

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# THE ROLE OF QUESTIONS IN TALK SHOWS

ANITA SCHIRM, UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED

### 1. Introduction

To ask good questions is to know a lot – holds an Arabic proverb. But what is a good question like pragmatically? What are the characteristics of the various kinds of question types? How can questions be categorized? And what is the role of questions in talk shows? In this paper I seek to answer these questions.

I discuss the role of questions in verbal conflict, the types of questions and the language use strategies associated with them through an analysis of semi-institutional moderated talk shows. Various authors have addressed the issue of the categorization of questions (cf. Gruber 2001, Ilie 1999, Heritage 2002), and various typologies of questions have been proposed. These typologies, however, do not deal with the pragmatic characteristics of questions. After an overview of the various typologies, I propose a system of categorization for questions which is based on their pragmatic characteristics and uses the communicative situation of talk shows as a starting point. I provide examples illustrating each type of questions and then demonstrate how individual features of questions – specifically, their sequential place and function – affects their ability to combine. After introducing elementary questions, I discuss the ways they can be combined based on combinatorial calculations. Finally, referring to phenomena related to face work and indirect questions, I describe complex questions as well.

### 2. Previous typologies of questions

Questions have been systematically studied since the antiquity. Aristotle used the term *question*, relating it to thinking and stating that our knowledge consists of answers given to specific questions. During the

antiquity and the Middle Ages it was mostly rhetoric that dealt with questions, recognizing their importance as the means of persuasion and the expression of poignancy. Rhetoric considered questions to be figures of speech, and the following were the most well known types of questions (Szabó and Szörényi 1988): *interrogatio* (rhetorical question), *epiplexis / percontatio* (reproaching question), *subiectio* (monologic dialogue with questions and answers), *dubitatio* (raising of doubt) and *communicatio* (a question concerning a pattern of action to be followed). The rhetoric literature also lists as additional types of questions the meditative question, the consensus question, and the attention eliciting question.

Interrogative sentences are also studied on the basis of their semantic structure (Kiefer 1983), according to which classification we can differentiate between yes/no-questions, wh-questions, choice questions, and open questions, differing from each other regarding their answer sets. Since questions are closely tied to the answers that can be given to them, semantics considers the answers to be the base of the investigation rather than truth conditions (Gronendijk and Stokhof 1997).

In his study on the logic of questions, Ladányi (1962) differentiated between types of questions based on whether the person asking the question knows the answer to it. If the answer is obvious to both the speaker and the listener, the question is promotive (that is, urging or ordering someone to do something) or emotive (expressing an emotion). If the speaker knows the answer and the listener does not, Ladányi talks about a pedagogical question, while in the opposite case, i.e. if the speaker does not know the answer and expects it from the listener, he characterizes it as an informative question.

According to traditional views, questions are aimed at finding out information. That is, when we talk about a question, we think of a formula which is syntactically an interrogative sentence and is aimed at eliciting an answer. In reality, however, answer and information eliciting questions form only one type of questions, namely, standard questions. In addition to these, there also nonstandard questions, that is, questions with which we want to elicit some kind of action rather than an answer, as well as questions that we use because of their argumentative nature rather than due to gaps in our knowledge.

In pragmatics the issue of argumentative nonstandard questions has been addressed copiously, and various typologies of questions have also been proposed. I will cite only two examples from the literature, which are based on different theoretical foundations, those by Gruber (2001) and Ilie (1999). Gruber (2001: 1826) investigates how sequencing is affected by questions and divides non-information eliciting questions into two groups,

focus shifting questions and opposing questions. The former are characterized by the speaker singling out an already mentioned element from a previous conversation and makes it the center of conversation. Opposing questions express opposing statements and can be further divided into the following subgroups: explicit opposing questions (in which the opposing point of view is explicitly expressed), implicit opposing questions (where the opposition is covert), rhetorical opposing questions (where the opposing view is formulated as a rhetorical question), distorting opposing questions (where the opposing view is expressed in the form of a false conclusion), and enticing questions (where the topic is looked at from a new aspect and works more globally).

Unlike Gruber, Ilie (1999: 979) focuses on differentiating between standard and nonstandard questions, classifying argumentative nonstandard questions into three types: rhetorical questions, expository questions, and echo-questions. Rhetorical questions aim at eliciting attention and affecting the audience's opinion. Expository questions are found in opening positions in conversations, while echo questions partly or fully repeat previous utterances.

The main issue I want to raise in connection with the typologies of questions proposed so far in pragmatics is that while they are based on empirical and inductive generalizations, they are not always consistent and are sometimes outright arbitrary. In my experience, no one-to-one correspondences can be drawn between semantic and pragmatic groupings of questions in existing typologies. Furthermore, the same interrogative question can fulfill different functions, depending on the speech situation. Also, the groups of questions proposed by discourse analysis and rhetoric cannot always be assigned clearcut characteristics to serve as the basis of the classification, since the communicative situation is cited as the decisive factor. In my view, if we want to identify the pragmatic characteristics of questions, we need to focus on their context and its characteristics. I start this enterprise by analyzing questions in talk shows and the communicative situation of the debate, and propose types of questions based on this analysis.

### **3. The corpus of data**

In order to describe the characteristics of questions as used in talk shows and create a typology, I analyzed a corpus of talk show data. The corpus consists of 2 hours and 10 minutes of recorded Hungarian talk

show material, transcribed by myself.<sup>1</sup> Of the recorded shows, two were television programs (the programs “Médiaegyensúly – Pro és kontra” [Media Balance – Pros and Cons] and “Közhang” [Public voice], broadcast on the Hungarian TV channel ATV in 2002<sup>2</sup>), while one was a radio show (the program “Zöldindulás” [Greenquake], broadcast on the Hungarian radio channel Fikszrádió in 2001<sup>3</sup>).

Talk shows constitute a special kind of programing in media. A talk show is a typical example of face-to-face interaction, and, unlike news programs, this type of programing provides information while providing entertainment at the same time, so it is basically listener oriented. Talk shows have multiple audiences: first, the directly targeted audience who have an interest in the topic, second, the viewers at the studio, and third, the television viewers or radio listeners who turn on the program incidentally. Talk shows constitute an example of semi-institutional discourse (Ilie 1999: 975), which means that they have to comply with certain expectations and rules during conversation, but control is far lower than in the case of institutional discourse and higher than in informal conversation. Talk shows occur in institutional contexts (on TV or radio), are basically listener-oriented, and have multiple audiences. The institutional character of semi-institutional discourse follows from the fact that there are in-character and non-in-character utterances, while the conversational nature of this discourse comes from the fact that initiating conversational turns, raising questions, and determining the length of turns are not the exclusive rights of the talk show host.

