

Theses of doctoral (PhD) dissertation

DIÁNA VARGA

**THE STRUCTURE OF HUNGARIAN
IMPERATIVE SENTENCES**

Pázmány Péter Catholic University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Graduate School of Linguistics

Lead by: **Prof. Katalin É. Kiss**

university professor, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Theoretical Linguistics Studies

Supervisor: Prof. Balázs Surányi

university professor

Piliscsaba

2014

1. AIMS

In this dissertation, entitled *The Structure of Hungarian Imperative Sentences*, I analyze the structure of Hungarian imperative sentences in the generative syntactic framework. This dissertation fills a gap in the generative analyses of Hungarian sentence structure, since so far imperative clauses have only received attention in descriptive and functional grammars.

I claim that imperatives are those sentences that contain verbs with the affix *-j*, the word order is inverted, that is, verb–verb modifier (*Menj el!* ‘Go away!’), and the complementizer *hogy* ‘that’ can be left out when they are embedded (*Azt parancsolom, (hogy) menj el.* ‘I order you to go away.’). Apropos of imperatives, I talk about subjunctives as well. I claim that subjunctives are those sentences that contain verbs with affix the *-j* (similarly to imperatives), but the word order is nuclear, that is, verb modifier–verb, and the complementizer *hogy* ‘that’ cannot be left out when they are embedded (*Azt akarom, *(hogy) elmenj.* ‘I want you to go away.’).

The following phenomena are examined:

A: While imperatives and subjunctives are different in syntax the first question is whether imperative mood and subjunctive mood exist in morphology as well. Verbs with the imperative affix (*-j*) cannot only appear in imperative sentences.

- (1) *Menj el!*
go.IMP.2SG away
‘Go away!’

- (2) *Nem kell, hogy elmenj.*
 not necessary that away.go.IMP.2SG
 ‘It is not necessary that you go away.’
- (3) *Lehetetlen, hogy elmenj.*
 impossible that away.go.IMP.2SG
 ‘It is impossible that you go away.’

Only the first example is imperative. Examples (2) and (3) are subjunctives according to Pataki (1984), É. Kiss (2003) and Tóth (2003, 2005). That is, we can claim that the affix *-j* can appear on the verb of imperatives and of subjunctives as well. Therefore, the question is whether this *-j* is the marker of imperatives or subjunctives.

B: We can read in grammars of Hungarian (e.g. Pataki 1984, É. Kiss 2003) that the fundamental word order of imperatives is inverted, that is verb–verb modifier (1). I propose an analysis that can explain this typical word order.

C: I examine the structure of negative imperatives. In imperative sentences we find a special form of the negative particle which is *ne* ‘not’ as opposed to the form *nem* that is used otherwise.

- (4) *Nem mész haza.*
 not go.IND.2SG home
 ‘You are not going home.’

- (5) a. *Ne menj haza!*
 not go.IMP.2SG home
 ‘Don’t go home!’
 b. **Nem menj haza!*

The question is whether negative imperatives have a structure that is different from that of negative indicatives.

D: In chapters 2 and 4 which are about embedded imperatives and embedded subjunctives, I describe three differences between these two embedded sentence types.

1. In imperatives, the word order is inverted: the verb modifiers follows the verb (6a,b), however in subjunctives there is nuclear word order (7a,b).

- (6) a. *Felszólítalak, hogy menj el.*
 order.IND.1SG that go.IMP.2SG. away
 ‘I order you to go away.’
 b. **Felszólítalak, hogy elmenj.*
- (7) a. *Nem kell, hogy elmenj.*
 not necessary that away.go.IMP.2SG
 ‘It is not necessary to go away.’
 b. **Nem kell, hogy menj el.*

2. We can omit the complementizer *hogy* ‘that’ in embedded imperatives (8a,b), but not in embedded subjunctives (9a,b).

- (8) a. *Felszólítalak, hogy menj el.*
 order.IND.1SG that go.IMP.2SG. away
 ‘I order you to go away.’
 b. *Felszólítalak, menj el.*
- (9) a. *Nem kell, hogy elmenj.*
 not necessary that away.go.IMP.2SG
 ‘It is not necessary to go away.’
 b. **Nem kell, elmenj.*

