



‘CSAK NEKI’ OR
‘CSAK ANNAK’?
BACK-REFERENCE
TO [-HUMAN]
ANTECEDENTS IN
HUNGARIAN

DEL Language Fair 2021

Gréta Barna

ON HUNGARIAN SENTENCES IN GENERAL

- The order of major sentence constituents is constrained
- The functions associated with the different structural positions are logical functions instead of the grammatical functions
- Topic and predicate

TOPIC

- Not restricted to subjects
- It does not receive primary stress
- The topic foregrounds an individual (a person, an object, or a group of them) from among those present in the universe of discourse as the subject of the subsequent predication

TOPIC

1. [_{Topic} **János-t**] [_{Predicate} **el-üt-ött-e** egy autó]
John-ACC VM-hit-PST.3SG a car
'A car hit John. [John was hit by a car.]'
2. [_{Topic} **János-ból**] [_{Predicate} **hiányzik** a becsület]
John-FROM miss.PROG.3SG the honesty
'Honesty is missing from John. [John lacks honesty.]'
3. [_{Topic} **János-nak**] [_{Predicate} **össze-tör-ték** az autó-já-t]
John-DAT VM-break-PST.3PL the car-POSS-ACC
'They broke John's car. [John had his car broken.]'

PREDICATE

- It is constituted by the verb, which can be accompanied by a verb modifier (VM)
- Subject is generated within the VP
- Topic–predicate boundary: the rightmost position where a sentence adverbial can be inserted
- Primary stress falls on the first prominent part of the predicate

FOCUS

- It immediately precedes the V
- It removes the stress from the verb succeeding it
- Primary stressed constituent in a sentence
- Exhaustive identification
- A focusing particle like *csak* 'only' can also be used to express exhaustive identification

FOCUS

1. **János csak MARINAK mutatta be Pétert.**
John only Mary-DAT introduced VM Peter-ACC
'It was only to Mary that John introduced Peter.'
2. **János MARINAK mutatta be csak Pétert.**
John Mary-DAT introduced VM only Peter-ACC
'It was only to Mary that John introduced Peter.'

PRONOUNS

- Three sets of personal pronouns: clitics, deficient/weak, strong
- No clitics in Hungarian
- Strong forms:
 - 3rd person singular: *ő* '(s)he' *az* 'that' *ez* 'this'
 - 3rd person plural: *ők* 'they'
- Weak form
 - 3rd person singular: *pro*, empty phonetic form
 - 3rd person plural: *pro*, *ők* 'they'

PRONOUNS

Context: 'The stew is ready.'

1. – **Nem kérek belől-e / ?ab-ból.**
not want-1SG FROM-3SG / that-FROM
'I don't want any of it.'
2. – **Ab-ból / *belől-e nem kérek.**
that-FROM / from-3SG not want-1SG
'I don't want any of that.'
3. – **Csak ab-ból / *belől-e kérek.**
only that-FROM / from-3SG want-1SG
'I only want some of that.'
4. – **Ab-ból is / *belől-e is kérek.**
that-FROM too / from-3SG too want-1SG
'I want some of that too.'

PRONOUNS

- (1) **A cipők pontosan elkészültek, már tegnap elvitték ő-k-et.**

the shoe-PL on_time VM-make-PST.3PL already yesterday PART-take-3PL.PST
(s)he-PL-ACC

‘The shoes were ready on time, they were already taken yesterday.’

- (2) **A könyveit rendbe rakta,**
the book-POSS.PL.3SG order-into put-3SG.PST

de a takarítónő össze-vissza dobálta ő-k-et.

but the maid together-back throw-3SG.PST (s)he-pl-ACC

‘He put his books in order, but the maid threw them around higgledy-piggledy.’

PRONOUNS

- Alberti & Farkas (2017): The less specific the [+HUMAN] antecedent, the more acceptable the co-referring [-HUMAN] pronoun, and, parallel to this, the less acceptable the strong form of the [+HUMAN] pronoun

PRONOUNS

- Péter utálja a Raidet, ...
Peter hate-3SG the Raid-ACC
'Peter hates Raid, ...'
- ...pedig csak AZ / *Ø / *Ő vált be a szúnyogok ellen.
but only that / ø / (s)he work VM the mosquito.PL against
'but is is THAT that has proved efficient against mosquitos.'
- ...de pont AZT / *Ø / *Ő-T ajánlotta a szomszéd.
but just that-ACC / ø / (s)he-ACC recommend-3SG.PST the neighbor
'...but it is THAT that the neighbor recommended.'
- ...de pont AR-RA / *RÁ / *Ő-RÁ esküszik a szomszéd.
but just that-SUB / SUB.3SG / (s)he-SUB.3SG swear.3sg the neighbor
'...but it is THAT that the neighbor swears by.'