So, we can see that characteristic features of semi-institutional talk shows are role and competency. Therefore, in addition to elements usual in the literature on typologies such as standardness and sequential place, I also add competency as a new parameter in my typology since I consider it to be important to separate the question types used by the two kinds of participants of talk shows, namely, questions by moderators vs. by guests. The reason why such a separation is meaningful and relevant is because asking questions is, to some extent, role-bound in semi-institutional talk shows since there are certain expectations as to who can ask what kinds of questions during the conversation. For instance, guests do not normally ask direct questions about the host’s opinion since it is well-known that the moderator has to remain neutral during a debate (Clayman 1992: 163). Similarly, the moderator’s right to ask questions and the relevance of such

---

1 In the examples cited in this paper I use the Jeffersonian method of transcription (Heritage 1984: ix–xvi). In the examples I denote the moderator by R.

2 <http://www.magyaratv.hu>

3 [http://www.fikszradio.hu/zoldindulas/2001/zi\\_20010410/index.html](http://www.fikszradio.hu/zoldindulas/2001/zi_20010410/index.html)

questions are also usually undisputed. At the same time, guests can ask any kinds of questions of each other in any kind of way. The moderator's questions are only limited by the journalist's need to remain neutral, while the guests cannot ask personal questions of the host or dispute the host's right to ask questions.

I also aim to investigate whether a question asked during a talk show is suitable for the role of the person asking it, that is, whether it can be considered in-character or not. Most of the questions in my corpus are in-character questions, with the number of not-in-character questions being very low. Not-in-character questions can be illustrated by example (1), in which a person does not have competency to ask a question due to the fact that a guest disputes the role that the moderator plays in the conversation:

(1)

R: Jobboldal. Akkor most már azt is tudom, ki kicsoda.

V: Tisztelettel köszöntöm a nézőket. Először is Juszt úrhoz lenne egy kérdésem. *Hogy most moderátor lesz vagy vitapartner?*

R: Jaj, ez a szokásos ízé. Jó. Tessenek parancsolni. Én vendéglátó vagyok, házigazda ebben a műsorban, és mint olyan, természetesen vigyázok arra, hogy ne essenek egymásnak a vendégek.

V: De azért hagyja a két vitapartnerünket kibontakozni.

R: "Right side. Now I know who is who."

V: "It's my honor to greet the viewers. First I have a question to Mr. Juszt. *Whether he'll be a moderator or a guest?*"

R: "Oh, it's the usual thing. OK. Here you go then. I am the host, the host of this program, and as such I monitor that the guests don't get into a fight with each other."

V: "But you should nevertheless let our two guests develop their arguments."

In this example a guest of the program starts the conversation with a seriously face threatening question, disputing whether the host will fulfill his expected role.

#### 4. The structure of talk shows

Semi-institutional moderated talk shows cannot be considered real disputes, in the sense of the Dutch school of pragma-dialectics (Eemeren et al. 1993: 31), which defines dispute as the ideal conflict that involves a confrontation, an opening, an argumentation and a decision. In the talk shows analyzed by me making a decision is not expected, so this discourse event is better characterized as a verbal conflict (Vuchinich 1990) than a

dispute. Verbal conflict is a speech event during which the participants openly confront each other with utterances. The opposition that develops is expressed through linguistic, metalinguistic means (raised pitch, fast pace, overemphatic stress patterns) or gestures (head shaking). Verbal conflict develops between two or more people and ends when opposing turns stop. Participants involved in verbal conflict openly show that agreement between them is terminated.

Regardless of its subject, a dispute always follows the same basic pattern, which can be described as follows. Two speakers, A and B, produce the following pattern during a dispute. A makes a statement in Turn 1 (T1), which B contests in T2. A, in turn, contests in T3 the statement in T2 by either supporting the statement in T1 or openly discussing why they do not agree with T2 (Muntigl and Turnbull 1998: 227). That is, disputes usually follow sequences of three turns, containing two adjacency pairs (T1 and T2, as well as T2 and T3), with the second turn in each pair containing the disagreement.

Questions play an important role in talk shows since, besides asking, questions can fulfill the function of statements, disputing, ordering, changing the subject, maintaining a relationship and many other speech acts. Below, I will discuss the various question types occurring in my corpus, illustrating them in their own contexts and, thus, taking into account the utterance immediately preceding the question, the question itself, and the continuation of the sequence as well.

## **5. A typology of questions**

In a pragmatic investigation of questions the most important aspect to consider in the analysis is their context, since the same question can fulfill different functions in different contexts, while the function of the question largely depends, first, on the role of the person asking it in the context of the situation where the question is asked, and, second, on whether this person follows the pragmatic rules of the given situation or not. Pragmatic groupings of questions cannot be made on the basis of either the grammatical form or intonation, since these are only accompanying features but not characteristics that differentiate various questions from each other. The context of a given question can be characterized, on the one hand, by the institutional character of the speech situation, and, on the other hand, by the roles and competency of the participants.

In order to categorize questions occurring in talk shows I used 4 main criteria: the role and competency of the participant asking a question, as well as the standardness and sequential place of the question itself. As far

as the role of the role of the person asking the question, questions in talk shows can be asked by either the moderator or a guest. A question is the result of competency if it is within the role of the person asking it, while it is not if it does not fit this role. A question is standard if it is asked because of a gap in the knowledge of the person asking it and if this person expects an overt verbal answer, and if the question does not fulfill any argumentative function. Sequential place refers to the place of the question within the turn sequence it occurs in.

