CAPTURING SUBJECTIVE MEANING[1]
(A contrastive study of modal particles in Hungarian and Russian)

K. Fábricz

0. The overall content of an utterance can be divided into two distinct levels of representation. On the level which might be termed "the objective level" a state of affairs is represented. On the other level variously circumscribed as "subjective" or "modal" it is the speaker's attitude towards the content of the "objective message" of his/her utterance that is conveyed. Though artificial the above division may be, an attempt at capturing the linguistic behavior of one type of words expressing this latter level of representation could hardly do without the gross distinction above. The motivation for an investigation of different issues pertaining to the speaker's attitude towards the subject matter of his/her utterance relates to a claim formulated, among others, by J. Lyons who suggests that "any theory of meaning which fails to account for the subjectivity of reference, deixis and modality [...] is condemned to sterility".[2]

This paper will, on the one hand, examine the hypothesis that objective and subjective meaning can be differentiated. To do this, it will be helpful to consider a set of words from various languages used both as a means conveying objective meaning and as Modal Particles, i.e. a word-group employed to express subjective modality. The other task will be to describe a strategy for revealing the semantic relation between objective and subjective applications of formally identical lexemes in Hungarian and Russian. Practising this strategy will make it possible to point out how subjectivity is expressed by modal particles, at least in the two languages under discussion.

1.0. Subjectivity could be defined roughly as the expression of what the speaker thinks or how the speaker feels about the facts or ideas contained in the utterance. The speaker's attitude manifests itself on different linguistic and extralinguistic levels such as intonation, style, grammar, vocabulary, etc. For instance, it is subjectivity that governs word-selection in a context (cf. *eat up* vs.

---

[2] J. Lyons. Language, Meaning and Context. Bungay, Suffolk, The Chancer Press, 1981, p. 242.

gobble up) where an action can be described by a set of words basically different from one another only from the point of view of their subjective value. On the lexical-grammatical level in English we find the modal verbs providing for a wide coverage of the range of subjectivity.

1.1. There are lexemes capable of modifying the meaning of an utterance both "objectively" and "subjectively". These words pose one special problem wich may be stated by means of the following examples:

(1) (a) There is *only* a little bread left.

(b) I was *only* too pleased to leave that place.

(2) (a) Vous partez *déjà*?

(b) Qu'est-ce que vous m'avez dit *déjà*?

(3) (a) *Nur* ihn hatte man vergessen.

(b) Wozu habe ich *nur* gelebt?[3]

In the light of the considerations mentioned above, it may be assumed that the italicised words are used for modifying the NP (*only*, *nur*) or the predicate (*déjà*) in the upper sentences. Thus, *only*, *déjà* and *nur* in examples (1)(a), (2)(a) and (3)(a), respectively, can be viewed as words belonging to the objective content of the utterances in which they are used. On the other hand, it is obvious that sentences (1)(b), (2)(b) and (3)(b) cannot be interpreted as containing NP or predicate modifiers in the way their parallel sentences do. For a quick justification of the difference between, say, *only* in (1)(a) and (1)(b) consider the inadequancy of (1)(b') as opposed to (1)(a'):

(1) (a') There is *only* a little bread left, and no more.

(b') *I was *only* too pleased to leave that place, and no more.

Before we have a better grasp of at least a few of the features setting objectivity (1)(a)–(1)(a') and subjectivity (1)(b) apart, we

---

[3] The German examples are borrowed from W. Arndt. 'Modal Particles' in Russian and German. – Word, 1960, Vol. 16, No. 3, p. 327.

might do well to recognize that there exists a group of words applicable in two different ways. These words belong, on the one hand, to such word-classes as adverbs, pronouns, quantifiers or conjunctions, and to modal particles, on the other.

1.2. Linguistic modality, a long-disputed category of relation connecting the speaker, the hearer and the "objective" world, is still rather poorly understood. It has, for the last few decades, become evident that neither modality in logics, nor modality in mathematics is suitable for a whole account of modality in language. Linguistic modality can be adequately treated in a framework where it is described as a member of a binary opposition whose other member is predicativity. Predicativity and modality are inherent categories of each utterance. The former is responsible for an actual string of words to become a sentence via predication. The latter shows how, in what manner it is done.

