Chapter 10

Marking the type of speaker bias: Hungarian *nem-e* interrogatives

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This paper investigates the use conditions of a noncanonical polar interrogative form type in Hungarian, which contains the (surface) constituent *nem-e* (consisting of a negative and an interrogative particle), and compares them to those of the two canonical negative polar interrogatives. It is shown for the first time that *nem-e* in fact appears in three different construals, which are connected to at least two different dialects. Focusing on *nem-e* interrogatives used by speakers of the Standard Dialect, we point out that they lack non-epistemic speaker expectation bias, cannot be used to encode indirect reproaches, offers or requests, they do not realize initiating moves in discourse, they do not give rise to rhetorical question readings, and they cannot felicitously be responded to by isolated response particles. These properties are accounted for on the basis of the assumption that the focus-background structure of the form involves a focused proposition, which leads to certain restrictions regarding the structure of discourses it can appear in.

1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to review the use conditions, particularly the "bias profiles" of different form types of negative polar interrogatives in Hungarian in general, and then focus on a non-canonical form type that contains the (surface) constituent *nem-e*, consisting of the negative particle *nem* and the interrogative particle *-e*, illustrated in (1). (Until we present our account of the interpretation of interrogatives with *nem-e* in Section 5, they will be translated into English in terms of negative polar interrogatives with "high negation", as other negative

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interrogative forms in Hungarian normally are, cf. Gyuris 2017, a.o.. In Section 5 we will argue for a more appropriate translation.)

(1) A and B are wondering why their friends haven't arrived in time for a meeting.
A says: Nem-e történt valami az úton?
not-Q happened something the way.on
'Didn't something happen on the way?'[1]

We rely on a distinction made in the literature between two dimensions of bias in polar questions (cf. Sudo 2013). The first one, usually referred to as *evidential bias*, indicates sensitivity to evidence in the context for the positive or the negative answer (p vs. $\neg p$) (Cf. Ladd 1981, Büring & Gunlogson 2000, Roelofsen et al. 2013). The second one, which is going to be referred to here as *(speaker) expectation bias* (following Silk 2020), indicates sensitivity to the speaker's previous expectations regarding the answer. These expectations can stem from the speaker's beliefs, wishes or some set of rules, and are thus referred to in the literature as *epistemic*, *bouletic* or *deontic bias*, respectively.[2] (For relevant discussion, cf. Romero & Han 2004, Reese 2007, Reese & Asher 2009, Domaneschi et al. 2017, Silk 2020, a.o.)

Interrogatives containing the constituent *nem-e* complement the inventory of negative polar interrogative forms found in the Standard Dialect, to be introduced below. In traditional descriptive grammars and style guides they have been referred to as a "substandard" (cf. Szász 1905, Tompa 1961/1962, Grétsy & Kovalovszky 1980/1985), in modern descriptive grammars as a "non-standard" form type of negative interrogatives (cf. Kenesei et al. 1998: 2).[3] No semantic or pragmatic distinctions between interrogatives with *nem-e* and the other negative interrogative form types have been mentioned so far in the literature.

In this first systematic study of the interpretation of interrogatives with *nem-e*, we argue that they appear in at least two dialects in Hungarian, in different structural environments and with different use conditions. In the first dialect, they are used *in lieu* of a standard negative interrogative form.

[1] Q stands for 'interrogative particle'.

[2] Note that Sudo (2013) and Gärtner & Gyuris (2017, 2023) refer to all types of (speaker) expectation bias as *epistemic bias* for brevity.

[3] In spite of the stigmatization of the form by descriptive linguists and language educators, a sociolinguistic survey reported on by Kassai (1994) has found that 36,7% of 832 participants considered an interrogative with *nem-e* acceptable, and 45,9% of 812 participants did not correct the form in a text where they were asked to correct what they consider "mistakes" . These data indicate how widely the form is used and accepted among speakers.

In the second dialect, they appear in addition to the canonical negative polar interrogative forms, but are used for a special effect. In the latter dialect, *nem-e* turns out to be sensitive to the type of the (speaker) expectation bias (epistemic vs. deontic/bouletic). The central question to be addressed in this paper is how to account for the interpretational features of *nem-e* in the second dialect, with particular attention to its bias profile.

The paper is structured as follows. First, in Section 2, we review previous claims about the bias profiles of the (two) canonical positive and negative polar interrogative form types in Hungarian. Section 3 presents a set of examples with *nem-e*, and sorts them into two dialects. Section 4 focuses on *nem-e* interrogatives in one of these dialects, investigating the type of negation they encode, the type of the speaker expectation bias they introduce, and further conditions on the use of the form in context. Section 5 makes a proposal for an account of the interpretation of *nem-e* interrogatives in the latter dialect, which explains the properties discussed above. The paper ends with the conclusions in Section 6.

2 Polar interrogatives in Hungarian: Forms and biases

This section presents the interrogative forms that can appear in matrix clauses in Hungarian. (For more detailed overviews, cf. Gyuris 2017, 2018.)

(2) represents the form type referred to as *-e-interrogative*, marked by the *-e* interrogative particle, which cliticizes onto the finite verb. It is pronounced with an end-falling intonation contour. (3) is a so-called *rise-fall* (/\)*-interrogative*, which is marked by prosodic means, with a global rise-fall tune (L*HL%, cf. Ladd 1996), peaking on the penultimate syllable.[4]

(2) János ki-utazott-e Berlinbe?
János VM-travelled-Q Berlin.into
'Did János go to Berlin?'[5]

[4]For a detailed discussion of Hungarian intonation, including that of polar interrogatives, cf. Varga (2002).

[5]VM stands for 'verb modifier'. The category of verb modifiers includes verbal prefixes (e.g. *ki*), bare nominal complements, oblique complements expressing a goal, and non-agentive subjects, cf. É. Kiss (2002: 57). In non-negative sentences, these constituents are situated immediately in front of the verb in the absence of a constituent in preverbal focus, but stay behind the verb in case the latter is preceded by the negative particle (*nem*) or a constituent in focus position (to be illustrated below). The verb–VM order will be referred to here as "inversion". According to standard Hungarian orthography, a verb is written together as one word with the verbal prefix preceding it. To make the verbal prefix more visible, we will in most cases use a hyphen to connect it with the following verb.

(3) János ki-utazott Berlinbe ⋀ ?
János VM-travelled Berlin.into (Q)
'Did János go to Berlin?'

As a comparison between (3) and (4) illustrates, ⋀-interrogatives are string-identical to the corresponding declaratives, which are pronounced with an end-falling tune as a default:

(4) János ki-utazott Berlinbe.
János VM-travelled Berlin.into
'János went to Berlin.'

In subordinate clauses, the only interrogative form available is the *-e* interrogative, as in (5).[6]

(5) Mari tudja, hogy János ki-utazott-e Berlinbe.
Mari knows that János VM-travelled-Q Berlin.into
'Mari knows whether János went to Berlin.'

It is argued in Gyuris (2017) that whereas *-e*-interrogatives are equally infelicitous in the presence of *compelling contextual evidence* (cf. Büring & Gunlogson 2000) for the positive or the negative answer, ⋀-interrogatives can be compatible with the presence of compelling contextual evidence for the former.[7] (6) shows the use of the two forms in a context with compelling contextual evidence for the positive answer, and (7) illustrates their uses in a neutral context (i.e., one with no compelling evidence for any of the answers).

(6) A enters the building in sunglasses and t-shirt. S, who has been sitting in a windowless office during the last couple of hours, wants to know what the weather is like outside. S asks A:
a. # Jó idő van-e?
good weather is-Q
'Is the weather nice?'

[6]Note that (i) can only be analysed as containing an embedded declarative:

(i) Mari tudja, hogy János ki-utazott Berlinbe.
Mari knows that János VM-travelled Berlin.into
'Mari knows that János went to Berlin.'

[7]In case the speaker believes that the contextual evidence is only compatible with the positive answer, the ⋀-interrogative form is blocked by a declarative pronounced with multiple rise-fall tunes (cf. Gyuris 2019, Varga 2010), the counterpart of English 'rising declaratives' (cf. Gunlogson 2003).

b. Jó idő van ⋀ ?
good weather is (Q)
'Is the weather nice?'