Using these criteria, I differentiate between 14 types of questions occurring in my corpus, which can be categorized in one of three classes of questions on the basis of their role within the verbal conflict: dispute directing, argumentative, and clarifying question. The first class, dispute directing questions involve questions that are used to shape the dispute. Argumentative questions serve the purpose of maintaining the dispute, while clarifying questions are standard questions, that is, they are asked in order to obtain information. The question types I propose are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Question types categorized on the basis of role, competency, standardness and sequential place.

class / question type	role	competency	standardness	sequential place	
<b>1. dispute directing questions</b> dispute starting					
	mod	+	not standard	T1 (at start of dispute)	
	clashing topic changing	mod	+	not standard	T2
		mod	+	standard/not st.	T1 (in course of dispute)
<b>2. argumentative questions</b> Socratic	guest	+	not standard	T3	
	negative debating	mod	+	not standard	T1
		mod / guest	+ / -	not standard	T2
	attacking echo attack-back	mod	+	not standard	T2
	mod / guest	+	not standard	after a question	
rhetorical	guest	+	not standard	anywhere	

<b>class / question type</b>	<b>role</b>	<b>competency</b>	<b>standardness</b>	<b>sequential place</b>
<b>3. clarifying questions</b>				
classic clarifying	mod	+	standard	T2
doubtful echo	mod	+	standard	T2
opinion eliciting	mod	+	standard	T1
examination	guest	+	standard	T1
permission eliciting	mod	?	standard	pre-T1

An advantage of this taxonomy is that it recognizes the differences between the two types of participants in the semi-institutional moderated talk show, the moderator vs. the guests. It also takes into account the characteristics of these roles, the function of questions that are asked, as well as the fact that the function of the question type in the conversation is defined by the status of the person asking it. In addition, the role and competency parameters of this taxonomy of questions can be used for the analysis of any other genre besides the talk show as well.

Based on the values of the four parameters used in the classification it might seem that some question types overlap with each other since they receive the same values in the system. However, since the three question classes are proposed on the basis of their function, questions are differentiated functionally even if their characteristics in other parameters are the same. Questions within the same question class are not identical even if they share some of their other characteristics since in the case of their sequencing place I only marked the turn in which they occur (T1, T2, or T3) – in addition to this, I also examine the wider context the question occurs in as it is also crucially important to take into consideration. In the next section, I will discuss the various question types and illustrate them with examples.

## **6. Question types in talk shows**

The first class of questions differentiated by their function are dispute directing questions. Based on their content, all questions to some extent shape and direct the course of a dispute, since all questions determine the answers that can be given in response to them, but these are specific questions whose institutional function is to direct disputes. In semi-institutional moderated talk shows the role of the moderator is to initiate

the conversation and to elicit the opposing views of the guests, as well as to monitor that the dispute does not turn too heated. In accordance with the role of directing, moderator's dispute directing questions which enjoy competency include the dispute starting question, the clashing question (which elicits opposing views and clashes them with each other), and the topic changing question, whereas guests' questions in this category are Socratic questions.

The first type of question in the dispute directing class of questions is the dispute starting question, which is a typically moderator generated question, since it is the right and responsibility of the moderator to start the dispute after introducing the participants of the debate as well as its topic. The function of this question is to present the opposing views of the dispute participants, to ground the basis of the dispute, and to initiate conflict:

(2)

R: De mielőtt ennek kifejtésére kérném röviden, mégis tisztázzuk akkor, hogy hol vagyunk most. Szóval mi a helyzet? *Tényleg van Magyarországon sajtószabadság, olyan sajtószabadság, amellyel elégedettek lehetünk tizenkét évvel a demokrácia indulása után? És a fogyasztókra, a piac szereplőire kell bízni, hogy ha nem tetszik valami, akkor változtassanak?*

B: Én ezt már több másorban kifejtettem, hogy én azt gondolom, hogy Magyarországon sajtószabadság van.

R: "But before I ask to expand on that briefly, let's clarify then where we are now. What is the situation? *Is there really freedom of the press in Hungary, such freedom of the press that we can be satisfied with twelve years after the dawn of democracy? And should we leave it up to the consumers and the participants of the market to change something if they don't like it?*"

B: "I have stated and expanded on this in various programs already that I think there is freedom of the press in Hungary."

The modifying element of the question quoted above (*tényleg* "really"), with the right intonation, implies that the question should be understood as a statement. This statement-as-question is used at the start of the dispute by the moderator to elicit the different views of the guests, that is, he starts the dispute and introduces the topic of the program with this question. A dispute starting question always occurs at the beginning of a turn sequence.

The next kind of dispute starting question, the clashing question is also a typically moderator's question since it is the task of the moderator to

elicit the opposing views of the guests. This question usually occurs following a long and elaborate utterance by a guest and is typically directed at another guest. That is, the typical function of the clashing question is to change the speaker and to assist in developing the conflict, as seen in (3) below:

(3)

B: De alapvetően én azt gondolom, hogy Magyarországon a sajtószabadság létező fogalom.

R: *Ezzel szemben, gondolom?*

A: Én azt gondolom, hogy a sajtószabadság nem az újságírók szabadságát jelenti...

B: “But basically I think that freedom of the press is an existing concept in Hungary today.”

R: *“In opposition with this, I suppose?”*

A: “I do not think that freedom of the press means freedom of journalists...”

The dispute starting question and the clashing question differ from each other in that the former is used to ignite verbal conflict, thus, always occurring in the first turn, while the latter is used to further the already developed dispute by changing the speaker, occurring in the second turn.

The third dispute directing question is the topic changing question, characterized by the person asking it, either introducing an entirely new topic or singling out a point mentioned earlier and asking a question about it. The topic changing question always opens a new turn sequence, as, for example in (4):

(4)

A: Bocsnát, csak hagy mondjam el, hogy ugye riogatták az embereket az MSZP-sek, itt van, egy példát. Elnézést, tényleg nem akarom elhúzni az időt. Tehát itt volt a 23 millió román esete.

R: *Válthatnánk a televízióra, hogyha ezt a témát dobták be? Mert csak a szokásos patronokat hallok pufogatni.*

A: “Excuse me, let me just mention that the Hungarian Socialist Party was scaring people, here is an example. Sorry, I really don’t want to waste the time. So, there was the case of the 23 million Romanians.”

R: *“Can we switch over to the television, since you brought that topic up? I mean I am hearing the usual arguments...”*

The last type of dispute directing question is the Socratic question, a characteristic feature of which is that it uses a pattern of inference to direct

the course of the dispute. According to Labov and Fanshel (1977: 102), it is a yes/no-question which is formulated in order to elicit the standpoint of the interlocutor rather than to find out whether the correct answer is yes or no. As the interlocutor answers each question, the possible arguments that could be used to express disagreement with the final statement are eliminated one after the other. Thus, the ever increasing areas of agreement form the basis of further debate. An example of a Socratic question is the following (5):

(5)

A: De nem működik, mert minden kormány megszállja, és nyomorgatja az M1-es televíziót, és mindig egy, egy vacak dolog van belőle.

B: Azt mondja, hogy minden kormány megszállja.

A: Igen.

