

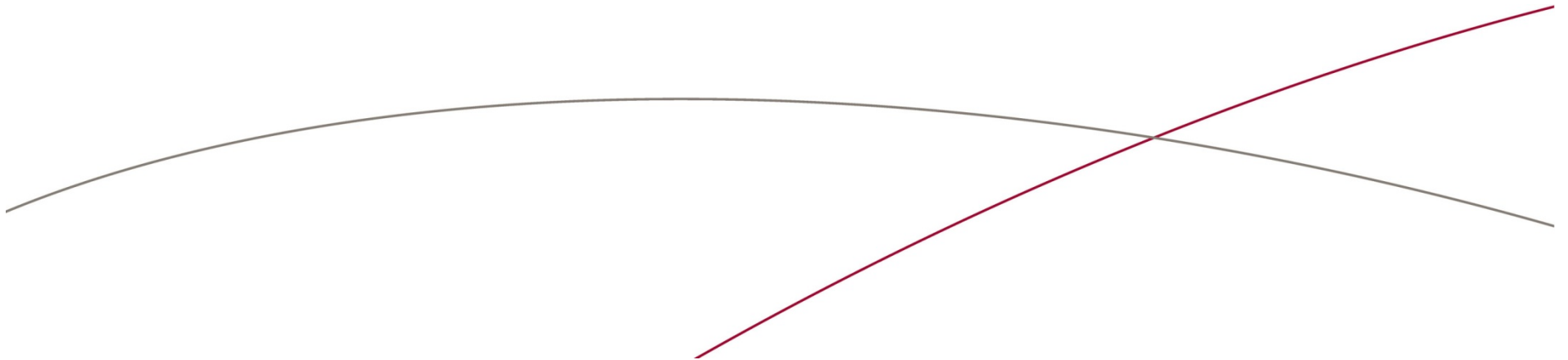


# Rethinking clausal asymmetries

## The case of Swedish and Hungarian

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**The aim of this talk:**

**SYNTAX**

**SEMANTICS**

**PRAGMATICS**

} of propositional pronoun  
insertion  
in Swedish and Hungarian



- 1: Propositional pronoun insertion is dependent on the syntactic type of embedded clause.
- 2: Syntax universally provides for two different clause types: those with Edge-feature (EF) on C and those without EF.
- 3: EF is semantically vacuous and can be associated to different content.
- 4: In Swedish, EF is associated to *evaluability*, in Hungarian to *predicationality*.
- 5: The semantic difference w.r.t. EF has consequences for information structure:  
Swedish: *det* backgrounding vs. Hungarian: *azt/AZT* focusing



*Att*-clauses allow *det*-insertion following certain predicates:

- (1-s) Peter **sa** (*det*) att de ofta samlas efter jobbet. (*assertives*)  
Peter said it that they often gather after the work  
'Peter said that they often gather after work'
- (2-s) Peter **ångrade** (*det*) att han tackat ja till festen. (*factives*)  
Peter regrets it that he thanked yes to the party.the  
'Peter regrets that he accepted the invitation'
- (3-s) Peter **tvivlar på** (\**det*) att de kommer ikväll. (*non-assertives*)  
Peter doubts part. it that they come tonight  
'Peter doubts that they will come tonight'



*Hogy*-clauses allow *azt*-insertion following assertive predicates, but not following factive and non-assertive predicates:

- (1<sub>-H</sub>) Péter (*azt*) **mondta**, hogy gyakran összejönnek munka után.  
Peter it-ACC said that often gather-PL.3 work after  
'Peter said that they often gather after work'
- (2<sub>-H</sub>) Péter (\**azt*) **bánja**, hogy elfogadta a meghívást.  
Peter it-ACC regrets that accept-PAST.SG.3 the invitation-ACC  
'Peter regrets that he accepted the invitation'
- (3<sub>-H</sub>) Péter (\**azt*) **kétli**, hogy jönnek ma este.  
Peter it-ACC doubts that come-PL.3 today evening  
'Peter doubts that they will come tonight'



# The problem: Swedish vs. Hungarian

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## Similarities:

- In complements to **assertives** (e.g. *say*), propositional pronoun insertion is possible in both Swedish and Hungarian.
- In complements to **non-assertives** (e.g. *doubt*), propositional pronoun insertion is *not* possible in Swedish and Hungarian.