(7) A and S talk long-distance on the phone. S wants to know what the weather is like at A's place. S asks A:

a. Jó idő van-e?
good weather is-Q
'Is the weather nice?'

b. Jó idő van ⋀ ?
good weather is (Q)
'Is the weather nice?'

As noted in Gyuris (2017), and confirmed experimentally in Gyuris et al. (2020, 2021), speakers from different regions judge the appropriateness of *-e*-interrogatives for encoding informal information-seeking questions differently. As opposed to speakers from certain regions in Eastern Hungary and in Transylvania (Romania), speakers from Western Hungary and Budapest tend to accept them only in official, formal contexts (e.g., court or police interrogations), where they are intentionally used to indicate the impartiality of the questioner (cf. Varga 2021). Nevertheless, speakers of all dialects give for *-e*-interrogatives significantly higher acceptability ratings in neutral contexts than in contexts with evidence for the positive answer.

We turn now to the corresponding negative form types. The negative counterparts of (2) and (3) are illustrated in (8) and (9), respectively. The corresponding negative declarative, which is string-identical to (9), is shown in (10).

(8) Nem utazott-e ki János Berlinbe?
not travelled-Q VM János Berlin.into
'Didn't János go to Berlin?'

(9) Nem utazott ki János Berlinbe ⋀?
not travelled VM János Berlin.into (Q)
'Didn't János go to Berlin?'

(10) Nem utazott ki János Berlinbe.
not travelled VM János Berlin.into
'János didn't go to Berlin.'

All of (8–10) display inversion between the VM and the verb, due to the fact that the negative particle attracts the verb to NegP, cf. É. Kiss (2009). The syntactic structure of (10) is shown in (11) (Cf. Surányi 2009.):

(11) $[_{\text{NegP}}$ Nem [utazott$_i$ $[_{\text{IP}}$ ki t_i János Berlinbe]]]

In what follows, standard negative *-e*-interrogatives of the form illustrated in (8) will be referred to as *nem V-e* interrogatives, and negative ⋀-interrogatives as *nem* ⋀ interrogatives.

The bias profiles of *nem V-e* and *nem* ⋀ interrogatives are different, as discussed in Gyuris (2017). Both of them are compatible with *vala*-indefinites, which Szabolcsi (2002) considers positive polarity items (PPIs). This indicates, following Ladd (1981), that both give rise to an "outside negation" (ON, non-propositional negation) reading. *Nem* ⋀ interrogatives are also compatible with negative polarity items (NPIs), including phrases with *sem* (that É. Kiss 2009 refers to as "negative polarity item, minimizer"), which indicates, following Ladd (1981), that they also give rise to a so-called "inside negation" (IN, propositional negation) reading.[8] The availability of the ON- vs. IN-readings is illustrated for the two negative interrogative forms in (12)–(13):

(12) Nem utazott-e ki János Berlinbe (valamikor / *semmikor)?
not travelled-Q VM János Berlin.into at.some.time never
'Didn't János go to Berlin (at some point/*ever)?' ON, *IN

(13) Nem utazott ki János Berlinbe (valamikor / semmikor) ⋀?
not travelled VM János Berlin.into at.some.time never (Q)
'Didn't János (at some point/ever) go to Berlin?' ON, IN

The examples in (14)–(15), where *nem V-e* and *nem* ⋀ interrogatives are presented in contexts with no previous expectation regarding any of the possible answers vs. with expectation towards the positive answer *p*, respectively, show that both negative forms are incompatible with contexts where the speaker has no expectation bias, but that they are both compatible with contexts with bias towards *p* (independently of the ON/IN distinction).

(14) *No expectation:*
You told me that you went to a party yesterday. I have no idea who else did (or was supposed to go). I ask:

[8]Further diagnostics of ON vs. IN readings include compatibility with *is* 'too' vs. *sem* 'neither', respectively, to be illustrated in (14–15).

a. # Nem volt-e ott (esetleg) János (is) a buliban?
not was-Q there perhaps János too the party.in
#'Didn't (perhaps) János go to the party (too)?'

b. # Nem volt ott (esetleg) János (is/sem) a buliban ⋀?
not was there perhaps János too/neither the party.in (Q)
'Didn't (perhaps) János go to the party (too/either)?'

(15) *Positive expectation:*
You have just told me about Mary's birthday party you went to. I have no idea who else went (or was supposed to go). I know that John is a good friend of Mary's. I ask:

a. Nem volt-e ott (esetleg) János (is) a buliban?

b. Nem volt ott (esetleg) János (is/sem) a buliban ⋀ ?

Having looked at the canonical positive and negative interrogative form types in Hungarian, the next section zooms in on interrogatives with *nem-e*.

3 Interrogatives with *nem-e*: Data and dialects

In the following examples, the majority of which was taken from the Hungarian National Corpus (HNC)[9], the particle *-e* appears cliticized onto the negative particle *nem*. (16)-(17)[10] encode information-seeking questions, in (18), (19), (20)[11], and (21)[12] *nem-e* appears in "embedded root" environments:

(16) Az üzletközpont útvesztőjéből óriási szatyrokkal betéved
the shopping.centre labyrinth.its.from giant bags.with VM.come.3SG
néhány civil: "nem-e itt árulják az akciós rozsdamentes
some civilian not-Q here sell.3PL the sale stainless
edénykészletet." [HNC]
cookware.ACC

'From the labyrinth of the shopping centre some civilians come in with big shopping bags: "isn't it here where the stainless steel cookware is sold?" '

[9] http://corpus.nytud.hu/mnsz/index_eng.html, cf. Oravecz et al. (2014).
[10] Repeated with original spelling.
[11] https://www.gyakorikerdesek.hu/sport-mozgas__egyeb-kerdesek__2716148-hogyan-nezzem-meg-hogy-nem-e-atvernek (Last accessed: 15 June 2025)
[12] This example is from the questionnaire reported on in Kassai (1994).

(17) figyu, vince, nem-e vetted még észre, hogy a mti
look.SUBJ.2SG Vince not-Q took.2SG still VM that the MTI
híreit MINDENKI szószerint hozza le/ismétli, mert
news.its.ACC everybody literally bring.3SG VM/repeat.3SG because
valószínűleg ez kikötés? [HNC]
probably this requirement
'Look, Vince, haven't you noticed yet that the news of the MTI (Hungarian News Agency) are brought/repeated by everybody using the same words, because probably that's a requirement?'

(18) nëm-ë gyün el, kérdëzzítëk më̈g (Hegedűs 2001)
not-Q come.3SG VM ask.SUBJ.2PL VM
'Isn't he coming? Ask him!'

(19) Kérdés, hogy nem-e a második emeleti folyosó végén lévő hátsó
question that not-Q the second floor.of corridor end.its.on being back
ajtónál fognak csöngetni? (Nádasdy 2024)
door.at will.3PL ring.INF
'It is a question whether they won't ring the bell at the back door at the end of the corridor on the second floor.'

(20) Hogyan nézzem meg hogy nem-e átvernek?
how look.SUBJ.1SG VM that not-Q VM.deceive.3PL
'How should I find out whether they don't deceive me?'

(21) Jó lenne tudni, nem-e lesz vihar.
good be.SUBJ.3SG know.INF not-Q be.FUT.3SG storm
'It would be good to know whether there won't be a storm.'

(22) realizes a rhetorical question (cf. the particle *hiszen* 'indeed'):

(22) Ráadásul egy ilyen hadüzenetnek megvolnának a
in.addition a such declaration.of.war.DAT VM.be.COND.3PL the
történelmi gyökerei is. Hiszen nem-e a magyar kalandozó hadak
historical roots.its too indeed not-Q the Hungarian adventuring troops
portyáinak igáját nyögte Szent Gallen büszke kolostora?
raids.their.DAT yoke.its.ACC suffered.3SG Saint Gallen proud cloister.its
[HNC]
'In addition, such a declaration of war would have its roots in history. Wasn't it the yoke of the raids of Hungarian "adventuring" troops that the proud cloister of Saint Gallen suffered from?'

