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Age-specific features of the use of discourse markers in Hungarian*

Abstrakt (Wiek mówcy a własności stosowania markerów dyskursu w języku węgierskim). Akwizycja markerów dyskursu w rozwoju językowym dziecka może być postrzegana jako krok w ewolucji (meta)pragmatycznej świadomości, będąc jej wskaźnikiem. Niniejsze studium bada częstotliwość, pozycję oraz funkcję trzech węgierskich markerów dyskursu: *hát* 'cóż, no', *így* 'więc' and *ilyen* 'taki'. Materiał badawczy składa się z wywiadów nagranych z piętnastoma sześcio- i siedmioletnimi przedszkolakami, piętnastoma piętnasto- i szesnastoletnimi uczniami szkoły średniej oraz z piętnastoma dorosłymi (w wieku 20-57 lat). Celem badania jest stwierdzenie, czy częstotliwość występowania i funkcja tych markerów jest zależna od wieku osoby mówiącej.
Zgodnie z wynikami, wszystkie analizowane markery dyskursu pojawiają się w mowie spontanicznej trzech grup wiekowych. *Hát* jest markerem występującym najczęściej (był używany przez wszystkich nastolatków i dorosłych oraz 67% dzieci), zazwyczaj w pozycji inicjującej zwrot. *Így* oraz *ilyen* pojawiały się najczęściej w mowie spontanicznej nastolatków, zgodnie z naszą wcześniejszą obserwacją, iż częstotliwość *így* koreluje z wiekiem mówcy. Funkcja *ilyen* jest podobna w mowie każdej z grup, podczas gdy *így* wykazuje większy zestaw funkcji u osób w wieku 15 lat.

Abstract. The acquisition of discourse markers in child's language development can be interpreted as part of the evolution of (meta)pragmatic awareness, being an indicator of it. The present study examines the frequency, position and function of three Hungarian discourse markers: *hát* 'well', *így* 'so' and *ilyen* 'such, like, so'. The material consists of interviews recorded with fifteen 6–7 years old nursery-school children, fifteen 15–16 years old secondary school students and fifteen adults (aged between 20 and 57 years). The main question of the research is whether the relative frequency and the function of these discourse markers is dependent on the age of the speaker.
According to the results all of the analyzed discourse markers appear in all the three age group's spontaneous speech. *Hát* is the most frequent marker (all participating teenagers and adults used it, and also 67% of the preschool children), typically in turn-initial position. *Így* and *ilyen*

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occurred most often in the teenagers' spontaneous speech, in line with our earlier observation that the frequency of *így* correlates to the speaker's age. Function of *ilyen* is similar in every age group's speech, while *így* shows a broader set of functions by the age of 15.

1. Introduction

Discourse markers (also known as *discourse deictics, discourse connectors, discourse particles, discourse operators, cue phrases,* etc., cf. Fraser 1999: 932–937; Schourup 1999: 227–265) are usually defined as linguistic-pragmatic items that indicate transitional points within a discourse, provide information about the segmentation and operation of a discourse, and/or stake out the structure of the current discourse. Or, in a cognitive perspective, they are seen as cohesive elements that help the participants of a conversation in constructing coherent mental representations of the information they convey to one another (Fraser 1999: 931, Louwerse & Mitchell 2003: 199). For instance, a discourse marker may indicate that a new topic or a side-issue is introduced: ***Tényleg,*** *hogy sikerült a vizsgád?* '**By the way,** have you passed your exam?'; ***Mellesleg*** *a baleset mikor történt?* '**Incidentally,** when did the accident happen?'.

In the literature, discourse markers are taken to be a functional group of rather heterogeneous provenance: they may come from a number of parts of speech (adverb, conjunction, verb, etc.) and from various structural levels (lexemes, phrases, clauses); in addition, there are even nonverbal discourse markers (Schiffrin 1987; for an acoustic and perceptual investigation of basic types of "humming" in Hungarian, cf. Markó 2005; 2006). Discourse markers occur in large numbers in spoken discourse, but they can also be found in certain written genres (cf. Schiffrin 2001; Dér 2006). Louwerse & Mitchell (2003) found approximately ten times as many discourse markers in spoken as in written discourse.

The majority of current research efforts are focused on the way adults use discourse markers in everyday conversations. A few studies, however, are aimed at how children acquire the skill of marking the various levels of discourse and suggest that the use of discourse markers changes with (young) speakers' age. Thus, in children's developing command of language, the acquisition of discourse markers can be interpreted as part of the emergence of their pragmatic awareness, and is an important sign thereof.

Montes (1999) studied the occurrences of the discourse markers *ah, oh, uh, ay, oy, uy, eh, aha, mhm* in the speech of a Spanish child between ages 1;7 an 3;0, in 13 conversations with the child's mother. Her results confirm the claim that discourse markers first appear at very early stages of first language acquisition. Escalera (2009) analysed discourse markers in the speech of 3–5-year-old speakers of American English, primarily with respect to gender differences. Her results show that the use of discourse markers is determined primarily by situation-dependence and contextual demands and only secondarily by gender.