# The problem: Swedish vs. Hungarian

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## Differences:

- In complements to (**true**) **factives** (e.g. *regret*), propositional pronoun insertion is possible in Swedish, but *not* in Hungarian

(2-s) Peter **ångrade** (*det*) att han tackat ja till festen. (*factives*)  
Peter regrets it that he thanked yes to the party.the  
'Peter regrets that he accepted the invitation'

(3-H) Péter (\**azt*) **bánja**, hogy elfogadta a meghívást.  
Peter it-ACC regrets that accept-PAST.SG.3 the invitation-ACC  
'Peter regrets that he accepted the invitation'



# The solution: syntax

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## Assumptions:

- *Det/azt*-insertion indicates the availability of Spec-CP.
- The ungrammaticality of *det/azt*-insertion indicates the unavailability of Spec-CP.

## From this it follows...

The insertion of cataphoric propositional pronouns in the matrix clause is dependent on the availability of Spec-CP in the embedded clause.





Spec-CP is an A-bar position, which can be defined as a position attracted by an edge-feature on a phase head (Chomsky 2008).

**Hence...**

The derivation of Spec-CP can be seen as a consequence of the Edge-feature in C.

The EF-analysis differs from the “traditional” EPP-analysis:

“**EPP** is a demand that an Agree-relation must be **visible** at the SM interface, **the edge-feature** a demand that a phase head must have an **A-bar specifier**.”

(Platzack 2008:7)



Per definition, clauses lacking the EF in C lack Spec-CP.  
From a different perspective, the unavailability of Spec-CP indicates the lack of the EF in C.

Only clauses allowing pronoun insertion are endowed with an EF in C.

## **Reformulating the observation:**

In Swedish and Hungarian:

- Assertive predicates select EF complements
- Non-assertive predicates select complements without EF



## **Question:**

Why do complements to factive predicates differ in Swedish and Hungarian?

## **Our answer:**

In a modular framework, Narrow Syntax is only responsible for the actual derivation of Spec-CP, not for the interpretational effects of this position.

EF – different semantic correlates in Swedish and Hungarian



Within a communicative exchange, one can only evaluate (i.e. accept or reject) clauses used by the speaker to assert, presuppose, or entail the truth of  $p$  or  $\neg p$ .

Such clauses are *evaluable*.

Clauses that do not assert, presuppose, or entail the truth of  $p$  or  $\neg p$  cannot be evaluated, and are therefore *non-evaluable*: *yes/no-questions, conditionals, if-clauses, optatives*



# Evaluable clauses

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**Proposal:** Evaluable clauses can be subdivided into two categories.

**Evaluable**

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graph TD; A[Evaluable] --> B[Subjected to evaluation in the on-going discourse]; A --> C[Not subjected to evaluation in the on-going discourse];
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**Subjected to evaluation  
in the on-going discourse**

*declaratives*  
*assertive complements*  
*wh-exclamatives*  
*wh-questions*  
*non-restrictive relative clauses*

**Not subjected to evaluation  
in the on-going discourse**

*complements to factive and  
perception predicates*  
*Att-exclamatives*  
*restrictive relative clauses*



- **Evaluable main clauses are V2 in Swedish ([+Spec-CP])**

(4-s) Jag **har** aldrig någonsin varit i Paris.  
I have never ever been in Paris

(5-s) Vem **vill** någonsin åka till Paris?  
who wants ever go to Paris

- **Non-evaluable main clauses are V1 in Swedish ([−Spec-CP])**

(6-s) **Har** du *någonsin* varit i Paris?  
have you ever been to Paris

(7-s) Måne han *någonsin* bli bättre!  
may he ever get better



Only evaluable *att*-clauses allow insertion of an (optional) expletive *det* ‘it’ in front of the complementizer; *om*-clauses are inherently non-evaluable and never allow *det*-insertion:

(8-s) a. Jag **ångrar** (*det*) **att** jag sårade honom. (evaluable)  
I regret it that I hurt him

b. Peter **tvivlar på** (*\*det*) att de kommer ikväll. (non-evaluable)  
Peter doubts part. it that they come tonight