3. We can use infinitival constructions instead of subjunctives (10a,b), but not instead of imperatives (11a,b).

- (10) a. *Töhötöm képtelen rá, hogy megtanuljon*
 Töhötöm incapable VPFX that learn.IMP.2SG
norvégul.
 Norwegian
 ‘Töhötöm is incapable to learn Norwegian.’
 b. *Töhötöm képtelen norvégul megtanulni.*
 Töhötöm incapable Norwegian learn.INF
 ‘Töhötöm is incapable to learn Norwegian.’
 (Pomozi 1991: (6), (6a))
- (11) a. *Kérem, hívjon meg egy sörre!*
 ask.IND.1SG invite.IMP.3SG VPFX one beer
 ‘I ask you to invite me for a beer.’
 b. **Egy sör meghívására kérem.*
 (Pomozi 1991: (13), (13a))

I propose an analysis for embedded imperatives and for embedded subjunctives which explains these three properties.

E: It seems that Hungarian imperatives appear with two word orders:

- (12) *Hazagyere* *nekem!*
home.come.IMP.2SG for me
'Come to home!'
- (13) *Gyere* *haza* *nekem!*
come.IMP.2SG home for me
'Come to home!'

Hungarian grammars (e.g. Pataki 1984, É. Kiss 2003) often claim that the fundamental word order of imperatives is inverted, verb–verb modifier, therefore we have to explain why we can find imperatives with two different orders. Furthermore, we may ask whether both orders are indeed imperatives.

These five phenomena are discussed in detail in my dissertation.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

In my dissertation, two main methods were applied to collect data. On the one hand I used data from the Hungarian Historical Corpus. I applied this method to determine the role of discourse particles (*aztán* 'lit. after that', *ám* 'orig. that there', *nekem* 'lit. for me') in matrix subjunctives. On the other hand, I did a questionnaire survey including 35 male and female participants who were 20–35 years old

and they were university students or graduates. I used the Praat MFC software for randomizing situations. The test contains 32 dialogues: 16 experimental items and 16 fillers. The participants had to judge the last sentences of the dialogues on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 meant that the sentence was unacceptable and 5 meant that the sentence sounded natural. I applied this method to determine discourse conditions on the use of matrix imperatives and matrix subjunctives.

3. THE STRUCTURE AND THE MAIN THESES OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 1 introduces the phenomena under investigation, illustrates the problems to be solved, introduces the theoretical framework and outlines the structure of the thesis. Chapter 2 contains a critical review of the literature on Hungarian imperatives. These previous descriptions and analyses are divided into 3 groups on the basis of the way they identify the moods of the verb. In the first group (e.g. Tompa 1962, Kugler 2000) there are the following three moods: indicative, conditional and imperative. The second group (e.g. Pataki 1984, É. Kiss 2003, Tóth 2003, 2005) distinguishes four moods: indicative, conditional, subjunctive and imperative. The authors of this second group claim that imperative and subjunctive mood exist at the level of morphology. However in this case the morphological form of the verb (-j) in the subjunctive and in the imperative paradigm would be the same and this would not be economical.

In most languages the imperative paradigm exists only in second person or sometimes in third person, that is, the paradigm of imperatives is defective in various languages. However, Hungarian exhibits a full paradigm. I assume – agreeing with the third group of grammars of Hungarian (Farkas 1992, Hegedűs 2004) – that the reason for this is that at the level of morphology only the subjunctive paradigm exists; imperative is not a different paradigm morphologically.

