

Want, unconditionals, ever-free-relatives and scalar particles:
the sources of free-choice items in Hungarian¹

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The problem

- Free-choice items (FCIs):

(1) *Akárki előadhat ezen a konferencián (egy jó absztrakttal).*

FCI PRT.give.POSS this the conference.on

Anyone can present at this conference (with a good abstract).

- Constituent unconditionals:

(2) *Akárki (is) adott elő, János mobilozott.*

FCI too gave PRT John fiddled.with.cell

Whoever was giving the talk, John was fiddling with his cellphone.

No matter who it was that gave the talk, John was fiddling with his cellphone.

(3) *Akárki (is) adott elő, János érdeklődéssel hallgatta (azt/őt).*

FCI too gave PRT John interest.with listened 3SG

Whoever was giving the talk, John listened to her with interest.

- Ever-free-relatives (ever-FRs):

(4) *János lenyűgözve hallgatta (*azt), akárki (is) volt*

John stunned listened DEM FCI too was

a meghívott előadó.

the invited speaker

John listened with adoration to whoever was the invited speaker.

(5) *János lenyűgözve hallgatta ((mind) azt),*

John stunned listened all DEM

amit csak mondtak a konferencián.

what only said the conference.on

John listened with adoration to whatever was said at the conference.

John listened with adoration to all that was said at the conference.

Some first observations:

- different division of labour:
 - English has *wh-ever* for unconditionals and ever-free-relatives, *any-* for FCIs
 - Hungarian has *akár-* for all three (plus there is rel.pron. + minimizer for ever-free-relatives)
 - English has a lexical strategy, Hungarian a syntactic one: focused FCIs give us unconditionals and ever-free-relatives
- focused-FCI ever-FRs seem to be headless (true free relatives – untypical for Hungarian)
- rel.pron.+minimizer ever-FRs seem to be light-headed relatives (typical for Hungarian)

Unification efforts:

- Unconditionals and FCIs: Szabolcsi (2019) a.o.
- Unconditionals and ever-FRs: Hirsch (2016), Simík (2018, 2020) a.o.
- ever-FRs and FCIs: Dayal (1997), Giannakidou (1997, 2001) a.o.

Why Hungarian and why diachrony:

- *akár-akár-akár*: calls for a unified and compositional account
- focus
- *and*-coordination in unconditionals historically, also: non-identical consequents historically
- crosslinguistic perspective

Claims

- Hungarian has two types of ever-FRs
- Hungarian has definite (non-universal) ever-FRs (contrary to reports such as von Stechow (2000) or Simík (2020))
- Hungarian has true free relatives
- Old and Middle Hungarian data support Rawlins's (2013) model of unconditionals: conjunction-based, pointwise functional application
- Modern Hungarian data support Hirsch's (2016) model of unconditionals and ever-FRs
- A fully compositional analysis of all things *akár* does not appear feasible synchronically

A more detailed look at FCIs in Hungarian

- Syntax: quantifier positions (like distributive universal quantifiers) (Halm 2016ab)
- Semantics: need to be licensed by an appropriate modal-ish operator (possibility modal, antecedent of conditional etc.)
- more formally, I adopt the dependent indefinite approach (Giannakidou 1997 a.o.):
 - FCIs are represented as intensional indefinites, i.e., dependent indefinites which contain a possible world variable that must be bound by an appropriate intensional quantificational operator (i.e., it cannot be bound by text-level existential closure) in order to be licensed

- plus there is presupposition of exhaustive variation: in the accessible possible worlds, different values are assigned to the FCI, and these assignments taken together exhaust all the available values from the domain of quantification
- *bár*-paradigm: exact same behaviour in Modern Hungarian as *akár*-paradigm as far as FCIs, ever-FRs and constituent unconditionals are concerned (Halm 2016ab, *pace* Szabó 2012); a separate grammaticalization pathway, later development than *akár*-

Free-choice items: Illustration

(6) *Akárki bebizonyíthatja a Pitagorasz-tételt.*

FCI PRT.prove.POSS the Pythagoras-theorem

Anyone can prove the Pythagorean theorem.

	w1	w2	w3	w4
János	x	x		
Mari		x	x	
Peti	x			
Anna				x

- All the individuals are such that at least in one of the (epistemically, modally, counterfactually etc.) accessible possible worlds, they prove the theorem.

