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Diachronic Evidence and the Relation between Interrogative Markers and Focus

0. The problem

Interrogative marker: *-e*

Often claimed to be a Focus head (e.g. van Craenenbroeck & Lipták 2008)

But: independent from the notion of focus

- optional in main clause yes-no questions

- occurs even if there is no focus

Position: clause-internal; on the vP-periphery, usually attached to the verb

- Diachronically: *-e* appeared in a clause-final position

- Non-standard dialects, or ellipsis: *-e* does not always attach to the verb

Proposal: *-e* is a [+wh] marker head at the functional vP-periphery; foci located at the vP-periphery for different reasons

1. The Modern Hungarian pattern

Embedded interrogatives: no distinctive intonation (↔ main clause interrogatives)

Subordinator: optional C head *hogy* 'that'

● yes-no interrogatives: *-e* obligatory

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

● *wh*-interrogatives: overt *wh*-element

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

Main clause questions: distinctive intonation

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

● yes-no interrogatives: *-e* is optional

2. The Old and Middle Hungarian patterns

Historical periods:

  ● Old Hungarian (ca. 896–1526)

  ● Middle Hungarian (ca. 1526–1772)

  ● Modern Hungarian (ca. 1772–)

● Old Hungarian embedded yes-no interrogatives: complementiser *ha* 'if':

(3) mōgadm̄g   nèkǫnc **ha** te vag xᶜ   istènnᶜ   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)

● Middle Hungarian embedded yes-no interrogatives: complementiser *ha* 'if' + *-e*:

(4) mondd   meg nekünk, **ha** te vagy-**e** Krisztus, az Isten Fia
     tell-IMP.2SG PRT we.DAT **if** you are-**Q** Christ   the God   son
     'tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God' (Káldi's translation, from 1626)

● Old (and Middle) Hungarian embedded *wh*-interrogatives: optional complementiser *hogy*
     'that' + *wh*-element:

(5) kèrdeʒkeduē / **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)

3. More on the evolution of the interrogative marker

Interrogative marker *-e*: appeared in Old Hungarian main clause yes-no interrogatives
     (optionally):

(6) nēde tù   incab nagobbac vattoc aʒocnal **ė**
     Q   you rather greater-PL are.3PL those-DAT **Q**
     'Are ye not much better than they?' (Munich Codex, from 1466)

Position: clause-finally, later clause-internally

Optional clause-initial particle (e.g. *nemde* 'isn't it', *minemde* 'isn't it')

Optionality of -*e*: distinctive intonation marks [+wh]

- if -*e* were a Focus head, then it should be obligatory in main clause interrogatives (exhaustivity)

- optional in Old/Middle Hungarian and in Modern Hungarian (cf. É. Kiss 2002) too

- clause-final position not linked to any designated focus position

4. More on clause-typing and functional left peripheries

Clause-typing: traditionally associated with the CP-periphery (cf. Rizzi 1997)

Marking of subordination: in embedded clauses – also associated with the CP-periphery (cf. Rizzi 1997)

● Single encoding: one element responsible for the overt marking the type of the clause and subordination

  e.g. *ob* 'if' in German

(7)   Ich   weiß   nicht, **ob** er   kommt.
    I   know.1SG not   **if**   he   comes
    'I don't know if he is coming.'

● Double encoding: the element responsible for overtly marking subordination is different from the element overtly marking the type of the clause

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

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

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

(8) 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)

Wh-movement: targets the CP in English, German ↔ Hungarian: it targets the vP-domain

→ general subordinator + a *wh*-element: no Doubly Filled COMP Filter violation in
    Hungarian

            ↔ certain German dialects, Middle English

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 encoding 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

5. Ellipsis, non-standard varieties and the interrogative marker

Position of *-e*: a functional v head – but also a clitic, usually attached to the verb

Elliptical constructions: verb absent → *-e* attaches to a preceding element

(9) Valaki   element,   de   nem tudom,   hogy Mari**-e**   ~~ment   el~~.
     someone off-went.3SG but   not   know-1SG that   Mary**-Q**   went   off
     'Someone left but I don't know whether it was Mary.'

Certain nonstandard dialects: no movement of the verb to the leftmost functional v head if there is a negative element or a particle in the specifier of that vP

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

Standard Hungarian: *-e* as a bound morpheme attracts the verb (except in ellipsis patterns)

6. Conclusions

Co-occurrence of *-e* and focus: result of more general diachronic processes

Diachronic evidence: the presence/absence of *-e* is indeed in correlation with certain typological settings – the changes thereof predict the changes in the status of *-e*

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

→ evolution and reinforcement of functional left peripheries (CP, vP)

● increased role of the general finite subordinator (*hogy* 'that')
  cf. Bacskai-Atkari (2012, 2013)

● grammaticalisation of [+wh] at the vP-periphery

Changes in the expression of focus:

  SOV → "Top Foc V X"

● preverbal focus ← sentential stress

  cf. Szendrői (2001)

● highest [Spec,vP] position occupied also by other elements – negative, verbal particle

  cf. É. Kiss (2008)

Verb movement to highest v head: only with *-e*

● default: verb stays in the VP (cf. É. Kiss 2008)

● *-e* as a bound morpheme is a trigger

  ↔ no such trigger in comparative subclauses

  → degrading (Bacskai-Atkari 2013)

● in non-standard dialects: *-e* does not trigger verb movement if the [Spec,vP] is filled by a verbal particle or a negative

↔ truly predicative XPs

● verb movement not necessary for *-e* – can attach to preceding constituent as a clitic

→ development of *-e* independent from focus

→ *-e* is an interrogative marker functional head

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