THE STUDY

- The study examines back-reference to [-HUMAN] singular and plural antecedents
- The co-referring pronoun in each sentence is in focus position and they appear in four cases: accusative, ablative, dative, and superessive
- For each case I looked at the acceptability of the [-HUMAN] pronoun and the weak [+HUMAN] pronoun

ABLATIVE CASE - SINGULAR

- Azt hittem, a kék ruhádat

that-ACC believe-pst.1sg the blue dress-POSS.2SG-ACC

veszed fel az ünnepségre.

take-2SG up the ceremony-ALL

‘I thought you would wear your blue dress to the ceremony.’

- Úgy volt, de pont at-tól / *től-e vagyok mindig kiütéses.

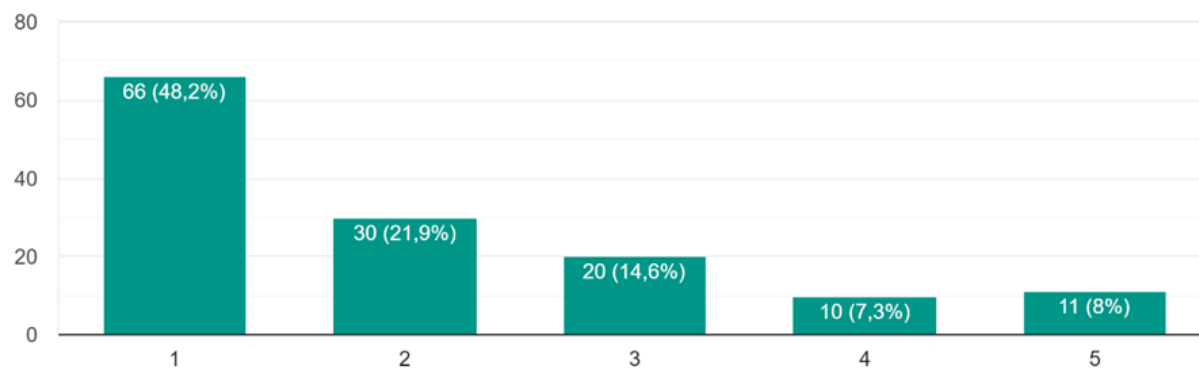
so be.PST but just that-ABL / ABL-3SG be.1SG always rash-ADJ

‘I was going to, but it always gives me rashes.’

ABLATIVE
CASE: WEAK
[+HUMAN]
PRONOUN –
SINGULAR

A: Azt hittem, a kék ruhádat veszed fel az ünnepségre. B: Úgy volt, de pont tőle vagyok mindig kiütéses.

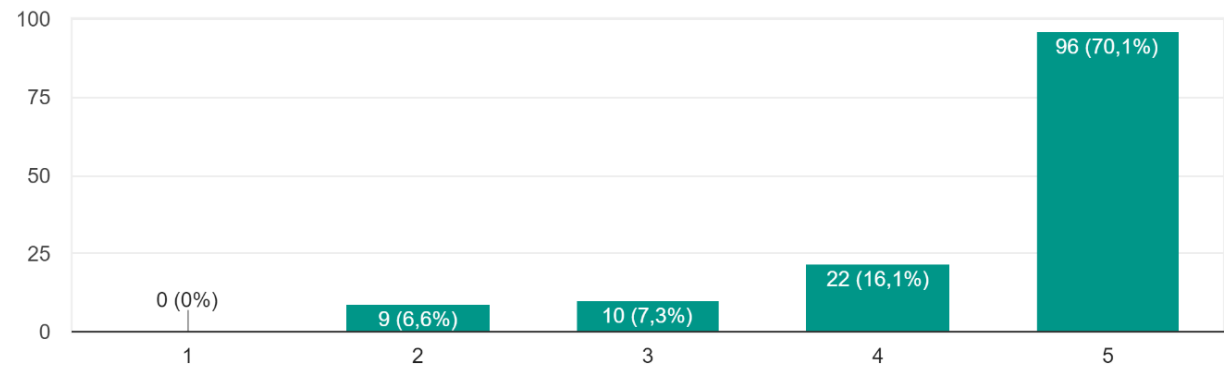
137 válasz



ABLATIVE
CASE: [-
HUMAN]
PRONOUN –
SINGULAR

A: Azt hittem, a kék ruhádat veszed fel az ünnepségre. B: Úgy volt, de pont attól vagyok mindig kiütéses.

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ABLATIVE CASE - PLURAL

A horrorfilmekén kívül bármit megnézek -

the horror_movies except anything-ACC VM-watch-1SG

csak az-ok-tól / *től-ük szoktam rosszul érezni magam.

