

Possible Teaching Methods for Drilling Simple Sentence Word Order in Teaching Hungarian As a Foreign Language

1. Introduction

»Teachers teaching Hungarian as a foreign language start correcting flawed word order from the start without fail for the simple reason: there are no rules, according to which one could generate a well-formed sentence/text with a correct word order.«¹ Naumenko-Papp Ágnes is a tutor for teaching English as a foreign language. She has drawn attention to a most delicate issue of teaching Hungarian. »Hungarian is generally considered a language with a »free« word order«². Free word order results in a multiform syntactic representation of a single semantic panel. In addition, sentences constituted by the same words would generate a brand new meaning in comparison with another syntactic combination constituted by the very same words, or, for that matter, might provide delicate discursive differences in its meaning. Therefore Hungarian does not have a »free word order« but one with a »word ordering algorithm that has not yet been depicted« (ibid). We, native speaker regularly do make use of the choices provided by this syntactic variability. Selection within this prolific set of formatted sentences, however, goes on almost unconsciously.

Are there syntactic rules for the word order in the Hungarian language that can be depicted explicitly? If there are explicit rules, how can we drill them when teaching word order skills? How could these rules be »learnt«? What linguistic paradigms might help teachers and learners of Hungarian as a foreign language to »pattern« this issue?

¹ Naumenko-Papp 1987, 433.

² É. Kiss 1980, 507.

This paper raises questions concerning two basic topics and provides probable solutions for them. We shall present a model that consists of 1) a set of rules promoting the generation of well-formed Hungarian sentences with a correct word order that could be successfully introduced in the teaching of Hungarian as a foreign language; 2) teaching methods for drilling these rules in education; and 3) a complex of applications – from flash cards to teaching software units.

2. Historic-Theoretical Approach

Native speakers with use of Hungarian awareness, minds reflecting on linguistic phenomena, pragmatists have been observing the exceptional variability of word order in the Hungarian language that is quite unique in comparison with languages spoken in countries neighbouring Hungary. **The early grammars** of ours, early linguistic studies of ours were trying to establish the construction of Hungarian sentences in surveillance to the Latin language and via the conceptual network of Latin grammar from the perspective of Hungarian as a foreign language to be taught in education. Linguistic research progressed with pace and without fail towards a self-reflective Hungarian grammar, some of the outstanding linguists have been: Fogarasi (1838), Brassai (1852–53; 1860; 1863–65; 1885), Arany (1873), Kicska (1890; 1891; 1892; 1893), Simonyi 1879; 1880; 1883; 1902; 1903), Molecz (1900) and others who were always making some further impact on tracing Hungarian linguistic construction.

Our current linguistic theory, besides making use of the progressive paradigms of our great predecessors, assuming a scientifically viable continuity, acknowledging a shared interest, has also framed the Hungarian language as a possible language to be mapped via paradigms provided by most recent theoretical frameworks. There have been quite many novel conceptions to set up a new Hungarian grammar and they all have shaped an exceedingly targeted description of Hungarian syntax. They have even provided in theoretical linguistic paradigms concerning word order explanation for the development of these syntactic schemata.

The conceptual framework of this paper has been shaped by linguists researching transformational generative grammar, especially É. Kiss (1978–2009), Alberti (1994), and Alberti/Medve (2002). Their theories have provided the most thorough generative construction of Hungarian sentences so far, supplemented by an analysis of the semantic and prosodic layers of sentences. Transformational generative grammar, however, has been targeting to set up a model of the inventory of all the well-formed sentences within a language via an application that will, at the same time, select and refuse flawed syntactic constructions. This scope results in such complex frameworks of rules and requires such abstract understanding of variability, in comparison to basic syntax, that it overwhelms linguistic competence accessing Hungarian as a foreign language.

The solely grammatically oriented generative syntax is supplemented by a pragmatic segmentation of sentences and by a grammar-in-use providing pragmatic-functional explanations that are useful in teaching Hungarian. I shall often refer to conclusions made by Brassai 150 years ago where he made his point concerning 1) »cues that sentences are suspended from and at which points they also turn around«³ 2) the verb at the kernel on account of Brassai's discovery, the queuing operator in actual syntactic segmentation. In addition to Brassai's paradigm I also rely on Brassai's recent followers studies, especially on *Magyar nyelvtan* (2004) by Hegedűs that provides functional Hungarian word order queuing rules. Hegedűs depicts the framework of patterns and functions. This framework, however, is heavily situation-dependent, and, furthermore, it is combination-in-progress all the time (296), the rules Hegedűs (2004) has set up – however good a starting point they provide for research – are difficult to convert into actual language teaching.

Consequently, for the purpose of teaching Hungarian word order rules, we need a synthesis that merges early and recent paradigms of Hungarian word order, theoretical models that are adaptable for teaching purposes, and is supplemented by further issues that teaching Hungarian as a foreign language (hence, HFL)

³ Brassai 1860, 368.

cannot avoid, e.g. teaching native Hungarian, and, studies that have been done on HFL.

3. Native Language Approach

The more exact a linguistic construct is the more complex explanation is needed to understand it, the understanding of which would challenge native speakers profoundly, too. **Native language skills** (native language teaching) with the purpose of educating speakers with a metalinguistic awareness is actually targeted at adapting complex linguistic description to provide junior school pupils with material fit for junior comprehension. Junior and secondary school pupils who study the grammar of their mother tongue benefit from native grammar comprehension since they, possibly, are competent enough in the objective of research, that is, their native language: the foreign language instructor may as well experiment, can play with words, syntagms so that pupils could get the construction of various structures, and specific features of meaning.

