

# Information Structure, Functional Left Peripheries, and the History of a Hungarian Interrogative Marker

## 0. Introduction

diachronic development of the Hungarian interrogative marker *-e* in embedded questions

Modern Hungarian embedded yes-no interrogatives:

- (1) Nem tudom, (**hogy**) megérkezett-**e** Mari.  
not know-1SG **that** PRT-arrived.3SG-Q Mary  
'I don't know if Mary has arrived.'

Old Hungarian embedded yes-no interrogatives:

- (2) mōgadīng nēkōnc **ha** te vag x<sup>c</sup> istēnn<sup>c</sup> fia  
tell-IMP.2SG-PRT we.DAT **if** you are Christ God-DAT son-POSS  
'tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God' (Munich Codex, from 1466)

two main aspects of the change:

- change in the complementiser: *ha* 'if' to optional *hogy* 'that'
- appearance of the element *-e*

status of the element *-e*

e.g. van Craenenbroeck and Lipták (2008): a Focus head

but: problematic to tie it to the notion of focus

head of an IntP in the sense of Rizzi (2001)

but: should be appropriately linked to other interrogative elements

position in the CP-periphery versus the vP-periphery

proposal:

- *-e* is a functional v head (call it F)
- the marking of [+wh] has grammaticalised on the vP-periphery in Hungarian
- changes parallel with the evolution of functional left peripheries
- change from SOV to "Top Foc V X" (É. Kiss 2013) → head-initial vPs, focus

## 1. Clause-typing and interrogatives in Modern Hungarian

- main clause questions: distinctive intonation

*wh*-interrogatives: *wh*-element present

- (3) **Ki** érkezett meg?  
**who** arrived.3SG PRT  
'Who has arrived?'

yes-no interrogatives: *-e* is optional

- (4) Megérkezett(-e) Mari?  
 PRT-arrived.3SG-Q Mary  
 ‘Has Mary arrived?’

- embedded questions: no distinctive intonation

*wh*-interrogatives: *wh*-element present; optional *hogy* ‘that’

- (5) Nem tudom, (hogy) ki érkezett meg.  
 not know-1SG that who arrived.3SG PRT  
 ‘I don’t know who has arrived.’

yes-no interrogatives: *-e* is obligatory; optional *hogy* ‘that’

- (6) Nem tudom, (hogy) megérkezett-e Mari.  
 not know-1SG that PRT-arrived.3SG-Q Mary  
 ‘I don’t know if Mary has arrived.’

*hogy*: general subordination marker – not sensitive to  $[\pm wh]$ , cf. É. Kiss (2002)

embedded pattern: *hogy* is a subordination marker

→  $[+wh]$  marked by a different element – *wh*-phrase or *-e*

position of *hogy*: C head

operator movement in Hungarian

- relative operators target a [Spec,CP] position – Kántor (2008), Bacskai-Atkari (2014)
  - *wh*-operators: target the functional vP-periphery (“focus”) – cf. É. Kiss (2002)
- ↔ English and German: relative operators and *wh*-operators target a [Spec,CP] position

focus in Hungarian: preverbal position

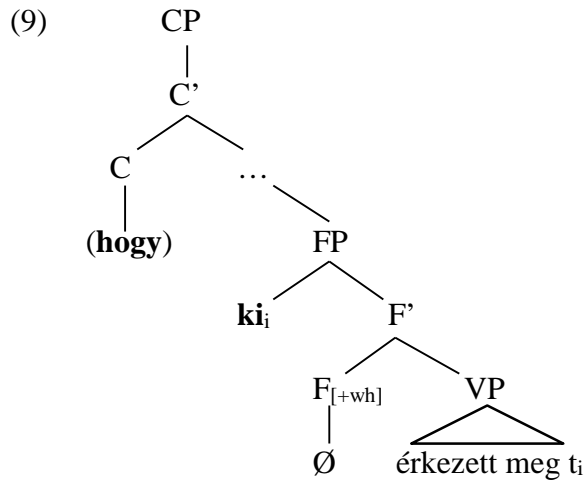
- (7) a. Mari megérkezett.  
 Mary PRT-arrived.3SG  
 ‘Mary has arrived.’
- b. **Mari** érkezett meg.  
 Mary arrived.3SG PRT  
 ‘It is Mary who has arrived.’