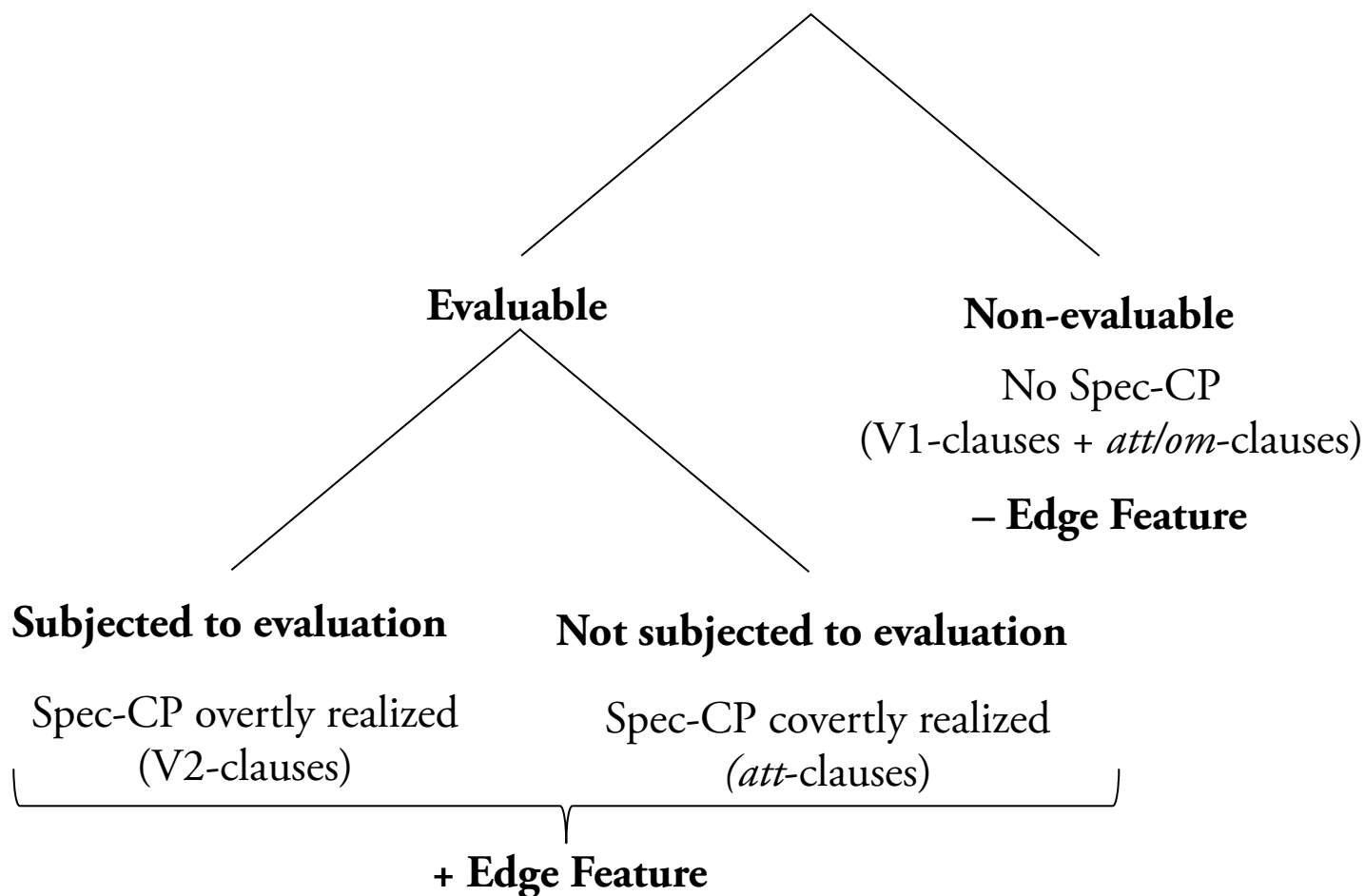
(9-s) a. Jag **ångrar** (*\*det*) **om** jag sårade honom  
I regret it if I hurt him

b. Jag **undrar** (*\*det*) **om** han kommer ikväll  
I wonder it if he comes tonight



# Evaluability and the left periphery

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Complements to assertive predicates may have V2 word order in Swedish. In such cases (10-b), *det*-insertion is impossible:

- (10-s) a. Han nämnde (*det*) att han inte **kom** till festen. (non-V2)  
He mentioned it that he not came to party.the
- b. Han nämnde (\**det*) att han **kom** inte till festen. (V2)  
He mentioned it that he came not to party.the

Assuming that the EF on C can only be instantiated once, the hypothesis straightforwardly accounts for this pattern: the iterated C-domain (hosting the complementizer *att*) lacks Spec-CP.