Constituent unconditionals (focused FCIs)

- Syntax: adjuncts, something in the adjunct can be quasi-anaphorically picked up in the consequent by a pronoun (but it does not have to)
- Semantics: a set of different antecedents with the same consequent (clearly visible with alternative unconditionals):

(7) *Akárki adott elő, a közönség szkeptikusan hallgatta (azt/őt).*

FCI gave PRT the audience skeptically listened 3SG

Whoever gave the talk, the audience listened to her/him with skepticism.

(8) *Akár Chomsky (adott elő), akár Jackendoff (adott elő),*

whether Chomsky gave PRT whether Jackendoff gave PRT

akár Everett adott elő, a k. sz. hallgatta (?azt/őt).

whether Everett gave PRT the a. sk. listened 3SG

Whether Chomsky gave the talk, or Jackendoff gave the talk or Everett gave the talk, the audience listened to him with sk.

- *akár* 'if.UNCOND' is preferred but *ha* 'if' is also acceptable, especially with a pair of unconditions:

(9) *Ha esik, ha fúj, augusztus 26-án Pécsen leszek.*

if rains if blows August 26-on Pécs.in will.be

Whether it rains or there is wind, I will be in Pécs on August 26th.

- there is an inference of ignorance or indifference

Unconditionals (focused FCIs): Model

- Rawlins's (2013) model (as formulated by Hirsch 2016):
 - intuition: an unconditional is a conjunction of conditionals
 - *wh-ever* XP is an interrogative CP denoting a Hamblin question, a set of propositions

(10) $[[\textit{whatever Mary cooked}]] = \{\lambda w. \textit{Mary cooked pasta in } w,$

$\lambda w. \textit{Mary cooked pizza in } w, \dots\}$ -> the propositions are mutually exclusive

- unconditionals are just like a conditionals:

(11) *Whatever Mary cooked, John had fun.*

LF: $[[\Box \textit{whatever Mary cooked}] \textit{John had fun}]$

- *wh-ever* XP pointwise restricts the modal, yielding:

- {if Mary cooked pizza, John had fun; if Mary cooked pasta, John had fun;...}
- finally, a silent operator converts this set of propositions into a single proposition:
LF: [Op [[□ whatever Mary cooked] John had fun]]
- Szabolcsi (2019): different model – see brief discussion later

Constituent unconditionals (focused FCIs): Illustration

(12) *Akárki nyeri meg az előválasztást,*

FCI wins PRT the primaries

(az/?ő) lesz az ellenzék közös jelöltje.

3SG will.be the opposition joint candidate

'Whoever wins the primaries, she/he will be the joint candidate of the opposition.'

	w1	w2	w3	w4	w5	w6
Gergely Karácsony	x					
Klára Dobrev		x				
Péter Jakab			x			
András Fekete-Győr				x		
József Palkovics					x	
Péter Márki-Zay						x

- All the individuals are such that at least in one of the accessible possible worlds, they will be the candidate of the unified opposition.
- In each relevant accessible possible world, exactly one individual will be the candidate of the unified opposition.

ever-FRs (focused FCIs)

- syntax:
 - focus position, just like wh-words in questions (cross-linguistically, ever-FRs are often more question-ish than non-ever-FRs)
 - no overt light head
- semantics
 - definites or universals: they trigger definite conjugation, universal inferences derive from variation across possible worlds/situations
 - uniqueness (similarly to unconditionals):

(13) *Egy szép serleggel jutalmazták akárki nyerte meg a versenyt.*

a nice cup.with honoured FCI won PRT the race

'Whoever won the race was awarded a beautiful cup.'

(14) *#Egy oklevéllel jutalmazták akárki futotta a távot.*

a certificate.with honoured FCI ran PRT the course

int.: 'Whoever completed the course was awarded a certificate.'