*wh*-elements target the same position:

- (8) a. \***Ki** megérkezett?  
 who PRT-arrived.3SG  
 ‘Who has arrived?’
- b. **Ki** érkezett meg?  
 who arrived.3SG PRT  
 ‘Who has arrived?’

$[+wh]$  associated with the highest functional vP (call it FP)

structure:



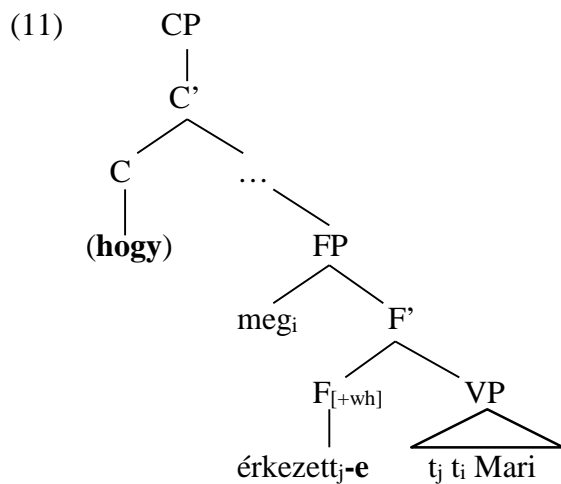
patterns with *-e*: either a focussed XP, or verum focus

- (10) a. Nem tudom, **(hogy)** megérkezett-**e** Mari.  
 not know-1SG **that** PRT-arrived.3SG-**Q** Mary  
 'I don't know if Mary has arrived.'
- b. Nem tudom, **(hogy)** Mari érkezett-**e** meg.  
 not know-1SG **that** Mary arrived.3SG-**Q** PRT  
 'I don't know if it is Mary who has arrived.'

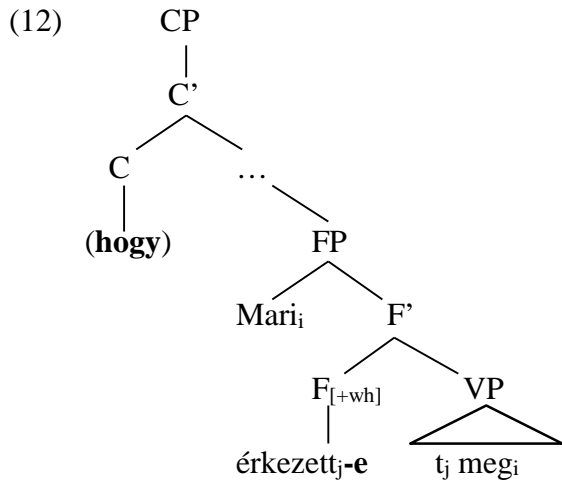
normally no movement of the verb to F (cf. É. Kiss 2008), see (9)

but: bound morpheme as a trigger (cf. elliptical comparatives, see Bacskai-Atkari 2014)

structure for (10a):



structure for (10b):



→ Modern Hungarian: marking of subordination: CP-periphery; [+wh]: vP-periphery

## 2. Diachronic changes in Hungarian embedded yes-no interrogatives

historical periods:

- Old Hungarian (ca. 896–1526)
- Middle Hungarian (ca. 1526–1772)
- Modern Hungarian (ca. 1772–)
- Old Hungarian: *ha* ‘if’

- (13) a. Kèrdlec teged az elø istènè hog mōgadiñg nèkõnc **ha** te  
 ask-1SG you.ACC the living God-SUB that tell-IMP.2SG-PRT we.DAT **if** you  
 vag x<sup>c</sup> istènn<sup>c</sup> fia  
 be.2SG Christ God-DAT son-POSS

‘I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.’ (Munich Codex 33va; from 1466)