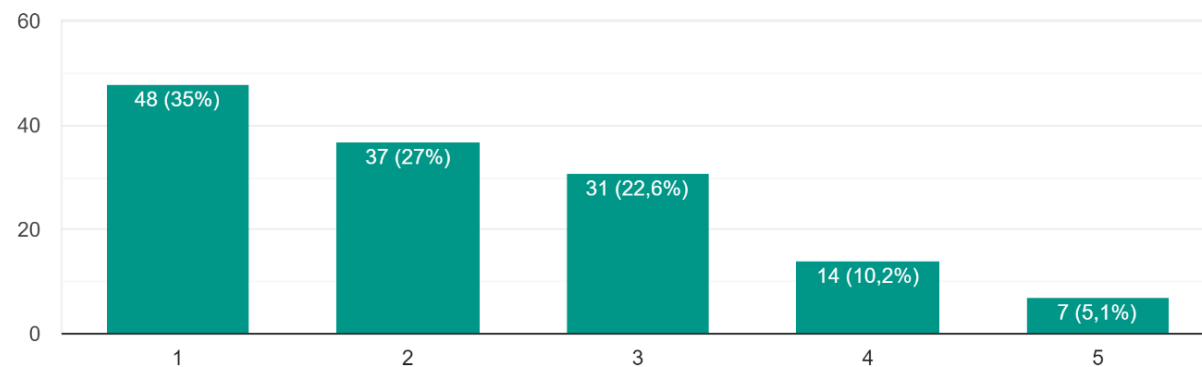
only that-PL-ABL / ABL-3PL do sick-adv feel-INF myself

'I watch everything except for horror movies - they are the only ones that make me feel sick.'

ABLATIVE
CASE: WEAK
[+HUMAN]
PRONOUN –
PLURAL

A horrorfilmekén kívül bármit megnézek – csak tőlük szoktam rosszul érezni magam.

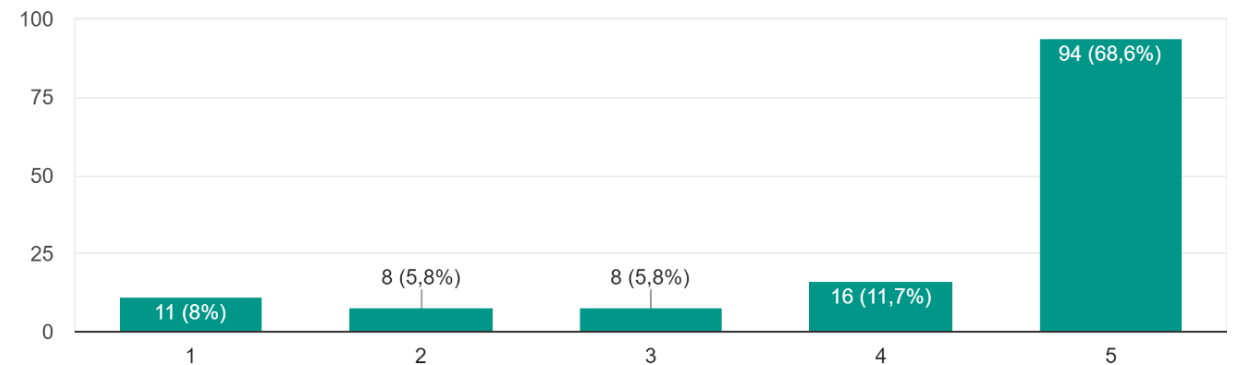
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ABLATIVE
CASE: [-
HUMAN]
PRONOUN –
PLURAL

A horrorfilmekén kívül bármit megnézek – csak azoktól szoktam rosszul érezni magam.

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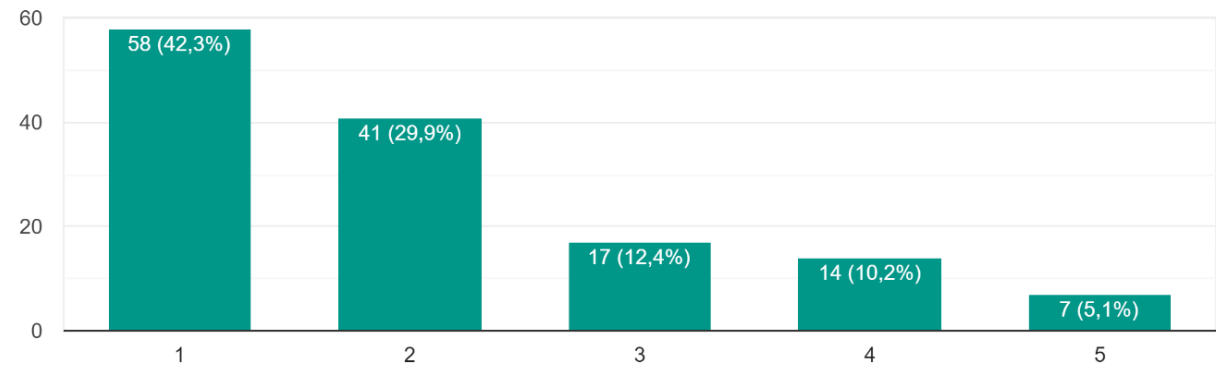
ACCUSATIVE CASE - SINGULAR