The benefit of being in possession of our mother tongue, may, however, become a drawback, when we are expected to provide explanation for the word order of our sentences. *»This sounds good.«* – We cannot refer to *»feelings«* when teaching Hungarian for non-native speakers. For him one sentence sounds like another one, whether good or odd. Native language competence enables us to select structures that *»sound the best«* but teaching Hungarian as a foreign language needs more than this.

The first two researches I discuss in my paper target native language intuition and native language grammar competence, and their availability for the purpose of setting up a framework of rules.

3.1 *The Role of Native Language Intuition in Selecting Word Order*

The first research has been measuring how far a Hungarian native speaker can make his way in the profusion of Hungarian word order constructs, and looking for syntactic constructs that are favoured by native speakers. I selected interviewees for my experiment at ran-

dom from my mailing list and via a social website: I asked them to explain the representations of a single sentence with all the possible word order variations. A sentence consisting of five elements would make 120 permutations each of which is, provided certain criteria suffice, well-formed, grammatically correct, with a proper word order, and meaningful. In this experiment I was monitoring whether the interviewees recognize and depict the focus in a sentence that is without context and social linguistic, pragmatic embeddings; would they track any difference between neutral statements and the ones with an emphasis? Which word order sequence would they consider the most acceptable and the most regular one from the variations of the same sentence with a unanimous meaning. 62 questionnaires were returned. I checked them for choices dependent on native language intuition with reference to the sentence featuring on the questionnaire. The sentences consisted of identical elements (*teszi, a pincér, a süteményeket, az asztalra, ebéd után*), yet the vast majority of the interviewees have recognized the correctness of these sentences with various word orders, irrespective of their being either neutral or having an emphasis. Without the support of situation and context the most difficult to decide on the grammatical correctness of sentences were sentences starting with the verb: **7–7** (11 %) of the interviewees have judged the two sentences starting with verbs to be correct.

The task to depict the focus has also verified the previous result: native speakers – just like I had expected – could hardly depict the verbal focus in the two sentences starting with verbs in the focus (16,6 %), while they have depicted foci for the subject, object, local and time adverbial segments correctly – 50,76 %.

Choices related to sentences with an emphasis proved my hypothesis: there are constructions that native language intuition accepts more regular and easier to comprehend. The experiment has shown that the following sentences can be considered to be structures that native speakers prefer (the most preferred sentence and the second best one:

- time adverb + subject + focus + VP;
- subject + focus + VP;
- focus + VP.

Considering neutral sentences have also resulted in similar cues: choices, however, were more unanimously marking preferences: according to them, native speakers consider the following schema the most regular one: »regular« *T (topic) + Q (quantor) + F (focus) + VP* (**36** most regular, **8** second most regular). On the whole, the schema, *time adverb + subject + place adverb + verb + object* schema is considered almost as regular as the former one (**14** most regular, **26** second most regular).

I rely on the conclusion of this experiment when I am setting up a rule for the purpose of teaching EFL which promotes the generation of the syntactic construction that has been considered the most regular one in the experiment out of the many possible choices.

3.2 Native Language Learning and the Choice Made by Native Language Intuition with Reference to Free Word Order

My second experiment concerning the mother tongue also measures »standard native speaker« word order competence: what abstract schemata does a Hungarian native speaker with average education get access to concerning word order, and, what does he think of the free choices with word order in Hungarian. For this purpose I have asked students whether had studied any word order rules ever before, and I also enquired them about their attitude towards Hungarian word order.

I had presupposed in this study (187 students participated in the study, filling in questionnaires) that students I interviewed had not learnt word order formation rules in grammar classes, they would not be able to list rules like that, and, that they were holding the view that there were no rules supervising syntactic construction for word order.

The outcome of the experiment seemed to provide me with ambiguous figures. The 52 % (88 persons) of the respondents recalled that they had studied Hungarian word order rules in grammar classes, 73 % (138 persons) also thought that Hungarian word order construction was processed according to rules. A detailed analysis of the answers repainted the picture, though. Considering the

students who »had studied« word order rules there were only 10 persons (11 %) who could also provide effectively relevant and correct word order rules (*correct answer*); further 10 of them provided at least one correct answer or element, that is, these students »knew something by instinct«. While, on the other hand, 61 % (67 persons) of the ones selecting »yes« either did not answer, answered that he did not know, declared that it was irrelevant, or provided a bad answer, or, for that matter, he had learnt that word order was free, by the rule.

In the second set of questions I inquired about the individual perspective of each student. 138 students (73 %) declared that there were rules for word order. And in their commentary they provided me with 145 data. These figures, by ratio, resulted in similar scores according to which there are more students by one third who are convinced that there are word order rules in the Hungarian language than the number of those who have actually studied these rules. From their commentary I have learnt that answering the second question only 10 % (14 persons) of them listed effective word order observations, 11 % (16 persons), on the other hand, provided observations that were partially correct, and each of these latter students provided either the interrogative construction or a well-formed variation of the sentence with emphasis for an example. Altogether 6 of the students (4 %) considered Hungarian word order free. 32 students (22 %) ignored the space left for commentary; the rest – 77 persons, 53 % – provided a genuinely mistaken answer (*wrong answer*: 23 %; *irrelevant answer*: 13 %; *unaware*: 17 %).

My research supports the hypothesis according to which native speakers mostly provide well-formed sentence constructions via unconscious generation which process he would not be able to account for either with reference to his grammar studies with reference to his native language intuitions. An awareness of formerly intuited rules of the native language and targeted language use, however, can bring about a good proper native linguistic performance and may also considerably gear the effectiveness of learning foreign languages and, also, the effectiveness of teaching one's native language as a foreign language to non-native speakers.