The expression of modality by purely lexical means is confined to two types of words: **modal words** and **modal particles**. In Russian and in Hungarian modal words are basically used to convey epistemic modality which has to do with how the speaker's knowledge concerning a given action or state of affairs is reflected. Modal particles, on the other hand, function in the domain of subjective modality with a wide range of semantic features. W. Arndt calls modal particles "subjective shorthand signals". Following a research into the literature on modal particles in Russian and German, he finds that it is mainly the intuition of the linguist that assigns a given word to the class of modal particles and one can hardly find any palpable criteria for the differentiation in contemporary linguistics.[4]

Although since then there has been a considerable growth of interest in exploring modal particles in the Soviet Union, Germany and Czechoslovakia, some of the cardinal questions concerning modal particles have remained unanswered. Here belong such questions as what the meaning of the modal particle is like, how it relates to the function or actual usage of the modal particle, how this meaning and this function are built into the overall content of an utterance, where these categories come from, what their relation to (subjective) modality is, and how they are related to predicativity.

One way of untangling these problems may be an investigation of the coexistence of some Hungarian and Russian conjunctions, quantifiers and adverbs with their modal counterpart as illustrated above in (1)—(3).

---

[4] See W. Arndt. Ibid., p. 325.

2.0. For the present purposes I have selected four Hungarian and four Russian lexemes each of which are used in the two ways mentioned. They are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Lexeme	Lexical categories	Possible English Equivalents
H. *is*	conjunction vs. MP	*also, as well, too*
R. *и*	conjunction vs. MP	*also, as well, too*
H. *csak*	quantifier vs. MP	*only, just*
R. *только*	quantifier vs. MP	*only, just*
H. *már*	adverb vs. MP	*already, yet*
R. *уже*	adverb vs. MP	*already, yet*
H. *még*	adverb vs. MP	*yet, still*
R. *еще*	adverb vs. MP	*yet, still*

The eight lexemes above appear to be suitable for a functional-semantic analysis not only because among the thirty or so Hungarian modal particles and approximately as many Russian ones these four pairs dispose a high degree of adherence but also because they all belong to (at least) two word categories equally shared by both the Hungarian and the Russian lexemes. It would carry us far beyond the scope of this writing to discuss the details of the etymological relationship between the two types of application. Instead, these pairs will be labelled "homonyms" and their analysis will proceed from a consideration of the conjunction, the quantifier, or the adverb the corresponding modal partical (MP) stems from. The procedures to be used for the differentiation of meaning will include modifications and/or paraphrases of the sentences with a view to obtaining empirical evidence for the difference between the homonyms.

2.1. The Hungarian *is* as a conjunction differs from its Russian counterpart, *и*, in that the latter is also used in the sense 'és' ('and'), cf.:

(4) (a) Анна *и* Ева подруги.
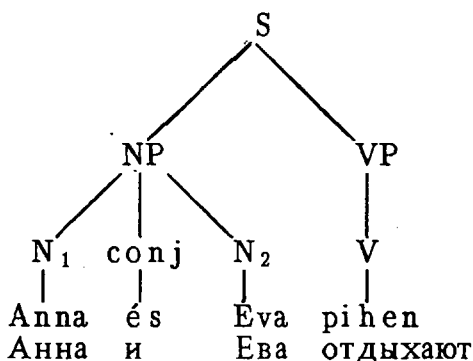
(b) Anna és Éva barátnők.

(Ann and Eve are friends.)[5]

It should be added that *is* and *és* are etymologically connected to each other[6] thus showing a close resemblance to the two applications of the conjunction и in Russian. The correlation between *és* and *is* or between $и_1$ ('and') and $и_2$ is illustrated below:

(5) (a) Anna és Éva pihen.

   (b) Анна и Ева отдыхают.

   (Ann and Eve are having a rest.)

N_1 and N_2 thus **coordinated**, we have, in effect, a representation of $((N_1+N_2)+V)=S$. The introduction of *is* into (5)(a) and $и_2$ into (5)(b) results in the following modification:

(5) (a') Éva *is* pihen.