The question realized by the next example is to be interpreted as a suggestion for an explanation:

(23) Nem-e az az oka ennek, hogy annyi embernek van
not-Q that the reason.its this.DAT that so.many person.DAT is
megnyilatkozási lehetősége (mindenki szerkeszthet magának
expression opportunity.its everybody create.POSS.3SG himself.DAT
honlapot pl.), hogy egyszerűen nem tudjuk átlátni a
homepage.ACC e.g. that simply not know.1PL VM.see.INF the
helyzetet. [HNC]
situation.ACC
'Isn't the reason for this that so many people have an opportunity to express themselves (everybody can create a homepage for themselves, for example) that we simply cannot understand the situation?'

In (24)[13] the interrogative encodes an indirect offer:

(24) – Másvalamit nem-e tetszik kérni? – folytatta a leány.
other.something.ACC not-Q like.3SG ask.INF continued.3SG the girl
' – Don't you wish something else? – the girl continued.'

The interrogative in (25) is used to encode a threat. (Note the remark by one of the interlocutors in this dialogue about the education of the original speaker whose utterance is reported on here, to be discussed below.)

(25) Azt kérdezte egy férfihang, hogy asszonyom, nem-e fél …
that.ACC asked.3SG a man's.voice that madam not-Q afraid
– Így kérdezte, hogy "nem-e fél"? Nem lehetett egy
so asked.3SG that not-Q afraid not be.POSS.PAST.3SG an
akadémikus. Szóval, mit kérdezett? – Nem-e fél a kedves
academic so what.ACC asked.3SG not-Q afraid the kind
férje, hogy lóba varrjuk? [HNC]
husband.your that horse.into sew.1PL
'A man's voice asked, madam, isn't he afraid … – Did he ask this way, "isn't he afraid"? He surely wasn't an academic. So, what did he ask? – Isn't your dear husband afraid that we sew him into a horse?'

[13]Kondor, Vilmos 2018. A haldokló részvényes. ('The shareholder on his deathbed.') Libri Kiadó, Budapest. (Courtesy of László Simon.)

The two examples in (26) and (27) illustrate the use of the *nem-e* form to make requests. Note the repetition of *-e* in the latter, which will be discussed below:

(26) Valaki esetleg nem-e tud segíteni a leszerelésben? [HNC]
somebody possibly not-Q can.3SG help.INF the dismantling.in
'Can't perhaps somebody help in dismantling it?'

(27) Te, medve, nem-e lehetne-e engem arról a listáról kihúzni? [HNC]
you bear not-Q be.POSS.COND-Q I.ACC that.from the list.from VM.delete.INF
'You, bear, couldn't my name be deleted from that list?'

The examples provided above might give the impression that interrogatives containing *nem-e* constitute a formal variant of *nem V-e* interrogatives, illustrated in (8), a position also taken in Kenesei et al. (1998). I am going to point out, however, that *nem-e* appears in two kinds of syntactic structures, and then argue that these are associated with different use conditions. I will also suggest that the two structures are in fact used in two different dialects.

The first type of interrogatives with *nem-e*, illustrated in (17)–(18) and (26) above, contains verb–VM inversion, as *nem V-e* interrogatives do, cf. (8), but differ from the latter in that *-e* cliticizes onto the negative particle.[14] I suggest that this configuration is a result of a phonological process, and thus the syntactic structure of the *nem-e* clause of (18) is as shown in (28a). The latter is either pronounced as in (28b), with *-e* cliticized onto the negative particle, or as in (28c), with *-e* pronounced twice, cf. (27).[15]

(28) a. [... [$_{\text{NegP}}$ nem gyün-e$_i$ [$_{\text{IP}}$ el t_i]] ...]
b. nem-e gyün-ɇ el
c. nem-e gyün-e el

Interrogatives containing *nem-e* and verb–VM inversion will be referred to as *nem-e V VM* interrogatives (*nem-e* interrogatives with inversion). *Nem-e V VM* interrogatives were characteristic of Western Hungarian dialects until the 19th

[14] In the case of (26), the infinitive *segíteni* 'help.INF' is the VM.

[15] I follow Gärtner & Gyuris (2022) in taking *-e* to be base-generated in I°. By contrast, Kenesei (1994: 342) considers counterparts of (28b) to speak in favor of lowering *-e* from C°. Discussion of the two approaches – in particular with respect to their predictions regarding locality – is beyond the scope of the current paper.

century. However, since in the Northeastern dialect that formed the basis of the standard (literary) dialect of Hungarian *-e* cliticizes onto the verb, as in (8), *nem-e* forms with inversion from other dialects started to be judged as substandard, and got stigmatized (cf. example (25) above). Informal evidence indicates that speakers who use *nem-e V* VM interrogatives use them in the same contexts speakers of the Standard Dialect use *nem V-e* interrogatives (with obligatory inversion). This is the reason we refer to the dialect where *nem-e V* VM interrogatives are used as the Stigmatized Dialect (Dialect S).[16] In Dialect S, cases of *-e* doubling, as in (28c), normally mark the speaker's uncertainty, and are often used in indirect requests intended to be very polite.[17] In the latter uses *nem-e* can also be analysed as a particle, adjoined to a clausal constituent, like adverbs and other particles are (cf. Gärtner & Gyuris 2012).

The second type of interrogative with *nem-e* lacks inversion between the verb and the VM, illustrated in (20). This latter type will be referred to as the *nem-e VM-V* interrogative. It is mostly used by speakers who in other respects speak the Standard Dialect (using *nem V-e* interrogatives as well), but in a much more restricted range of situations than *nem V-e* interrogatives, to encode a particular type of noncanonical question. The dialect where *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives appear will be referred to as Dialect E (from "Educated" Dialect).[18,19]

Note, importantly, that the two types of *nem-e* interrogatives can only be distinguished in case there is a VM in the sentence, and there is no constituent in the immediately preverbal focus position, which automatically forces inversion. (Cf. É. Kiss 2002 for the syntax of the focus position.) (1) and (25), with no VM, and (16), (19), (22), (23) and (25), with a preverbal focus constituent, can be analysed as representing both categories out of context. Table 1 presents the inventory of negative interrogative forms in the three dialects distinguished in this work.

The rest of the paper will concentrate on the formal and interpretational features of *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives in Dialect E. The next section is devoted to a review of its relevant syntactic and semantic properties.

[16]Stigmatization applies in most cases to any form containing *nem-e*, irrespective of inversion, which makes it very difficult to obtain reliable data about *nem-e*.

[17]Constructions with *-e* doubling are very often used for a stylistic effect, to mock speakers of non-standard dialects.

[18]Cf. Nádasdy (2024: 224–227). I thank Ádám Nádasdy for discussion on the use of *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives in the dialect I refer to as Dialect E.

[19]There are also examples for *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives being used in situations where *nem V-e* interrogatives are used in the Standard Dialect, as in (i). We will ignore them in what follows.

(i) ...még a rúzsát is meg-nézte, hogy "nem-e elkenődött" [HNC]
even the lipstick.ACC also VM-looked that not-Q VM.smeared
'...she even looked at her lipstick, "whether it did not smear" '

Table 1: Inventory of negative interrogative forms

Standard Dialect	*nem* ⋀ *nem V-e*
Dialect S	*nem* ⋀ *nem-e V* VM
Dialect E	*nem* ⋀ *nem V-e* *nem-e* VM*-V*

4 Properties of *nem-e* VM*-V* interrogatives in Dialect E

4.1 Type of negation

(29) is a *nem-e* VM*-V* interrogative from Dialect E:

(29) Nem-e ki-utazott János Berlinbe?
not-Q VM-travelled.3SG János Berlin.into
'Didn't János go to Berlin?'

(30) illustrates the compatibility of (29) with a PPI (*valamikor* 'at some point') and its incompatibility with an NPI (*semmikor* 'never'):

(30) Nem-e ki-utazott János Berlinbe valamikor / *semmikor?
not-Q VM-travelled.3SG János Berlin.into at.some.point never
'Didn't János go to Berlin at some point/*ever?'