- Melyik süteményt adhatom?
which cookie-ACC give-COND-1SG
'Which cookie can I give you?'
- Pont *ő-t / az-t ott a sarokban.
just (s)he-ACC / that-ACC there the corner-in
'Just that right there in the corner.'

ACCUSATIVE
CASE:
[+HUMAN]
PRONOUN –
SINGULAR

A: Melyik süteményt adhatom? B: Pont öt ott a sarokban.

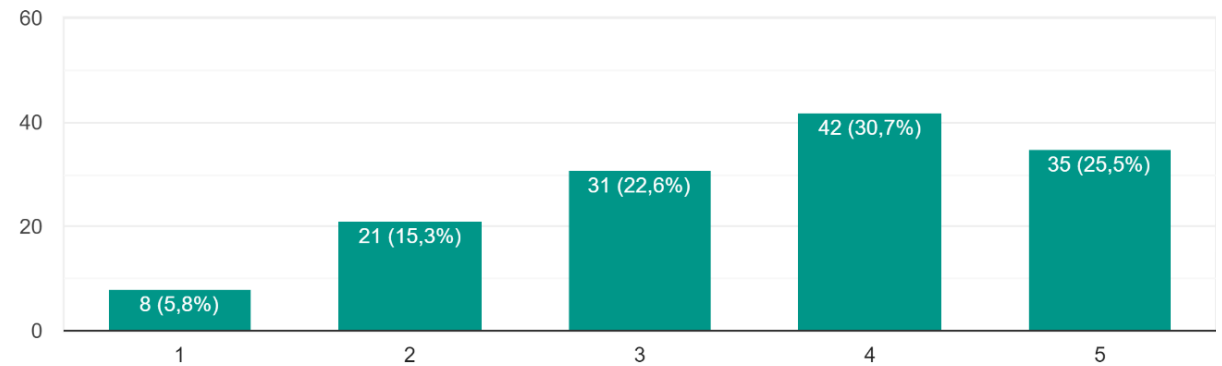
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ACCUSATIVE
CASE: [-
HUMAN]
PRONOUN –
SINGULAR

A: Melyik süteményt adhatom? B: Pont azt ott a sarokban.

137 válasz



ACCUSATIVE CASE – PLURAL

Már csak citromos cukorkák maradtak,

yet only lemon-ADJ candy-PL stay-3PL.PST

én pedig pont az-ok-at / Ő-k-et szeretem a legkevésbé.

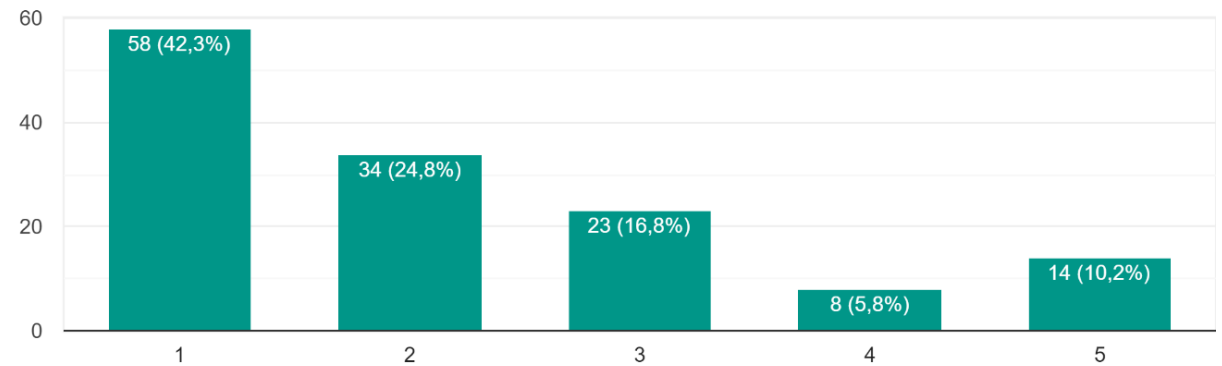
I however just that-PL-ACC / (s)he-PL-ACC like-1SG the least

‘There are only lemon-flavored candies left, but they are the ones I like the least.’