   (b') *И* Ева отдыхает.

   (Eve is also having a rest.)

---

(5)(a') and (5)(b') refer to doubling the (previously) given state of affairs as being valid or relevant from the point of view of another element of the same syntactic or syntactic-semantic type. Thus it appears to be the case that the insertion of *is* in (5)(a') and of H_2 in (5)(b') results in an operation of addition.

The Hungarian and the Russian conjunction at hand differ from each other in the position they take with relation to the word they are attached to: *is* is postpositive while H_2 is prepositive.

Addition as the function of these two conjunctions is different from coordination in at least two ways. On the one hand, addition takes place only when a kind of equivalence is present. In other words, adding one sentence element to some previous element presupposes addibility maintained by some feature of identity. The same does not hold for coordination with *és*/H_1, where a given set of elements to be coordinated may well appear as one following the other, one envoking the other etc. On the other hand, addition can, more characteristically in Hungarian, serve as a means of linguistic economy, since naming the sentence element to be added along with the sign of addition is sufficient for succesful communication. In this case *тоже* is more frequently met in Russian. Cf.:

(6) (a) — Kérek még kenyeret.

   — Én *is*.

(b) — Я хочу еще хлеба.

   — Я *тоже*.

(— I want some more bread.

— So do I.)

Addition based on some feature of identity (which we take to be the core meaning of these conjunctions) can be divided into two basic types. One type implies addition on the constituent level. It means that addition is achieved by relating one constituent to some previous constituent of the same syntactic type, cf.:

(7) (a) Almát is kérek.

(b) Я хочу *и* яблоко.

   (I want an apple as well.)

Constituent addition does not, as a rule, involve the predicate. The

reason for this lies in the fact that it is the predicate that embodies through its meaning the feature of identity.

The other type of addition which I will name "message addition" occurs in cases where two (or more) sentences appear to be identical from one specific point of view. Cf., e.g. (7) above for constituent addition where it is the object of the sentence that is added, and (8) for message addition:

(8) (a) Esik az eső. A szél is fúj.

(b) Идет дождь. *И* ветер дует.

(It's raining. And the wind is blowing, too.)

The feature of identity in (8) can be grasped, though grossly inelegantly, by a paraphrase like "When we say it's raining we usually mean we are having nasty weather. Saying that the wind is blowing can also imply the idea of the weather being nasty".

What is of crucial importance here is that *is* and $и_2$ are capable of adding one utterance to another on the basis of their semantic adherence.

Thus, it can be concluded that constituent addition involves the addition of two constituents with one other constituent (or more) being "doubled" while message addition is basically a semantic operation. To put it shortly, constituent addition rests on a specific identity of two elements of the sentences while message addition results from an evaluation of the sentence content.

2.2. *Is* and *и* can be readily recognized as particles in a number of instances by one formal criterion: when these words are attached to the predicate, they appear as modal particles:

(9) (a) — Mondtam, hogy vigyázz magadra!

— Vigyáztam *is*.

(b) — Я сказал тебе быть очень осторожным!

— А я *и* был осторожным.

(— I told you to take care of yourself!

— I did take care of myself.)

Why do we classify *is* and *и* in (9) as particles? A symptomatic feature is their affinity to the predicate. Pointing, as they do, to the predicate, these modal particles "are raised" to sentence level in the

sense that they modify through the predicate the whole sentence. The meaning they lend to the overall meaning of the utterance is 'accordance' between some presupposed action (order, to be more precise) and its execution. Paraphrasing (9) with a view to the extra message conveyed by the particle would give something like "You told me to take care of myself. I took care of myself and I did so in accordance with (in obedience to) your wish".

The other feature setting these modal particles apart from their homonyms is a shift from the balance maintained by the above parallelism between equally ranked constituents or messages. This shift of balance results from the fact that *is* and *и* (to be marked later on as *и₃*) are used in (9) in a pseudo-additive function. While as conjunctions these words serve as specific signs of addition, the particles *is* and *и₃* do not "add" one item to another on the basis of their underlying identity but rather they appear to form a link between two utterances where the second one is evaluated as correlating with the previous one by virtue of its being a consequence arising from the obedience to the wish to be fulfilled.