4. Teaching Word Order in Hungarian as a Foreign Language

The question is how we can introduce word order in HFL classes. The issue has been cropping up ever since the early grammars and there has been a demand for sufficient methodology communicated especially in recent HFL methodology studies. Teaching Hungarian as a Foreign Language methodology is still incomplete, however, there have been innumerable teaching guides and studies published to help teaching in this field. Some of the authors have made progress on word order within the framework of the overall process of language teaching, declaring basic principles⁴. Others have been researching way of making use of the paradigms of general linguistics in teaching Hungarian⁵, while in 2006 a teaching manual was published – the first one to provide, however shortly, functions and word order formation rules fit for teaching⁶. And there have also been studies concerning specific cases of word order published that have been shaping those issues that have to be considered by every teaching word order formation model. A most urgent issue among them is the timing of introducing word order schemata in teaching, its methodology, the principle of gradation, using heuristic scenarios, applying contrasting presentations to filter word order, communicative pragmatic classroom work framed in dialogues, and, also, an emphasis on the importance of drilling.

Approved Hungarian language course-books that have been in use for long reflect the suggestions, demands and perspectives of practicing language instructors. Some of them step forward with a direct claim for word order skills to be introduced in teaching HFL. C.f. *Színes magyar nyelvkönyv*⁷; *Hungarian in Words and Pictures*⁸; *Itt magyarul beszélnek*⁹, the recent *Új színes magyar nyelvkönyv*¹⁰

⁴ Hegyi 1976; Giay 1997, 1998, 2006.

⁵ Kovácsné 1985, 1988; Naumenko-Papp 1987; Rózsavölgyi 2002.

⁶ Szili 2006.

⁷ Erdős et al. 1979.

⁸ Erdős et al. 1986.

⁹ Kovácsi 1993.

¹⁰ Erdős 2007.

and – partly – the first volume of *Hungarolingua*. Further addendum and summary with reference to the Hungarian language is provided by *Küszöbszint*¹¹, which summarizes references for the teaching of word order within Hungarian as a foreign language. A thorough overview of the way these language course-books handle word order marks such challenges as timing the introduction of word order skills and drills, representing word order formation rules; the nature and conception of rules depicting positioning sentence functions; the question of the sole status of the verb, and its immobility within syntactic construction, and, the mapping of those pragmatic features that rule the construction of word order in Hungarian. We might as well set up a paradigm of word order formation that, from the start, guides the language learner in the making of sentences, yet would overwhelm the learner's Hungarian competence-in-progress with excessively complex formulae. It could still be a transparent skill which is based on intelligible linguistic principles.

5. A Model for Introducing Hungarian Word Order in Teaching Hungarian as a Foreign Language

The objective of my paper was to set up a model that can guide both tutor and learner of HFL ruler-style: we map a complete framework of word order formation rules that is fit for teaching and learning; it urges sentence formation awareness from the very beginning both in teaching and in learning, and will be guiding the language learner through the abyss of multiple choices safely toward a single sentence construction that would represent truly represent his intentionality.

5.1 Ground Rules for the Introduction of Teaching Word Order Formation

In this paper I have undertaken some major work to be done. I have already indicated that the ground rules for a model of such nature

¹¹ Aradi/Erdős/Sturcz 2000.

and scope interface with innumerable co-fields in linguistics: this paper refers to discoveries and notes provided by early predecessors; it relies on most recent research done in linguistic theory – which theories have deconstructed Hungarian sentence patterning a couple of times and from various perspectives during the last 30–40 years. This approach cannot help – and is also keen on – relying and building on native language intuition, especially while tracing preferred patterns, and relying on studies done within our hosting paradigm, teaching Hungarian as a foreign language, and, in addition, on Hungarian tutors' experience gathered during decades, and some of them providing paradigmatic methodology.

This teaching word order formation programme is based on the hypothesis according to which word order formation and sentence construction (also) have to be introduced in teaching Hungarian as a foreign language. We have surveyed historical trends but current Hungarian theoretical approaches obviously mark that it might not be simple to establish rules that are fit for teaching. Hungarian linguistics does not hold the view that with the exception of the stressed word and that of the verb the rest »might traffic forward, within, and backwards depending on which position would crop up in the speaker's mind«¹². On the contrary: the profusion of varieties indicate an underlying system of word order formation¹³, and during the last 30 years Hungarian linguists have reached the depth of this closeted framework. Hungarian sentences are characteristically generated via two constitutions: the beginning of the sentence, the word order of the segment before the verb, is bound¹⁴; freedom of word order is available for the »tail of the sentence« exclusively: it is the privilege of the extension after the verb to the right hand. Some linguists¹⁵, however, claim that there is bound word order in the right hand side of the sentence, after the verb – this is verified on the pragmatic »surface« in language use, supported by data concerning sentence construction preferences (see my research). A teacher who teaches his mother tongue to non-natives

¹² Fogarasi 1838, 243.

¹³ É. Kiss 1980, 507.

¹⁴ É. Kiss 2006, 2; 23.

¹⁵ Varga 1981; 1982; É. Kiss 2006; 2009.

as a foreign language has to step out of the magic closet of native language intuition so as to be able to present the most suitable – representative yet not exclusive – sentence construction within a scenario.

5.2 Methodology Proposal for the Teaching of Word Order Formation

The model summarizes the results of multifaceted research and presents a methodology for the teaching of word order formation that has an extra feature: it has been shaped and developed for ten years in scenarios of practical language teaching via success and failure, through many of them paced by learner-instructor interactions. Instructor–instructed, asking–answering – this cast of roles has been the other way around with word order formation rules: the language was curious about the reason why one of his sentences was incorrect while the other one was correct – which one should be relied on when forming a third statement? The tutor, then, started to be desperately looking for the answers for these many issues. The model for the teaching of word order formation I am presenting in this paper has been filtered in many ways in language classes and has been proved fit for teaching, learning: it provides rules for word order formation and is supplemented by teaching aids starting from flash cards via making use of colours to the experimental word order formation tutoring software.