ACCUSATIVE
CASE:
[+HUMAN]
PRONOUN –
PLURAL

Már csak citromos cukorkák maradtak, én pedig pont őket szeretem a legkevésbé.

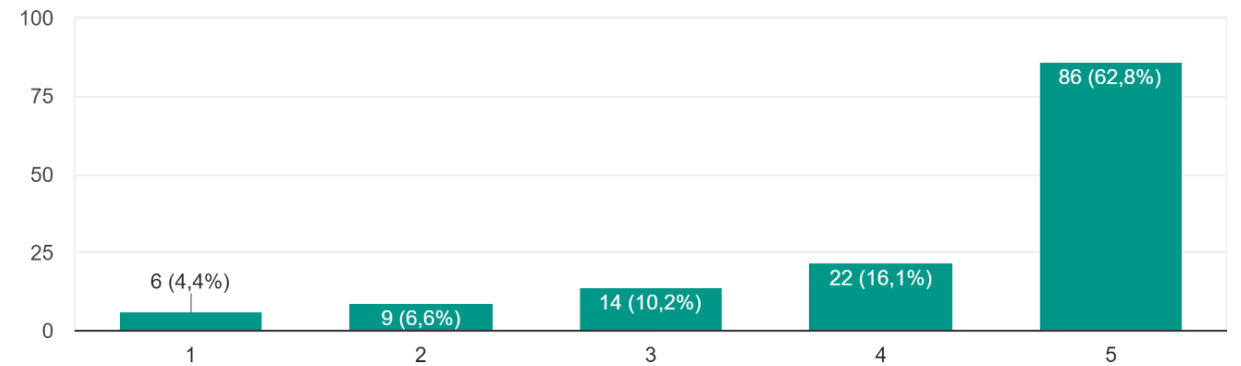
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ACCUSATIVE
CASE: [-
HUMAN]
PRONOUN –
PLURAL

Már csak citromos cukorkák maradtak, én pedig pont azokat szeretem a legkevésbé.

137 válasz



DATIVE CASE - SINGULAR

- Ezt a vázát emlékszem, még a nagymamádtól

this-ACC the vase-ACC remember-1AG yet the grandmother-POSS.2SG-from

kaptad. Magaddal viszed ezt is, ugye?

get-2SG.PST yourself-with take-2SG this-ACC too right

‘I remember you had gotten this vase from your grandmother. You will take this with you too, won’t you?’

- Mindenféleképpen, de pont an-nak / ??nek-i nem találtam még dobozt.

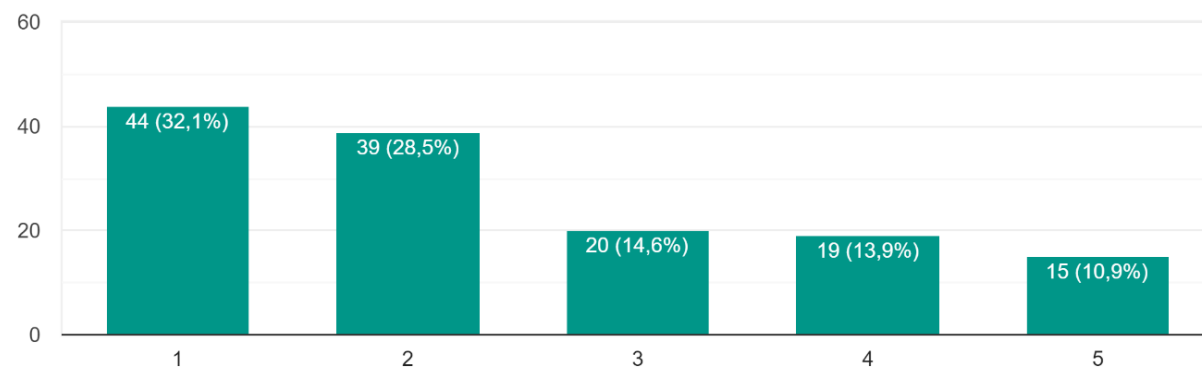
definitely but just that-DAT / DAT-3SG not find-1SG.PST yet box-ACC

‘Definitely, but that is the only one I haven’t found a box for.’

DATIVE
CASE: WEAK
[+HUMAN]
PRONOUN –
SINGULAR

A: Ezt a vázát emlékszem, még a nagymamádtól kaptad. Magaddal viszed ezt is, ugye? B:
Mindenféleképpen, de pont neki nem találtam még dobozt.