(incompatible with our world knowledge that almost certainly several contestants managed to complete the course)

(15) *Egy oklevéllel jutalmazták aki csak lefutotta a távot.*

a cert.with honoured REL.PRON only PRT.ran the course

'Whoever completed the course was awarded a certificate.'

ever-FRs (focused FCIs): Illustration

(16) *El kell fogadnunk (*azt), akármit (is) ítélt a játékvezető.*

PRT must accept DEM FCI too judges the referee

We have to accept whatever the referee decides.

	w1	w2	w3	w4
<i>kirúgás</i> 'goal kick'	x			
<i>tizenegyes</i> 'penalty'		x		
<i>szöglet</i> 'corner'			x	
<i>bedobás</i> 'throw-in'				x

- All the calls are such that they are made in at least one of the accessible possible worlds.

- In each accessible possible world, exactly one of the calls is made.
(We are interested in possible worlds that differ only in terms of the call to be made by the referee.)

Ever-FRs (focused FCIs): Model

- Hirsch's (2016) model for *wh-ever* with indifference reading (extended by Simík to cover readings other than indifference plus crosslinguistically)
- property-based
- unified model for unconditionals and ever-FRs

(17) *John ate whatever Mary cooked. ~ Whatever Mary cooked, John ate it. ~Whatever Mary cooked, John ate what Mary cooked.*

- solution: [[whatever Mary cooked]] is actually a property
- as sister to a silent question operator Q (George 2011), [[wh-ever XP]] is converted from property into set of propositions, a sister of D (within the consequent), it is converted by the iota operator from property into definite description

- my proposal for Hungarian:
- as per Giannakidou (1997), FCIs denote properties
- Q operator in Hungarian is associated with the focus position
- as a bonus, we get the presupposition of uniqueness and existence

Ever-FRs (rel.pron.+min.)

- syntax:

- relative pronoun in Spec,CP
- minimizer very close to relative pronoun

(15) *Aki csak (szerencsétlenségére) beleivott a vízbe,*

REL.PRON only unluckily PRT.drank the water.into

az mind kórházba került.

DEM all hospital.into got

'Whoever in her misfortune tasted the water was hospitalized.'

(16) *Aki (szerencséjére) csak beleivott a vízbe,*

REL.PRON luckily only PRT.drank the water.into

annak nem lett baja.

DEM not was trouble.3sg

'Those who luckily only tasted the water escaped unscathed.'

(17) *János lefotózott minden hülyeséget, amit csak meglátott.*

John photographed every silliness DEM only PRT.saw

'John photographed whatever stupid thing he came across.'

- semantics:

- variation, modal inferences; def.-univ.

- intuitively: 'those individuals that meet this very minimal, unexacting condition'

ever-FRs (rel.pron.+min.): illustration

(18) *Aki csak elindult, (az) (mind) célbaért.*

REL.PRON only PRT.started DEM all finished

'Whoever entered the competition completed the course.'

	<i>elindult</i>				<i>célbaért</i>			
	w1	w2	w3	w4	w1	w2	w3	w4
János	x	x			x	x		
Mari	x		x		x		x	
Peti	x		x		x		x	
Anna		x		x		x		x

From want to unconditional if and scalar particle

- In modern Hungarian, *akár* can be used as 'unconditional if' and as a 'scalar particle':

(19) *Akár elutazik Mari, akár otthon marad,*

if.UNCOND PRT.travels Mary if.UNCOND at.home stays

a mobilján biztosan eléred.

the cell.his.on surely PRT.reach

'(No matter) whether Mary will travel away or stay at home, you will be able to reach him on his cell.'

(20) *Akár 100 kilométert is lefut Mari.*

even 100 kilometres too PRT.runs Mary

'Mary can run as many as 100 kilometres.'

