

## The case for sublative as a generalized result-marker

Veronika Hegedűs

Hungarian Research Centre for Linguistics

**Aims and claims:** This paper aims to take a close look at Hungarian verbal particles (henceforth: particles) that do not have a goal-denoting spatial meaning at all. The focus will be on what I will call resultative particles but as a possible extension of these, intensifier low adverbs will also be included in the end. It will be claimed that the sublative suffix is a generalized resultative suffix in the sense that it is the default marker not only of lexical resultative phrases but also of grammaticalized resultative modifiers.

**The data:** While some originally spatial (goal-denoting) particles might have uses when they are purely resultative or telicizing elements (e.g. *meg* orig. ‘back’ is no longer directional; and some others also have purely telicizing uses, like *szét* ‘apart, to an extreme degree’; see e.g. É. Kiss 2006), I will exclude them from the discussion here. The less studied ‘resultative’ particles under examination are a fairly new development in the language; they only date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There are at least three particles that can be claimed to belong to this group: *újra* ‘again, re-’; *tönkre* ‘to ruins, to a full degree’; and *agyon* ‘to death, to an extreme degree’ (1). These are the non-spatial particles that are generally included in lists of newly-developed particles (e.g. Dékány & Hegedűs 2021).

- (1) a. Az elnököt tavalyl **újra**-választották.  
the president.ACC last.year re-elect.PAST.DEFOBJ.3PL  
‘The president was re-elected last year.’
- b. Túl sok a kecske, **tönkre**-legelik a gyepet.  
too many the goat to\_ruins-graze.3PL the lawn.ACC  
‘There are too many goats, they ruin the lawn by grazing.’
- c. Marit **agyon**-dicsérte a főnöke.  
Mari.ACC to\_death-praise.PAST.DEFOBJ.3SG the boss.POSS.3SG  
‘Her boss praised Mari excessively (lit. to death).’ (Dékány & Hegedűs 2021: (375b))

The particle counterpart of the generally used repetitive/restitutive adverb *újra* ‘again, re-’ (e.g. Csirmaz 2015) has a form that is transparently bimorphemic (*új-ra* ‘new-SUB’), although semantically it is not transparent anymore. This is essentially the equivalent of the English *re-* prefix and has grammaticalized from a resultative secondary predicate, a process aided by the fact that secondary predicates are immediately preverbal in neutral sentences. The second one is *tönkre* ‘to ruins’ (originally *tönk-re* ‘stump-SUB’; cf. Forgács 2004), which developed in a context where a directional spatial PP appeared right next to motion verbs, however, it has no spatial meaning as a particle, it just adds the meaning component ‘to an extreme degree, to the point something is ruined’, where the sublative suffix still lexicalizes the endpoint.

The particle *agyon* ‘to death, to an extreme degree’ (orig. ‘on the head’, later ‘to death’) is an exceptional case in that it is the only morphologically locative particle in the language (as opposed to directionals); it contains the superessive suffix *-on* (Dékány & Hegedűs 2021: 128–129). As a variant of this generally used particle, however, we can also find a more complex form: *agyon-ra* with the added sublative suffix, as in (2). While this form has existed at least sporadically already in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as evidenced by historical corpora (as well as the Academic Dictionary of Hungarian), it is not used by all speakers and is just an alternative to the version without the sublative suffix or to another (lexical) resultative with a similar meaning (*halál-ra* ‘death-SUB’).

- (2) a. Ezt már **agyon-ra** ismételték.  
this.acc already to\_death-SUB repeat.PAST.DEFOBJ.3PL

‘This has been repeated ad nauseam (lit. to death).’ (Dékány & Hegedűs 2021: (376))

- b. Mikor már **agyon-ra** untam magam...  
when already to\_death-SUB bore.PAST.DEFOBJ.ISG self  
‘When I was already bored to death...’

This form with the sublative suffix conforms to two general properties of the language: (i) particles are morphologically directional (goal-denoting), and (ii) resultative particles are suffixed with the sublative suffix. These are properties that motivate the existence of the morphological variant of an otherwise slightly unconventional particle. This also indicates that the sublative case suffix is a generalized marker not only of lexical resultative predicates but also of resultative particles, even when the particle in question did not develop from a resultative phrase.

**Analysis:** I follow and build on Hegedűs & Dékány (2017) and Hegedűs (2022) in assuming that some particles, namely, particles with the semantic component ‘to a full or extreme degree’, are syntactically different from regular spatial particles concerning both their grammaticalization patterns and their synchronic syntactic properties. They are different in their syntax in that they are base-generated in the functional projection above VP where they are in a Spec–Head configuration with the verb, contrary to regular spatial particles and other verb modifiers, the pre-verbal position of which is a derived position (see e.g. É. Kiss 2006, Surányi 2009, Dékány & Hegedűs 2015 a.o.). They are also different in their phrase-internal syntax, and this is what I mainly focus on here. Following previous claims, I assume that secondary predicates, including verbal particles are *p*Ps (or larger extended structures) built on postpositions (see Dékány & Hegedűs 2015). In the extended phrase, fully grammaticalized particles are generated in the *p* head, while those particles that are less grammaticalized may move into *p* from the lower P heads (where postpositions and case suffixes are).

Resultative particles have a less uniform source structure (either spatial or lexical resultative phrases), the grammaticalization of the verb modifier happens in its surface position pre-verbally and results in a telicizing verbal particle base-generated there. The most complex grammaticalization path is the one *agyon* has taken. Here a locative-marked phrase, originally meaning ‘on the head’, which used to be a verb modifier with a few verbs productively, grammaticalized into a particle with a telicizing meaning after its original locative meaning was bleached. In this case, the appearance of the sublative suffix follows the pattern of the other non-directional particles. The sublative suffix is the lexicalizer of the *p* head (a kind of Relator in the sense of den Dikken 2006). With these particles as well, the fully grammaticalized ones are proposed to be in the *p* head (i.e. are internally not complex), however, arguably only *újra* ‘again, re-’ has reached this stage of the grammaticalization path. The others in this group are less grammaticalized, which is what allows the sublative suffix to appear on the resultative *agyon* ‘to death, to an extreme degree’.

**Extension:** The sublative case also appears, sometimes optionally (just like with *agyonra*), on some adverbs, most relevantly on ones that express (excessive) result: e.g. *tök-re*, *baromi-ra* ‘completely, to an extreme level’. These adverbs seem to fit into the semantic category of intensifier low adverbs from the categories given by Egedi (2021), and I take them to be identical to resultative secondary predicates in their internal structure, i.e. they are *p*Ps; however, they are attached higher in the clause, above the projection that hosts particles and other verb modifiers, as they can appear together (3).

- (3) a. Ettől tök(-re) / baromi-ra ki-fáradtunk.  
this.ABL complete-SUB / idiotic-SUB out-tire.PAST.1PL  
‘We got extremely tired of this.’