B: *Tehát az előző kormány is megszállta?*

A: Nem eléggé Ilona, nem eléggé.

A: "It doesn't work because every government occupies and oppresses the television channel M1, and it always, always produces this awful mess."

B: "You say that every government occupies it."

A: "Yes."

B: "So the previous government also occupied it?"

A: "Not enough, Ilona, not enough."

In the example we can see a very simple pattern of inference unfold in the form of a question. That is, if for every  $x$  ((government)) it is true that  $y$  ((it occupies the TV channel M1)), then for a small subset of  $x$  ((previous government)) it is also that that  $y$  ((it occupies the TV channel M1)). Once one of the participants verified that the premise was true, she asks a question about the validity of a clearly correct inference, the truth of which the other participant admits.

Based on their function, the second class of questions is that of argumentative questions, whose role is to maintain the dispute, that is, to explicitly or implicitly question the standpoint of the other participant and to express opposition to their statement. I can differentiate between 5 different kinds of argumentative questions in my corpus: the negative question, the debating question, the attacking echo question, the attack-back question, and the rhetorical question.

A negative question is, structurally, an interrogative sentence with a negative particle, which can be interpreted as either a statement or a possible standpoint. According to Heritage (2002: 1428–1435), dispute participants do not regard negative questions as questions asking for clarification but, instead, as expressions of possible standpoints or of

criticism of a third party. Accordingly, a response to it is either agreement or disagreement, for instance in (6):

(6)

R: Mielőtt bármit is mondana válaszul, hadd kérdezzek valamit. *Nem lehet, hogy ez a mostani nagyon erős akaratnyilvánítás annak a jele tényleg, hogy érdemes újragondolni az egész 10–12 évet? ... Nem lehet az, hogy egy idő után kénytelenek az emberek levonni a tanulságokat...?*

B: Most én azzal egyetértek, hogy a közszolgáltatóság megjelenését, a jelenlegi minőségét újra kell gondolni, hogy miért lett olyan, amilyen...

R: “Before you answer anything to that let me ask something. *Couldn't it be that this current expression of will is a signal that it would be worth rethinking the past 10-12 years? ... Couldn't it be that after a while people are forced to make some conclusions...?*”

B: “Well, I agree that we should rethink public broadcasting and its present quality, why it turned out the way it did...”

Even though it is linked to a conventionalized structure, a negative question is not solely a structural category since it is associated with a well defined argumentative strategy and face work. Since a negative question is equivalent to a statement, it forces the opponent to take a stand.

A typical question of the argumentative class of questions is the debating question, which occurs in the middle of a turn sequence and is used with the purpose of calling into question the truth value of a previously mentioned utterance, and, by its provocative nature, forces the opponent to develop their arguments. Consider (7), for instance:

(7)

A: Sugár Ágnesnek hívják a hölgyet, aki azt nyilatkozta, hogy az elmúlt négy évben minden, ami a Magyar Televízióban történt, azt el kell felejteni, mert az katasztrófa volt. Tehát ilyen nincs. 2000-ben a Magyar Televízió, a közszolgálati televízió egy csodálatos programot adott le a millennium évének a megünneplése alkalmával, tehát ilyeneket állítani, hogy minden

R: *Melyikre tetszik gondolni? Szilveszterre például? Hogy közbotrány volt?*

A: Nem, tehát ezek a

B: Nem a szilveszterre.

R: Mert világraszóló közbotrány volt a ködben a nem létező táncosok és a többi.

A: “Ágnes Sugár is the lady who said in an interview that everything that happened in Hungarian Television should be forgotten because it was so catastrophic. Well, no, that can't be. In 2000 the Hungarian

- Television, a public television, broadcast a wonderful program marking the turn of the millennia, so to say that everything”
- R: “Which one do you mean? The New Year’s program? That there was a public scandal?”
- A: “No, it’s these”
- B: “Not the New Year’s.”
- R: “Because there was a colossal public scandal about the non-existent dancers in the fog and the rest.”

The first question of the moderator in this example could even function as a question eliciting information if it did not itself provide an answer with further provoking questions. The debating question is typically asked by a guest rather than the moderator.

The attacking echo question is also a member of the argumentative class of questions,<sup>4</sup> whose main characteristic feature is that it repeats fully or partly an utterance that occurred earlier in the conversation. This repetition is also augmented with arguments expressing opposition, thus, questioning the truth value of the original statement. The following example (8) is a case in point:

- (8)
- R: Tavaly mennyi volt, amikor megvette, mennyi volt a kihasználtsága a győri gyárnak?
- P: Ugyanannyi.
- R: *Ugyanannyi? Harminc százalék?*
- A: Tehát még egyszer, amikor megvette, tudta
- P: Azóta van egy gazdasági világválság az egész világon és
- R: *Világválság?* Azt mondják, hogy most dinamikusan fejlődik. Akkor valaki tényleg hazudik. Hát ne a... Elnézést kérek, hát a franc egye meg ...
- R: “Last year to what extent, when you bought it, to what extent was the Győr factory utilized?”
- P: “The same.”
- R: “*The same? Thirty per cent?*”
- A: “So, once again, when you bought it, you knew”
- P: “Since then a global crisis hit the entire world and”

---

4 In the literature (cf. Ilie 1999: 980) echo questions are regarded as a unified class of questions, understood solely as a structural category. However, echo questions differ in whether they express the speaker’s surprise (doubting echo question) or question the truth value of a previous utterance by the dispute partner, also qualifying the previous utterance at the same time (attacking echo question).

R: “*Global crisis?* They say it is developing dynamically. Then somebody is really lying. Well, not... Excuse me, damn it ...”

In this example the reporter repeats the statements of one of the guests on two occasions – with a stress pattern of attack rather than with that of the surprised echo question. The intention of the reporter with this stress pattern and the repetition is to question the guest’s statement and to cast it in a negative light. This is supported by evidence from the wider context as well as the general course of the dispute. The attacking echo question, then, is a nonstandard question type characterized by a strong argumentative function.

The next type of argumentative question is the attack-back question, which always immediately follows a previous question, that is, it formulates another question instead of providing an answer. I have found double attack-back questions in my corpus, as in (9):

(9)

A: Hát szerintem teljes mértékben alaptalanul jutott eszébe.

R: *Mert? Soha nem került ez szóba a tavasz során?*

A: *Mert Ön tud egy oly – bármilyen nyilatkozatot mondani? =*

R: *Nem került szóba?*

A: = *Orbán-nyilatkozatot, Pokorni-nyilatkozatot? Hogy a Trianon revíziójára gondol, tehát*

R: *Kérdezem én, nem hangzott ez el semmilyen gyűlésen?*

A: Nem hangzott el.

