köt*'s meaning as a light verb is that in contrast with most other metaphorical senses, it lacks semantic components which would pertain to the asymmetric nature of the connection (the "tying"). In its light verb meaning, *köt* designates symmetric (symmetrically construed) relationships.[19] This is shown not only by the fact that certain semantic components play no role in its light verb meaning, but also by the fact that the verb's meaning is enriched with a new feature untypical of *köt*'s other metaphorical senses, namely that of 'mutual commitment'. This component is presumably linked to the meaning of nominal elements (e.g. *szövetség* 'alliance', *barátság* 'friendship', *megállapodás* 'agreement') appearing in the patterns under study. It emerges from the meaning of LVCs as Gestalts, and cannot be separated from the semantics of the overall patterns.[20]

All this lends support to the assumption that the meaning of light verbs may in certain cases take on new semantic components.[21] That is to say, the emergence of light verbs does not necessarily involve semantic bleaching or generalization alone; the processes of abstraction/generalization and specification/elaboration are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In grammaticalization theory, a similar assumption forms the basis of Sweetser's (1988) "loss and gain" theory, see also Heine–Claudi–Hünnemeyer 1991: 110, Heine 2003.

Investigating the light verb meaning of *köt*, it is also worth mentioning in a 500-token random sample derived from searching for occurrences of *köt* in HNC2, this verb's light verb meaning is attested in a particularly high number. In addition to showing the number of *köt*'s occurrences in a light verb meaning and in the context of an LVC,

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[19] The feature of 'symmetric [connection]' is not without precedents, and it is not to be interpreted as merely the absence of 'asymmetry'. In cases where the 'create' component is foregrounded in the literal meaning of the verb (e.g. *csokrot köt* 'ties a bouquet'), the new quality produced by the action results from the combination of units having, or perceived to have, essentially the same quality. Thus, the relationship of units forming a new combination is also symmetric in this case.

[20] It is important, however, that the interpretation of nominal components (typically object dependents) is also inextricably linked to the constructions in which they appear: there is an interaction and mutually supportive relationship between the meanings of particular constructions and their constituting elements.

[21] This does not seem to be a common and typical trend among LVCs; still, it is worth noting that the phenomenon exists.

Table 1 below also reveals how many different nominals form a phrase with *köt* in its light verb meaning (not necessarily in an LVC) in the sample.

Köt		
	light verb meaning	light verb construction
all occurrences	233	216
associated nominals	25	14

Table 1: The light verb meanings of *köt*

As the table shows, in almost half of its occurrences in the 500-token sample, *köt* appears in its light verb meaning, and in 216 cases it forms part of an LVC. It is important to note, however, that these 216 light verb occurrences are distributed over only 14 different verbal constructions (in other words, *köt* only co-occurs with 14 different types of nominal in an LVC in the sample). Hence, it seems likely that these patterns include highly conventionalized phrases having unit status with relatively high token frequency.[22] Of LVCs involving the verb *köt,* the following three are the most frequent in the sample:

– *szerződés-t köt*, lit. *contract-*ACC *tie* 'make a contract': 93 tokens
– *megállapodás-t köt*, lit. *deal-*ACC/*agreement-*ACC *tie* 'make a deal/agreement': 59 tokens
– *házasság-ot köt*, lit. *marriage-*ACC *tie* 'get married': 15 tokens

Figure 5 below gives an overview of the nominals that co-occur with *köt* within an LVC in the sample under study. In addition, the figure also reveals how frequent each pattern is in the 500-token sample.[23]

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[22] In the entire HNC2 corpus, *szerződést köt* occurs 19.054 times, *megállapodást köt* 9374 times, and *házasságot köt* 3579 times.

[23] The nouns appearing in the figure have the following meanings: *szerződés* 'contract', *megállapodás* 'deal, agreement', *házasság* 'marriage', *szövetség* 'alliance', *béke* 'peace', *egyezmény* 'treaty, agreement', *alku* 'bargain', *üzlet* 'business', *ismeretség* 'acquaintance', *barátság* 'friendship', *egyezség* 'agreement', *együttműködés* 'cooperation', *fogadás* 'bet', *megegyezés* 'agreement'.
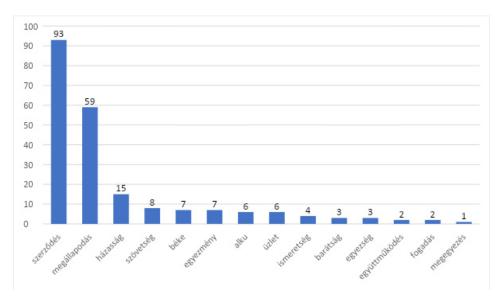
Figure 5: The most frequent nominals co-occurring with *köt* within LVCs

It can be seen that in the 500-token sample, nominal elements forming part of an LVC with *köt* are semantically very close to each other. Without exception, they designate some kind of connection and/or agreement. For example:

(15)   *barátságot köt*, lit. *friendship*-ACC *tie* 'make friends', *ismeretséget köt*, lit. *acquintan-ce*-ACC *tie* 'make someone's acquintance'

(16)   *szerződést köt*, lit. *contract*-ACC *tie* 'make a contract', *megállapodást köt*, lit. *deal*-ACC *tie* 'make a deal', *alkut köt*, lit. *bargain*-ACC *tie* 'make a bargain'

The examples under (15) refer to the establishment of various kinds of human relationships, whereas the nominals in (16) designate deals or agreements. However, the categories of relationships and agreements cannot be neatly separated from each other. Rather, these categories may be closely intertwined in certain cases (see e.g. *békét köt* 'make peace', *házasságot köt* 'get married'). Moreover, there is a strong correlation between them also in the sense that they mutually presuppose each other. On the one hand, relationships can be usually conceived of as particular kinds of (often implicit) agreements. On the other, agreements generally give rise to (or make explicit) relationships between the parties involved.

5. Summary

After offering a semantic classification of light verb constructions (LVCs), the paper gave a detailed analysis of one particular type of pattern, and explored the semantic structure of a single verb in order to demonstrate (challenging widespread assumptions in the literature) that the verbal elements of LVCs are not semantically empty, nor is their meaning necessarily and exclusively grammatical in nature. Although the study presented here is limited in scope, and does not allow for broad generalizations, it does seem to show that the light verb meaning of verbs that are capable of appearing in LVCs is not fundamentally different from other metaphorical senses of the same verbs. Although it displays a certain degree of abstractness, it is integrated into the semantic structure of a given verb in the same way (and to the same extent) as any other metaphorical meaning.

Thus, the key feature of such patterns cannot be adequately defined by claiming that the meaning of their verbal components is clearly separated from other meanings as a function of its high degree of abstractness, forming a special category within the verb's network of senses. Rather, LVCs appear to be better described by reference to synonymous verbs in their literal meanings ($V_{(x)}$(lit)) and by exploring differences between synthetic and analytic modes of designating a given process. Compared to synonymous verbs, LVCs are primarily distinguished by their more complex lexical structure and their partly more general, partly more specific meanings (cf. 4.1). However, further investigations are required for a more in-depth analysis of the relationships between light verbs, LVCs and verbs which are synonymous with these constructions. The author hopes that the study presented here may contribute to a better understanding of the nature and the meaning of LVCs in Hungarian, as well as give researchers the inspiration to investigate such verbal constructions in other languages.

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