

Scope Marking in Hungarian: intonation, syntax, and semantics

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When a question phrase takes scope over a clause higher than the one in which it bears a grammatical function in Hungarian, there are two possibilities: a ‘regular’ multi-clause *wh*-question, in which the question word appears in the highest clause over which it takes scope (1), or a scope-marking construction, in which a scope marker (SM) in the highest clause appears to indicate the scope of a question word in a lower clause (2).

- (1) *István ki-t gondol, hogy János fel-hívta?*
István.NOM who-ACC think.PRS.3SG that János.NOM VM-call-PST.3SG
‘Who does István think János called?’
- (2) *István MI-T gondol, hogy János ki-t fel-hívta?*
István.NOM who-ACC think.PRS.3SG that János.NOM who-ACC VM-call-PST.3SG
‘Who does István think János called?’

The defining features of the scope-marking construction have long presented a puzzle and reconciling them constitutes a challenge for any analysis. For instance, on the one hand this construction requires an embedding predicate that subcategorizes for a non-interrogative complement clause; on the other hand, the complement clause of that non-interrogative predicate must be a question.

In order to gain a different perspective, this presentation examines the intonation of the Hungarian scope-marking construction (Mycock 2020) and its interaction with syntax and semantics, comparing it to its ‘regular’ multi-clause *wh*-question counterpart, as exemplified in (1), and exploring reasons for their differences. The results are considered with respect to Hunyadi’s (2002) proposal that “there exists a systematic relation between the semantics of a sentence and its prosody” in Hungarian, and specifically that “the stress-bearing head of each intonational phrase has wide scope over the rest of the operators in the same intonational phrase”.

REFERENCES

- Hunyadi, L. (2002). *Hungarian Sentence Prosody and Universal Grammar: on the prosody-syntax interface*. New York: Lang.
- Mycock, L. (2020). ‘The Intonation of the Q-marking Construction: a comparison of Hungarian and Slovenian’. *Journal of Linguistics* 56: 359–397.