Chapter 3 contains an analysis of the structure of Hungarian matrix imperative sentences. I discuss whether the structural proposals of current cross-linguistic studies can be adapted to the Hungarian imperative structure. The structure of imperatives depends on the existence of true negative imperatives. For example Rivero (1994) and Rivero and Terzi (1995) propose that the imperative feature is in the CP projection in those languages that do not contain true negative imperatives. Meanwhile, if there exist true negative imperatives in certain languages, the imperative feature is in the IP projection in that language.

$$(14) \quad [_{CP} C^0 [_{NegP} Neg^0 [_{IP} I^0 [_{VP} V^0]]]]$$

(Rivero, 1994: (20), Rivero és Terzi 1995: 306)

However, Zanuttini (1991, 1994, 1997) and Han (1998, 2001) argue that the imperative feature is in the CP projection in every language. Zanuttini claims that the defective structure of imperatives triggers the lack of true negative imperatives in certain languages. Han argues that true negative imperatives do not exist in those languages

where the negative particle has scope over the imperative operator. I argue in section 3.1 that these theories do not account for every phenomenon of certain languages. In section 3.2, I introduce an analysis of Hungarian matrix imperatives. I consider the proposal by Zanuttini (1991, 1994, 1997) and Platzack and Rosengren (1998) and I argue, similarly to Potsdam (1998), that Hungarian imperatives do not have a defective structure. On the basis of Zanuttini (1991, 1994, 1997) and Han (1998, 2001), I propose that the directive illocutionary operator¹ is at the top of the structure in the CP/ForceP² projection. I confute Platzack and Rosengren's (1998) theory claiming that the FinP projection is missing from the structure. I argue that Hungarian imperatives contain a FinP projection, and the verb moves into this projection to trigger the verb–verb modifier word order.

¹ Han (1998) claims that this directive illocutionary force operator takes an irrealis proposition as an argument. She defines directive force as a function that takes a certain type of proposition and turns it into a directive action, which she defines as an instruction to the hearer to update his or her plan set. A plan set is a set of propositions that specify the hearer's intentions, and it represents the state of affairs that the hearer intends to bring about.

² I follow Rizzi's (1997) split CP theory, that is, I decompose the CP-layer into ForceP and FinP. Topic, focus, negation of focus and negation are between ForceP and FinP:

[ForceP Force [TopP* Top [NegP Neg [FocP Foc [NegP Neg [FinP Fin...]]]]]]

- (15) a. *Menj haz!*
 go.IMP.2G home
 ‘Go home!’

- b. [_{ForceP} Op [_{Force} Force⁰ [_{FinP} [_{Fin} menj_i [_{PredP} haza [_{Pred} t_i [_{TP} [_T t_i [_{MoodP} [_{Mood} t_i [_{VP}...]]]]]]]]]]]]].

I argue that Hungarian negative imperatives have the same structure as negative indicatives, and the negative particle *nem* is replaced by *ne* in an irrealis environment. The verb of imperatives does not move to the ForceP projection in affirmatives and in negative imperatives, therefore the following expressions can appear above the verb: focus (*Csak János menjen haz!* ‘Only John go home!’), focus and negation (*Csak János ne menjen haz!* ‘Only John should not go home!’), negation of focus and focus (*Ne csak János menjen haz!* ‘Not only John should go home!’), or all three of them (*Ne csak János ne menjen haz!* ‘Not only John should not go home!’), topic (*Valaki menjen haz!* ‘Somebody go home!’), and quantifiers (*Mindenki menjen haz!* ‘Everybody go home!’). Therefore, the directive illocutionary operator in ForceP will never be in the scope of negation, and there are true negative imperatives in Hungarian.

- (16) a. *Ne menj haz!*
 not go home
 ‘Don’t go home!’

- b. [_{ForceP} Op [_{Force} Force⁰ [_{NegP} ne [_{Neg} Neg⁰ [_{NNP} [_{NN} menj_i [_{FinP} [_{Fin} t_i [_{PredP} haza [_{Pred} t_i [...]]]]]]]]]]]]].