One might argue that *is* or *и₃* in (9) are but a modification of the conjunctions and they could be handled as "pragmatic conjunctions". Certainly, a parallelism resembling conjunction usage is maintained by the repetition of the corresponding verb. It is easy, however, to see that this repetition is not a necessary condition for there to be a particle. The simple operation of moving *is* or *и* over to the predicate results in the expression of 'accordance' to be established by the speaker and the hearer.

(10) (a) Süt a nap. A madarak is dalolnak.

(b) Светит солнце. И птицы поют.

(The sun is shining. The birds are singing, too.)

(10') (a') Süt a nap. Dalolnak *is* a madarak.

(b') Светит солнце. Птицы *и* поют.

(The sun is shining. So the birds are singing.)

The difference between (10) and (10') can be paraphrased as follows: (10) "If I say the sun is shining I mean it is wonderful and if I add that the birds are singing it is because I guess it is wonderful, too"; (10') "If I say the sun is shining it means it is wonderful and so the birds are singing". Though the formulation is rather awkward (especially in English which lacks a corresponding modal particle), it

is perhaps sufficient for making a transparent distinction between addition and pseudo-addition, or between identity and accordance.

While in Russian the occurrence of *и* before a predicate (but not between two predicates) signals the modal particle *и3*, it is a specific feature of Hungarian that when *is* as a particle is to be inserted in a sentence containing a prefixed verb as its predicate, *is* is positioned between the verbal prefix and the verb:

(11) Anna ragyogóan beszél angolul. Pétert *fel is vették* az

egyetemre.

(Ann's English is excellent. (Thus) Peter has been admitted

to university.)

This fact is of importance not only as a rule for recognizing the particle in such constructions. A prefixed verb in Hungarian can be split up for several reasons such as negation, focusing, etc.[7] However, separating the prefix from the verb involves a change in their order as well:

(12) Bejött valaki? (Did anyone come in?)

(13) Ki jött be? (Who came in?)

The particle *is* does not take the place after a prefixed verb (this position is reserved for the concessive *is* conjunction), but it gets built into the predicate while preserving the original prefix + verb order. Once again, this phenomen could be attributed to the "rise" of the particle to sentence (or predication) level.

The modal particles *is* and *и3* may appear together with other constituents of the sentence, too. In this case they adhere to constituents that are not readily attached to some previous constituent. Here belong, e.g., the appearance of these words with words of negation or the application of the particle *is* after a question word:

(14) (a) Nem *is* tudtam, hogy megjöttél.

---

[7] For details see K. É. Kiss. A magyar szintaxis egy transzformáci-ós-generatív megközelítése. A transformational-generative approach to Hungarian.) Unpubl. Ph.D. diss. Debrecen, 1978.

(b) А я *и* не знал, что ты приехал.

(I didn't know you had arrived.)

(15) Ki *is* fedezte fel Amerikát?

(Who (do you say) discovered America?)

The basic meaning of 'accordance' of the particles is still felt in utterances like (14) and (15). The subjectivity expressed by these particles in (14)(a) and(14)(b) could be made explicit by a paraphrase like "I did not know you had arrived and my ignorance is in accordance with the degree of incredibility of the state of affairs".

The role *is* plays in (15) resembles to some extent the English *did you say/do you say* expression inserted in a *wh*-question, cf.:

(16) Merre *is* van a bejárat?

Where *do you say* the entrance is?

Undoubtedly, *is* is used here as a kind of pseudo-conjunction whose linguistic task is to signal the speaker's intent to connect the question to something implied in the act of communication. This something could be captured as some extra information about the speaker's intention to get a quick answer, an answer which he himself might know but is unable to recall at the moment.

The Hungarian *is* is also typical in quantitative constructions like:

(17) Háromszor *is* becsapta. (He fooled him three times.)

Here *is* could be roughly compared to the *as many as* construction in English. (17) could be paraphrased as "He fooled him and he did that three times which is much", or, to bring the paraphrase closer to the meaning of accordance, "Fooling someone three times is in accordance with my evaluation of this action as, so to say, quantitatively excessive".

