

# Independence with or without ellipsis? About the evolution of *hogy* 'that' in subordinate clauses in Hungarian

Dér, Csilla Ilona (Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary)

Keywords: insubordination, stand-alone independent clauses, ellipsis, cooptation

Insubordination is „the independent use of constructions exhibiting *prima facie* characteristics of subordinate clauses” (Evans – Watanabe 2016: 2). Insubordinate clauses can serve different pragmatic functions: express interpersonal relations, manipulation of the hearer, and different attitudes of the speaker (inner, feelings, beliefs, desires), and also can signal the speaker’s commitment to a situation (Evans 2007: 387; Heine–Kaltenböck–Kuteva 2016: 50–51).

The emergence of such clauses is still largely based on hypotheses – they were created by ellipsis, extension, reanalysis, fusion, cooptation, etc. (Evans–Watanabe 2016, Mithun 2008, Cristofaro 2016, Heine–Kaltenböck–Kuteva 2016) –, detailed historical studies are lacking (cf. D’Hertefelt 2018).

This paper investigates the evolution of insubordinate clauses with the conjunction *hogy* 'that' in Hungarian on large diachronic and synchronic corpora (Magyar Nyelvtörténeti Szövegtár [Hungarian Historical Corpus], 1772–2010, 30 million word tokens; Magyar Nemzeti Szövegtár 2 [Hungarian Gigaword Corpus], v2.0.5, 1.04 billion word tokens, subcorpora by region: Hungary, Slovakia, Subcarpathia, Transylvania, Vojvodina –, and by register: spoken press language, written press language, fiction, academic, political, private). We focus on two functional types of these constructions (cf. Evans 2007):

1) wishes (there are only insubordinate curses in Hungarian, felicitations are missing):

**Hogy** *pusztulnál* /pusztulj el! 'I wish you died'

CONJ die.CON.2SG /die.IMP.2SG AFF

2) exclamations, evaluations:

**Hogy** *mennyire okos vagy!* 'How clever you are!'

CONJ how clever are.2SG.PRES

**Hogy** *ez milyen méltatlan!* 'How unworthy this is!'

CONJ this how unworthy

These sentences have clear pragmatic meanings compared to their variant without *hogy* (*Pusztulj el!*; *Mennyire okos vagy!*, etc.): they signify the speakers’ heightened emotions (rage, despair, joy), attract more attention and are more informal (Dér 2021).

Our main research question is to what extent the ellipsis hypothesis (Evans–Watanabe 2016: 3) can be maintained in the case of *hogy*-insubordinations. For the clauses mentioned above the following (or similar) main clauses can be hypothesized:

1) *I wish/want that you died.* (cf. Evans 2007: 388, 401)

2) *I am amazed how clever you are. It’s awful how unworthy this is!* (cf. *I’m amazed and shocked (That he should have left without asking me)* (Evans 2007: 403)

Our preliminary analyses (Dér 2019, 2020) on different *hogy*-insubordination types indicate that main clauses like in 1) and 2) did not exist in Hungarian, at least not with subordinate clauses that later became independent. However there were other types of main clauses and constructions that may have been the source of later independent clauses – we find them in exemplifications and in different kind of quotations. Finally we examine the main hypothesis in question: is ellipsis an appropriate explanation for the evolution of *hogy*-insubordinate clauses, or do we have a better one?

## References

- Cristofaro, Sonia 2016. Routes to insubordination: A cross-linguistic perspective. In: Evans, Nicholas – Watanabe, Honoré (eds): *Insubordination*. Amsterdam – Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 393 – 422.
- Dér, Csilla Ilona 2019. Szintaxisból a pragmatikába? *Hogy* kötőszós függetlenedett mellékmondatok kialakulása (inszubordináció) a magyarban [From syntax into pragmatics? Evolution of *hogy*-insubordinate clauses in Hungarian]. In: Forgács Tamás – Németh Miklós – Sinkovics Balázs (eds): *A nyelvtörténeti kutatások újabb eredményei X*. Szeged: SZTE BTK Magyar Nyelvészeti Tanszék, 47–62.
- Dér, Csilla Ilona 2020. Eltűnt főmondatok nyomában: a pozitív és negatív érzelmeket kifejező és erősítő *hogy* kötőszós inszubordinált mellékmondatok kialakulásáról a magyarban. [In the wake of missing main

clauses: About the evolution of insubordinate clauses with *hogy* expressing positive and negative emotions in Hungarian.] In: Balogné Bérces Katalin — Hegedűs Attila — Pintér Lilla (eds): *Nyelvelmélet és diakronia* 4. Budapest – Piliscsaba: PPKE BTK Elméleti Nyelvészet Tanszék – Magyar Nyelvészeti Tanszék. 31–45.

Dér, Csilla Ilona 2021. Types and pragmatic functions of *hogy* ‘that’ insubordinations in Hungarian. Presentation at the 17th International Pragmatics Conference, Winterthur, Zurich University of Applied Sciences, 28 June 2021.

D’Hertefelt, Sarah 2018. Insubordination in Germanic. A typology of complement and conditional constructions. Berlin – Boston: de Gruyter, Mouton.

Evans, Nicholas 2007. Insubordination and its uses. In: Nikolaeva, Irina ed.: *Finiteness. Theoretical and empirical foundations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 366–431.

Evans, Nicholas – Watanabe, Honoré 2016. The dynamics of insubordination: An overview. In: Evans, Nicholas – Watanabe, Honoré (eds): *Insubordination*. Amsterdam – Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 1–37.

Heine, Bernd – Kaltenböck, Günther – Kuteva, Tania 2016. On insubordination and cooptation. In: Evans, Nicholas – Watanabe, Honoré (eds): *Insubordination*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 39–64.

Magyar Történeti Szövegtár (MTSz, Hungarian Historical Corpus) (1772–2010)  
[http://clara.nytud.hu/mtsz/run.cgi/first\\_form](http://clara.nytud.hu/mtsz/run.cgi/first_form)

Mithun, Marianne 2008. The extension of dependency beyond the sentence. *Language* 84(1): 69–119.

Magyar Nemzeti Szövegtár 2 (MNSz2, The Hungarian Gigaword Corpus) (1991–2010)  
[http://clara.nytud.hu/mnsz2-dev/bonito/run.cgi/first\\_form](http://clara.nytud.hu/mnsz2-dev/bonito/run.cgi/first_form)