A: “Well I think it occurred to them without any foundation whatsoever.”

R: “*Because? It never came up during the spring?*”

A: “*Because you can name such a – any kind of statement at all? =*”

R: “*It didn’t come up?*”

A: “= *A statement by Orbán, another one by Pokorni? If you are thinking about the revision of the Treaty of Trianon, then*”

R: “*I want to ask, was this not expressed in any meeting?*”

A: “No, it didn’t.”

The example contains a double attack-back question, since after the mediator asks one, the guest avoids answering and, instead, asks a question himself – this question is interrupted, in turn, by a new question by the mediator. Finally, when the moderator asks the same thing for the third time, an answer is given. As far as face work is concerned, the attack-back question is aggressive, increasing the verbal conflict in which it occurs.

The last member of the class of argumentative questions is the rhetorical question. This is a question type to which the person asking it does not expect an answer but uses as a figure of speech, as a means of creating effect (Ilie 1999, Gruber 2001). In talk shows, the rhetorical question occurs most often in the guests' argumentative monologue, like in the following example (10):

(10)

A: És maga segítsen nekünk, és mi okosak szépen bújjunk össze, nem így, a televízióban, meg a Parlamentben, hatan-nyolcan; hívjon meg embereket, a Hankiss tanár urat hívja meg, a Verebes Istvánt hívja meg, egy csomó ember a ballibból érti ám, hogy mi mit beszélünk. Hát *Milyen alapon lehet megmagyarázni a magyarországi médiahelyzetet? Melyik isten hatalmazta föl a szoclib tábort, hogy ez így legyen?* Mi ezt vitatjuk, és kérjük a maguk segítségét, és ezért ki kell mennünk az utcára. És akkor engem nem zavar, hogy a magyar ATV-n a Fási Ádám hetvenöt darab műsort csinált egyfolytában MSZP-s polgármesterjelöltekkel és képviselőjelöltekkel, mer' akkor majd a mi képviselőjelöltünk, őket bemutatjuk ott. *De hát így hogy lehet?* Hogy az MSZP-s jelöltek hetvenöt műsorban, a mi jelölteink meg sehol. *Melyik isten hatalmazta fel magukat erre?*

A: "So help us clever people get together, not like this, on television and in the Parliament, six or eight of us. Invite people – invite Dr. Hankiss, and invite István Verebes, a whole lot of people from the among the liberals and the left wing understand what we are talking about. Well *On the basis of what can one explain the situation of Hungary's media? Which god authorized the camp of socialists and liberals to do this?* We are contesting it and are asking for your help, and that's why we have to go out in the street. And I'm not bothered that Ádám Fási made seventy-five programs one after the other on the Hungarian ATV with socialist mayor candidates and candidates for members of Parliament, because then our candidates we'll introduce them there. *But how can this happen?* That socialist candidates in seventy-five programs, while our candidates in none. *Which god authorized you to do this?"*

This long monologue passage demonstrates the characteristics of the rhetorical question well. Its effect creating function is fulfilled by the two uses of the question starting with *Which god authorized you*. It is also clear from the context that the person asking the question is not expecting an answer but uses this question because of its provocative nature. The questions in the above example can be considered as statements rather than questions, namely, statements of the opposite sense. The question *Well on the basis of what can one explain the situation of Hungary's*

*media?* is equivalent with the statement “On no basis at all can one explain the situation of Hungary’s media”, which is further supported by the emphatic stress that the question is given. The question *But how can this happen?* is equivalent to the statement “But this cannot happen”, while the questions *Which god authorized you...?* are equivalent to the statement “No god authorized you...”.

The third class of questions is that of clarifying questions.<sup>5</sup> Clarifying questions are standard questions, their aim is to elicit missing information. The members of this class are the following: the classic clarifying question, the doubtful echo question, the opinion eliciting question, the examination question, and the permission asking question. Clarifying questions are often differentiated from other classes of questions on the basis of their intonation.

The classic clarifying question does not start a dispute or contain an opinion, its only aim is to elicit information. It usually occurs in the first turn of a secondary sequence adjacency pair. The following example (11) contains two clarifying questions:

(11)

A: Támogatni kell a gyer-, azokat az embereket, akik gyermekeket szeretnének vállalni. Erről szóltak az adókedvezményeknek a bevezetése.

R: *Melyik adókedvezményekre tetszik gondolni?*

A: Hát a kettő–a nagycsaládosok támogatása, hogy leírhatják az adójukból a gyermekek után. Tehát ezt a polgári kormány vezette be.

R: *Kik vehetik ezt igénybe?*

A: Én úgy tudom, hogy a két a két és több gyereket ...

A: “Those chil-, those people who want to have children should be given support. That’s what the introduction of tax relief was all about.”

R: “*Which forms of tax relief do you mean?*”

A: “Well, the two, the support to families with more children, that they can deduct it from their taxes. Now, this was introduced by the conservative government.”

R: “*Who is eligible?*”

A: “As far as I know families with two, two or more children...”

---

5 In the literature (cf. Ilie 1999) the term *information eliciting question* is used for this question type. However, because every question asks for some kind of information (as one of its functions), I consider the term *clarifying question* to be more fitting here.

The doubtful echo question elicits information in such a way that the person asking the question repeats the previous utterance partly or fully, e.g. in (12):

(12)

R: Jó estét kívánok! Mai vendégeink: Kocsi Ilona, újságíró, a Magyar Hírlap főszerkesztője, Kerényi Imre, rendező, Madách Színház igazgatója és a Szövetség a Polgár-a-Nemzetért Pol-gári Körök tagja.

A: Nem.

R: *Nem?*

A: Én csak úgy amatőrök ott. Nem vagyok tagja a Szövetség a Nemzetértnek.

R: De olyan, mintha tagja lenne, vagy még olyanabb, mondhatnám.

KI: olyan, igen, igen.

R: "Good evening. Our guests today are journalist Ilona Kocsis, the editor-in-chief of *Magyar Hírlap*, stage director Imre Kerényi, the head of Madách Theater and member of the Alliance for the Civ-the For the Nation Civic Circles."

A: "No."

R: "No?"

A: "I am a total amateur there. I am not a member of the Alliance for the Nation."

R: "But it's as if you were a member, even more so."

KI: it is, yes, yes."