- Kassai (1817), Czuczor & Fogarasi (1862), Simonyi (1881) assume that the verb *akar* 'want' is the source of both *akárs*
- Klemm (1928) proposes (without evidence) that the scalar particle emerged first and the unconditional if second, and the locus was imperative sentences containing a 2SG form of *akar* 'want'.
- My detailed corpus analysis shows that in Late & Middle Hungarian, *akár* is almost exclusively found as introducing sets unconditions.
- My proposal: unconditions were the locus of reinterpretation. In Old, Middle and Modern H, *ha* 'if' could be used in alternative unconditionals too, and optional if-drop was widespread:

(21) a. *(Ha) akar-∅, elutazik, (ha)akar-∅, itthon marad-∅ [...]*
 if wants PRT.travels if wants at.home stays

b. *akar elutazik, akar itthon marad-Ø [...]*

if.UNCOND PRT.travels if.UNCOND at.home stays

'Whether he wants to travel away or he wants to stay at home,

- *akar* 'if.UNCOND' to *akár* 'if.UNCOND' is a case of the lengthening of a pre-liquid vowel in an unstressed syllables, a general phenomenon (Horgler 1914). Dialectally, *akar* 'if.UNCOND' is still attested.
- similar grammaticalization pathway for *akár* 'scalar particle':

(22) a. *(Ha) akar-Ø, tíz könyvet is hozhat.*

if wants ten book too bring.POSS

'If he so wants, he may bring as many as 10 books.'

b. *Akár tíz könyvet is hozhat.*

even ten book too bring.POSS

'He may bring as many as 10 books.'

- Since pairs of unconditions involve extremes, opposite ends of a scale, a derivation of *akár* 'scalar particle' from *akár* 'unconditional if' is also conceivable.

From unconditionals to ever-free relatives to FCIs

- Quantification in Old Hungarian happened by way of indeterminate pronouns (denoting Hamblin sets of propositions) bound by propositional operators (Bende-Farkas 2015).
- Proposal: such wh-indeterminates served as direct inputs to unconditionals (cf. Rawlins 2013):

(23) *akár hol mit talál, mindent össze szed* (AL. 216)

if.UNCOND where what finds everything PRT collects

'No matter what he finds and where, he collects everything.'

- Next step: if.uncond+wh-indeterminate sequence reinterpreted as a single unit of property type (Hirsch 2016) -> focused FCIs giving us ever-FRs and unconditionals

- Final step: FCIs can be bound by other intensional operators too: *akár*-FCIs start to crowd out established rivals:
 - the *vala*-paradigm: survives in *valahányszor* 'whenever'
 - the wh-indet bound by operator paradigm (survives in conditionals up until 19th C: *ha ki* 'if anyone')
- later, *bár*-paradigm emerges and starts to crowd out *akár*-paradigm (ongoing)

Corpus evidence

Date	Text	alternative uncond	constituent uncond / ever-FR	any-FCI	constituent uncond / ever-FR or any-FCI	alternative uncond or constituent uncond / ever-FR	scalar	scalar / any-FCI	other	total
1440	Jókai Codex	1								1
1450	Vienna Codex	3								3
1474	Birk Codex	5								5
1508	Guary Codex		2							2
1508	Medical Prescriptions		1							1
1515	Cantio Petri Berizlo			1						1
1519	Jordánszky Codex	1	3	1						5
1521	Booklet	1	1			2				4
1525	Bod Codex					3				3
1534	Kazinczy Codex	1								1
1536	Pesti Bible			2	2			1		5
1541	Sylvester Bible	33	13	7	1	3			4	61
1565	Heltai Bible	22	3	1	2	2		1	1	32
1590	Károli Bible	10	3	6	2	2	1		1	25
1626	Káldi Bible	23	4	13	3		4	2	1	50
<i>Total</i>		<i>100</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>199</i>

Source: Old Hungarian Corpus (Simon&Sass 2012, Simon 2014)

- No FCIs before 1500. Corroborates our claim that FCIs derive from unconditional if.