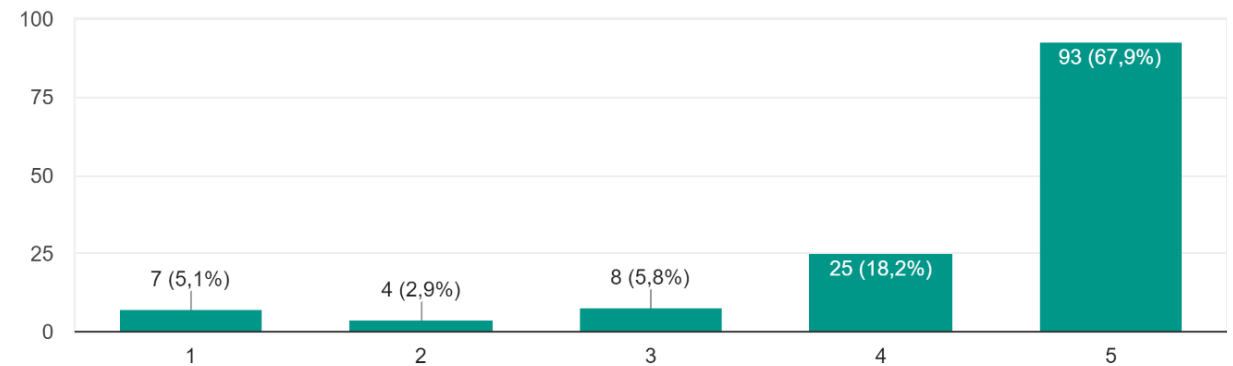
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DATIVE
CASE: [-
HUMAN]
PRONOUN –
SINGULAR

A: Ezt a vázát emlékszem, még a nagymamádtól kaptad. Magaddal viszed ezt is, ugye? B:
Mindenféleképpen, de pont annak nem találtam még dobozt.

137 válasz



DATIVE CASE - PLURAL

- Csak a könyveidnek szeretnél külön polcot?
only the book.POSS.2SG.PL-DAT like-2SG.COND separate shelf-ACC

‘Would you like to have a separate shelf for your books only?’

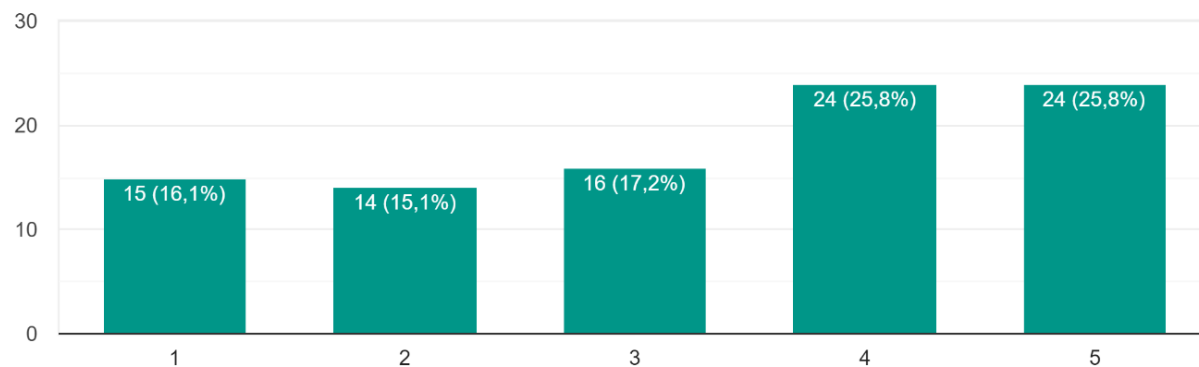
- Igen, csak az-ok-nak / nek-ik.
yes only that-PL-DAT / DAT-3PL

‘Yes, only for them.’

DATIVE
CASE: WEAK
[+HUMAN]
PRONOUN –
PLURAL

A: Csak a könyveidnek szeretnél külön polcot? B: Igen, csak nekik.