- The edge-feature on C is responsible for the availability of Spec-CP (cf. Chomsky 2008).
- The edge-feature on C is associated with evaluability in Swedish.
- Factive and assertive complements allow *det*-insertion in Swedish, since both are evaluable.
- Non-assertive complements (as well as *om*-complements and embedded *yes/no*-questions) are non-evaluable and do not allow *det*-insertion.



In our modular approach, the connection between the C-domain and a semantic content is language specific, and may vary cross-linguistically.

In **Hungarian**, the Edge-feature on C is arbitrarily connected to another semantic-pragmatic function, namely the **predicational status** of the clause.



The pronoun *azt* originates in the Spec-CP of the embedded clause (complements to **assertives**), realizing the EF on C. *Azt* moves to the ‘verb-modifier position’, in the functional layer of the matrix clause.

This movement is motivated by the status of the embedded clause: it is predicational (a **speech act**):

(4-H) a. Péter (*azt*) **mondta**, hogy gyakran összejönnek munka után.  
Peter it-ACC said that often gather-PL.3 work after

b. [<sub>PredP</sub> *azt*<sub>i</sub> **mondta**<sub>j</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> *t*<sub>j</sub> [<sub>CP</sub> *t*<sub>i</sub> C<sub>0</sub> ... ]]]]



By associating the EF on C with **Force**, our hypothesis explains why *azt*-insertion is impossible in **factive and non-assertive complements**:

Spec-CP is not available in clauses that lack Force.

(5-H) a. Péter (\**azt*) **bánja**, hogy elfogadta a meghívást.  
Peter it-ACC regrets that accept-PAST.SG.3 the invitation-ACC

(6-H) a. Péter (\**azt*) **kétli**, hogy jönnek ma este.  
Peter it-ACC doubts that come-PL.3 today evening

(5-6) b. [<sub>PredP</sub> \**azt* **bánja / kétli**<sub>j</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> [<sub>CP</sub> – C<sub>0</sub> ... ]]]]



Since the predicational status of the embedded clause is crucial for the realization of Spec-CP in Hungarian, embedded **yes-no-questions allow *azt*-insertion** also when following non-assertive matrix predicates:

(7-H) a. Péter (*azt*) **kérdezte**, hogy találkoznak-e munka után.  
Peter it-ACC asked that gather-PL.3 Q work after

b. [<sub>PredP</sub> *azt*<sub>i</sub> **kérdezte**<sub>j</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> *t*<sub>j</sub> [<sub>CP</sub> *t*<sub>i</sub> C<sub>0</sub> ... ]]]]

(9-s) b. Jag **undrar** (\**det*) **om** han kommer ikväll  
I wonder it if he comes tonight



FOCUS turns the embedded clause – even complements to factives (8<sub>-H</sub>) and non-assertives (9<sub>-H</sub>) – into a predicational entity. Consequently, the clauses (8<sub>-H</sub>')/(9<sub>-H</sub>') are endowed with the EF on C.

(8<sub>-H</sub>) Péter (\**aszt*) **bánja**, hogy elfogadta a meghívást tőlük.  
regret

(9<sub>-H</sub>) Péter (\**aszt*) **kétli**, hogy jövünk ma este.  
doubt

(8<sub>-H</sub>') Péter *AZT* **bánja**, hogy elfogadta a meghívást tőlük.  
regret

(9<sub>-H</sub>') Péter *AZT* **kétli**, hogy jövünk ma este.  
doubt



## de Cuba & Urögdi (2009):

Propose two different structures (origins) for *azt* / *AZT*

- In non-contrastive focus cases: *azt* generated in Spec-*cP*
- In contrastive focus cases: *AZT* generated in Spec-CP

NB! Non-factives select either CP- or *cP*-complements  
Factives only select CP-complements.

## Brandtler & Molnár (2011):

Both *azt* and *AZT* are generated in Spec-CP, instantiating the Edge-Feature on C.

NB! The factive distinction is not important: instead *evaluability* (Swedish) or *predicationality* (Hungarian).





## Argument against de Cuba & Urögdi (2009):

We argue for the parallelism between ECs hosting *azt* and *AZT*:

Both are predicational: the pronouns *azt* and *AZT* move into the **preverbal predicational domain of the matrix clause** in both cases.

