

The prosody of independent and dependent clauses with *ha* 'if' and *mintha* 'as if' in Hungarian

Csilla Ilona DÉR¹ & Alexandra MARKÓ²

¹HUN-REN Hungarian Research Centre for Linguistics & Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church

²MTA – HUN-REN Hungarian Research Centre for Linguistics, Lendület Neurophonetics Research Group

Among the various types of subordinate clauses without a main clause, independent (or insubordinated) clauses form a distinct category. These clauses have become conventionalized as independent (main) clauses in language use (Evans 2007) and carry a specific pragmatic—typically interpersonal—added meaning compared to their dependent counterparts (e.g., positive or negative attitudes and evaluations: joy, cursing, indignation, refutation). Formally, (1) they do not differ syntactically from their dependent counterparts, that is, from the subordinate clause of a complex sentence (2) with a main clause or (3) an ellipsed main clause. This can be illustrated with the example of *ha te mondd* 'if you say so' (cf. Kaltenböck and Keizer 2022):

- (1) – *Szinte hallom, amint rázod a fejed bánatodban és értetlenségemben. Nyugi! Minden szép folyamatosan csúszik ki a kezeim közül.*

– ***Ha te mondd***, Dirk. (MTSz, Gedeon)

if you say.IND.PRS.SG2

'I can almost hear you shaking your head in sadness and confusion. Relax! Everything is slowly slipping out of my hands. – If you say so, Dirk.' – the conditional clause's added meaning: 'I am not sure I agree with you.'

- (2) Lukács: *Gyere, üljünk le egy kicsit a grádicsra!* Máté: ***Ha te mondd***, akkor leülhetünk. (MTSz, Tamási)

'Lukács: Come, let's sit on the steps for a while!

Máté: If you say so, then we can sit down.' – subordinate clause + main clause

- (3) – *De mit csináljak Rómában? – Mindegy, mit csinálsz. (...) Bízd magad a véletlenre. Add át magad teljesen, ne legyen programmod... Megteszed? – Igen, Ervin, ***ha te mondd***.* (MTSz, Szerb)

'– But what should I do in Rome? – It doesn't matter what you do. (...) Trust in fate. Completely let go, have no plans... Will you do it? – Yes, Ervin, if you say so.

– The full sentence: *Megteszem, ha te mondd*. 'I will do it if you say so.'

Recently, a few studies have investigated the intonation of insubordinated clauses, examining the phenomenon from both perceptual and production perspectives, e.g., in Spanish (Elvira-García et al. 2017; Elvira-García 2019; Sánchez López 2019; Royo Viñuales 2023); French (Royo Viñuales 2023); Czech (Fried and Machač 2022); Italian (Lombardi Vallauri 2016). In the present study, we analyse the prosodic patterns of Hungarian conditional (*ha*-conjunction) and conditional comparative (*mintha*-conjunction) clauses for the first time, focusing on three variants of the same syntactic structure: insubordinate, subordinate clause with an ellipted main clause, and subordinate clause preceding/following a main clause (see examples above). Within conditional clauses, we differentiate evaluative, deontic, and assertive types (Dér 2024), while in the case of conditional comparatives, we investigate the most conventionalized evaluative variants (expressing doubt, refutation, irony), e.g., *Mintha tudnád!* 'You don't know (it) [ironic]'; *Mintha válaszoltam volna* 'I answered indeed'. Context-embedded target sentences from read speech are planned to be analysed with respect to prosodic patterns of each semantic-pragmatic type.

Our aim is twofold: to compare both the syntactically dependent and independent patterns in *ha* and *mintha* clauses, as well as the prosodic characteristics of the different types of insubordinated clauses with each other, and to contrast these findings with the results of previous literature. We hypothesize that Hungarian independent conditional clauses also have a particular intonation pattern, differing from their dependent counterparts.

References

- Dér, Csilla Ilona 2024. *Hogy, ha és hogyha* kötőszós függetlenedett mellékmondatok a magyarban. [Independent clauses starting with *hogy* 'that', *ha* 'if' and *hogyha* 'if' in Hungarian.] Manuscript, 193 p.
- Elvira-García, Wendy 2019. Two constructions, one syntactic form: Perceptual prosodic differences between elliptical and independent <si + V indicative> clauses in Spanish. In: Beijering, Karin, Kaltenböck, Gunther & Sansiñena, María Sol (eds.): *Insubordination. Theoretical and empirical issues*. Berlin–Boston: Mouton de Gruyter. 240–264.
- Elvira-García, Wendy, Roseano, Paolo & Fernández-Planas, Ana Ma. 2017. Prosody as a cue for syntactic dependency. Evidence from dependent and independent clauses with subordination marks in Spanish. *Journal of Pragmatics* 109: 29–46.
- Evans, Nicholas 2007. Insubordination and its uses. In: Nikolaeva, Irina (ed.): *Finiteness. Theoretical and empirical foundations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 366–431.
- Fried, Mirjam & Machač, Pavel 2022. Intonation as a cue to epistemic stance in one type of insubordinate clauses. *Folia Linguistica* 56(1): 183–214.
- Kaltenböck, Gunther & Keizer, Evelien 2022. Insubordinate *if*-clauses in FDG: Degrees of independence. *Open Linguistics* 8: 675–698.
- Lombardi Vallauri, Edoardo. 2016. Insubordinated conditionals in spoken and non-spoken Italian. In: Evans, Nicholas & Watanabe, Honore (eds.), *Insubordination*, 145–169. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Royo Viñuales, Victor 2023. *Hypothetical manner clauses in French and Spanish: Prosody co-signals degrees of (in)dependence*. Presentation at the 56th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea. National and Kapodistrian University of Athens – 29th August 2023.
- Sánchez López, Cristina 2019. Optative and evaluative *que* 'that' sentences in Spanish. In: Beijering, Karin, Kaltenböck, Gunther & Sansiñena, María Sol (eds.): *Insubordination. Theoretical and empirical issues*. Berlin–Boston: Mouton de Gruyter. 291–319.
- MTSz = Magyar Történeti Szövegtár [Hungarian Historical Database] [1772–2020]. <http://clara.nytud.hu/mtsz/>