(30) thus indicates that *nem-e* VM*-V* interrogatives have an ON, but no IN reading. This might suggest that they can be used felicitously in the same contexts as *nem V-e* interrogatives. The following subsections will, however, argue against this assumption.

4.2 Expectation bias

4.2.1 The data

It has been assumed in the literature (cf. Reese 2007, Sudo 2013, a.o.) that whenever a polar interrogative form introduces an expectation bias for the positive or the negative answer, the source of this bias can in principle be the speaker's

knowledge or beliefs (epistemic bias), her wishes (bouletic bias) or some set of rules (deontic bias). (31) illustrates the use of *nem-e* VM-*V*, *nem V-e* and *nem* ⋀ interrogatives in a context where the expectation bias for the positive answer ('John went to Berlin') is based on the speaker's beliefs:

(31) *Suggestion scenario*

A, B and János are colleagues. A and B talk after a meeting.
A: Why wasn't János present at the meeting?
B replies:

a. Nem-e ki-utazott Berlinbe?
not-Q VM-travelled Berlin.into
'Didn't he go to Berlin?'

b. Nem utazott-e ki Berlinbe?
'Didn't he go to Berlin?'

c. Nem utazott ki Berlinbe ⋀ ?
'Didn't he go to Berlin?'

In the *Suggestion scenario*, all three negative interrogative forms are felicitous. The following example shows, however, that they do not always pattern together:

(32) *Reproach scenario*
Mother sees her child kick another child in the sandpit. Mother says to her child:

a. # Nem-e szégyelled magad?
not-Q be.ashamed.2SG yourself
'Aren't you ashamed?'

b. Nem szégyelled-e magad?
'Aren't you ashamed?'

c. Nem szégyelled magad ⋀ ?
'Aren't you ashamed?'

The intended interpretation of the negative interrogatives in (32) is the following. Mother, the authority, thinks that Child should be ashamed of his actions (based on assumed rules of conduct). By asking an information-seeking question, Mother thus indirectly calls Child's attention to the fact that his conduct was inappropriate. This interpretation presupposes that Mother, the speaker, has a deontic bias for the proposition 'Child is ashamed' (*p*). Note that (32a) would be felicitous in a situation where the purpose of Mother's question were to make a

guess about how Child is feeling, since this would be compatible with her having a previous epistemic bias for *p*.[20]

(33) provides another illustration for the scenario above. As opposed to (32a)–(32c), (33a)–(33c) contain a VM, the bare noun *bocsánatot* 'apology.ACC', which makes the absence of the VM–verb inversion visible. The felicity judgments for the three form types pattern with those pertaining to (32).

(33) Mother sees her Child kick another child in the sandpit. Mother to Child:

a. # Nem-e bocsánatot kérsz?
not-Q apology.ACC ask.2SG
'Don't you apologize?'

b. Nem kérsz-e bocsánatot?
'Don't you apologize?'

c. Nem kérsz bocsánatot ⋀ ?
'Don't you apologize?'

The next example shows the three negative interrogative forms in a context where they are used to encode offers.

(34) *Offer scenario*
B, a colleague, enters A's office. A wants to offer him some coffee and thus says to him:

a. # Nem-e meg-innál egy kávét?
nem-Q VM-drink.COND.2SG one coffee.ACC
'Wouldn't you drink a coffee?'

b. Nem innál-e meg egy kávét?
'Wouldn't you drink a coffee?'

c. Nem innál meg egy kávét ⋀ ?
'Wouldn't you drink a coffee?'

In the *Offer scenario*, the *nem-e VM-V* interrogative form is infelicitous again, as opposed to the other two. The context justifies the assumption that the questioner has (or acts as if having) a bouletic bias towards the proposition 'Addressee would drink a coffee'. (A person making a sincere offer has a preference for the addressee accepting it.) Note that in case the speaker's aim were to make a guess about what the addressee wishes to drink (or do something) in general, (34a) would be just as felicitous as (34b)–(34c).[21]

[20](32a) is felicitous in Dialect S in the context provided.

[21](34a) is felicitous in Dialect S in the context provided.

The next example illustrates the use of the negative interrogative forms to make a request:

(35) *Request scenario*
In front of the coffee machine, A addresses her colleague B:

a. # Nem-e kölcsön-adnál egy százast?
not-Q VM-give.COND.2SG a hundred.ACC
'Wouldn't you lend me a hundred forints?'

b. Nem adnál-e kölcsön egy százast?
'Wouldn't you lend me a hundred forints?'

c. Nem adnál kölcsön egy százast ⋀ ?
'Wouldn't you lend me a hundred forints?'

Here again, the *nem-e VM-V* interrogative in (35a) is infelicitous, as opposed to the other two forms. The context in which the interrogatives are used to make an indirect request indicates bouletic bias of the speaker towards the answer. If the speaker were making a guess about the intentions of the addressee, (35a) would be felicitous.[22]

Thus, we have shown that *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives in Dialect E (having only an ON reading) differ from *nem V-e* interrogatives (which also only have an ON reading) and from *nem* ⋀ interrogatives (which are ambiguous between ON and IN readings): the first form is unavailable to make an indirect reproach, an offer or a request. Since the felicity of the latter three speech acts depends on the speaker having deontic or bouletic (that is, non-epistemic) biases towards the positive answer, one reasonable explanation for the infelicity of (32–35) in Dialect E would be that *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives are incompatible with non-epistemic (i.e., deontic or bouletic) biases for the positive answer. In the next section we look at previous approaches in the literature that were concerned with types of speaker expectation bias, to see whether they can offer a solution for the puzzle.

4.2.2 Previous accounts on (speaker) expectation bias

Reese (2007), the only theoretically-based proposal on the relation between bias types and IN/ON readings, argues that negative interrogatives with IN readings can have an epistemic, deontic or bouletic expectation bias for the positive answer, while those with ON readings can only be epistemically biased. According to Reese (2007: 91), the difference follows from the assumption that the biases

[22](35a) is felicitous in Dialect S in the context provided.

associated with the two readings are "distinct kinds of meaning": the biases of IN readings constitute "some type of implicature", whereas those of ON readings are "entailments, reflecting a speaker commitment which functions as a weak assertion". Interrogatives with ON readings, which "share the distributional properties of questions and assertions" are accounted for by the author by assigning to them "a conventionalized complex speech act type ASSERTION • QUESTION", cf. Asher & Lascarides (2001, 2003).

The claim that deontic and bouletic biases can only arise for IN readings does indeed explain the infelicity of *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives, which can only have ON readings, in contexts (32–35). However, in these contexts *nem V-e* interrogatives, which also only give rise to ON readings, are all felicitous. This suggests that Reese's general proposal for the types of expectation biases available on the basis of the availability of IN/ON readings cannot be extended to the relevant Hungarian data.

Contrary to Reese, Sudo (2013: 284) assumes that there are negative interrogatives in English with ON readings that "imply a positive expectation stemming from the norm/rules (deontic) or what the speaker desires (bouletic), rather than what the speaker believes to be true", as in *Aren't you ashamed of yourselves?*, or *Don't you like it?*, respectively,[23] although without further theoretical justification.

Having illustrated that *nem-e* interrogatives in Hungarian introduce a distinction between types of expectation biases that has not yet been observed in the literature, we turn to some other properties that determine their use in discourse.

4.3 Further discourse properties of *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives

4.3.1 Unresolved question in the discourse

(31), repeated in (36) below, shows that all the three negative interrogative forms under consideration are felicitous in situations where the aim of the speaker's utterance is to put forward a suggestion for a congruent answer (cf. von Stechow 1991) to an unresolved question in the discourse.

(36) *Suggestion scenario*
A, B and János are colleagues. A and B talk after a meeting.
A: Why wasn't János present at the meeting?
B replies:

[23]The examples are used by Asher & Reese (2007), originally due to Huddleston & Pullum (2002).

a. Nem-e ki-utazott Berlinbe?
not-Q VM-travelled Berlin.into
'Didn't he go to Berlin?'

b. Nem utazott-e ki Berlinbe?
'Didn't he go to Berlin?'

c. Nem utazott ki Berlinbe ⋀ ?
'Didn't he go to Berlin?'