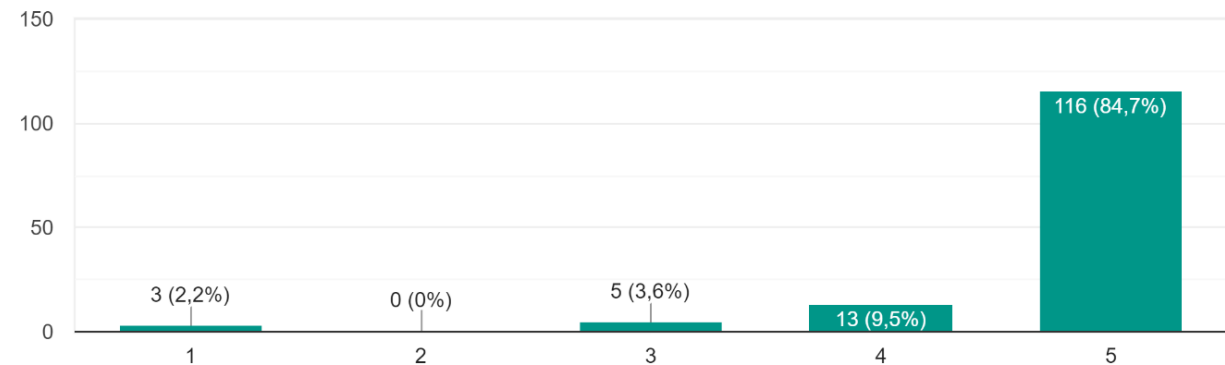
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DATIVE
CASE: [-
HUMAN]
PRONOUN –
PLURAL

A: Csak a könyveidnek szeretnél külön polcot? B: Igen, csak azoknak.

137 válasz



SUPERESSIVE CASE - SINGULAR

Mari azt mondja, nem igazán használja a Facebookot,

Mari that-ACC say-3SG not really use-3SG the Facebook-ACC

mégis csak az-on / *rajt-a tudom elérni.

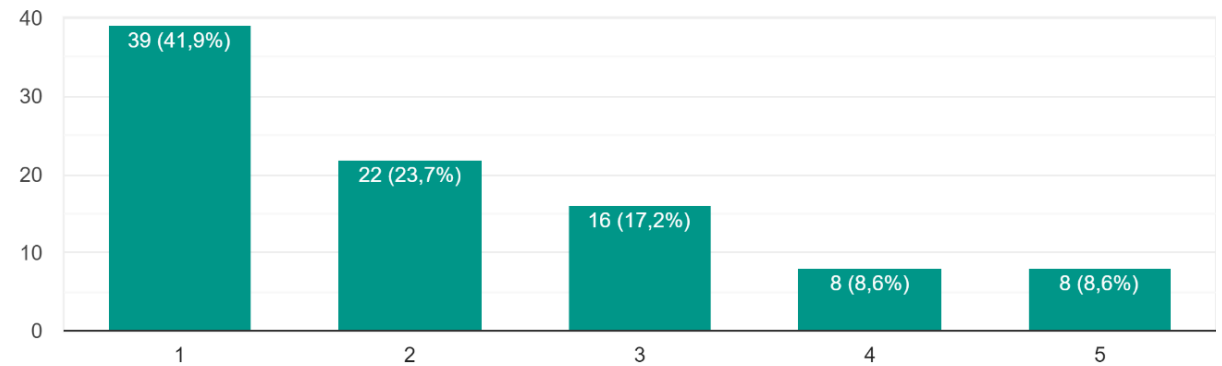
Still only that-SUP / SUP-3SG able-1SG reach-INF

‘Mary says she doesn’t really like Facebook, still, it is the only place where I can reach her.’

SUPERESSIVE
CASE: WEAK
[+HUMAN]
PRONOUN –
SINGULAR

Mari azt mondja, nem igazán használja a Facebookot, mégis csak rajta tudom elérni.

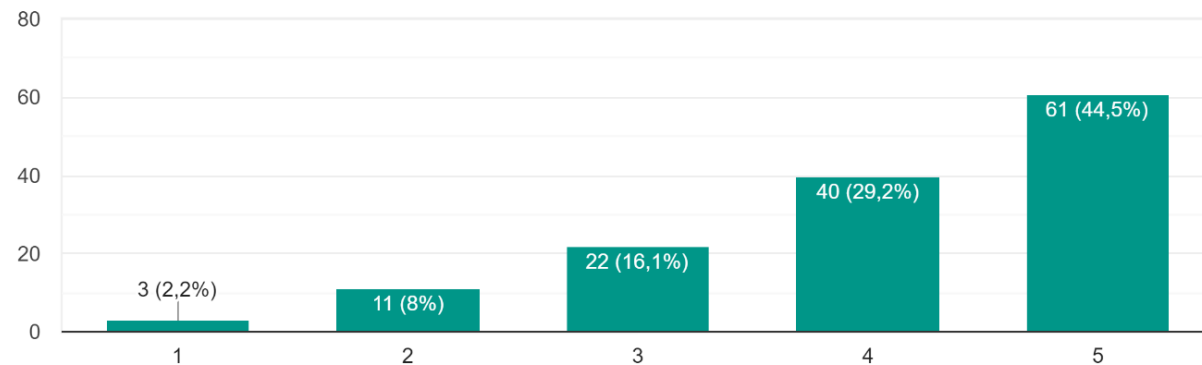
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SUPERESSIVE
CASE: [-
HUMAN]
PRONOUN –
SINGULAR

Mari azt mondja, nem igazán használja a Facebookot, mégis csak azon tudom elérni.