Chapter 4 introduces a recurrent claim in the literature, namely, that imperative mood universally cannot occur in dependent clauses (e.g. Sadock and Zwicky 1985, Palmer 1986, Platzack and Rosengren 1998, Han 1998). Another line of analyses argues however, that embedded imperative sentences exist in some languages. For example Rus (2005) proposes this about Slovenian on the basis of Sheppard and Golden (2002), Rögnvaldsson (1998) claims this about Old Scandinavian, Portner (2007) makes the same claim about Korean, and Crnič and Trinh (2009) about English. I claim in section 4.3 that embedded imperatives exist in Hungarian as well. The following properties support this claim (all distinguishing them from embedded subjunctives): (i) word order peculiarities, (ii) the possibility of leaving out the complementizer, (iii) using the infinitival construction. In Chapter 4, I introduce that embedded imperatives exist in Udmurt, another Finno-Ugric language, as well. I propose an analysis of embedded imperatives and embedded subjunctives in section 4.4 which can explain the word order peculiarities of both sentence types. The existence of a directive illocutionary operator triggers the word order differences. I hypothesize that the directive illocutionary operator selects a FinP with strong tense and mood features which trigger verb movement in imperatives (18a,b). This operator does not appear in subjunctives, therefore in this sentence type, the verb does not move, the word order is nuclear (17a,b). I propose that in these two embedded sentence types there are two different *hogy* ‘that’ complementizers. One of them appears only in subjunctives, and it has a [conj]

feature.³ The other one can appear in all sentence types. In embedded subjunctives, the complementizer bears the [conj] feature, which is selected by the matrix predicate. Therefore, the selecting verb determines the type of embedded sentence via the complementizer so the complementizer cannot be omitted. However, in embedded imperatives the main verb selects a ForceP with an [imp] feature. In this case it is not the complementizer that bears the [imp] feature, but the directive illocutionary operator in ForceP (18a,b).

- (17) a. *Megengedem, hogy hazamenj.*
 allow.IND.1SG that home.go.SUBJ.2SG
 ‘I allow that you go home.’
 b. [_{PredP} meg [_{Pred'} engedem [... [_{ForceP} [_{Force'} hogy [conj]
 [_{PredP} haza [_{Pred'} menj [...]]]]]]]]]
- (18) a. *Megparancsolom, (hogy) menj haza.*
 order.IND.1SG that go.SUBJ.2SG home
 ‘I order you to go home.’
 b. [_{PredP} meg [_{Pred'} parancsolom [... [_{ForceP} OP [_{Force'} Force⁰
 [_{SubP} [_{Sub'} hogy [_{FinP} [_{Fin'} menj]_i [_{PredP} haza
 [_{Pred'} t_i [...]]]]]]]]]]].

³ There exists a special complementizer in embedded subjunctive in certain languages, therefore it is possible that there is a special complementizer with a [conj] feature in Hungarian embedded subjunctives. For example in Russian subjunctives there is *чтобы* ‘that’ but in indicative sentences we find *что* ‘that’ as the complementizer. Furthermore, Polish subjunctives contain *żebyś* but indicatives contain the complementizer *że*.

(i) Ты хочешь, чтобы я прочитал эту книгу? Russian
 you want that I read this book
 ‘Do you want me to read this book?’

In Chapter 5 I am concerned with a sentences type that has imperative force but has a special word order. This construction has not been examined in the synchronic generative literature yet. I provide an analysis for (*Aztán haza (ne) gyere (nekem)!* ‘(Do not) come home!’ sentences and I determine the discourse conditions of their use. I introduce two analyses in section 5.1 and 5.2. One of them is that this sentences type is an imperative sentence with special word order. The other possible analysis is that this sentence type is a matrix subjunctive clause. I argue that the second analysis is the right one for these sentences. On the basis of Han (2001), I assume that there is a subjunctive operator in these sentences, which triggers subjunctive mood on the verb. Han (2001) claims that the subjunctive operator does not encode illocutionary force but the modality of irrealis. She states that the subjunctive operator can express illocutionary force via pragmatic inference since the directive force is compatible with an irrealis interpretation. I suggest the following structure for matrix subjunctives:

- (19) a. *Hazagyere!*
 home.come.SUBJ.2SG
 ‘Come home!’
 b. [_{CP} [_C Subj-Op] [_{PredP} haza [_{Pred'} gyere [...]]]]!

In section 5.3 I analyze the structure of negative sentences like (*Aztán haza ne gyere (nekem)!* ‘Do not come home!’ I propose that the negative particle is in the Neg head and the verb modifier moves

into the specifier of NegP, which results in the word order ‘verb modifier–negative particle–verb’.