The echo question in this example expresses the surprise of the moderator, who is also trying to cover up his own ignorance by the question, that is, to repair his loss of face. He attempts the same in the next turn as well, where he mitigates his error (*But it's as if you were a member*), and his guest supports him in this, which signals that he does not consider the act face threatening either.

The person asking an opinion eliciting question enquires directly about the interlocutor's opinion in connection with some concrete event. This question differs from the classic clarifying question in that the person asking the question enquires about an opinion rather than about some fact, that is, they are interested in the interlocutor's attitude, regardless of the truthvalue of the content. That is, whereas a classic clarifying question is directed at an absolute fact, the opinion eliciting question at a relative fact. An example of this is found in this conversation extract (13):

(13)

A: Ezután az egyik táborvezető felszólalására – felszólítására meg lehetett köpködni és ocsmányságokat lehetett mondani a szobornak. *Mi a véleményed erről?*

B: Hát én ezzel egyáltalán nem értek egyet. Az más kérdés, hogy erről most hallok először.

A: “After that, at the camp counselor’s command they could spit on the statue and talk filth at it. *What is your opinion about this?*”

B: “Well, I do not agree with this at all. Although I have to add that this is the first time I’ve heard about this”

In the case of the examination question (cf. Searle 1979, Kiefer 1983: 220) the aim of the elicitation of information is not to fill in gaps in the knowledge of the person asking it but rather to see if the person at whom the question is directed has certain information or not. That is, here the information to be elicited is the knowledge of the interlocutor or lack thereof, as in (14):

(14)

A: Először egy rövid kis verset olvasnék föl és ezzel lenne kapcsolatban a kérdésem: Viktor, savanyú a narancs, Viktor, keserű a narancs, Viktor csalódtunk benned, Viktor el kell menned, game over. Az lenne a kérdésem, hogy ezt hol tanítják a kisiskolásoknak. *Tudja-e valaki?*

B: Te olvastad fel a verset, nyilván megvan a forrása.

A: Persze.

A: “First I’d like to read out a short poem and then I’ll have a question in connection with it: Viktor, the orange is sour, Viktor, the orange is bitter, Viktor, we are disappointed in you, Viktor, you must go, gave over. My question is where this taught is to small schoolchildren. *Does anyone know?*”

B: “You read the poem out, you probably have the source.”

A: “Of course.”

The examination question nature of the question is sensed by the other interlocutors, that is evidenced by the response (*You read the poem out, you probably have the source*). The aim of asking examination questions in talk shows, on the one hand, can be to map up whether the interlocutor has a gap in their knowledge, or, on the other hand, can be to create effect.

Permission eliciting questions occupy a special place among questions, since they constitute pre-sequence utterances (Levinson 1983). So, the person asking the question enquires about the conditions of a projected act, and the sequence only starts when the conditions on the projected act are

met. The aim of this kind of question is to avoid an unpreferred (and face threatening) act. The following example (15) is a case in point:

(15)

A: Én úgy gondolom, hogy Gergővel ezzel tökéletesen egyetérthetünk. Sajnálom, ha a hölgy úgy látta, hogy mi itt fröcsögünk. Úgy gondolom, nem fröcsögünk egymással. Felhívtuk egy sajnálatos jelenségre a figyelmet.

R: *Szabad nekem valamit mondanom közbe?*

A: Természetesen.

R: Itt a televíziónál tartottunk és ugye erről szolt nagyrészt ez a beszéd is, hogy a jobboldalnak egy televízió, a polgári Magyaro-

A: Nem csak erről!

A: "I think we can completely agree with Gergő. I'm sorry if the lady thought that we are sputtering. I don't think we are sputtering. We have tried to call attention to an unfortunate phenomenon."

R: *"May I add something to that?"*

A: "Absolutely."

R: "We were talking about television, and this speech was also about this, that the right wing needs a television, a civic Hungary."

A: "Not just about that!"

In this example the moderator "asks for permission" to add something, to enter the dispute. He does so because interrupting an interlocutor is considered to be a strongly face threatening act, and he wants to avoid that by asking a pre-sequence question enquiring about his own competency to ask as well as about the conditions of the projected question. With the permission granted (*Absolutely*), the moderator can ask another question officially with the permission of the interlocutors.

## 7. Complex questions

The various question types do not always form clearly differentiated categories. Sometimes it is difficult to decide which type a question can be categorized under since it bears the characteristics of two different types at the same time and, thus, can be classified under either. Questions like this constitute complex questions.

The term *complex question* is used differently in rhetoric and in pragmatics. In the former (Corbett and Connors 1999: 71), it means connecting two independent questions within one proposition and is associated with logical deception. A complex rhetorical question has an inference hidden within it, and this inference is taken to be true. The

question *Have you stopped beating your girlfriend?* presupposes that the interlocutor beat his girlfriend in the past. In contrast, in pragmatics (Ilie 1999: 982–984), complex questions are questions that combine characteristics of several different question types. In this paper I use the term in this latter pragmatic sense.

In analyzing elementary questions I have experienced that the various types of questions often cannot be clearly differentiated from each other in real life due to the fact that one question also bears characteristics of another, making it a candidate for classification in either class. In my opinion, this, however, does not mean that there are other, so far undiscussed elementary question types but that speakers often stretch the characteristics of a certain type in the direction of another type – which results in their use of complex questions.

Besides acknowledging the existence of complex questions, the pragmatics literature (Ilie 1999), however, has not, so far, attempted to explain the possibilities and limitations of the combination of the various question types, or to explore why speakers use complex questions instead of elementary ones. In the rest of this paper I provide some examples of complex questions and discuss language use strategies associated with them.

In turn sequence number 77 of the program *Zöldindulás* [Greenquake] the characteristics of the rhetorical and debating questions occurred within one question asked by a guest (16):

(16)

R: Ezt a kérdést azért, ha azt jelenti, hogy Győrben is modern a gyár, csak az épülettel van baj.

P: Nem. *Te tényleg ennyire hülye vagy, vagy csak teszed magad?*

R: Én tényleg pont olyan hülye vagyok, mint amilyen hülyét a Danone próbál belőlem csinálni, tehát én megpróbálok most eljátszani azt, hogy én értem a dolgot

R: “If this question means that the factory in Győr is also modern, and only the building has a problem.”

P: “No. *Are you really this stupid, or are you just pretending to be?*”

R: “I am really exactly as stupid as Danone tries to make me out to be, so I am now pretending to not understand this.”

