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

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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) mōgadmīg nèkōnc ha te vag x³ istènn³ fia
tell-IMP-PRT we.DAT if you are Christ God-DAT son-POSS
‘tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God’
-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
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?’
Clause-typing and interrogatives in Modern Hungarian

- 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.’
Operator movement in Hungarian


↔ 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.’
Focus in Hungarian

wh-elements target the same position:

(8) a. *Ki megérkezett?
    who PRT-arried.3SG
    ‘Who has arrived?’

    b. Ki érkezett meg?
    who arrived.3SG PRT
    ‘Who has arrived?’
Structure of embedded *wh*-questions

(9)

```
CP
  
  C'
  
  C
( hogy)

  ...  

  FP
  
  ki_i

  F'
  
  F [+wh]
  
  Ø
  
  VP
  
  érkezett meg t_i
```
Patterns with -e

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

    not know-1sg that PRT-arrived.3sg-Q Mary
    ‘I don’t know if Mary has arrived.’

    not know-1sg that Mary arrived.3sg-Q PRT
    ‘I don’t know if it is Mary who has arrived.’
Structure for embedded yes-no questions (verum focus)

(11)

```
(11)     CP
          C'
            C
(hogy)

          ...         FP
            meg
            F'
            F[+wh]
            érkezett
            t_j t_i Mari
```
Structure for embedded yes-no questions (with focus)

(12)

CP
  └── C'
    └── C
      └── (hogy)

FP
  └── F'
    └── VP
        └── tj meg ti

Mari
  └── F[+wh]
      └── érkezettj-e
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. mōgadmīg nèkoṇc ha te vag xᶜ
tell-IMP.2SG-PRT we.DAT if you be.2SG Christ
istènnᶜ fia
God-DAT son-POSS
‘tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God’
(Munich Codex 33va; from 1466)

b. kèrde ọtèt ha mit latna
asked-3SG he-ACC if what-ACC see-COND.3SG
‘he asked him if he saw ought’
(Munich Codex 44ra; from 1466)
ha ‘if’ + -e

(14) a. mondd meg nekünk, ha te vagy-e Krisztus, tell-IMP.2SG PRT we.DAT if you are-Q Christ az Isten Fia?
the God son-POSS
‘tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God’
(György Káldi’s translation: Mark 26,63; from 1611)

b. kérdé őt, ha lát-e valamit?
asked-3SG he-ACC if see-COND.3SG-Q something-ACC
‘he asked him if he saw ought’
(György Káldi’s translation: Mark 8,23; from 1611)
Modern Hungarian

Modern Hungarian: \( \text{hogy ‘that’) + -e} \)

(15) a. mondd meg nekünk, te vagy-e a Krisztus, az Isten Fia?
   ‘tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God’
   (Neovulgata: Mark 26,63; from 1997)

   b. megkérdezte tőle, \text{hogy lát-e valamit.}\n   ‘he asked him if he saw ought’
   (Neovulgata: Mark 8,23; from 1997)
Changes in embedded interrogatives

(16) $\text{ha}_{[+\text{wh}]} \rightarrow \text{ha}_{[+\text{wh}]} + -\text{e}_{[+\text{wh}]} \rightarrow (\text{hogy}) + -\text{e}_{[+\text{wh}]}$

change from encoding $[+\text{wh}]$ at the CP-periphery to encoding $[+\text{wh}]$ at the vP-periphery
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-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 tu’ incab nagobbac vattoc aʒocnal ę Q you rather greater-PL are.3PL those-DAT Q

  ‘Are ye not much better than they?’

  (Munich Codex, from 1466)
The Old Hungarian pattern: embedded questions

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

(19) kérde3keduē / **hogy mi** volna micor halottaibol
    asking **that what** be-COND when dead-ELA
    felkèlend
    up-rises

‘questioning what the rising from the dead should mean’
(Munich Codex, from 1466)

- embedded yes-no questions: *ha* ‘if’

(20) mõgadômã gèkoñc **ha** te vag x̌e ìstènňe fia
tell-IMP-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)
Clause-typing and functional left peripheries

- 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)

(22) *Ich weiß auch nicht, wer dass da gewesen ist.*
*I know too not who that there been is*

‘I don’t know who was there either.’ (cf. Weiß 2013)
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

Old Hungarian main clause questions (e.g. Vienna Codex, mid. 15th c.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface pattern</th>
<th>Underlying structure</th>
<th>Number of occurrences in the Vienna Codex (mid-15th century)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>xxx V xxx -e</td>
<td>unambiguous head-final C</td>
<td>7 (10.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxx V -e xxx</td>
<td>unambiguous (head-initial) v</td>
<td>32 (48.48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxx V -e</td>
<td>ambiguous</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxx -e</td>
<td>ambiguous</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Typological change in word order

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


- 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
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
Thank you! 
Danke!
😊
References

References

References