1.  $[_{\text{PredP}} \text{ azt}_i \quad [_{\text{VP}} \text{ t}_j \quad [_{\text{CP}} \text{ t}_i \quad \text{C}_0 \quad \dots ]]]]$
2.  $[_{\text{FocP}} \text{ AZT}_i \quad [_{\text{PredP}} \quad [_{\text{VP}} \text{ t}_j \quad [_{\text{CP}} \text{ t}_i \quad \text{C}_0 \quad \dots ]]]]$



# Summarizing the EF-account

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According to the EF-account, syntax provides for two distinct clause types: [+EF] and [−EF]. Cross-linguistically, these clause types can be associated to different semantic content:

## Hungarian:

1. Predicational clauses (+EF):  $[_{CP} \text{Spec-CP: } \textit{azt/AZT} C_0 \dots ]]]]$
2. Non-predicational clauses (−EF):  $[_{CP} \text{Spec-CP: } - C_0 \dots ]]]]$

## Swedish:

1. Evaluable clauses (+EF):  $[_{CP} \text{Spec-CP: } \textit{det} C_0 \dots ]]]]$
2. Non-evaluable clauses (−EF):  $[_{CP} \text{Spec-CP: } - C_0 \dots ]]]]$



Swedish and Hungarian also differ with regards to the **information structural effects** of pronoun insertion.

These differences concern at least the following areas:

- **Focusing**
- **Backgrounding**

The observed differences can all be attributed to the semantic/pragmatic association of EF in Swedish and Hungarian, respectively.



In Swedish, the function of the cataphoric pronoun *det* (as opposed to *azt* in Hungarian) is **backgrounding** (in factives and assertives).

(1-s”) Peter **sa** *det* att de ofta samlas efter jobbet.  
Peter said it that they often gather after the work

(2-s”) Peter **ångrade** *det* att han tackat ja till festen.  
Peter regrets it that he thanked yes to the party.the

(3-s”) Peter **tvivlar på** (\**det*) att de kommer ikväll.  
Peter doubts part. it that they come tonight



In Swedish, the cataphoric pronoun *det* **can never be focused** (as opposed to *azt* in Hungarian). Focusing (*predicationality*) does not affect the syntactic realization of Spec-CP in Swedish (contra Hung.):

(1-s') Peter **sa** (\*DET) att de ofta samlas efter jobbet.  
Peter said it that they often gather after the work

(2-s') Peter **ångrade** (\*DET) att han tackat ja till festen.  
Peter regrets it that he thanked yes to the party.the

(3-s') Peter **tvivlar på** (\*DET) att de kommer ikväll.  
Peter doubts part. it that they come tonight

This pattern is expected, since focusing does not affect the evaluable status of the clause.



In Hungarian, the cataphoric pronoun *azt / AZT* can be focused (as opposed to *det* in Swedish). Focusing (by guaranteeing *predicationality*) affects the syntactic realization of Spec-CP in Hungarian (contra Swedish):

(1-<sub>H</sub>) Péter *azt / AZT* **mondta**, hogy gyakran összejönnek munka után  
Peter it-ACC said that often gather-Pl.3. work after

(2-<sub>H</sub>) Péter (\**azt*) *AZT* **bánja**, hogy elfogadta a meghívást.  
Peter it-ACC regrets that accept-PAST.SG.3 the invitation-ACC

(3-<sub>H</sub>) Péter (\**azt*) *AZT* **kétli**, hogy jönnek ma este.  
Peter it-ACC doubts that come-PL.3 today evening



## SYNTAX:

- two clause types in both Swedish and Hungarian:  
[+/- Edge-feature]
- EF is decisive for propositional pronoun insertion.

## SEMANTICS:

- two different semantic correlates of EF:  
Swedish – *Evaluability*  
Hungarian – *Predicationality*

## PRAGMATICS:

- information structural consequences:  
Swedish – *Backgrounding*  
Hungarian – *Focusing*



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# Truth vs. acceptance of truth

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What is at stake in conversation is not so much the logical or actual truth of a given statement as the *acceptance* of that statement as true (cf. Stalnaker 2002).

As one rejects some physical entity that is offered (pushing it away so that it disappears or goes away (...)), so one may reject a proposition or a proposal. Looked at from this point of view, **assent and dissent**, rather than truth and falsity, would seem to be notions with which we should operate in any account that we give of the difference between the assertion and the denial of  $p$ .

