Summary
Multiple Questions in French and Hungarian. A Lexical-Functional Analysis with Special Emphasis on the Syntax-Discourse Interface
PhD Dissertation
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The aim of this study is the analysis of multiple questions in French and Hungarian (1) within the framework of Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG). The analysis focuses on the syntactic and discursive aspects and on their interface. The study of multiple questions is part of a more general approach to discourse functions and discourse structure, since they play an important role in the analysis.

(1) Ki mit csinál? / Qui fait quoi? / Who does what?

I argue for a discourse-neutral syntactic structure in that it does not contain designated positions for discourse functions (for example, topic and focus), not even in the so-called discourse-configurational languages. I define discourse functions exclusively on a semantic and pragmatic basis and systematically distinguish them from formal highlighting techniques.

I examine two LFG representational levels in detail, constituent structure and information structure. Furthermore, I make an attempt to formalize discourse structure as well. The basic units of information structure are not discourse functions, but are based on two basic properties of those: prominence and D-linkedness. Although I treat prominence as a semantic notion, I also aim to formalize, with the help of correspondence functions, that prominent elements are formally highlighted as well. I suppose that such correspondences exist between constituent and information structure, and between prosodic and information structure as well. The former implies that in some languages one-to-one correspondences may exist between certain syntactic positions and the above mentioned i-structure roles.

The interpretation of multiple questions (the type of the answer they expect) can be derived from the correspondence between constituent and information structure in Hungarian. Multiple questions licensing pair-list answers contain at least one D-linked question word, which systematically appears in the designated position for such elements. In multiple questions expecting single pair answers, no such question word is present. As opposed to Hungarian, this information is made much less explicit in the syntax of French.

An important advantage of this approach is that it can account for the so-called neutral sentences that do not necessarily contain a (narrow) focus constituent, and they can even lack a topic constituent in some cases. However, they can contain a set of different elements that share some of their properties with the topic or the focus. Moreover, the analysis makes explicit the relationship between D-linked and non-D-linked question words in pair-list multiple questions.

The proposed discourse structure consists of the sentences constituting a given discourse, more precisely, of their information structures. Furthermore, it makes a proposal on the formalization of the discourse relations between sentences in LFG.

The present study is not only a comprehensive analysis of multiple questions in Hungarian and in French, but it contributes to the research on information and discourse structure, both within the LFG framework and beyond.
In what follows, I present the structure of the dissertation.

The thesis is divided into three parts and ten chapters. Part I discusses the preliminaries of the analysis. In Chapter 2, the empirical domain of the study is presented. First, some basic issues about multiple questions are addressed (syntactic structures, possible answers, etc.), then the multiple question types of Hungarian and French are introduced and illustrated extensively with attested or corpus examples. The aim of this chapter is more the presentation of the data in a framework-neutral way, than arguing for a particular approach or analysis.

Chapter 3 presents some cross-linguistic problems that the analyses of multiple questions have had to face so far, such as the variety of syntactic structures, the subtle differences between two groups of languages that (apparently) exhibit the same syntactic structure, and the lack of multiple questions. This chapter is not specifically about Hungarian or French, its aim is rather to provide an overview of the phenomenon investigated.

The second part of the chapter presents some previous analyses offered and points out in what ways they could not account for all the phenomena adequately. The analyses examined include those proposed in the GB/Minimalist paradigm, in Optimality Theory, and in non-derivational frameworks, such as Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG) and LFG. Since Mycock (2006)'s analysis is also conducted in the LFG framework, it is examined in detail, in order to point out the assumptions that are kept in this thesis, and those that are rejected.

Part II offers the background for the analysis. Chapter 4 prepares the ground for the proposed information-structure representation of the present analysis. After considering previous approaches, the basic notions of information structure are defined (topic, focus, and their subtypes). It is argued that the formal (syntactic and prosodic) aspects are to be consistently distinguished from semantic and pragmatic factors. The former are referred to as highlighting, whereas the latter are exploited in the definitions offered.

The second part of the chapter deals with the semantic analysis of questions, since semantic information is also encoded in the i-structure in LFG. After introducing some relevant theories, the Structured Meaning Approach (Krifka 2001) is adopted as the framework used in this thesis. Finally, the semantic and pragmatic properties of answers are discussed, based on Marandin et al. 2009.

Chapter 5 deals with the relevant aspects of Hungarian syntax, prosody and information structure. Its aim is to provide the necessary background about the Hungarian language. First, the basic syntactic structure of the language is considered in a framework-neutral way. Then some of the most prominent analyses proposed in the past thirty years are presented, pointing out their shortcomings, especially with respect to the treatment of neutral ("all focus") sentences. Then the basic properties of Hungarian prosody are examined. Special emphasis is laid on the discussion of discourse functions in Hungarian, applying the definitions of Chapter 4 on the Hungarian data. This section also introduces new or so far less treated data containing a preverbal focus and a preverbal question word. Finally, the relevant issues on Hungarian question formation are presented.

Chapter 6 examines French from the same perspective. First, the syntactic structure of French is considered, with special emphasis on word order. It is shown that word order can considerably differ from the canonical SVO order in French: for instance the subject can be
postverbal and intersperse with the complements in the case of subject NP inversion, or clitic objects can be incorporated in the verb forms. The concept of syntactic weight (Abeille & Godard 2000) is also introduced, along with its role in word order phenomena and in interrogatives. Furthermore, the prosodic manifestation of discourse functions (focus, thematic shifter) is also examined, both in assertions and in questions. Finally, the basic properties of question formation are discussed.

Part III introduces and illustrates the proposed analysis. Chapter 7 introduces the analysis. First, an account is proposed in the mainstream LFG framework, i.e. following Butt (1996)'s i-structure architecture. Adopting this aspect of (Mycock06)'s analysis, it is assumed that some question words are prosodically highlighted (focused, in Mycock's terminology), but the hypothesis that all question words are focused is rejected. It is shown that there are convincing arguments in favour of the assumption that D-linked question words are to be analyzed as (topics) at the level of i-structure.

However, an alternative i-structure architecture is also put forth, with the aim of capturing a wider range of data. It does not contain TOPIC or FOCUS as i-structure primitives, but considers them as the intersection of the two basic information structure properties (prominent, D-linked) on the one hand, and of discourse structure on the other. This is a formalized way of claiming, for instance, that "focus is the prominent element of answers or corrections".

Furthermore, a possible LFG representation of d(iscourse)-structure is also provided, although its exact formalization necessitates further research. It is represented as a tree-diagram, with the information structures of the individual sentences as its nodes. It also specifies the discourse relations between the individual sentences, based on Büring (2003) and Asher & Lascarides (2003).

In Chapter 8, the analysis of the Hungarian data is presented. First a c-structure is proposed for Hungarian, with the necessary i-structure annotations, representing the mapping function between c-structure and i-structure. The proposed analysis is then applied to the different types of multiple questions. At each type, the c-, the f- and the d-structure of the question (and the answer) are provided, this latter containing the information structures of the individual sentences (which, in turn, contain semantic information). The LFG representation of sentences with a co-occurring focus and question word in the preverbal domain is also considered.

Chapter 9 presents the analysis of the French data in the same way. First the c-structure is presented and motivated, followed by the LFG representation of all multiple question types in French. The correspondences between c- and d-structures account for the relationships between structure and interpretation.

In Chapter 10, a general conclusion is provided.