The model regenerates in every new teaching scenario and shapes in accordance with the Hungarian language competence of learners from the very start. Whether we want it or not, when we introduce ourselves at the very beginning during the first Hungarian as a foreign language class we have already been teaching word order formation. When we utter the simple sentence, »X. Y. *va-gyok*« we flash three characteristic features of the Hungarian sentence. We do not use a first person singular subject, and in the lack of this we do not start the sentence with the verb, either: we issue the most important information of the speech act, that is, our name, at the beginning of the sentence. This construction almost unnoticeably generates a neutral, stressed three-part statement

containing a name, and either a place adverb or an indirect object that is not determined by a definite article. The basic didactic principle of the model is a stepping forward carefully – and gradually – up on this imaginary winding staircase that drives the learner towards the heights of long meaningful well-formed statements. Novel syntactic structures generate and extend from former simple ones we can again and again have a look at the former step, at a now familiar word order formation rule. With the introduction of the time adverb and the verbal prefix our student is ready to make a statement via a five-part syntactic construction. The five parts, however, can naturally be extended: at certain functions various parts can be inserted in the construction. The same rules suffice – with a couple of addenda – for this purpose. The rules do not ignore the primary objective of sentence formation, that is, communication, telling. They provide, at an early stage, a choice for the formation of interrogatives, answers, for the expression of specific intentional modalities (e.g. negation). The aim of the model is to make the rules and the methodology we propose for the introduction of these rules match every possible teaching scenario, every possible language instructor and course-book. Consequently we provide modules that do not rely on any specific prior grammatical competence because the routine of application is not in surveillance to either grammatical structures or elements but to the intentionality of the speech act. The formation rule of a three- or four-part sentence can be introduced even if the learner is only familiar with a sole type of adverb, and, for the purpose of the model that is irrelevant which type of adverb that would be.

In this rule formation routine we can witness the formation of four rules: 1–2) rules I and II for neutral statements with stress and without verbal prefixation; 3) rule III for neutral statements with verbal prefixation; and 4) rule IV for statements with stress and with verbal prefixation. One of the benefits of the teaching word order formation model is that it provides as much information for learners as much information they are ready to make use of at the given level of linguistic competence of theirs. This is the reason why word order formation rules start out at the modelling of three-part neutral statements and slowly arrive at the point where a total framework of formation rules can be set up (*figures 19–22*).

The initial three-part statement is gradually extended into a four-part construction and, with the entry of the time adverb; it extends into a five-part construction. This paradigm does not position a particular part of the sentence, but a functional part within a sentence. At the initial position of the sentence we reserve the initial word status for the subject (positions 1) which is not obligatory and which can only be preceded by the unstressed time adverb determining the overall clause. At a later stage the initial subject position can be preceded by any anaphoric part of the sentence. This latter unstressed position is marked by the label, »position 0«.

When teaching Hungarian as a foreign language it is extremely important to focus on the rule that in the Hungarian language we have two elements that especially imply a bound word order: the verb and the element preceding the verb. These elements take position 2 and 3 in the position-mapping of sentences. Position 2 is functionally the most focussed distinguished one the depiction of which in sentences with a stress is easy: this is the position that is the locus of the most important word/phrase to be emphasized in sentences with a stress. This position also deserves our attention in neutral statements. When the position is filled in the SOV feature of the Hungarian sentence is complete.

Position 3 is reserved for the verb, but for that we have to take a detour: course-books drilling word order formation and, also *Küszöbszint* features a fixed position for the verb that never changes in any case; this entails extra rules in case of verbs with stress – that is the verb with stress, unlike other elements with stress, claim rules of its own. This may bring about systematic insecurity in the learners' heads. This specification, however, seems to be unnecessary. It is simpler and easier to learn if we make position 2 preceding the verb the place for the element with a stress irrespective of its word class and the function it has with the syntactic construction. So we move the verb from its assigned position 3 in order to be able to describe every syntactic construction with a stress with the same rule. This saves us the unsolved problem we have seen with other concepts: the verb is not in a privileged position any more: it will not be receiving rules that would be different in comparison with the rest of the words and constructions. And this might make the

framework of rules simpler and more transparent for language learners.

Finally in position 4 which is not extended any further, the construction of the sentence is completed by elements without stress that are neutral with reference to word order.

These positions – the sentence construction constituted by 5 positions – are fit for elementary level sentence formation. We have provided altogether four word order formation rules at the elementary level. Our learners have participated in the making of these rules: we need two rules for neutral statements – where the unstressed verb with prefixation claims for an extra rule; we can also shape sentences with stress via two formation rules irrespective of what function these sentences with stress perform.

5.2.1 Word Order in Sentences Without Verb Prefixation

The filling in of position 2 is also obligatory in **neutral statements**: this will realize SOV word order that is primarily characteristic of Hungarian (however, not exclusively characteristic). There is some kind of queuing for the fulfilment of position 2 within the sentence: the unstressed object undetermined by the definite article before the verb to be followed by a inessive place adverb, or, in case we do not have these, a place adverb in ablative or lative, or, in case we do not have them either, a complement may crop up semantically modifying the verb (*figure 1*):

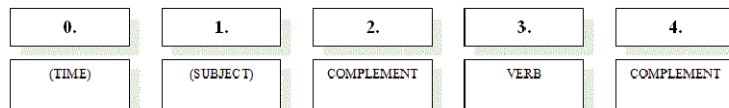


Figure 1: rule I – Basic word order for neutral statements

In case of **sentences with stress** we suggest to start with a question answer panel. It is the question word or the answer which is the most important element. And this way the stressed word order within **interrogative** sentences and affirmative/negative **answers** could also be explained. Statements conveying new information

also get stressed in the second position. The fourth case of stressing is **negation**: we started out negating parts of the sentence in sentences without verbal prefixation. Transformations in this construction matches »stress rules«, we have already depicted quite well. Relying on this we transfer the verb to be negated from position 3 to the position with stress. So we do not need a new rule for the verb; and the transposition of the verb is coherent with the transferral of the verb to initial position used in transformation generative notation (*figure 2*):