(Lyons 1977:777)



# Previous research

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**de Cuba & Urögdi (2009:37):**

*Azt*-insertion is related to clausal complexity *cP* or CP

– the distinction is based on [+/-] referentiality:

**1. CP: referential entity – V [CP]**

“a referential entity that denotes a proposition without illocutionary force..., a semantic object encoding a proposition ...about which the complex sentence makes an assertion”

**2. *cP*: non-referential entity – V [*cP* [CP ]]** (with add. functional layer)

“a non-referential semantic object denoting a speech act, which adds a new proposition or an open question to the context. A *cP* properly contains a CP both syntactically and semantically.



# Contrastive Topics

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CT: Combination of two features: D-linking and Predicationality

Prediction: in both languages possible –

In Swedish with D-linking *det*, in Hungarian with predicational *AZT*

(11-s) *Det* att de ofta samlas efter jobbet **har** Peter inte **sagt**.  
it that they often gather after the work has Peter not said

(12-s) *Det* att han tackat ja till festen, **ångrar** Peter bittert.  
it that he thanked yes to the party.the regrets Peter bitterly

(10-H) AZT, hogy gyakran összejönnek munka után, Peter nem **mondta**.  
it that often gather-PL.3 work after Peter not said

(11-H) AZT, hogy elfogadta a meghívást, Peter nagyon **bánja**.  
it that accept-PAST.SG.3 the invitation Peter much regrets



## The data – Hungarian: *wh*-expletives 37

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*wh*-expletives (*azt*-insertion) only following certain predicates:

(10) *Mit* **mondott**, hogy kivel találkozott munka után?  
what-ACC said that who-with met work after  
'What did he say that he met after work?'

(11)\**Mit* **sajnál**t, hogy kivel találkozott munka után?  
what-ACC regretted that who-with met work after  
'What did he regret that he met after work?'

Evidence for the claim:

Insertion of *wh*-expletive is only possible in neutral cases

(Contrastive) focusing is impossible in these cases – the EC cannot be predicational



## The data – Hungarian: *wh*-extraction

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*wh*-extraction (specific argument *wh*-phrase) – from assertive and factive complements equally possible:

(12) *Kivel* **mondta**, hogy találkozott munka után?

who-with said that met work after

‘Who did he say that he met after work?’

(13) *Kivel* **sajnálta**, hogy találkozott munka után?

who-with regretted that met work after

‘Who did he regret that he met after work?’

Evidence for the claim:

Extraction of a *wh*-phrase is possible in case of specificity



## The data – Hungarian: *wh*-extraction 39

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*wh*-extraction (non-specific *wh*-phrase) – from assertive and factive complements equally impossible (islands):

(14) \**Hogyan gondolod*, hogy viselkedtél?  
how you-think that you behaved  
'How do you think that you behaved?'

(15) \**Hogyan sajnálod*, hogy viselkedtél?  
how you-regret that you behaved  
'How do you regret that you behaved?'

Evidence for the claim:

Extraction of a *wh*-phrase is not possible in case of non-specificity



## The data – Hungarian: backgrounding 40

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*Hogy*-clauses allow *azt*-insertion following all predicates:

- (1-H) Péter **mondta** *azt*, hogy gyakran összejönnek munka után.  
Peter said it-ACC that often gather-PL.3 work after  
'Peter said that they often gather after work'
- (2-H) Péter **bánja** *azt*, hogy elfogadta a meghívást.  
Peter regrets it-ACC that accept-PAST.SG.3 the invitation-ACC  
'Peter regrets that he accepted the invitation'
- (3-H) Péter **kétli** *azt*, hogy jönnek ma este.  
Peter doubts it-ACC that come-PL.3 today evening  
'Peter doubts that they will come tonight'





## The data – Hungarian: backgrounding <sup>41</sup>

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*Hogy*-clauses allow *azt*-insertion: with focusing, backgrounding  
do not allow *azt*: in neutral cases (-EF)

(2-H) Péter (\**azt*) **bánja**, hogy elfogadta a meghívást.  
Peter it-ACC regrets that accept-PAST.SG.3 the invitation-ACC  
'Peter regrets that he accepted the invitation'

(2-H') Péter *AZT* **bánja**, hogy elfogadta a meghívást tőlük.  
Peter it-ACC regrets that accept-PAST.SG.3 the invitation-ACC

(2-H'') Péter **bánja** *azt*, hogy elfogadta a meghívást.  
Peter regrets it-ACC that accept-PAST.SG.3 the invitation-ACC