The unresolved question under consideration in the dialogue above is the one uttered by A, which activates a set of alternative (full) answers of the type 'János wasn't at the meeting because *q*', where *q* stands for a proposition. *q* itself thus corresponds to a *term answer* to the unresolved question above.[24] The proposition 'He went to Berlin' is offered by B in the dialogue as the value of *q*.

(37) presents the three negative interrogatives in a context with no unresolved question in the context:

(37) *I have to ask something scenario*
A to B: I have to ask you something.

a. # Nem-e át-ment János a vizsgán?
not-Q VM-went.3SG János the exam.on
'Didn't János pass the exam?'

b. Nem ment-e át János a vizsgán?
'Didn't János pass the exam?'

c. Nem ment át János a vizsgán ⋀ ?
'Didn't János pass the exam?'

The felicity of (37b–37c) and the infelicity of (37a) confirms the suggestion according to which *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives require the presence of an unresolved question in the context.

4.3.2 No coordination

Here we want to point out that the coordination of two *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives is infelicitous, as opposed to the coordination of two exemplars of the other two negative interrogative form types, as illustrated in (38) below:

(38) A, B and János are colleagues. A and B talk after a meeting.
A: Why wasn't János present at the meeting?
B replies:

[24] Cf. Krifka (2011) for the definitions of *full* vs. *term* answers.

a. # Nem-e el-felejtette az időpontot és nem-e ki-utazott
not-Q VM-forgot the date.ACC and not-Q VM-travelled
Berlinbe?
Berlin.into
'Didn't he forget the date and didn't he go to Berlin?'

b. Nem felejtette-e el az időpontot és nem utazott-e ki Berlinbe?
'Didn't he forget the date and didn't he go to Berlin?'

c. Nem felejtette el az időpontot és nem utazott ki Berlinbe /\ ?
'Didn't he forget the date and didn't he go to Berlin?'

Based on the discussion in Section 4.3.1, the contrast between (38a) and (38b–38c) can be interpreted as indicating that *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives can only be used to suggest a complete congruent answer to the unresolved question (thus making the conjunction of two such forms infelicitous), whereas the other two forms can also be used to suggest a partial answer.

4.3.3 Possible replies to questions with *nem-e*

We look next at how to react to questions encoded by *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives. (39b)–(39h) present potential replies to the question in (39a) in the context illustrated:

(39) A and B see their colleague János from a distance, and note that he has a suntan.

a. A: Nem-e nyaralni volt?
not-Q be.on.holiday.INF was
'Wasn't he on holiday?'

b. B: Lehet.
maybe
'Maybe.'

c. B: #Igen (, nyaralni volt).
yes be.on.holiday.INF was
#'Yes (, he was on holiday).'

d. B: %De (igen) (, nyaralni volt).
but yes be.on.holiday.INF was
%'Yes (, he was on holiday).'

e. B: Nem, #(nem volt nyaralni).
no not was be.on.holiday.INF
'No, #(he was not on holiday).'

f. B: Nem, a kertben dolgozott.
no the garden.in worked
'No, he was working in the garden.'

g. B: Volt nyaralni, de nem azért barna.
was be.on.holiday.INF but not because.of.that brown
'He was on holiday, but he does not have a tan because of that.'

h. B: (Nem,) (volt nyaralni, de) azért barna, mert
not was be.on.holiday.INF but because.of.that brown because
a kertben dolgozott.
the garden.in worked
'(No,) (he was on holiday, but) he has a tan because he worked in the garden.'

I suggest that these data indicate that, in spite of appearances, the set of congruent answers to questions realized by *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives does not consist of the denotation of the surface constituent following *nem-e* and its negation. For (39a), this set would include the propositions 'He was on holiday' and 'He was not on holiday'. (39b) illustrates the most natural reply to (39a) in the context. Since the response particle *igen* 'yes' is infelicitous in answers to canonical forms of negative interrogatives in Hungarian (cf. Farkas 2009 for an account), it comes as no surprise that, as evidenced by (39c), it is also excluded as answer to a question realized by a *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogative. It is more unexpected that the response particle *de* 'but'[25] (with or without the assumed positive answer) is not considered acceptable by all speakers of this dialect in the context under consideration, (39d)[26] and that the response particle *nem* 'not' in (39e) does not constitute a felicitous reply in isolation, either, only if followed by the utterance of a declarative disambiguating the answer.

(39f), where *nem* is followed by the utterance of an alternative answer to the superordinate question (*How did he get a suntan?*), is fine, as is (39g), which gives a polarity-reversing answer to the *nem-e* question, but explicitly denies that it also answers the superordinate question. Finally, (39h) answers the *nem-*

[25] *De* is analogous to German *doch* 'but', encoding a reverse polarity reply to a negative polar question.

[26] I thank Lilla Kamilla Sándor and Viktória Virovec for discussions on the data.

e question, but rejects that the latter is identical to the complete answer to the superordinate question, by also explicitly giving an answer to the latter.

4.3.4 No rhetorical question reading

The final property of *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives we wish to mention here is that they cannot be used by a speaker in a situation where the denotation of the surface constituent following *nem-e* or its negation is part of the common ground, in other words, where they encode a rhetorical question (cf. Caponigro & Sprouse 2007). Consider the relevant three forms (containing a covert copula) in a context where they are supposed to realize a rhetorical question:

(40) *Rhetorical question scenario*
A and B are talking. They both know that Péter is A's oldest friend.
A: Why is Péter always so helpful?
B replies:

a. # Nem-e ő a legrégebbi barátod?
not-Q he the oldest friend.your
'Isn't he your oldest friend?'
(Intended: 'He is your oldest friend.')

b. Nem ő-e a legrégebbi barátod?
'Isn't he your oldest friend?'
(Intended: 'He is your oldest friend.')

c. Nem ő a legrégebbi barátod ⋀ ?
'Isn't he your oldest friend?'
(Intended: 'He is your oldest friend.')

(40b–40c) are available to commit the speaker to the proposition 'Péter is your oldest friend', and to indicate, based on the Maxim of Relevance, that this is B's answer to A's question. (40a), however, is not available for this purpose in Dialect E (although it would be available in Dialect S). The latter can only be interpreted as a suggestion for an answer to A's question by the speaker, without assuming that the answer is in the common ground, thus, not as a rhetorical question. The next subsection presents the proposal explaining these data.

5 *Nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives: The account

5.1 Structural assumptions

As it was shown in the previous sections, *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives have a more restricted use in Dialect E than the canonical *nem V-e* interrogatives. Thus, the former represent a special form type having a specific interpretation. One possible approach towards explaining their distribution would be to consider *nem-e* a discourse/pragmatic particle, which indicates that the rest of the sentence denotes a proposition that the speaker puts forward as a suggested answer to an unresolved question. This proposal, however, fails to account for why clauses containing *nem-e* count as interrogatives, and thus can be embedded under matrix predicates that embed interrogatives, as in (41).[27]

(41) Ilike töpreng rajta, hogy nem-e ő bántotta meg valamivel.
Ilike contemplates on.it that not-Q she offended VM something.with
'Ilike contemplates whether it was her who offended him with something.' [HNC]

As an alternative, we propose that *nem-e* is the visible subpart of a matrix copular negative interrogative clause, and the rest of the *nem-e* interrogative originates from an embedded declarative, whose polarity (other things being equal) is positive. The essentials of the full structure of the *nem-e* interrogative in (42), including covert parts, are shown in (43):

(42) Nem-e ki-utazott Berlinbe?
not-Q VM-travelled Berlin.into
'Isn't it that he went to Berlin?'

(43) [$_{CP_1}$ … [$_{NegP}$ Nem [$_{FocP}$ ~~az~~ ~~van~~-e [$_{IP_1}$ …
not that be.3SG-Q
[$_{CP_2}$ ~~hogy~~ [$_{IP_2}$ ki-utazott Berlinbe]]]] …]
that VM-travelled Berlin.into
'Isn't it that he went to Berlin?'