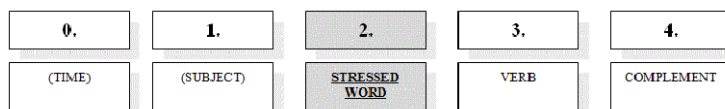


Figure 2: rule II – Basic word order in sentences with stress

5.2.2 Word Order in Sentences with Verbal Prefixation

Verbs with prefixes seemingly do not match the framework so far set up. In case of verbal prefixes learners have to become familiar with various new aspects (e.g. marking direction, word modifier, perfecting function) which are extended with verbs with prefixes in neutral sentences. In sentences like this a new element is added to queuing for the position 2 which element has not yet been there but from this moment on it precedes the rest of the words. In neutral sentences the verbal prefix is exclusively positioned before the verb. Besides, it closely attaches to the verb which is marked both in spelling (prefix and verb making up a single word) and in word order formation routine (concatenating two positions (*figure 3*)).

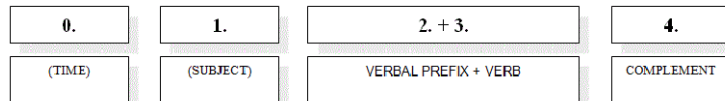


Figure 3:

Rule III – Basic word order in sentences with verbal prefixes

The construction of **stressed sentences**, with verbal prefixes, strongly resembles the construction of stressed sentences without verbal prefixes: extending the schema we only have to find the position of the verbal prefix. Since the verbal prefix keeps on being attached to the verb it does not move far: the verbal prefix shares the verbal position with the verb (*figure 4*):

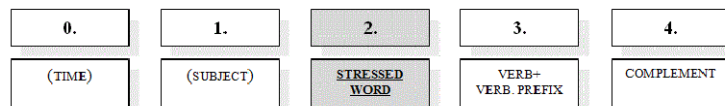


Figure 4:

Rule IV – Basic word order in sentences with verbal prefixes

Now we are ready with the system that, on elementary level, guides language learners in the seemingly obscure task of sentence construction. The rules do not depict details of generating all correct Hungarian sentences like descriptive syntax and syntactic theory does – it has not been an objective of ours, anyway. We have arranged the syntactic formation of sentences to depend on their function – and only partly on their formal specification or on the syntactic function of parts of the sentence. Language learners get help making statements providing information and facts, providing stressed information and in interrogation, answering and negation, and, in addition, they can participate in real-time dialogues giving grammatically and pragmatically correct answers. Rules are more or less formed by learners themselves, since from the moment we introduce ourselves students are getting familiar with the basic principles of sentence construction, with the distancing of subject and predicate in word order and with the task of taking the two distinguished positions (verb and the position preceding the verb). This way learners develop a competence to use SOV word order and the recognition of rules transforming them practically by themselves on time. For this no complex framework has been required; language learners, with the help of a couple of rules, will be able to make correct statements/utterances in accordance with their intentionality.

5.2.3 Factors Modifying Ground Rules

The rules we have just introduced provide the elementary level of learning word order formation in Hungarian as a foreign language. Some factors that modify word order attach semantic-pragmatic supplements to the rules previously formed, and, at the same time set the possibilities and direction for the development of the model towards the stage of actual sentence segmentation and towards complex sentences. The modifying factors include various infinitival phrases and universal quantors that convey overall features.

We have not left »space«, for example, for universal quantors in the word order paradigm we have presented before, neither have we listed the word order facets of particular infinitival constructions, yet we shall witness that no rule is necessary to add: with semantic interpretation and with some minor additions the former four rules are applicable.

5.2.3.1 Infinitives in Sentences

Recent HFL course-books do not dare to trespass to the territory of sentences containing infinitives at an early stage in learning. This field is seemingly complex. Language course-books present infinitival phrases filtered by their grammatical function (their syntactic function within sentences¹⁶; the intentionality conveyed by the phrases presented, and the word order that partly depends on this (too), is left to be discussed by the instructor.

Infinitival phrases should be categorized – unlike in current HFL course-book routine – in a new way so that the various infinitival syntagms could be explained by the rules we have already presented. The infinitival phrases with *tud*, *szerez* + infinitive in neutral sentences display features similar to that of a sentence with stress: it lacks narrative word order¹⁷. This emotional excess is worth to be depicted as the semantic feature of basic verbs. These constructions can be interpreted as sentences with a stress from the start where

¹⁶ Aradi 2003, 12.

¹⁷ Hegedűs 2004, 297.

the stressed position 2 is taken by the inflected verb. These sentences, however, may also receive a »real« stress-marker, that is there can be other words in the sentence that may go for the status of new information, question, answer or negation. In this case we transpose another word before *tud* and *szere*t according to the regular stress rule (figure 5). Phrases like *szabad, tilos, érdemes, lehet* are generated according to a similar principle with an infinitive that has no verbal prefix. So when introducing them it is enough to refer to a rule.

1.	2.	3.	4.
(SUBJECT)	STRESSED WORD	VERB	COMPLEMENT
<i>A madár</i>	<i>tud</i>	–	<i>énekelni.</i>
<i>Tamás</i>	<i>szere</i> t	–	<i>úszni.</i>
<i>A gyerekek</i>	<i>engem</i>	<i>szere</i> t.	

Figure 5: The infinitive in sentences (*tud, szere*t)

The verb, *akar* often crops up in the company of *szere*t and *tud*, yet it behaves differently. It is a stress-evasive verb¹⁸ and does not require new rules; it can be positioned without fail within the framework of neutral and stressed sentence constructions we have already presented.