- b. & a vacnac kezè foguan viue øtet az vçan  
 and the blind-DAT hand-POSS-ACC holding took-3SG he-ACC the street-SUP  
 kuuøl Es ø zemèibè hagapuan ø kezèit reia  
 outside and he eyes-POSS-ILL spitting he hands-POSS-ACC he-SUB  
 vètuen kèrde øtèt **ha** mit latna  
 putting asked-3SG he-ACC **if** what-ACC see-COND.3SG

‘And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.’ (Munich Codex 44ra; from 1466)

- Middle Hungarian: *ha* ‘if’ + *-e*

- (14) a. Kényszerítlek téged az élő Istenre, hogy mondd meg  
force-1SG you.ACC the living God-SUB that tell-IMP.2SG PRT  
nekünk, **ha** te vagy-e Krisztus, az Isten Fia?  
we.DAT **if** you are-Q Christ the God son-POSS

‘I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.’ (György Káldi’s translation: Mark 26,63; from 1611)

- b. És kezét fogván a vaknak, kivezeté őt a  
and hand-POSS-ACC holding the blind-DAT out-took-3SG he-ACC the  
faluból, és annak szemére pökvén, s kezeit  
village-ELA and that-DAT eyes-POSS-SUB spitting and hands-POSS-ACC  
rátévén kérde őt, **ha** lát-e valamit?  
he.SUB-putting asked-3SG he-ACC **if** see-COND.3SG-Q something-ACC

‘And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.’ (György Káldi’s translation: Mark 8,23; from 1611)

- Modern Hungarian: (*hogy* ‘that’) + *-e*

- (15) a. Megesketlek téged az élő Istenre: mondd meg nekünk,  
PRT-swear-CAUS.1SG you.ACC the living God-SUB tell-IMP.2SG PRT we-DAT  
te vagy-e a Krisztus, az Isten Fia?  
you are-Q the Christ the God son-POSS

‘I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.’ (Neovulgata: Mark 26,63; from 1997)

- b. Ő kézen fogta a vakot, kivezette a helységből, és a  
he hand-SUP held-3SG the blind-ACC out-led-3SG the village-ELA and the  
szemére köpve rátette a kezeit, aztán  
eye-POSS-SUB spitting he.SUB-put-PST-3SG the hands-POSS-ACC then  
megkérdezte tőle, **hogy** lát-e valamit.  
PRT-asked-3SG he.ABL that sees-Q something-ACC

‘And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.’ (Neovulgata: Mark 8,23; from 1997)

changes in embedded interrogatives:

- (16)  $ha_{[+wh]} \rightarrow ha_{[+wh]} + -e_{[+wh]} \rightarrow (hogy) + -e_{[+wh]}$

change from encoding [+wh] at the CP-periphery to encoding [+wh] at the vP-periphery

### 3. The Old Hungarian pattern

- main clause questions

*wh*-interrogatives: *wh*-element

- (17) Auag **mi** valtfagot ad ember o lèlkèiert  
or **what** exchange-ACC gives human (s)he soul-POSS-FIN

‘or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’ (Munich Codex, from 1466)

yes-no interrogatives: clause-initial Q-particle and clause-final *-e* (both optional)

- (18) *nēde tū incab nagobbac vattoc azocnal è*  
 Q you rather greater-PL are.3PL those-DAT Q  
 ‘Are ye not much better than they?’ (Munich Codex, from 1466)

- embedded questions

embedded *wh*-interrogatives: *wh*-element, optional *hogy* ‘that’

- (19) *kèrdezkeđuē / hog mi volna micor halottaibol felkèlend*  
 asking that what be-COND.3SG when dead-ELA up-rises  
 ‘questioning what the rising from the dead should mean’ (Munich Codex, from 1466)

embedded yes-no questions: *ha* ‘if’

- (20) *mōgadīng nèkõnc ha te vag x<sup>c</sup> istènn<sup>c</sup> fia*  
 tell-IMP.2SG-PRT we.DAT if you are Christ God-DAT son  
 ‘tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God’ (Munich Codex, from 1466)

