



Report on Marta Ruda's doctoral dissertation entitled  
*On the Syntax of Missing Objects:*  
*A Study with Special Reference to English, Polish, and Hungarian*  
(Kraków, 2016)

This is an insightful, thoroughly researched, well-written, and properly organised dissertation on a difficult topic, which has been insufficiently investigated in the available literature although it is theoretically quite interesting. Ms. Ruda has shown in her dissertation that she is fully capable of discussing intricate linguistic problems, as well as offering analyses and solutions that will certainly be welcome by the linguistic community at large. Therefore **I propose that she be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and that it be conferred on her 'with distinction'.**

In this report I will list the merits of the dissertation, but, as is the nature of such an enterprise, I will devote more space to problems and criticisms, which are intended to help the author in her future work and/or in case she wishes to publish the manuscript. Needless to say, I am looking forward to her response and counterarguments.

Ms. Marta Ruda (henceforth referred to as MR) divides the thesis into three parts. The first one is devoted to surveying the issues surrounding missing objects. The middle part reviews the additional data gained from corpora of English and Polish. The last one contains MR's theoretical contributions to the set of problems at hand. MR is justified to confine her attention to the three languages of which she has excellent command, and indeed her findings related to the two that I am familiar with, that is, English and Hungarian, are quite reliable.

MR starts by characterising non-anaphoric and anaphoric missing objects, an important distinction followed throughout the thesis, for it emerges from the examples, all carefully presented, that the primary line of interpretation must involve such a decision. The overview given here is extensive, and, at the same time, succinct. For instance, her discussion of involving the passive or structures of secondary predication takes up three pages only but enlightens the reader. I am also in agreement with the author in drawing the conclusion on the basis of examples like *The dog bites ø* that "the human interpretation usually observed with CPAA [= characteristic property of agent alternation] (and related constructions) is an effect arising at the Conceptual-Intentional (C-I) interface rather than being an inherent property of the construction." (p.24) It may be of interest to note here, by way of human missing objects, that in addition to similar constructions in Hungarian, of which MR is aware as transpires from a subsequent chapter, Hungarian forces a human interpretation of missing subjects of third person plural verb forms, cf. (*What's this noise?*) *Kopog-t-ak* 'knock-PAST-3PL; Someone has knocked'; or: *Ugat-t-ak* 'Someone has barked.' Note that the occurrence of the corresponding pronominal object *ők* 'they' forces anaphoric interpretation, out of the question in this context.