Let us consider the properties of the structure in (43). First, the covert expletive *az* is the "correlate" of the subordinate declarative clause. It is situated in the preverbal focus position.[28] Second, *az* is followed by the covert copula *van* 'be.3SG'.

[27] Note that the embedded (root) interrogative in (41) would license the "reflectivity" particle *vajon* 'I wonder', a diagnostic of interrogative clauses, cf. Kenesei (1994) and Kálmán (2001).

[28] Cf. Kenesei (1994) for a comprehensive account of the syntax of subordinate clauses in Hungarian.

Third, the clitic *-e* ends up attached to the negative particle *nem* because both the copula and the correlate are covert. Finally, the complementizer *hogy*, introducing the subordinate clause, also remains covert.[29] It is well known that the preverbal focus position within the Hungarian sentence (which, other things being equal, hosts the constituent serving as the term answer to the Immediate Question Under Discussion, discussed below, cf. Gyuris 2012), is associated with an exhaustive/identificational reading (cf. É. Kiss 2002, Szabolcsi 1994 for general discussion, a.o.). Since the expletive *az* in the focus position of the main clause functions as a "placeholder" for the subordinate declarative clause, we assume that the *nem-e* construction makes the denotation of the declarative a propositional focus with an exhaustive/identificational reading. These interpretational features are emphasized in the English translation given in (43), which contains a cleft construction, and is thus preferable to the English translations given previously for *nem-e* interrogatives, in terms of plain negative polar interrogatives. In what follows, we will therefore use the cleft construction in the translations.

The structural assumptions listed above can account for the lack of inversion between the verb and the verb modifier, which is the default word order in positive declaratives, cf. (4) above.

Additional support for the biclausal analysis is provided by the possibility of *nem-e* preceding another *nem* 'not', illustrated in (44). Here the second negative particle is a constituent of the "embedded declarative".

(44) A and B are talking.
A: I thought John went to a conference but his car is in the car park opposite the building.
B replies: Nem-e nem utazott el?
not-Q not travelled VM
'Isn't it that he did not go away (perhaps)?'

In the next section we present the preliminaries for an account of the interpretation of *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives listed in Section 4 on the basis of the structure postulated above.

5.2 Interpreting *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives: Basic assumptions

In Section 4 above *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives were associated with the interpretational properties listed in (45). Here, *p* stands for the denotation of the embedded declarative (cf. CP_2 in (43)) following *nem-e*:

[29] Obligatory covertness is the result of a certain degree of grammaticalization having affected *nem-e*. For discussion of the trade-off between compositional and construction-specific properties see Reis (1999) and Jacobs (2016).

(45) Semantic and discourse properties of *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives in Dialect E

a. They give rise to ON readings but not to IN readings. (Section 4.1.)

b. They are infelicitous as indirect reproaches, offers and requests. (Section 4.2.1.)

c. They are only felicitous in contexts where there is an unresolved question Q in the context such that *p* counts as a term answer to Q. (Section 4.3.1.)

d. The conjunction of two *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives is infelicitous. (Section 4.3.2.)

e. Replies consisting of the isolated response particles *igen* 'yes', *de* 'but' or *nem* 'no' are dispreferred or infelicitous. (Section 4.3.3.)

f. They do not give rise to rhetorical question readings. (Section 4.3.4.)

The fact that *nem-e* interrogatives are compatible with PPIs, which was used as a diagnostic for ON-readings (property (45a)), follows from analysing the constituent following *nem-e* as an embedded positive declarative (which is compatible with PPIs as a default). The incompatibility with NPIs, which indicates the absence of IN-readings, follows from the general incompatibility of the interrogative particle *-e* in the matrix clause with NPIs, as shown in Section 2.[30] Note that NPIs are still felicitous in *nem-e* interrogatives in case the "embedded" declarative contains another negation, which licenses NPIs, as in (44).

The remaining properties (45b–45f) are going to be accounted for by referring to the covert structure shown in (43) above, in which the embedded declarative (CP_2) is interpreted as exhaustively focused, a result of the correlate (placeholding expletive) *az* being situated in the preverbal focus position of the matrix clause (CP_1).

For describing the felicity conditions of *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives in the discourse we rely on insights from the Question Under Discussion (QUD) framework. (For general discussion, cf. Roberts 2012 and Büring 2003, a.o..) Here the (explicit or implicit) question that an utterance (of a declarative or interrogative) is assumed to react to is referred to as the *I(mmediate)* QUD, modelled as a set of propositions. For utterances of declaratives, the IQUD is constituted by a (contextually determined) subset of the set of focus alternatives to the declarative. (Cf. Rooth 1992, Beaver & Clark 2008, a.o..) As far as the IQUD of utterances of polar

[30] Cf. Gärtner & Gyuris (2022) for an analysis of the ban on IN readings of *-e*-interrogatives as a syntactic intervention effect.

interrogatives with (exhaustive) focus is concerned, we follow Kamali & Krifka (2020: 26–27), who take it to be a contextually determined subset of the set of focus alternatives introduced by the declarative encoding the positive answer. As an illustration, consider (46a), a polar interrogative with a constituent in the preverbal focus position (followed by *VM-V* inversion). The set of focus alternatives to the positive answer is shown in (46b). Assuming that the set of contextually relevant individuals contains Anna and Béla, the denotation of (46c) is a subset of the set of alternatives in (46b), and thus (46c) denotes an appropriate IQUD for (46a).

(46) a. Anna_F ment el moziba?
Anna went VM movies.into
'Was it Anna who went to the movies?'

b. {'It was Anna who went to the movies', 'It was Béla who went to the movies', 'It was Cili who went to the movies', 'It was Anna and Béla who went to the movies', 'It was Anna and Cili who went to the movies', 'It was Anna, Béla and Cili who went to the movies', ... }

c. (Anna és Béla közül) ki ment el a moziba?
Anna and Béla among who went VM the movies.into
'Who (of Anna and Béla) went to the movies?'

The fact that the focus in the polar interrogative in (46a) has an exhaustive/identificational reading entails that the focus alternatives in (46b) exclude each other, and thus that the positive answer to (46a) provides a complete answer to the IQUD in (46c).

Now the assumptions above will be applied to *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives. For simplicity, here we only consider *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives without a preverbal focus constituent in the "embedded" CP_2, as in (43). We suggest that the focussing of the whole CP_2 indicates that its proposition denotation constitutes a *term answer* to the IQUD. The fact that CP_2 is exhaustively focused means that the propositions in the set constituting the alternatives to its denotation mutually exclude each other as term answers to the IQUD (and thus that all constitute maximally informative answers to the latter, cf. Dayal 1996). Thus, the IQUD for any *nem-e VM-V* interrogative is to be schematically represented as the set of propositions shown in (47), where p, p', and p'' stand for the denotation of CP_2 and its alternatives, $\mathcal{P}$ denotes a property of propositions determined by the specific IQUD (to be discussed below), and exactly one of the propositions in the set can be true at the same time. This means, informally, that a *nem-e VM-V*

interrogative is used for the purpose of asking whether the denotation of CP_2 is equivalent to the only proposition that has the contextually given property $\mathcal{P}$.

(47) {'It is p that has property $\mathcal{P}$', 'It is p' that has property $\mathcal{P}$', 'It is p'' that has property $\mathcal{P}$', ...}

Regarding how IQUDs of the form illustrated in (47), with mutually exclusive possible answers, are realized in natural language, empirical observations suggest that there are at least two *wh*-interrogative forms available for this purpose. The first one is *why*-interrogatives asking for reasons, which, according to Oshima (2007: 152) are presupposed to have "only one true resolution" in a particular context.[31] This means that all possible answers to *why*-questions are also complete. (36), repeated in (48), provides an illustration:

(48) *Suggestion scenario*
A, B and János are colleagues. A and B talk after a meeting.

a. A: Miért nem volt János az értekezleten?
why not was János the meeting.on
'Why wasn't János at the meeting?'

b. B: Nem-e ki-utazott Berlinbe?
not-Q VM-travelled Berlin.into
'Isn't it that he went to Berlin?'

The property of having mutually exclusive possible answers does not apply to the question realized by the *wh*-interrogative in (49a), which, however, can denote the IQUD for the two polar negative interrogative form types in (49c–49d), but not for the one in (49b).

