A unified analysis of Hungarian *ugye*-utterances

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Introduction. Hungarian *ugye* appears both in sentences encoding question acts (1a), and in sentences encoding assertions (1b). I refer to the former type of construction as *ugye*-Q, and to the latter type as *ugye*-A.

(1)
    a. \Ott   magyarul   beszéltek,   ^ugye?   *ugye*-Q
       there   Hungarian.INspoke.3PL   UGYE
       'There you spoke Hungarian, didn't you?'

    b. \Ott   ugye magyarul   beszéltek.   *ugye*-A
       there   UGYE Hungarian.INspoke.3PL
       'There, you know, they spoke Hungarian.'

Ugye is one of the most commonly used "discourse particles" in contemporary Hungarian spoken language. *ugye*-Qs represent the older use, *ugye* originating as a compound (consisting of the demonstrative adverb úgy 'so' and the interrogative particle –*e* meaning 'is that right?' (see Benkő 1967). *Ugye*-A is a more recent development appearing mainly in spoken language. In this latter type of construction, *ugye* marks basically that the information encoded by the sentence is part of the common knowledge of the discourse participants according to the speaker (see Gyuris 2009). The main research question is whether there is a common contribution of *ugye* in *ugye*-Qs and *ugye*- As, and if so, how we can account for this contribution in current formal discourse theories. The goal of the present talk is to give the outline of a comprehensive and unified analysis of Hungarian utterances containing *ugye* based on data from corpus studies, syntactic questionnaires, and pragmatic experiments.

Background.

Most recent Hungarian descriptive works (e. g. Keszler 2000; Kenesei et al. 1998) focus on the *ugye*-Q construction, and tend to ignore the *ugye*-A construction.

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Kenesei et al. (1998) treats *ugye* as a *question tag* whose function is to mark *leading questions*. In the descriptive tradition as well (e. g. H. Molnár 1968), *ugye* was sometimes treated as an *interrogative marker*: as opposed to the *-e* question particle which marks neutral polar questions (see Gyuris 2017), *ugye* is treated as the marker of *biased questions*. More recently, Gyuris (2009) convincingly argued that *ugye* cannot be an interrogative marker, as the sentence type of *ugye*-Qs seems to be non-interrogative. She also argues for a possible unified interpretation (Gyuris 2009), and provides one such account in Gyuris (2018). Recent corpus-based functional linguistic studies (e. g. Schirm 2009; Abuczki 2015) treat *ugye* as a *discourse marker* (or *discourse particle*), and illustrate its multi- functionality citing more and more different "shades" of its meaning (e. g. "rhetorical surplus", "emotional surcharge", "persuasive strategy", etc.).

Data.

Word order in Hungarian is flexible; preverbal positions encode "discourse functions" (É. Kiss 2002). The position of *ugye* is not fixed either, it can appear in almost every position of the sentence both in *ugye*-Qs and *ugye*-As (2a–b).

(2)
  a. (^Ugye) ott (^ugye) magyarul (*ugye) beszéltek?
  b. \(Ugye) ott (ugye) magyarul (*ugye) beszéltek (ugye).

However, a prototypical *ugye*-Q (as in (1a)) contains a sentence final *ugye*; the sequence preceding it has a falling intonation contour (as in default declaratives; it is marked above by "\"), and *ugye* constitutes an independent prosodic unit, it bears a rise-fall contour (which is the marker of polar interrogatives in Hungarian; it is marked above by "^"). A prototypical *ugye*-A (as in (1b)) contains a preverbal *ugye*, which does not constitute an independent prosodic unit, and the whole sequence has falling contour. If an *ugye*-Q contains a non-sentence-final *ugye* (2a), the particle does not constitute an independent prosodic unit, and the whole sequence has a rise-fall contour (as in default polar interrogatives in Hungarian).

The structure of the talk.

The first part of the talk presents the formal (syntactic, prosodic), and functional (semantic, pragmatic) properties of *ugye*-utterances based on corpus studies and syntactic questionnaires. It is shown that the form of *ugye*-Qs and that of *ugye*-As are typically different, although this difference is not categorical, rather prototypical. It is argued that the sentence type of *ugye*-Qs is complex, contains a declarative anchor and a interrogative tag. Thus, in *ugye*-Qs *ugye* is analyzed as an invariant question tag, and prototypical *ugye*-Qs can be described as tag questions (cf. Kiefer 1988; Kenesei et al. 1998; Gyuris 2009; Abuczki 2015; Molnár 2019). Formal characteristics of *ugye*-As suggest that they should be treated as pure declaratives, although this analysis may cause troubles of a unified account of *ugye*-utterances (cf. Gyuris 2009; 2018). It is shown that a clear distinction between the two uses can be made on the level of speech acts.

The second part of the talk focuses on *ugye*-Qs as tag questions. Tag questions are non-neutral (or biased) questions, so they are not typically used for information-seeking purposes, their function is rather to ask for confirmation for the proposition expressed by the declarative anchor. I am following the tradition of work (Ladd 1981; Büring – Gunlogson 2000; Farkas – Bruce 2010; Northrup 2014, among others) according to which the choice among forms realizing question acts is based on contextually available information, more precisely, on the availability of contextual evidence (called as "current evidence" by Northrup 2014) and the speaker's beliefs, expectations (called as "prior evidence" by Northrup 2014). Hypotheses about the different "bias profiles" of different *ugye*-Q forms were formulated, and were tested in three pragmatic experiments, whose findings confirm that the availability of contextual evidence (current or prior) has an impact on the preference of one form over an other, but a clear-cut "division of labour" among tag question forms has not been confirmed.

The third and last part of the talk proposes a possible uniform interpretation of *ugye*-utterances based on the discourse model of Farkas – Roelofsen (2017). It is argued that *ugye*-sentences (either *ugye*-Qs or *ugye*-As) are uniformly declarative and denote the propositional content of the sentence without *ugye*. Thus, uttering an *ugye*-sentence puts {p} (and not {p, ¬p}) on the conversational TABLE. The function of *ugye* is to provide information about the credence level of the speaker concerning p, in other words, it informs the addressee about the strength of the speaker's commitment towards the truth of p. Intonation plays a distinctive role: (i) If *ugye* is pronounced with an independent rise-fall contour, the credence level of the speaker is low (in other

words: the speaker commitment is weak). In that case, the speaker seeks for confirmation from the partner in order to remove the issue raised by the utterance form the conversational TABLE (ideally by putting it to the COMMON GROUND). (ii) If *ugye* bears no independent intonation contour, the speaker's credence level is high or maximal (the speaker commitment is strong), that is, she takes the piece of information for granted. Uttering the latter type has the discourse effect that the propositional content of the sentence can be removed from the TABLE and can be put directly into the COMMON GROUND without the partner's explicit reaction.

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