- No scalar *akár* before 1536: lends some credibility to the claim that scalar *akár* derives from *akár* 'if.UNCOND' and not directly from *akar* 'want'.
- Any-FCIs emerge earlier and are more numerous than instances of scalar *akár*. Corroborates the proposal that any-FCIs derive from wh-ever-FCIs and not from scalar *akár*.
- Any-FCIs emerge later than wh-ever-FCIs. Corroborates the hypothesis (together with the strong attestation of reinterpretation situations) that any-FCIs derive from wh-FCIs.

Diachronic evidence for a Rawlins-style analysis of unconditionals (conjunction of antecedents, pointwise functional application)

- Two models:

(24) $[p \rightarrow r] \text{ AND } [q \rightarrow r]$ conjunction, pointwise

(25) $[p \text{ OR } q] \rightarrow r$ disjunction, flat

- Old and Middle Hungarian:

- Antecedents connected by (é)s 'and': $[p \rightarrow r] \text{ AND } [q \rightarrow r]$
(deletion under identity)

(26) *Annak okairt akar ill'unk 's akar meghall'unk*

therefore if.UNCOND live and if.UNCOND die

az vristenę vağunk .

the Lord's are

‘Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.’ (KJV: Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.)

Sylvester Bible (1541), Romans 14:8

- unconditionals with distinct (though in some sense similar) consequents: [p->r] AND [q->r’]

(27) *Mert akár élünk, az Úrnak elünk,*

for if.UNCOND live the Lord.for live

akár meg-halunk, az Úrnak halunk-meg.

if.UNCOND PRT-die the Lord.for die.PRT

‘For whether we live, we live for the Lord, whether we die, we die for the Lord.’

Káldi Bible (1626): Rom 14:8

(KJV: 'For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord')

Szabolcsi (2019)

- attempt to give unified account for unconditionals and free choice on a non-interrogative basis (contra Rawlins 2003) in the universal free-choice paradigm
- empirical claim: „in Hungarian, AKÁR expressions serve as NPIs, FCIs, and unconditional adjuncts, but not as interrogatives or free relatives”
- I argued above that *akár*-expressions do serve as free relatives and the fact that they undergo obligatory focusing in unconditionals and free-relatives hints strongly at some interrogative business going on
- Szabolcsi (2019) claims that focusing is not obligatory in so-called non-modal unconditionals (ones lacking ignorance or indifference inferences):

(28) *Akárki bejött, nyikorgott a padló.*

whoever PRT.came squeaked the floor.

'Whoever entered, the floor squeaked.'

- I respectfully argue that this is an inaccurate parsing of the sentence, and the correct one is this (for a more detailed discussion, cf. Halm (2013) and Halm (2016a: 152-154)):

(29) *(Ha) akárki bejött, nyikorgott a padló.*

if anyone PRT.came squeaked the floor.

'If anyone entered, the floor squeaked.'

- As far as another example discussed in Szabolcsi's (2019) is concerned, I find, together with numerous informants, that it is actually unacceptable:

(30) #*Akár Mari, akár Kati bejött, nyikorgott a padló.*

either Mary or Kate PRT.came squeaked the floor

intended: 'Whether Mary entered or Kate entered, the floor squeaked.'

- The sentence becomes fully acceptable, however, if the order of the particle and the verb is reversed, in line with my proposal:

(31) *Akár Mari, akár Kati jött be, nyikorgott a padló.*

either Mary or Kate came PRT squeaked the floor

'Whether Mary entered or Kate entered, the floor squeaked.'

- More generally, a fully compositional analysis of all things *akár* runs into the problem that while as far as FCIs and ever-FRs are

concerned, the *akár*- and *bár*-paradigms have identical behaviour and functions, this does not extend to alternative unconditionals:

(31) *Akár szorgalmas vagy, akár lusta vagy...*

if.UNCOND diligent are if.UNCOND lazy are

'(No matter) whether you are diligent or lazy, ...'

(32) **Bár szorgalmas vagy, bár lusta vagy*

??? diligent are ??? lazy are

- In general, free-standing *akár* 'even' and free-standing *bár* 'even though' do not have the same meaning
- To conclude: all things *akár* are indeed connected, but in some cases, only diachronically.

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