- (20) a. *Haza ne gyere!*
home not come.SUBJ.2SG
‘Don’t come home!’
- b. [CP [C Subj-Op] [NegP *haza*_i [Neg’ *ne* [NNP [NN’ *gyere*_j [PredP t_i [Pred’ t_j [...]]]]]]]]]]!]

Sections 5.4 and 5.5 deal with the discourse conditions on the use of matrix subjunctives. Matrix subjunctives can be used if the proposition or the fact that the action is carried out is given in the discourse. I present a questionnaire survey on these data, the results of which confirm the hypothesis that matrix subjunctives are more acceptable if the sentence contains at least one of the three examined discourse particles (*aztán* ‘lit. after that’, *ám* ‘orig. that there’, *nekem* ‘lit. for me’) because these particles signal a kind of givenness in the discourse.

REFERENCES

- Crnič, Luka – Trinh, Tue. 2009. Embedding Imperatives. In: Suzi Lima – Kevin Mullin – Brian Smith (szerk.), *Proceedings of NELS 39*. Amherst: GLSA.
- Dömötör Éva – Varga Diána. 2013. Főmondati kötőmód diskurzuspartikulákkal. In: Gécseg Zsuzsanna (szerk.), *LingDok13. Nyelvész Doktoranduszok Dolgozatai*. Szeged: SZTE. – megjelenés alatt
- É. Kiss Katalin – Kiefer Ferenc – Siptár Péter. 2003. *Új magyar nyelvtan*. Budapest: Osiris Kiadó.
- Farkas, Donka. 1992. Mood Choice in Complement Clauses. In: Kenesei István – Pléh Csaba (szerk.), *Approaches To Hungarian 4*: 207–24. Szeged: JATE.
- Han, Chung-hye. 1998. *The structure and interpretation of imperatives: mood and force in Universal Grammar*. University of Pennsylvania, PhD disszertáció.
- Han, Chung-hye. 2001. Force, Negation and Imperatives. *The Linguistic Review* 12: 4: 289-325.
- Hegedűs Rita. 2004. *Magyar nyelvtan – Formák, funkciók, összefüggések*. Budapest: Tinta Könyvkiadó.
- Kugler Nóra. 2000. Az igeragozás. In: Keszler Borbála (szerk.), *Magyar grammatika*, 104–126. Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó.
- Palmer, Frank Robert. 1986. *Mood and Modality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Pataki Pál. 1984. A francia subjontif és a magyar kötőmód. *Általános Nyelvészeti Tanulmányok XV*: 207–218.
- Platzack, Christer – Rosengren, Inger. 1998. On the subject of imperatives: A Minimalist account of the imperative clause. *Journal of Comparative Germanic Linguistics* 3: 177-224.
- Pomozi Péter. 1991. Néhány gondolat a magyar “konjunktívusz”-ról. *Dolgozatok a magyar mint idegen nyelv és a hungarológia köréből* 26: 1-13.
- Portner, Paul. 2007. Imperatives and modals. *Natural Language Semantics* 15: 351-383.
- Potsdam, Eric. 1998. *Syntactic Issues in the English Imperative*. New York: Garland.
- Rivero, Maria-Luisa. 1994. Negation, imperatives and Wackernagel effects. *Rivista di Linguistica* 6: 91–118.
- Rivero, Maria-Luisa – Terzi, Arhonto. 1995. Imperatives, V-movement and logical mood. *Journal of Linguistics* 31: 301–332.
- Rizzi, Luigi. 1997. The Fine Structure of the Left Periphery. In: Liliane Haegeman (szerk.), *Elements of Grammar*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Rögnvaldsson, Eiríkur. 1998. *The syntax of the imperative in Old Scandinavian*. Kézirat, University of Iceland.
<https://notendur.hi.is/eirikur/imp.pdf>
- Rus, Dominik. 2005. Slovenian embedded imperatives. In: Corinne Brandstetter – Dominik Rus (szerk.), *Working Papers in Linguistics*, 153-183. Georgetown: Georgetown University.