2.3. To sum up, the lexemes *is* and *и* used as additive conjunctions are characterised by a balance maintained by a parallel of equally ranked syntactic or semantic components. The feature of identity necessary for addition is carried either by the predicate or the content of the message.

Using *is* or *и* in a place where their homonymous conjunctions never (or seldom) appear turns them into modal particles whose core

meaning is 'accordance' that is stated by the speaker between a given state of affairs and his own relation to it.

It should be noted that the occurrence of particles does not require that there be some previous fragment to which some other fragment could be linked.

3.0. If we turn to the question of homonymy of the lexemes *már*, *még*, *csak*, and *уже*, *еще*, *только*, their assignment to any of the existing word-classes is hampered by the complexity of syntactic and semantic features characteristic of more than one (or two) part of speech. Their heterogenity is reflected by the difference between labelling them, e.g. in the Hungarian literature, as adverbs (of measure and degree) or as particles (mostly in slavistics: cf. частицы). The role they play in a sentence may be considered adverbial in the sense that these words are basically used for qualifying an action from the point of view of its actual phase (*már*, *még*, *уже*, *еще*) or restrictedness (*csak*, *только*). These words can thus be grouped into two subsets so as to treat them separately.

3.1. When we assign *már*, *még*, *уже*, *еще* to the category of adverbs, in so doing we refer to the observation that the given words and their negated versions are used to picture an action as being carried out in one of the four phases:

még nem/еще нет   *már/уже*   *még/еще*   *már nem/уже не*

——>

Although a thorough investigation of the above quadrade would take us far from the problem of homonymy, one brief remark should nevertheless be added.

The "adverbiality" of these words is different from that of words like *tegnap*, *вчера* ('yesterday') or, say, *gyorsan*, *быстро* ('quickly') in that unlike adverbs relating the action involved to some objective feature of time, velocity, etc., *már*, *még* and *уже*, *еще* characterize an action on its own from the point of view of its development.

Thus, depicting an action as something that has not yet started or that has already started, etc. brings in the notion of **anticipation** which is closely related to both subjectivity in general, and evaluation, in particular.

This is, however, not to say that these words belong to the class of particles in sentences (18) and (19).

(18) (a) *Már* kész vagy?

(b) Ты *уже* готов?

(You are ready (already)?)

(19) (a) *Még* nem tud korcsolyázni.

(b) Он *еще* не умеет кататься на коньках.

(He cannot skate yet.)

Clearly, these words are used here as pointers relating an action or state of affairs to a specific stage of its development. If we want to specify the information conveyed by the words italicized above, we can supply the sentences with paraphrases. Thus, we could add to (20) the following paraphrase:

(20) (a) A gyerek *már* jár.

(b) Ребенок *уже* ходит.

(The baby can already walk.)

(20') (a) A gyerek jár, és ez korábban nem így volt.

(b) Ребенок ходит, а раньше это было не так.

(The baby can walk, and this was not the case before.)

Example (20') suggests that *már* and *уже* are used here to underlie an alteration in the state of affairs. 'Alteration' as the core meaning of these words can be supplemented by an additional feature to an evaluation of the action as happening early or unexpectedly. Cf.:

(21) (a) *Már* megérkeztél?

(b) Ты *уже* приехал?

(You are here already?)

It is interesting to note that alteration combined with evaluation may be expressed by *already* in English, cf.:

(22) (a) Have you been to the USA *yet*?

(b) Have you *already* been to the USA?

As for the adverbs *még* and *еще*, they are basically used to express 'maintenance' of the (previously begun) state of affairs. E.g.:

(23) (a) Peti még olvas.

(b) Петя *еще* читает.

(Pete is still reading.)

'Alteration' and 'maintenance' can be considered as antagonistic meanings, especially in sentences like the following:

(24) (a) János *már* öreg. — János *még nem* öreg.

(b) Иван *уже* старый. — Иван *еще не* старый.

(John is already old. — John is not old yet.)