(49) A, B and János are colleagues. A and B talk after a meeting.

a. A: Mit mondott János Mariról?
what.ACC said János Mari.from
'What did János say about Mari?'

b. B: #Nem-e ki-utazott Berlinbe?
not-Q VM-travelled Berlin.into
'Isn't it that she went to Berlin?'

[31] It depends on contextual factors "what counts as a reason" (Oshima 2007: 155). Cf. also Unger (1977).

c. B: Nem azt-e, hogy ki-utazott Berlinbe?
not that.ACC-Q that VM-travelled Berlin.into
'Wasn't it that she went to Berlin?'

d. B: Nem azt, hogy ki-utazott Berlinbe /\?
not that.ACC that VM-travelled Berlin.into (Q)
'Wasn't it that she went to Berlin?'

How-questions on their method reading, which have been suggested to have "determinate complete answers" (Sæbø 2016: 3175)[32] also illustrate a form type denoting appropriate IQUDs for questions realized by *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives, as shown in (50) (inspired by (7) in Sæbø 2016):

(50) a. A: Hogy került ez ide?
how got this here
'How did this guy get here?'

b. B: Nem-e ide-evezett a sziget másik oldaláról?
nem-Q VM-rowed the island other side.from
'Isn't it that he rowed here from the other side of the island?'

Before turning to the formal details of our analysis, we take a brief look at two types of constructions discussed in the literature that resemble *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives in terms of formal features, including focus-marking, and the structure of discourses they appear in.

5.3 Cross-linguistic analogues of *nem-e VM-V* interrogatives

Sheil (2016) studies the Scottish Gaelic *propositional cleft* (PC), which signals that the clause is not divided into a background and a focus part, because the whole is marked as a "broad-sized identificational focus". She argues that declaratives realizing the PC construction are only felicitous in a context where there is an explicitly given "super-question of the Immediate QUD" (Sheil 2016: 35), the latter being a polar question. The contribution of the PC is then to signal "a revision to the line of inquiry (an alternative strategy to answering a super-question)" (2016: 26). Sheil (2016: 4) also shows, however, that the PC is ungrammatical in interrogatives and cannot be negated, which makes a detailed comparison with *nem-e* interrogatives difficult. The author argues, in addition, that in spite of superficial

[32]For a discussion of manner readings of *how*-questions, which are more difficult to associate with unique maximal answers, cf. Oshima (2007), Abrusán (2011), Sæbø (2016), Schwarz & Simonenko (2018), a.o..

similarities, the PC cannot be reduced to the English *it is that* construction (to be discussed below), since it does not share the explanatory or interpretive function of the latter. For example, in the context illustrated in (51), where no explanation is asked for, only the PC but not the *it is that* construction is felicitous:

(51) (Roddy wants to marry a girl, and she insists on him buying her a ring. He gets one from a gypsy tinker, and he and the girl agree to marry after the fisheries.)
'S a cheud oidhche bha dannsa aca ann an taighean Gordon,
'And the first night they had a dance in Gordon's houses,'
's ann a thuit na clachan as an fhàinne.
COP in.3MSG C.REL fall.PAST the.PL stone.PL out.of the ring
'(# it's that) the stones fell out of the ring.' (Sheil 2016: 5, (1.6))

In addition, the PC is also shown by Sheil not to be reducible to the verum focus construction (the sizes of the focused elements being different), or to sentence focus (which is an information focus, rather than an identificational one).

The second construction that resembles *nem-e* interrogatives as far as structure and discourse function is concerned is the *it is that* construction in English, illustrated in (52):

(52) Not that Uther was ever unkind to me; it was simply that he had no particular interest in a girl child. (Delahunty 1990: 11)

Delahunty (1990: 20) considers the *it is that* construction an "inferential": "the form can be viewed as a pragmatic instruction to its audience to infer a relationship between the construction and its context that goes beyond the mere addition of the information conventionally denoted by the clause."[33] In various works, Delahunty suggests that the proposition denoted by the finite clause within the inferential may be interpreted as an implicated premise (explanation, reason, cause) or conclusion (result, consequence, conclusion), or "taken as a (re)interpretation or reformulation of the target utterance" (Delahunty & Gatzkiewicz 2000: 301), the exact choice depending only on the context.

Declerck (1992: 205) argues, however, that "the typical aspects of meaning associated with the inferential *it is that* construction are not of a pragmatic nature but follow from the fact that the construction belongs to the class of copular sentences that are 'specificational' ".[34] This accounts for the fact that the inferential

[33] More precisely, the relevant connection holds rather between the propositional content of the inferential construction and contextually given material, cf. Remberger (2020: 48).

[34] Declerck (1992) uses the term 'specificational' in the sense of specifying a value for a variable, cf. Higgins (1976), Akmajian (1979), and Declerck (1979).

construction is not interpretable in isolation (and unlikely to occur discourse-initially), and that it gives rise to an "exhaustiveness implicature" (Declerck 1992: 213).[35] Declerck claims that the construction involves two kinds of inferences.

> "First, the *that*-clause expresses what the speaker infers to be the correct explanation or interpretation of a situation or speech act. […] Second, in order to understand the sentence the hearer has to infer the variable for which the *that*-clause is presented as value" (Declerck 1992:212).

Importantly, it follows that a negative *it is that*-sentence, as in (53), does not reject the truth of the *that*-clause but denies that "this inference is the one that satisfies the variable" (p. 216):

(53) It is not that one fears treachery, though of course one does.
(Declerck 1992: 216, (22a))

Declerck (1992) accounts for the distribution of the inferential *it is that* construction by suggesting that

> "the only variables that can take a *that*-clause as value are those that lexicalize as nouns that can appear in the copular structure 'NP is that'. Nouns like *reason*, *cause*, *explanation*, *interpretation* are of this type: they express a notion whose contents can be specified by a *that*-clause." (Declerck 1992: 220).

He emphasizes that "[o]ther nouns that have to do with some aspect of a situation (e.g. time, place) do not share this characteristic", adding that "since the value that is specified by an inferential has the form of a *that*-clause, the variable that is inferred is automatically taken from the group 'reason / cause / explanation / interpretation' " (Declerck 1992: 220).

This short review thus shows that the Scottish Gaelic PC and the inferential construction share with *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives the property of marking a proposition as exhaustively focused, constituting a term answer to a superordinate question.[36] In the next section we turn to issues of how to formally model these interpretational features.

[35] "When a value, or set of values, is specified for a variable, the hearer has a right to conclude that the listing of values is exhaustive." (Declerck 1992: 213)

[36] Cf. Remberger (2020) for discussion of the focus-background structure of the latter.

5.4 Interpreting *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives: Formalization

In this section we are going to propose an account of the use conditions of *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives, which relies on the compositional semantic interpretation of the (partly covert) structure associated with *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives, shown in (43) above, and repeated here as (54).

(54) [$_{CP_1}$ … [$_{NegP}$ Nem [$_{FocP}$ ~~az~~ ~~van~~-e [$_{IP_1}$ …
not that be.3SG-Q
[$_{CP_2}$ ~~hogy~~ [$_{IP_2}$ ki-utazott Berlinbe]]]] …]
that VM-travelled Berlin.into
'Isn't it that he went to Berlin?'

The formal derivation of the meaning of (54), the outlines of which are presented in (55), relies on the following assumptions. First, the semantic value of polar interrogatives consists of the proposition corresponding to the positive answer and the latter's negation (cf. Hamblin 1973). Second, (54) is a construction with exhaustive focus: the proposition denoted by the "embedded declarative" CP_2 is the only one among its alternatives that possesses a particular property, referred to as $\mathcal{P}$. We assume that $\mathcal{P}$ is introduced by the covert copula *van*, and that it is a property of propositions, which is contributed by the context, more precisely, by the IQUD. We also assume that *-e* is responsible for marking the interrogative sentence type, and thus it is interpreted on the periphery (TypeP or ForceP). We assign it a denotation analogous to the polar-question operator in Hamblin (1973: 50), along the lines suggested in Uegaki (2018: 14).