The context of the above exchange shows that the person asking the question is not expecting an answer but intends it as a rhetorical question. As a rhetorical question, then, the question is equivalent to a statement (= “You are really this stupid”) and is only formulated as a question because this way it is less face threatening than as a direct statement. The

moderator, however, still becomes aware of the debating nature of the question and immediately retaliates.

In turn number 97 of the program *Pro és kontra* [Pros and cons] a question asked by a moderator unites the features of a topic changing question and a negative question (17):

(17)

R: *Nincs abban valami, amit én kérdésként fölvettem az elején, hogy valahogy minthogyha egy új fejezethez ért volna ez a vita? Hát állandóan vitatkozunk 88–89 óta ezekről a dolgokról, ugye? Kerekasztal-tárgyalásokban a médiáról nem tudott közös álláspontra jutni a csapat.*

R: *“Isn’t there something in it, something I asked it in the form of a question at the beginning of the debate, that this debate has entered a new stage? We have been arguing about these things since 1988-1989, right? At the round-table discussions this group could not reach a consensus about the media at all.”*

On the basis of its beginning with a negative particle, the first question in this example needs to be classified as a negative question, and it is to be interpreted as a statement (*Isn’t there something in it, something I asked it in the form of a question...?* = “There is something in it”). At the same time, it refers back to a subtopic that occurred earlier in the conversation, thus changing the course of the dispute.

In addition to the two complex questions illustrated above, various other complex questions are also possible in the course of a dispute. The way the questions are combined, however, is not coincidental, since the sequential place and the main function of the question types in question determine which elementary questions can join in the formation of a complex one. Importantly, only those questions can be combined whose sequential places do not exclude each other. This means that a mathematical formula can predict the number of possible combinations of questions based on their sequential places.

By combining questions of the same sequential place and excluding the combination of each question with itself, the number of possible combinations is  $[n \times (n-1) / 2]$ , where  $n$  equals the number of questions that can be chosen in a given turn, so the number of those questions that  $n$  can be combined with is  $n-1$ . The product of the multiplication needs to be divided by 2 because in complex questions the ordering of the component questions is irrelevant, however, the choice of questions implicitly contains the order.

Different questions of the different sequential place can be combined along the  $n \times m$  formula, where  $n$  and  $m$  stand for the number of questions in each group of different sequential place, respectively.

The pragmatic definition of the complex question (“in one question characteristics of several questions occur simultaneously”) does not allow only double complex questions, but triple, quadruple and quintuple complex questions as well and so on. The theoretically infinite number of possibilities is, however, limited in practice, since one question cannot combine any number of any kinds of functions at the same time. The limitation is imposed by the function of complex questions, namely, with the kinds of situations in which and for the kinds of reasons due to which speakers use complex questions instead of elementary ones, that is, what language use strategy is associated with them. In the following section I will discuss this in detail.

## **8. Language use strategies involving complex questions**

In addition to structural rules, disputes also have a social framework they are associated with. In the course of a dispute, saving or threatening what Goffman calls “face” plays an important role in conversation in general, and in disputes in particular. Goffman (1999: 306) defines face as a group of characteristics that a person has, “an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes”. Since we strive to present a coherent image of ourselves, we are forced to save our face if it is threatened. Face saving acts include all those actions and forms of behavior which we resort to in order to maintain harmony of the face we present (Goffman 1999: 307). In interaction, speakers usually attempt to minimize to threaten their face and to maintain it, usually employing strategies with which they can avoid face threatening acts while at the same time also avoiding to protect the interlocutor’s face during conversation.

Though a dispute is a conversational action containing typically face threatening acts because the non-agreements present in it are inherently face threatening, but the participants of the dispute strive to minimize threatening each other’s faces. Analyzing face work in verbal conflict, Muntigl and Turnbull (1998: 225) have found that if speaker S’s utterance T2 threatens speaker A’s face, A responds with a step to restore their face, which, at the same time, threatens B’s face: depending on the aggressiveness of T2, they either defend T1 or attack T2.

As far as complex questions are concerned, dispute participants use these when they want to minimize face threatening and to make the question more indirect. Question types occurring in debates are face

threatening to varying degrees. Depending on whether face threatening is absent or present, we differentiate between neutral and face threatening questions, respectively.<sup>6</sup>

Even in its most neutral form, a question threatens the negative face of the interlocutor in the sense that it limits them in their freedom to act autonomously, since it forces them to answer. In all those instances when face threatening is limited to forcing the interlocutor to answer, I categorize that question type as neutral as far as face threatening is concerned. Neutral questions include those questions that do not affect the face of the person they are directed to. The most typical manifestations of neutral questions are standard questions, i.e. clarifying questions (the classic clarifying question, the doubtful echo question, the opinion eliciting question and the examination question), permission eliciting questions, and topic changing questions. These questions do not involve any provocative or argumentative intention, and, thus, they cannot be considered to be face threatening.

Neutral and face threatening questions cannot be clearly separated from each other – there is a transitional area between the two types. Transitional questions include two types of moderator's questions, the clashing and the dispute starting questions – these can be provocative and hurtful as well, but they follow from the moderator's role, namely, that the moderator has to start the dispute somehow and introduce the different points of view. Thus, since they follow from a specific role, they cannot be considered unequivocally face threatening either and occupy a place in the transitional area.

The face relations of questions occurring in verbal conflict can be defined clearly up to this point. Other problems also arise in connection with face threatening questions, namely, that face threatening can be registered on the level of participant, but the extent of face threatening cannot be objectively defined on the level of analysis, since the face relations of a question can be judged differently by participants of the conflict vs. outsiders. Furthermore, we can never be certain that a question results in the same effect as was intended explicitly or implicitly by the person asking the question. And lastly, the extent of face threatening is influenced by the context as well as by the content of the question.

Of all face threatening questions, the least face threatening is the negative question, which mitigates the threat to face exactly because of its

---

<sup>6</sup> Some questions can be categorized as face protecting questions. However, since no face protecting questions occurred in my corpus of data and since protecting the face of the partner is very rare in disputes, I do not discuss this phenomenon in my paper.

form: a negative question is an interrogative sentence with a negative particle in it which is equivalent to a statement and is associated with a well defined argument strategy and face work. This is so because formulating what we want to say in the form of a question rather than as a statement is a politeness strategy, since it is insulting to ask something than to state it – which, in turn, ensures that a negative question is less face threatening than the statement of identical content. All the other face threatening types of questions (the Socratic question, the debating question, the attacking echo question, the attack-back question, and the rhetorical question) can be more weakly or strongly face threatening depending on the content and context of the question itself. A question becomes strongly face threatening if its aggressiveness follows from breaking the extrinsic rules of conversation rather than from the positioned content. Such cases are the disintegration of the adjacency pair in case of an attack-back question or examples of questions losing competency. The most face threatening acts are utterances that dispute competence and relevance (cf. Muntigl and Turnbull 1998).

