The feature geometry of 3SG generic null subjects vs. 3SG referential null subjects

Holmberg (2010) establishes the following correlation between Partial vs. Consistent Null Subject Languages:

**Partial NSLs:**
- 3SG generic subjects must be null.
- 3SG referential subjects must not be null.

**Consistent NSLs:**
- 3SG generic subjects must not be null.
- 3SG referential subjects can be null.

1 Tässä pro\textsubscript{GEN}/*i istuu mukavasti. here (one/*he) sits comfortably
‘One/*He can sit comfortably here.’ (Finnish, Holmberg 2010)

2 Hän istuu mukavasti tässä.
he sits comfortably here
‘He sits comfortably here.’

3 Se si/*pro e morti, non ci si/*pro muove piu.
if one is dead not RFL one move any more
‘If one is dead, one does not move any more.’ (Italian, D’Alessandro & Alexiadou 2003)

Hungarian seemingly patterns with Consistent NSLs in that it requires 3SG generic inclusive subjects to be lexical:

4 [CP] Az ember\textsubscript{GEN} mindig fél-0-0, [CP] hogy le-zuhan-0
the man always fear-PRES-3SG that off-crash-PRES3SG

\begin{itemize}
\item a repülőgép.]
\item the airplane
\item ‘One always fears that the airplane will crash.’
\end{itemize}

Indeed, a matrix 3SG pro can only be interpreted with unique reference but not as generic inclusive:

5 [CP] Mindig fél pro\textsubscript{GEN}, [CP] hogy le-zuhan-0
always fear-PRES3SG s/he/*one that off-crash-PRES3SG

\begin{itemize}
\item a repülőgép.]
\item the airplane
\item ‘S/he /*One always fears that the airplane will crash.’
\end{itemize}

In discourse-semantically neutral sentences, the generic inclusive lexical subject az ember ‘the man’ can serve as an antecedent for reflexives, (6), for the null subject of depictive adjunct predicates, (7), and can control the PRO\textsubscript{GEN} subject of infinitival clauses, (8) (see E.Kiss 1987, 2002 and Kenesei 1989, 1992 on pronominal binding in Hungarian discourse-semantically marked and neutral sentences):

6 Manapság az ember\textsubscript{GEN} láthatja magát\textsubscript{GEN}/*i az internet-en.
nowadays the man see-OPT-3SG self-ACC the internet-SBL
‘Nowadays one can see oneself/*himself on the internet.’

7 [CP] Az ember\textsubscript{GEN} nem vizsgál-0 beteg-eti,
the man not examine-PRES3SG patient-ACC when

\begin{itemize}
\item pro\textsubscript{GEN}/*i \textsubscript{GEN}/*i részeg 0].
\item (the man/*he\textsubscript{GEN}/i) drunk COP_PRES3SG
\item ‘One does not examine a patient when one/*he is drunk.’
\end{itemize}
Unlike its Italian counterpart, (3), the generic inclusive lexical subject az ember ‘the man’, can also serve as an antecedent for proGEN in Hungarian, (9a)-(9b):

(9a) [CP Az emberGEN nem készül ar-ra, [CP hogy proGEN/*őGEN meg-hal-0]].
PFX-die-PRES3SG

‘One is not prepared (for it) that one/*he will die.’

(9b) [CP Az ember-nekGEN kínos 0, [CP ha proGEN /*őGEN izzad-0]].
sweat-PRES3SG

‘It is embarrassing (for one) if one/*he sweats.’

The binding properties of generic inclusive null subjects isolate Hungarian both from Consistent NSLs and from Partial NSLs. In the former, 3SG generic inclusive null subjects (proGEN) are absent, (1); in the latter, they do not need a lexical antecedent, (2). Hungarian proGEN always requires a 3SG generic inclusive antecedent in the higher clause, (6)-(7).

3 3SG referential null subjects can be clearly distinguished from 3SG generic inclusive null subjects in Hungarian in that the former can alternate with a 3SG referential pronoun while the latter cannot (see Kenesei 1989 on the binding conditions of preverbal and postverbal referential pronouns in Hungarian):

(10a) Péter, az-t hiszi, hogy ŏ/pro, sokáig fog élni.

‘Peter, believes that (he) for long will live.

(10b) Az emberGEN az-t hiszi, hogy proGEN /*őGEN sokáig fog élni.

‘One believes that one/*he for long will live.

3SG referential pronominal and null subjects have unique reference and accept only antecedents with unique reference. 3SG generic inclusive subjects are first-person oriented, group-denoting items with attitudinal modal base, in the scope of GEN. (Moltmann 2006, 2010, 2012). GEN ranges over accessible worlds. When it is restricted to the actual world, 3SG generic inclusive subjects acquire 3PL, 1SG or 1PL unique reference interpretation (see Cinque 1988, on Italian si, Egerland & Sigurdhsson 2009 on Icelandic madhur, Krzek 2012 on Polish sie, respectively). D’Alessandro & Alexiadou (2003) derive the alternation between the unique vs. generic reference of impersonal si in Italian from phi feature agreement of si either in ASPP or in SpeechActP (SAPP) (Sigurdhsson 2004). This cannot be extended to Hungarian, where syntactic aspect does not correlate with such interpretive differences.

It is proposed that the [+gen] feature of generic inclusive subjects must be licensed in SAPP via Cyclic Agree (Bejar & Rezac 2009). Unique reference subjects do not have a [+gen] feature and license their phi features in canonical ways. The different ways of licensing explain generic vs. unique reference alternation cross-linguistically.