It can also be recognized, however, that antonymy shows itself only when coupled with negation (*már — még nem*; *még — már nem* etc.). This suggests that antagonism is not inherent in the opposition *már — még* or *уже — еще*. It is apparent in cases where these words are attached to some adverb of time. Then the assignment of an action to some point or period of time by that adverb makes it possible for *már*, *még, уже, еще* to become additives evaluating this assignment. Surprisingly, the given words appear to be synonymous in sentences with an "objective" adverb of time, e.g.:

(25) (a) *Már/még* az idén felépítik a házukat.

(b) *Уже/еще* в этом году они построят свой дом.

(They will build their house this year.)

The evaluation of the action across the adverb of time involves a reference to some boundary of the time span (*this year*). This phenomenon has been interpreted as a shift from an adverb to a particle on the grounds that, on the one hand, evaluation is *ab ovo* modal, and, on the other hand, the given words manifest their "adverbiality" less transparently.[8]

---

[8] See И.А. Киселев. О лексико-грамматической сущности слова ЕЩЕ. — В кн.: Словарные составы русского и белорусского языков в их историческом развитии и современном состоянии. Сборник научных трудов. Минск, 1980, с. 52—57; И.А. Киселев. Значение и употребление слова *уже* (*уж*) в русском языке и соотносительно слова *уже* в белорусском языке. — В кн.: Русский язык. Межведомственный сборник. Минск, 1981, с. 50—56.

This interpretation is, however, motivated by common attitude towards modal particles: they are but left-overs of other parts of speech with a rather vague meaning and linguistic role.

I suppose the italicised words in (25) are all adverbs becaouse their basic meaning and function is retained. That is, *már az idén* means the alteration will take place until the end of the year, *még az idén* means the maintenance of the year running during which the action will be carried out, and the same is true for the constructions *уже/еще в этом году*. Evaluation can in English be formulated as "as early as", but this is not to say it has much to do with an adverb-to-particle transposition. It follows that *már* and *még* and their Russian equivalents in (25) retain the function of positioning the items they refer to in one of the blocks the quadrade on page 93 consists of. Synonymy, in much the same way as antonymy above (24), is connected to a coincidence of the occasional similarity of constructions containing, in English, *as early as* and *still*.

When used on their own (i.e. without an "objective" adverb of time), these words cannot be applied in sentences posing a restriction on relating the action to one specific block of the quadrade, e.g.:

(26) (a) *Ö *még* megjött.

    (b) *Он *еще* приехал.

       (? He arrived yet.)

(27) (a) *Ö *már* megjön.

    (b) *Он *уже* придет.

       (? He will come already.)

It should be added that (26) and (27) could be made grammatically acceptable by, say, extending the sentences. In this case we would, however, have either an additive conjunction (*Ö még megjött, de a többiek elmaradtak.* — He still came, but the rest lagged behind.) mingled with some adverbiality, or a complex sentence (*Ö már megjön, mire a többiek hazaérnek.* — He will have arrived when the others get home.).

Már and *még*, or *уже* and *еще* can be considered as particles when they do not express alteration or maintenance, respectively, but are used to express subjective modal meanings. Their modal application is bound to places where they cannot be interpreted as expressions of alteration or maintenance. *Már* and *уже* as adverbs are confined to actions taking place in the present or in the past (cf. (27)).

When used in imperatives, which are references to some future action, these words turn into particles denoting a wide range of subjective modal meanings from annoyance to cajoling. The actual shade cannot be defined on the basis of sentences taken in themselves. Thus, the following sentence could be interpreted as a command, a request, an expression of arrogation and impatience, etc.:

(28) Hagyd *már* abba! (Quit it!)

Instead of alteration in (28) we have a change in meaning that can be determined as alteration to be fulfilled.

In Russian the adverb-to-particle shift is coupled with a phonetic change *уже* − *уж*, the latter standing for the particle (although it is also used as an adverb, but never the other way round).

Уж is also used in imperatives, e.g.:

(29) Иди *уж*! (Don't say it!/Go!)

A suitable position for the modal particles *még* and *еще* is provided by actions that happen in the future (thus excluding 'maintenance').

(30) (a) Ez *még* jól jöhet.

(b) Это *еще* может понадобиться.

