Want, **unconditionals and scalar particles: the sources of free choice items in Hungarian**

INTRODUCTION: The diachronic formal semantics of free choice items has received considerable interest recently (Aguilar-Guevara et al. 2010, Gianollo 2018), as has the connection between free choice and unconditionals (Šimík 2018, Szabolcsi 2019, Fălâus & Nicolae 2021). In this paper, we present a detailed corpus-supported analysis (based on the Old Hungarian Corpus), with the aim to exactly map how the *akár*-paradigm of free choice items emerged in Hungarian. While it has been hypothesized for a long time that the ultimate source of the paradigm is the verb *akár* 'want', the actual diachronic pathway and the locus and mechanism of reinterpretation has not been clearly and properly understood. We will show that *akár* 'unconditional if' was the main conduit, and the scalar particle *akár* played at most a secondary role. We will also show that corpus data corroborate the observation of Bende-Farkas (2015) that the *akár*-paradigm was first limited to free choice relatives and only later gained use as a general, non-relative free-choice item. The chart below shows our proposal: the full lines indicate pathways that played a dominant role and the dotted lines ones that played at most a secondary role:
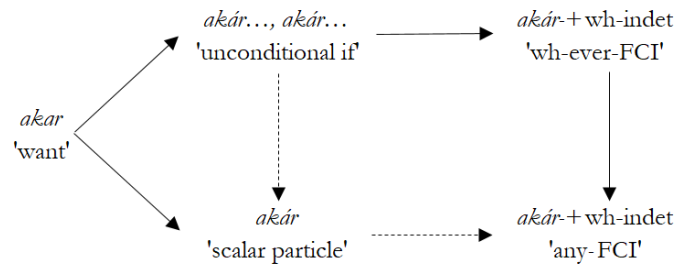

Table 1: Grammaticalization pathways

These findings help us further explore the synchronic as well as diachronic connection between unconditionals and free choice, as well as contribute to a fuller understanding of the diachrony of quantification in Hungarian.

FROM WANT TO UNCONDITIONAL IF AND SCALAR PARTICLE: In modern Hungarian, *akár* can be used as 'unconditional if' and as a 'scalar particle':

(1) *Akár   elutazik   János, akár   otthon   marad,*
    if.UNCOND PRT.travel.3SG John if.UNCOND at.home stay.3SG
    a   mobilján   biztosan   eléred.
    the   cell.3SG.on surely   PRT.reach.3SG
    '(No matter) whether John will travel away or stay at home, you will be able to reach him on his cell.'

(2) *Akár 100   kilométert   is   lefut   János.*
    even 100 kilometres.ACC too   PRT.run.3SG   John
    'John can run as many as 100 kilometres.'

It is assumed in the historical linguistic literature that *akar* 'want' is the source of both *akár*s (Kassai 1817, Czuczor & Fogarasi 1862, Simonyi 1881). Klemm (1928) proposed (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'. However, our detailed corpus analysis will show that in Late & Middle Hungarian, *akár* is almost exclusively found as introducing unconditions. Based on this, we propose that unconditions were the locus of reinterpretation. In Old, Middle and Modern Hung., *ha* 'if' could be used in unconditionals too, and optional if-drop was widespread:

(3) a. *(Ha) akar-Ø,   elutazik,   (ha)   akar-Ø,   itthon   marad-Ø […]*
        if   want-3SG PRT.travel.3SG if   want-3SG   at.home stay-3SG
    b. *akar   elutazik,   akar,   itthon   marad-Ø,*
        if.UNCOND PRT.travel.3SG if.UNCOND at.home stay-3SG
        'Whether he wants to travel away or he wants to stay at home, […].'

The change from *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 (Horger 1994). *Akár* 'scalar particle' will be argued to have been derived directly from *akar* 'want', again in an optional if-drop environment:

(4)a. *(Ha) akar-Ø,   tíz   könyvet   is   hozhat.*
     if   want-3SG   ten   book.ACC   too   bring.POSS.3SG
     'If he so wants, he may bring as many as 10 books.'

   b. *Akár tíz   könyvet   is   hozhat.*
     even ten   book.ACC   too   bring.POSS.3SG
     '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 possible (to be discussed in the talk).

THE RISE OF THE FREE-CHOICE PARADIGM: Quantification in Old Hungarian was expressed by way of indeterminate pronouns bound by propositional operators (Bende-Farkas 2015). We argue based on historical data such as below that at first, this was the case with *akár*-FCIs too: a sentence-initial free-choice operator was binding one or more sentence-initial wh-indeterminates:

(5) *akár   hol   mit   talál,   mindent   össze   szed* (AL. 216)
    FC-OP   where   what.ACC   find.3SG everything.ACC PRT   collect.3SG
    'No matter what he finds and where, he collects everything.'

Furthermore, we will propose that the grammaticalization locus was the following:

(6) *akár   ki   mit   mond   mégis   meg   teszem*
   a. if.UNCOND somebody   something.ACC say.3SG   yet   PRT   do.1SG
    'Even if somebody says something, I will do it.'
   b. FC-OP   who   what.ACC   say.3SG   yet   PRT   do.1SG
    'Whoever says whatever, I will still do it.'

This is corroborated by our corpus data which indicate that i) in the earlier sources, *akár*+pronoun expressions were limited to sentence-initial position (a fact noted by Bende-Farkas 2015) and ii) *akár*+wh expressions were without exception free choice relatives (wh-ever-FCIs). It is only gradually that *akár*+wh expressions appear sentence internally and as any-FCIs, in connection with the very final step of grammaticalization, which was the the merger of *akár* 'free-choice operator' with the wh-indeterminates to yield the current set of free choice pronouns of Modern Hungarian:

(7) *akárhol   akármit   talál,   mindent   össze   szed*
    FCI-where   FCI-what.ACC   find.3SG everything.ACC PRT   collect.3SG
    'Whatever he finds wherever, he collects it all.'

Our proposals will be underpinned by detailed corpus data on the uses of *akár* in Late Old Hung.:

Date	Text	uncondi tional if	wh-ever-FCI/FC-op	any-FCI	wh-ever-FCI/FC-op OR any-FCI	if.uncond OR wh-ever-FCI/FC-op	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
Total		100	30	31	10	12	5	4	7	199

- No FCIs before 1500. Corroborates assumption that FCIs derive from unconditional if.
- No scalar *akár* before 1536: some support to the idea that scalar *akár* derives from if.uncond and not directly from want.
- Any-FCIs emerge earlier and are more numerous the 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.