→ double encoding of subordination and [+wh] already in Old Hungarian (embedded *wh*)

→ *-e* already present (main clauses – head of a head-final CP)

changes from Old Hungarian to Middle Hungarian:

- position of *-e*
- presence of *-e* in embedded clauses (but not in main clauses)

#### 4. Clause-typing and functional left peripheries

clause-typing and marking of subordination: traditionally associated with the CP-periphery (cf. Rizzi 1997)

- single encoding: one element marking clause type and subordination overtly

e.g. *ob* ‘if’ in German (also: English *if*)

- (21) *Ich weiß nicht, ob er kommt.*  
 I know.1SG not if he comes  
 ‘I don’t know if he is coming.’

- double encoding: different elements marking subordination and clause type

subordination marker typically a general subordinator, e.g. *that*

element overtly marking the type of the clause: may also be an operator (*wh*, relative)

e.g. embedded *wh*-interrogatives in certain German dialects (cf. Weiß 2013: 777–778)

(cf. also: Middle English)

- (22) *Ich weiß auch nicht, wer dass da gewesen ist.*  
 I know.1SG too not who that there been is  
 ‘I don’t know who was there either.’ (based on Weiß 2013: 778, ex. 15a)

Hungarian embedded interrogatives:

- double encoding in *wh*-interrogatives in all periods  
(optional C head *hogy* ‘that’ + *wh*-element)
- double encoding in yes-no interrogatives in Modern Hungarian  
(optional C head *hogy* ‘that’ + *-e*)
- single encoding in yes-no interrogatives in Old Hungarian  
(C head *ha* ‘if’ ~ German *ob*)

Middle Hungarian: intermediate stage in the transition from single to double encoding functional left peripheries in Hungarian embedded interrogatives:

- subordination: CP-periphery
- marking of [+wh]: vP-periphery – evolution of functional vP-periphery during Old/(Middle) Hungarian  
initially: [+wh] marked by *ha* ‘if’ at the CP-domain; clause-final *-e*: head of a head-final CP

*-e* as the head of a head-final CP

patterns with *-e* in Old Hungarian main clause questions (e.g. Vienna Codex, mid. 15th c.):

Surface pattern	Underlying structure	Number of occurrences in the Vienna Codex (mid-15th century)
xxx V xxx <i>-e</i>	unambiguous head-final C	7 (10.6%)
xxx V <i>-e</i> xxx	unambiguous (head-initial) v	32 (48.48%)
xxx V <i>-e</i>	ambiguous	18
xxx <i>-e</i>	ambiguous	9
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>66</b>

typological change in word order:

cf. É. Kiss (2013)

SOV	(Proto-Hungarian)
↓	
“Top Foc V X”	(Old Hungarian)

change can be observed in Old Hungarian too

- change from predominantly head-final to predominantly head-initial projections
- preference of finite over non-finite subordination – Bacskai-Atkari and Dékány (in press)
- evolution and reinforcement of functional left peripheries (CP, vP)

main triggers of the change:

- increased role of the general finite subordinator (*hogy* ‘that’)
    - cf. Bacskai-Atkari (2012, 2014, in press)
  - grammaticalisation of [+wh] at the vP-periphery (*wh*-questions → yes-no questions)
  - changes in the expression of focus:
    - SOV → “Top Foc V X”
    - preverbal focus ← sentential stress cf. Szendrői (2001)
    - but: highest [Spec,vP] position occupied also by other elements
      - e.g. negative, verbal particle, cf. É. Kiss (2008)
- *-e* is an interrogative marker functional head at the vP-periphery

## Conclusion

changes in embedded interrogatives in Hungarian

from Old Hungarian *ha* ‘if’ to Modern Hungarian (*hogy*) ‘that’ + *-e*

single encoding → double encoding

- clause-typing – grammaticalisation of [+wh] at the vP-periphery
- the evolution of functional left peripheries
- information structure – focus position at the vP-periphery reinforcing that periphery

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