137 válasz



SUPERESSIVE CASE - PLURAL

Minden fordulóban újabb kis türkiz tavak tárulnak az ember

Every turn-in newer littl turquois lake-PL unfold-3PL the person

elé – időnként csak az-ok-on / rajt-uk átgázolva

in.front.of sometimes only that-PL-SUP / SUP-3PL across-wade-PART

lehet tovább haladni.

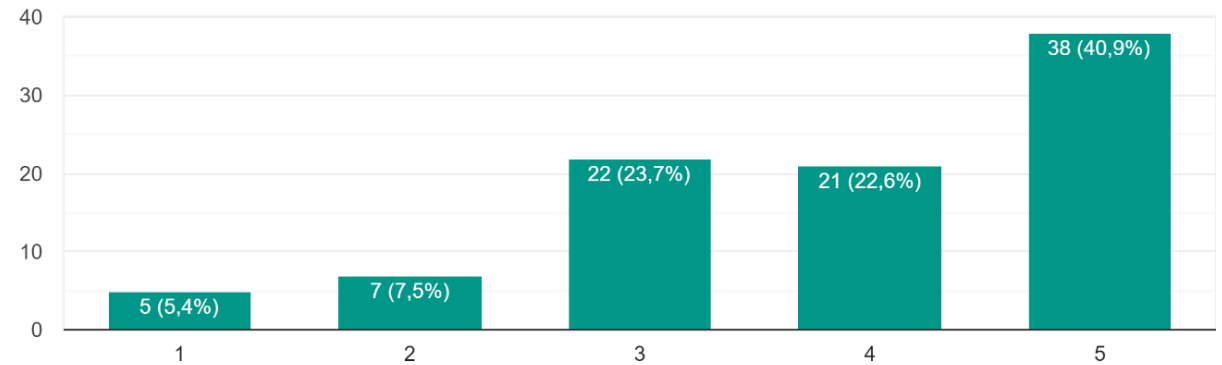
be.COND onward go-INF

‘At every turn there are little turquoise lakes unfolding in front of us – sometimes it is only by wading through them we can go on.’

SUPERESSIVE CASE: WEAK [+HUMAN] PRONOUN – PLURAL

Minden fordulóban újabb kis türkiz tavak tárulnak az ember elé – időnként csak rajtuk átgázolva lehet tovább haladni.

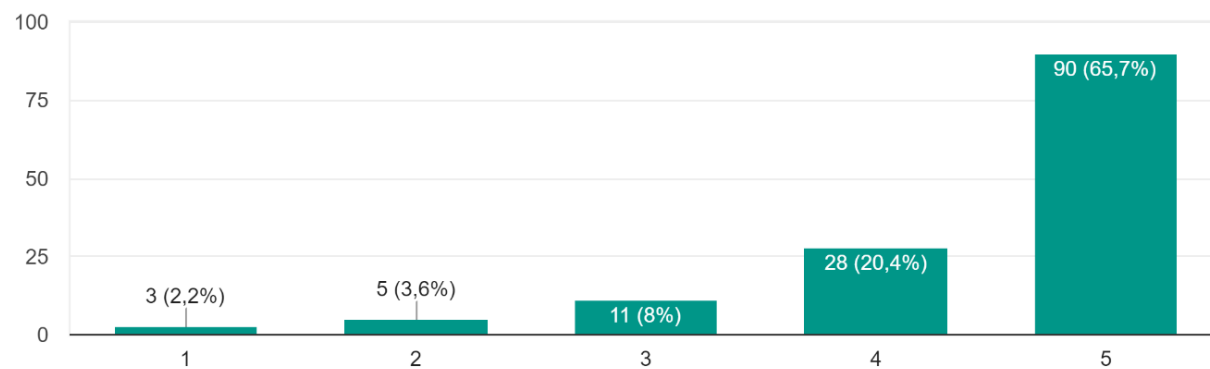
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SUPERESSIVE CASE: [- HUMAN] PRONOUN – PLURAL

Minden fordulóban újabb kis türkiz tavak tárulnak az ember elé – időnként csak azokon átgázolva lehet tovább haladni.

137 válasz



CONCLUSIONS

- When the antecedent is singular, the predictions are in compliance with what Alberti and Farkas (2017) observed
- When the antecedent is plural, the results of the ablative and accusative cases are similar to what has been perceived in their singular counterparts
- The dative and superessive cases have been judged to be mostly grammatical rather than ungrammatical

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
ATTENTION.