(55) a. $[\![\text{CP}_2]\!] = \lambda w'.\ went(j, b, w')$

b. $[\![van]\!] = \lambda r.\ \lambda w.\ \mathcal{P}(r)(w)$

c. $[\![\text{FocP}]\!] = \lambda w.\ \mathcal{P}(\lambda w'.went(j, b, w'))(w)$
$\wedge\ \forall q\ [q \neq \lambda w'.went(j, b, w') \rightarrow \neg\mathcal{P}(q)(w)]$

d. $[\![\text{-}e]\!] = \lambda p.\ \{p, \neg p\}$

e. $[\![(54)]\!] = \{\ \lambda w.\ \mathcal{P}(\lambda w'.went(j, b, w'))(w)$
$\wedge\ \forall q\ [q \neq \lambda w'.went(j, b, w') \rightarrow \neg\mathcal{P}(q)(w)]$,
$\lambda w.\ \neg\mathcal{P}(\lambda w'.went(j, b, w'))(w)$
$\wedge\ \forall q\ [q \neq \lambda w'.went(j, b, w') \rightarrow \neg\mathcal{P}(q)(w)]\ \}$

The denotation of CP_2 in (55a) is a proposition, identical to the one denoted by the declarative in (56):

(56) [$_{CP}$ … [$_{IP}$ Ki-utazott Berlinbe] …]
VM-travelled Berlin.into
'He went to Berlin.'

(55b) shows the denotation of the covert copula *van*, which takes a proposition as argument and associates with it has a contextually given property $\mathcal{P}$. (55c) presents the denotation of FocP as a proposition that is true in those possible worlds where 'John went to Berlin' has property $\mathcal{P}$ but no other proposition does. It relies on standard assumptions about the preverbal focus constituent in Hungarian (cf. Szabolcsi 1994), according to which it is associated with an exhaustive reading. (55d) assigns *-e* the contribution of turning the proposition-denotation of its sister node into a set of propositions consisting of the latter proposition and its negation, discussed above. Additionally, we assume that *nem* contributes non-propositional (outside) negation, which makes a vacuous contribution to the truth conditions. The denotation of the whole structure in (54) is shown in (55e). (55e) makes it clear that the positive answer to a question encoded by a *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogative is not equivalent to the denotation p of CP_2, but to a proposition that identifies p with the unique proposition that has property $\mathcal{P}$.

Now we turn to how these proposals can account for the remaining properties in (45). Property (45c), according to which *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives are only felicitous in contexts where there is an unresolved question Q such that the denotation of CP_2 counts as a term answer to Q, directly follows, given the assumptions of the QUD approach, from the claim that in the structure under consideration, CP_2 is (exhaustively) focused, and thus gives rise to the IQUD shown in (47), repeated in (57) below:

(57) {'It is p that has property $\mathcal{P}$', 'It is p' that has property $\mathcal{P}$', 'It is p'' that has property $\mathcal{P}$', …}

The unresolved question Q referred to in (45c) thus corresponds to the appropriate IQUD.

Next, we turn to property (45b): as opposed to the two other negative polar interrogative form types in Hungarian, *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives are infelicitous as indirect reproaches, offers or requests. This was shown in Section 4.2.1. For the sake of succinctness, I will sketch an account for the first case, repeated in (58), which is then taken to apply to the other cases *mutatis mutandis*. (The original English translation given in (32a) has been replaced by a cleft construction, for reasons discussed in Section 5.1.)

(58) *Reproach scenario* (repeated with new translation)

Mother sees her Child kick another child in the sandpit. Mother says to Child:

a. # Nem-e szégyelled magad?
not-Q be.ashamed.2SG yourself
'Isn't it that you are ashamed?'

b. Nem szégyelled-e magad?
'Aren't you ashamed?'

c. Nem szégyelled magad /\ ?
'Aren't you ashamed?'

A very simple line of explanation can be based on the fact that the reproach in (32)/(58) is an initiating speech act. This is incompatible with uses of *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives, which, as we have seen above, must be reactive to an IQUD.

A more specific -- and stronger – account emerges if we try to spell out such an IQUD for (32a)/(58a). Among *why*-questions, which we limit our discussion to here, the one fitting the context of (58) most naturally would be (59).

(59) Why are you kicking your friend?

And, if we now take inspiration from Delahunty (1990)/Declerck (1992) and allow ourselves the paraphrase of (32a)/(58a) in (60), we derive a double infelicity.

(60) Isn't the reason for your kicking your friend that you are ashamed?

(60) – and thus (32a)/(58a) – fails on the basic content-level, given that being ashamed would be a fairly odd reason for the child to kick his friend. And, what's more, if being ashamed is suggested by the mother as a reason for bad behaviour, this cannot be construed as her "endorsing" (cf. Silk 2020) such a feeling to the child, i.e., her epistemic bias cannot be reinterpreted (e.g., via relevance implicature) as deontic bias ("you should be ashamed").

Note that things are different with the *Suggestion scenario*, (31), and the reinterpretations of *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives in (32)–(35) as guesses (Section 4.2.1). All of these are limited to epistemic speaker expectation bias, with the first one already containing – and the others in need of accommodating – an appropriate "*why*"-based IQUD.[37,38]

[37] An additional possibility that we leave unexplored is that *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives license "higher-order" deontic expectation bias, schematically expressed by *The reason for … should be that …*

[38] I thank Hans-Martin Gärtner for discussions on the reasons for the absence of non-epistemic expectation biases for *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives.

Next, according to property (45d), the conjunction of two *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives is infelicitous. This follows from the fact that the answers to two conjoined *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives, given that they share the same IQUD, cannot be independent of each other. As (55) shows, the truth of a positive answer to one *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogative entails that no other interrogative having the same IQUD but a different CP_2 can be answered positively.

Now, consider (45f): *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives, as opposed to other negative interrogatives in Hungarian, cannot be used to signal that the proposition p denoted by CP_2 is in the common ground according to the speaker. This property was referred to as the "absence of a rhetorical question reading" above. One of the central claims of the account proposed here is that the set of possible answers to questions encoded by *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives is not identical to the denotation of the constituent (CP_2) following *nem-e* and its negation ($\{p, \neg p\}$). Rather, due to the focusing of CP_2 in the covert structure the denotation of the polar interrogative under consideration is equivalent to the set of propositions {'It is p that has property $\mathcal{P}$', 'It is not p that has property $\mathcal{P}$'}. This means that even if p is in the common ground, a *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogative where CP_2 denotes p is not an appropriate means of pointing this out, since p is not a congruent answer to the latter.

Finally, we turn to property (45e): the isolated response particles *igen* 'yes', *de* 'but' or *nem* 'no' are dispreferred or even infelicitous as replies to questions realized by *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives. I suggest that the reason, again, has to do with the non-identity between the set of agreeing and disagreeing answers to *nem-e* VM-*V* interrogatives and the set $\{p, \neg p\}$, where p equals the denotation of CP_2. This non-identity makes it difficult (or even impossible) to reconstruct the propositional content of the actual answer on the basis of a response particle alone.

6 Conclusion

This paper investigated the use conditions and the bias profile of the negative interrogative form type in Hungarian that contains the surface constituent *nem-e*, composed of a negative and an interrogative particle. It was pointed out for the first time that different occurences of *nem-e* may represent different uses and belong to different dialects. We have provided different analyses to three different uses of *nem-e*, attibuting the latter constituent a biclausal struture on the first one, considering it a result of movement according to the second one, and analyzing it as a particle on the third one, respectively. Concentraing on

nem-e interrogatives used by speakers of the Standard Dialect, we have pointed out that they only have ON but no IN readings, they are incompatible with (standard) non-epistemic speaker expectation biases, they cannot be interpreted as indirect reproaches, offers or requests, they are only felicitous in contexts with an unresolved superordinate question under discussion, cannot be coordinated, do not have rhetorical question readings, and cannot felicitously be responded to by isolated response particles. It was argued that these properties follow from the focus-background structure of the interrogative, which involves an (exhaustively) focused declarative clause subordinated to a covert matrix clause.

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