Now near an infinitive with a prefix it is not that simple because syntagms within the same category do not behave the same way. There is some form of a hierarchy among the distinguished syntagms: a fairly stressed feature in neutral statements¹⁹ may be traced especially with *szere*t and *szere*tne, so they are staying in position 2, but do not split the sequence, *prefix + infinitive* which is the internal word order (e.g. *Szeretek felsétálni a Várba.*). This is also valid for words with a nominal (nominal-verbal) status (*tilos,*

¹⁸ Hegedűs 2004, 300.

¹⁹ Ibid., 297.

fontos etc.). *Tud, akar, kell* display a stress-evasive nature²⁰, that is, they deploy the prefix belonging to the infinitive before themselves (e.g. *Meg tudom fogni a legyet.*).

It follows from the passage above that sentences containing infinitives did not require the formation of new rules: principles already in use remain valid. We only have to add some explanation and semantic complements.

5.2.3.2 Specific Elements in Sentences – the Question of Quantors

Some of the syntactic constructions – actually regular ones – cannot be generated via the framework of rules so far presented. When I was doing research on native language intuition I found that native speakers preferred the construction *T + Q + F + VP* among neutral sentences. Yet there is no place for the quantor among the rules we have presented. This research on the mother tongue also detected that sentences starting with an unstressed time adverb make a frequent construct. We can find many examples for both constructs in language course-books which verify the correct applications coming from the native language intuition of language course-book writers. The framework of rules on display offers an initial position within the sentence that is not obligatory on behalf of considerably simple time adverbs (e.g. seasons, months, days, parts of the day, hours) and this offer makes establishing the correct word order for language learners easier. There are time adverbs, however, for which the zero positioning rule is unavailable. These elements – generative syntax calls them *universal quantors with a broad scope* – (e.g. *mindig, mindennap, általában, gyakran*) cannot precede the subject. In order not to have to restructure sentences and to add a new position within the sentence we shall consider these elements as »lexical signposts«²¹, in which case semantic meaning is to be supplemented in teaching with reference to word order operation. Hegedűs²² presents a categorization – semantically and functionally based,

²⁰ Ibid., 302.

²¹ Aradi 2008, 240.

²² Hegedűs 2004.

also surveillancing word order – of this kind: some adverbs complementing verbs weaken the semantics of the verb, others strengthen it. Adverbs narrowing the meaning of the verb (e.g. *ritkán, soha*) stand straight before the verb. Adverbs extending the reference of the predicate (e.g. *mindig, néha*) stand before the prefixed verb (or before any modifier of the verb). Adverbs with full semantic scope (e.g. *korán*) can also stand right before the verb or before the syntagm constituted by the *verb modifier + verb*²³. This unique operation can be treated as the semantic feature of quantors selected for teaching (e.g. adverbs beginning with *mindig, mind-* and other adverbs, *gyakran, néha* etc.) and can be introduced in language class with some additional reference to word order positioning.

6. Methodological Issues Concerning the Application and the Introduction in Language Classes of the Model Proposal

This paper has set up a framework of rules. Besides this framework it also lists the teaching aids we have developed during these years and summarizes the methods of their application with the help of which the system for the teaching word order formation in discussion can be introduced in language classes effectively. Simple teaching aids must already be in use: the moving of words on flashcards may illustrate the generation of particular constructions and their accidental difference in comparison with the native tongues of HFL learners well. This is supplemented by the colour-cards we have introduced for pupils in Hungarian classes: positions within the sentence are (also) marked by colours which mark the syntax of the sentence with logic. Careful development, carefully selected colours may make the colour/position interface meaningful. An ambiguous sentence is constituted by the ice-blue subject without declination and by the verb reddening like the soul of the sentence. Marked (affixated) elements, adverbials that further complement predication with the introduction of some of the circumstances of the event depicted will be coloured green. The very same words may

²³ Ibid., 296f.

also come to the beginning of the sentence – coloured light green – provided they are unstressed, that is they do not convey new information with reference to the utterance. At the end of the sentence colours merge – this »greyness« provides space for the further, less important complements.

Rules divide sentence construction into positions; the syntactic table is a natural aid which features every word of each sentence in a position that serves it well. This »schema« helps learners a great deal: they are able to notate rules and they can practice the making of various constructions; and they may be used as reminders helping the making of living speech. The syntactic table has been the constitution of the teaching aid, »Szóforgató« which is the 3D version of the rules: it is a booklet with pages that can be rotated via syntactic positions. It contains all the rules already introduced or the rules to be introduced, and any rule can be reconstructed by rotating the cards starting from the three-part neutral to the five-position one consisting of many words, including the stressed construction with a verbal prefix.

The booklet has been developed into a teaching word order formation software, »Szóforgató«. At this experimental stage the programme can display the operation of generating three- and four-part neutral statements with a time adverb complement, and it also features the word order of *questions* and *answers*. The thorough framework of rules based on questions and answers that have been proven in practice via alternate applications, and the guiding principle, that is, levels operating according to the same principle, and its learner- and teacher-friendly use secure that the experimental teaching software can be developed into a proper purposeful well-operable teaching aid.

7. Model Proposal in Use

The model we have proposed for the teaching of word order formation in simple sentences has been under continuous learning and teaching surveillance because of its basic practical features. Yet to measure the efficacy of this framework and to measure the fitness of teaching aids for practical teaching it has had to be piloted real

time. These pilots were done between 2008 and 2011 in three rounds: at real time language classes for foreign language learners; at presentations for language instructors, and in a control group who represented the interface between native speakers and language instructors – they were Hungarian native speaker university students learning about the methodologies of teaching Hungarian. Pilots were supplemented in these groups by research questionnaires the questions of which were segmented with reference to the levels represented in the experimental teaching software. Participants could evaluate rules for three-part neutral, three-part stressed (question-answer), and four-part (containing a time adverb complement) sentences, their presentation, the sample task on the software and the drills, the choice for individual working through. They could also measure how far the model was intelligible, and how much they liked this method of teaching word order formation. Language instructors could also judge the educative clarity of the rules for language learners, and could declare whether the method was fit for classroom activities for language classes.