On the basis of the above, the following continuum can be proposed as far as face threatening is concerned for the elementary questions occurring in verbal conflict:

NEUTRAL QUESTIONS	transitional	FACE THREATENING QUESTIONS
classic	clashing	negative Socratic
doubtful echo	dispute	debating
opinion eliciting		attacking echo
examination		attack-back
permission		rhetorical
topic changing		

In my analysis I have dealt with face relations of questions in such detail since – in addition to sequential place and function – these constitute a factor that defines how elementary questions can be combined. Complex questions combine two question types, and the face threatening done by the more face threatening question is mitigated by the other question type. That is, it is the unspoken intention of the speaker to mitigate face

threatening that motivates the speaker to use a complex question, which can thus be considered a politeness strategy.

The continuum of questions proposed on the basis of how face threatening they are demonstrates that a complex question always combines a less face threatening question with a more face threatening one. It does so in order to protect the faces of both the person asking the question and the one of whom the question is asked, by mitigating the directness of the question.

## 9. Conclusion

In this paper I have investigated questions occurring in talk shows from a pragmatic aspect to see what role they play in developing and maintaining verbal conflict. I have analyzed three semi-institutional moderated talk shows. To complement the aspects of analysis proposed in the literature (Ilie 1999, Gruber 2001), namely, standardness and sequence, I have proposed further parameters, role and competency, as well, since I consider it important to differentiate between questions used by different participant types of talk shows. Thus, I have proposed separate moderator's and guests' questions. I have also checked whether a question fits the role of the person asking it, that is, whether the person has competency to ask it or not. Using these aspects in the course of an empirical and inductive analysis, I have differentiated between 14 types of questions in my corpus, which, on the basis of their role in verbal conflict, can be classified in three large classes of questions: dispute directing, argumentative, and clarifying question classes. In my analysis I have characterized all 14 types of questions and illustrated them with examples.

In the differentiation process, types of elementary questions did not always occur in their pure forms, but sometimes they combined to form complex questions. Such combinations do not, however, present a shortcoming in the proposed typology of questions, since the analysis showed that complex questions are associated with well defined language use strategies which form a part of face work. The most important function of complex questions is to make the question more indirect and to minimize the threatening of face.

## References

Clayman, Steven E. "Footing in the achievement of neutrality: The case of news-interview discourse." In *Talk at Work: Interaction in Institutional*

- Settings* edited by Paul Drew and John Heritage, 163-198. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Corbett, Edward P.J. and Robert J. Connors. *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Eemeren, Frans H. van, Rob Grootendorst, Sally Jackson and Scott Jacobs. *Reconstructing Argumentative Discourse*. Tuscaloosa: Alabama University Press, 1993.
- Goffman, Erving. "On face work: An analysis of ritual elements in social interaction." In *The Discourse Reader* edited by Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland, 306-320. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Gronendijk, Jeroen and Martin Stokhof. "Questions." In *Handbook of Logic and Language* edited by Johan Van Benthem and Alice ter Meulen, 1055-1124. Amsterdam: Elsevier Science, 1997.
- Gruber, Helmut. "Disagreeing: Sequential placement and internal structure of disagreements in conflict episodes." *Text* 18 (1998): 467-503.
- . "Questions and strategic orientation in verbal conflict sequences." *Journal of Pragmatics* 33 (2001): 1815-1857.
- Heritage, John. "The limits of questioning: Negative interrogatives and hostile question content." *Journal of Pragmatics* 34 (2002): 1427-1447.
- . "Transcript notation." In *Structures of Social Action*, edited by J. Maxwell Atkinson and John Heritage, ix-xvi. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Ilie, Cornelia. "Question-response argumentation in talk shows." *Journal of Pragmatics* 31 (1999): 975-999.
- . "Semi-institutional discourse: The case of talk shows." *Journal of Pragmatics* 33 (2001): 209-254.
- Kiefer, Ferenc. "A kérdő mondatok szemantikájáról és pragmatikájáról." [On the semantics and pragmatics of interrogative sentences]. In *Tanulmányok a mai magyar nyelv szövegtana köréből*, [Studies on modern Hungarian syntax] edited by Endre Rácz and István Szathmári, 203-230. Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1983.
- Labov, William and David Fanshel. "Rules of discourse." In *Therapeutic Discourse: Psychotherapy as Conversation*, edited by William Labov and David Fanshel, 71-111. New York: Academi Press, 1977.
- Ladányi, Péter. "A kérdő mondatok logikai analizéséhez. (Egy interrogatív logika vázlata)" [A logic analysis of interrogative sentences: A sketch of an interrogative logic]. *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények* 64 (1962): 187-207.

- Levinson, C. Stephen. "Presequences." In *Pragmatics*, edited by C. Stephen Levinson. 345-364. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Muntigl, Peter and William Turnbull. "Conversational structure and facework in arguing." *Journal of Pragmatics* 29 (1998): 225-256.
- Schirm, Anita. *A kérdések szerepe a verbális konfliktusban [The role of questions in verbal conflict]*. In: [http://www.nytud.hu/NMNyK/schirm\\_eloadas.pdf](http://www.nytud.hu/NMNyK/schirm_eloadas.pdf) VII. Nemzeti Magyar Nyelvtudományi Kongresszus, Budapest, 2004.
- Searle, John R. "The structure of illocutionary acts." In *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, edited by John R. Searle, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- Szabó, G. Zoltán and László Szörényi. *Kis magyar retorika [Concise rhetoric of Hungarian]*. Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1988.
- Vuchinich, Samuel. "The sequential organization of closing in verbal family conflict." In *Conflict Talk: Sociolinguistic Investigations of Arguments in Conversation*, edited by Allen D. Grimshaw, 118-138. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Anita Schirm is assistant professor at University of Szeged, Department of Hungarian Linguistics. Her main research interests are morphology, pragmatics and discourse analysis. Her recent works include morphological forms of alienable and inalienable possessions, discourse markers, and pragmatical aspects of new communication methods like billboards and hoax e-mails.