(It might come handy).

(31) Ez *még* meghozhatja a fia szerencséjét.

(It might bring good luck to his son.)

Modality involves in (30)−(31) an expression of hope that is related to the anticipation mentioned in connection with (18)−(19).

The transposition of *már*, *még* and *уже*, *еще* does leave a trace behind from the homonymous adverbs. The operation that is carried out is aimed at preserving a certain amount of 'maintenance' or 'alteration' so as to make possible a reference to some non-existant but wishful maintenance or alteration.

3.2. A similar change occurs in the transposition of *csak* and *только* from quantifiers to particles.

As quantifiers they are used to express **restriction** that is apparent from (32) below:

(32) (a) Ő *csak* tejet iszik.

   (b) Он пьет *только* молоко.

   (He drinks only milk.)

(32) can be interpreted as containing an action that is restricted with respect to its object. Restriction may concern other sentence elements as well. The idea of posing a restriction on some sentence element includes exclusion. Exclusion is explicit in a modification of (32):

(32') He drinks only milk *and nothing else.*

It is exclusion that prevails when these words are used as particles. The exclusion expressed by the corresponding particles, however, differs from the above phenomenon. Whereas in (32) exclusion refers to a logical deduction following from restriction, when *csak* and *только* appear as particles, exclusion becomes a prominent feature. This is due to the fact that these modal particles are connected to the predicate and they serve to underlie its exclusive importance. Thus it appears that *csak* and *только* as particles turn restriction into its opposite:

(33) (a) Gondolja *csak* el, mit jelent ez!

   (b) Подумать *только*, что это значит!

   (Just think of what that means!)

The opposite sense words acquire can be formulated as an indirect restriction of all other possible implications. To make this point a bit clearer, consider (34):

(34) (a) Nem jó ez így, asszonyom, *csak* emészti magát.

   (b) Нехорошо, барыня... Губите вы себя *только*.

   (You cannot carry on like this, madam. You are destroying
   (killing) yourself.)

The correlation between restriction and exclusion in (34) is the opposite of (32) in the sense that in the latter the action is restricted to one object (*milk*) and all other possible objects are thus excluded.

In (34), on the contrary, the exclusiveness of the action is expressed while a restriction on other possible action can be deduced.

The confines of this paper do not permit a thorough discussion of the possible uses of homonyms.[9] Nevertheless, even this quick glance at these four Hungarian and four Russian lexemes makes it possible to state some specific features of modal particles.

4.0. It is a prerequisite for there to be a particle that it be "raised" to sentence level. We could argue that subjective modality expressed by lexical means, particularly by modal particles, can be captured only on sentence level where both predicativity and modality become relevant. When a conjunction, an adverb or a quantifier undergoes transposition, some of its semantic and functional features are retained whereas others disappear or get modified. This fact accounts for the difficulty of recognizing a particle: the linguist feels that word at hand is not the same as it was in the other case, but he also feels a connection between the two applications.

(a) A conjunction becomes a modal particle when it gets rid of the task of coordinating two components. (b) An adverb ceases to be an adverb when it does not relate some action to some of its phase and comes to convey emotional-intellectual features. (c) A quantifier turns into a modal particle when it no more poses a restriction on the word it is attached to but rather it is used for emphasizing its importance.

Modal particles form a subclass which stands on its own in the sense that these words dispose functional and semantic properties that provide for a cohesion. For example, a particle may be a synonym to another one the etymons of which hardly show any functional-semantic resemblance. Thus, *már* and *csak* as modal particles can be used in imperatives for the expression of various subjective attitudes. Here they are rather close to each other, at any rate much closer than their etymons:

(35) Gyere *már*! (Come on now!)

Gyere *csak*! (You can come.)

Research into subjectivity expressed by modal particles is urgent not only because a better understanding of subjective modality

---

[9] For a more detailed investigation see K. Fábricz. Partikulák a magyar és az orosz nyelvben. (Particles in Hungarian and Russian.) Unpubl. Ph.D. diss. Szeged, 1986.

would perhaps result in more formal definitions than the tentative ones above, but also because it would reveal important features of the process during which a set of words become modal.