7.1 Hypotheses

Prior to the launching of research I had presumed that the rules will prove intelligible (H1); language learners would be able to perform the tasks provided by the teaching word order formation software and they would not require any help from their instructor or multiple drilling (H2); every interviewee would find this method of teaching word order formation interesting (H3). With language instructors I also supposed that they would also consider the rules intelligible for students (H4); teaching word order formation software is useful (H5), this method of teaching word order formation would be considered fit for the teaching of Hungarian as a foreign language (H6).

7.2 Piloting Results

Each segment of the questions has been mapped separately and each segment has provided an enormous amount of data concerning the reception of the teaching word order formation model. I have chose questions for the testing of my hypotheses that represent the opinion both of language learners and of Hungarian native speaker tutors and university students together.

7.2.1 The Intelligibility of Rules (Hypotheses H1 and H4)

The most important ground hypothesis of mine had been, prior to the launching of research, that both language learners and instructors and Hungarian university students would understand the rules without any difficulty (hypothesis H1). This is complemented by hypothesis H4 which presupposes that the rules would be intelligible not only for instructors/university students but this was also expected of language learners.

The analysis of the results shows that word order formation rules were best understood by language instructors (79–86 %). Students were second best in this (68–74 %), and foreign language learners were also quite close (57–81 %). Besides the ones who evaluated the model as (*excellent*) the majority of participants evaluated the model with the second best marker (*fair*), and, furthermore, only few respondents evaluated the intelligibility of rules concerning the three types of the sentence lower than this (*figure 6*).

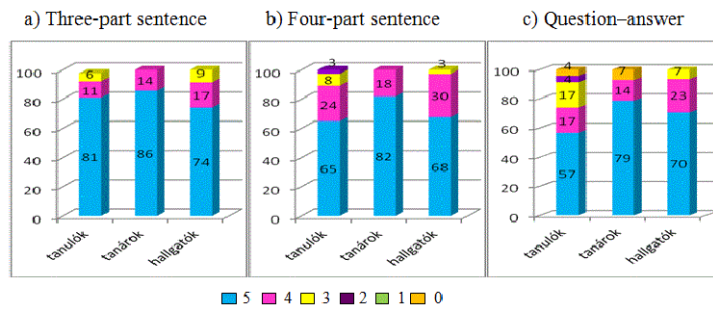


Figure 6: Responses concerning the intelligibility of word order formation rules by %

7.2.2 The Reception of Drills (Hypotheses H2 and H5)

According to hypothesis H2 the drills of the teaching word order formation software would not cause any difficulty for language learners and they would not require help from their instructors and they would need to repeat the drills. According to question ›f‹ the language learner could do the exercises without any difficulty; ›g‹ marked that the respondent needed help to do the exercises and ›h‹ marked that the respondent needed further drilling for the understanding of the rules – this was a question marking a negative attitude, that is, its statement represented difficulty, and in these cases a lower score in many cases marked a better score.

Hypothesis H5 presupposed that according to language instructors the drills of the teaching word order formation software would be helping the understanding of word order formation rules and are fit for individual learning.

Language learners saw the difficulty of drills (questions ›f‹) fairly unanimously; they gave an excellent or a good evaluation in 78–86%. Only one or two respondents referred to difficulties, consequently this part of the hypothesis H2 has been verified. And 49–68% of the students did not require help from their instructor (scores, *bad* and *fair*) to assist them in doing the exercises which is also and indicator of the realization of the hypothesis. When

learners were asked about the statement that they did not need multiple drilling and help to do the exercises 39–51 % of the learners chose scores, *bad* and *fair*, that is, they did not agree with the statement. Yet the rate of those who demanded more drilling was altogether 8–13 %. This, however does not prove the failure of hypothesis H2, it only proved the importance of drilling sentence construction.

The language instructors judged the exercises to be better: 86–91 % of them thought the word order formation exercises for all the three sentences were satisfactory (question *ij*). Instructors considered it to fit for individual work a bit less: 64–91 % gave *excellent* and *good* evaluation for this which marks that instructors were divided concerning the three types of sentence construction.

Hungarian native speaker university students have evaluated the usefulness of the exercises even higher: 94–99 % of them gave *excellent* and *good* evaluation for the impact of exercises in anchoring the rule. Students have considered the possibility of individual learner's activity somewhat lower: the proportion of *excellent* and *good* evaluations has been 91–93 %.

The realization of hypothesis H5 has been verified by the cumulative average scores calculated from data received which have been in all cases between 4.00 and 4.91 on the average (*figure 7*):

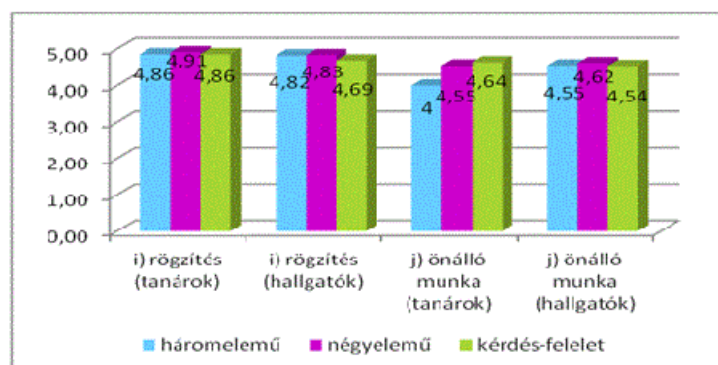


Figure 7: Fitness of exercises for anchoring rules and for individual learner's activity (average scores)

7.2.3 The Prestige Index of Teaching Word Order Methodology

The final question on the questionnaire in the research enquired about respondents' opinion: how much did they like the method presented in classroom work/in presentations (questions 21 and 22).