- Sadock, Jerrold M. – Zwicky, Arnold M. 1985. Speech act distinctions in syntax. In: Timothy Shopen (szerk.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sheppard, Milena Milojević – Golden, Marija. 2002. (Negative) Imperatives in Slovene. In: Sjef Barbiers – Frits Beukema – Wim van der Wurff (szerk.), *Modality and its Interaction with the Verbal System*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Tompa József. 1962. *A mai magyar nyelv rendszere*. I-II. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Tóth Enikő. 2003. A magyar kötőmódról. In: Hoffmann István — Kis Tamás (szerk.), *Magyar nyelvjárások 41.*, 617-26. Debreceni Egyetem.
- Tóth Enikő. 2005. Az alárendelt mellékmondatbeli kötő-, ill. felszólító módról. In: Sinkovics Balázs (szerk.), *LingDok4*. 175-93. Szeged: SZTE.
- Zanuttini, Raffaella. 1991. *Syntactic Properties of Sentential Negation: A Comparative Study of Romance Languages*. University of Pennsylvania, PhD disszertáció.
- Zanuttini, Raffaella. 1994. Speculations on negative imperatives. *Rivista di Linguistica* 6: 67–89.
- Zanuttini, Raffaella. 1997. *Negation and Clausal Structure: a Comparative Study of Romance Languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

4. PUBLICATIONS ON THE RESEARCH TOPIC

List of publications

2011 A felszólító mondatok szerkezete [The structure of imperative sentences]

Magyar Nyelv 107/1: 60-72.

2011 A mód, a modalitás és az imperatív operátor viszonya a magyar felszólító mondatokban [The relation between mood, modality, and the imperative operator in imperative sentences]

In: Parapatics Andrea (ed.), *Félúton 7. Konferencia Kötet*. Budapest: ELTE-BTK.

2012 A magyar felszólító mondatok szerkezete [The structure of Hungarian imperative sentences]

In: Gécseg Zsuzsanna (ed.), *LingDok11*. 253-271. Szeged: SZTE.

In press:

Főmondati kötőmód diskurzuspartikulákkal [Matrix subjunctives with discourse particles]

(co-author: Dömötör Éva)

In: Gécseg Zsuzsanna (ed.), *LingDok13*. Szeged: SZTE.

Conference talks

- 2009 *A felszólító mód helye a magyar mondat szerkezetben* [The place of imperative mood in the Hungarian sentence structure]
XXIX. Országos Tudományos Diákköri Konferencia (OTDK) – 3rd place winner
Szeged, 16-18 April, 2009.
- 2010 *A magyar felszólító mondatok szerkezete* [The structure of Hungarian imperative sentences]
Nyelvészdoktoranduszok 14. Országos Konferenciája (LingDok 14.)
Szeged, 30 November-1 December, 2010.
- 2011 *A felszólító mondatok szerkezete* [The structure of imperative sentences]
Piliscsabai Nyelvész kör (PiNyek)
Piliscsaba, 9 April, 2011.
- 2011 *A mód, a modalitás és az imperatív operátor viszonya a magyar felszólító mondatokban* [The relation between mood, modality, and the imperative operator in imperative sentences]
7. Félúton Konferencia
Budapest, 6-7 October, 2011.

- 2012 *Dependent imperatives exist: Evidence from Finno-Ugric*
(co-author: Tánczos Orsolya)
The 14th Annual Conference of the English Department
(ACED 14.)
Bucharest, 30 May-2 June, 2012.
- 2012 *Főmondati kötőmód diskurzuspartikulákkal* [Matrix
subjunctives with discourse particles]
(co-author: Dömötör Éva)
Nyelvészdoktoranduszok 16. Országos Konferenciája
(LingDok 16.)
Szeged, 29-30 November, 2012.
- 2013 *Főmondati kötőmód a magyarban* [Matrix subjunctives in
Hungarian]
Nyelvészdoktoranduszok 17. Országos Konferenciája
(LingDok 17.)
Szeged, 28-29 November, 2013.

Accepted abstracts

- 2012 *Subjunctive in Hungarian main clauses: word order and
interpretation*
14th Seoul International Conference on Generative Grammar
(SICOOG 14)
Seoul, South Korea, 6-9 August, 2012.