According to the responses received it was the language instructors who had received the above presented/monitored method of teaching word order formation methodology: they evaluated this almost exclusively *excellent* or *good*. The three- and four-part sentences got *excellent* 86–91 %; 14–9 % *good*. 86 % of the evaluations were *excellent* for the question and answer segment, and 7 % of them were *good* – and there was also a single *fair* evaluation (7 %). The prestige index provided by Hungarian native speaker university students has also been a balanced one: 93–97 % of them gave *excellent* and *good* evaluation with the three types of sentences. The results are more variable with foreign language learners: 89 % of them evaluated three-part sentences *excellent* and *good*. 8 % of them (3 persons) gave an *average*, 1 learner ignored the question. With four-part sentences 83 % of them gave *excellent* and *good* evaluation; 4 persons gave *average*, 1–1 person *failed* it (11%/3%/3%). 70 % of the students evaluated the teaching question-answer word order method *excellent*, a further 13 % of them considered it *good*; 1 person gave *average*, 2 persons gave *fair*, 1 respondent *failed* it. The average scores mark the general reception of teaching word order formation methodology (figure 8):

Possible Teaching Methods

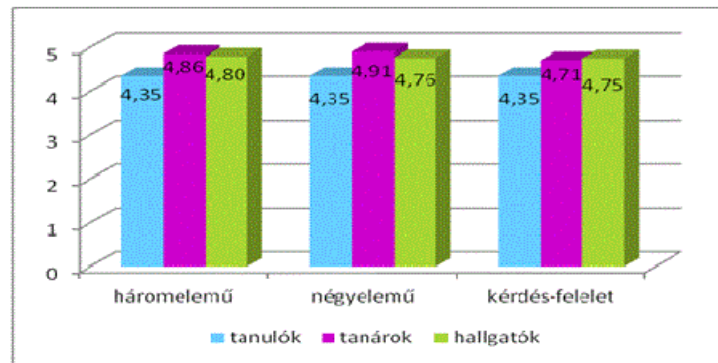


Figure 8: Average scores calculated from the prestige index of teaching word order formation methodology

The results obviously reflect that language instructors have received our teaching word order formation methodology happily. Hungarian native speaker students who study HFL teaching methodology have held a similar positive opinion concerning the methodology presented. The most important reference point, however, was the opinion of foreign language learners: they evaluated the project high above 4.00 and that verifies our hypothesis.

7.2.4. Evaluating Language Class Availability

According to hypothesis H6 language instructors, students would consider teaching word order formation fit and available for language class use. Only 3 of the language instructors have monitored word order formation rules »in operation« – they have made their point with reference to actual classroom application. Two of them have evaluated the availability of the method *excellent*, the third one of the party evaluated it *good*. They had considered all the three types of rules. This has scored an average 4.66. Putting together the former three instructors and the ones who had learnt about the method at a presentation the availability of the methodology concerning the three types of sentences varied between 4.14

and 4.6 which verifies the hypothesis and, furthermore, marks that the interviewed language instructors have accepted the proposed teaching word order formation methodology. The perspective expressed by Hungarian native speaker university students also verifies our hypothesis since they have evaluated the presented teaching word order formation methodology at the average score of 4.75–4.79.

7.3 Conclusion

The research-oriented piloting of word order formation rules we have discussed in this paper, the teaching word order formation methodology and the teaching aid supplements – primarily the experimental word order formation tutoring software started during the final phase of model-generation. The nucleus of the proposed methodology, however, is to introduce language learners into the auxiliary rules with the help of which they can develop their Hungarian sentence formation competence and their familiarity with word order formation rules would be developing and would become more effective along with their developing linguistic competence in Hungarian. For reasons of measurability students, instructors and prospective teachers who were participating in research learnt about the rules and methodology in a targeted presentation. In spite of this fact rules have proved available in all three groups interviewed. Respondents appreciated understanding word order formation and the aids supporting the mastering of rules. The majority of the participants have liked the methodology presented. Differences among the opinions expressed concerning individual learner's activities, multiple drilling and the availability of methodology in classroom work have set the path toward the possibilities of a further development of methodology: we need to set up alternative ways of application which consider particular specific language learning scenarios (e.g. few teaching hours, low motivational level).

8. Summary

I have presented a model in my paper I have set up during the long years of teaching HFL. The model has been designed to create a framework of word order formation rules that can be used from the very start for the teaching of Hungarian as a foreign language – for the presentation of Hungarian word order formation so that language learners could reconstruct this framework, under the targeted guidance of instructors gradually and continually by themselves.

We have prepared a teaching aid kit – word flashcards, the table of sentences, the »coloured sentences«, the booklet, »Szófor-gató« and the teaching word order formation software, »Szófor-gató« – gives a hand both to the instructor and to language learners to learn rules, anchor them and drill.

The validity of the model has been acknowledged via the results of piloting the proposed teaching word order formation methodology: each aspect has received an evaluation above the score, 4.00 on the average. Further wide-range public promotion and piloting with learners might decide whether the proposed methodology could provide a reference point for instructors of Hungarian as a foreign language – shall we have listed the rules Naumenko-Papp was missing for the purpose of generating correct Hungarian statements/texts? Could it have the honour »*the most beautiful task for a language teacher, ... to be babysitting the birth of a sentence*«?²⁴

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²⁴ Hegyi 1991, 27.

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