Pak and colleagues (1996) studied the use of the discourse markers *and, okay, because, so* (among others) between 1 and 9 years of age. They found that, in children's usage, discourse markers first refer to interactional aspects (for instance, *okay* signals agreement), and only occur in generalised meanings (as in *Are you okay?*) roughly from age 4 onwards. Obviously, contexts of use are also diversified as the child grows older.

Kyratzis and Ervin-Tripp (1999) recorded the speech of 4 and 7-year-old speakers of American English while playing and telling stories, and concluded that diverse activities elicit diverse discourse markers, and that quantitative and qualitative differences can also be observed between age groups and genders. Andersen and colleagues (1999) used the method of controlled improvisation to study the speech production of 18 English, 18 French, and 18 Spanish speakers aged 4 to 7 in terms of to what extent the various registers are characterised by the use of discourse markers. The results show that, in the speech communities under scrutiny, children are sensitive to the meanings of the various discourse markers right at the beginning of their school careers. On the other hand, these items appear in their speech well before they become able to interpret them in a register-specific manner.

In a study on French, it turned out that discourse markers like *mais* 'but' or *pourtant* 'nevertheless' first occur in children's speech around age 8 to 10. Of course, they occur earlier as conjunctions – but it is only relatively late that they start fulfilling a discourse marking role (Champeaud & Bassano 1994, cited by Choi 2007). Meng & Schrabback (1999) analysed occurrences of *hm* (various types of humming) and *na* (interjection) in diverse situations, in interactions with adults of German-speaking children between 2;8 and 3;4. Humming occurred with a fall-rise intonation the most often; and while it had three different roles in adults' speech, children only used it in a single function (to signal agreement as listeners).

The studies reviewed so far exclusively concerned children's speech. Furman & Özyürek (2007) compared narratives produced by children of age 3, 5 and 9 and adults, with respect to the use and pragmatic functions of three Turkish verbal discourse markers. Hesitational *şey* is a verbal marker in Turkish, whereas in Hungarian or English nonverbal discourse markers signal hesitation (*öööö* in Hungarian, *uhhh* in English: a filled pause containing schwa or some other material). This Turkish discourse marker was used with the same frequency in all age groups. On the other hand, *yani* 'I mean' and *işte* 'you know' occurred more often in 9-year-olds' and adults' speech than in that of 3 or 5-year-olds. In the authors' view, this suggests that some discourse markers are more difficult to acquire than others, and that this is in correlation with the multifunctional (syntactic vs. interactional) character of the latter.

In an earlier study on Hungarian (Markó et al. 2010), the production and perception of three types of humming, those expressing agreement or disagreement, and those with an interrogative function, were investigated in kindergarten pupils between 5 and 7, schoolchildren between 10 and 14, and adults. The results show that agreeing and disagreeing types of humming are undoubtedly part of the children's communicative repertoire by the age of 5 to 7. Kindergarten pupils, in general, are not yet aware of

the attention-confirming function of the humming of agreement – but schoolchildren already are. By the age of 12–13, they also learn to recognise interrogative humming and they probably also use it in their everyday interactions, although (as the 50% result of the production experiment shows) this is not necessarily conscious knowledge in their case.

In sum, the various studies all converge on the point that in children's language use discourse markers occur in increasingly wider contexts. It can also be observed that they proceed from interactional meanings immediately referring to the current conversation towards a more general or global meaning (with the interactional functional retained).

In the present paper, the use of three Hungarian discourse markers, *hát* 'well', *így* 'like', and *ilyen* 'kind of' was studied in three age groups: kindergarten pupils, secondary school children, and adults. Our preliminary hypothesis was that these discourse markers occur more often and in more diverse functions as the speakers' age progresses.

The item *hát* turned from an adverb into a conjunction ('and then') by the sixteenth century, and into a discourse marker in Middle Hungarian (Schirm 2009). The literature lists three main ranges of uses of the particle *hát*: it can be a general marker of response, it can serve to introduce a question, and it can be a marker of excuse/explanation or self-correction (Kiefer 1988, Németh 1998). Its pragmatic functions are also diverse, ranging from raising the level of rhetoricity to expanding one's message and to saving the speaker's face (Schirm 2009). As a discourse marker, *hát* "typically occurs at the very beginning of the discourse segment it pertains to" (Dér 2010: 162).

With respect to their part-of-speech affiliation, *így* is an adverbial demonstrative pronoun ('in this manner'), and *ilyen* is an adjectival demonstrative pronoun ('of this type/quality'). In this function, *így* typically occurs as an adverbial of manner, state, or degree; another main range of its functions is that of a conjunction ('thus, hence, therefore'). The usual functions of *ilyen* are attributive (*ilyen kabát* 'a coat like this') or predicative (*Feri ilyen* 'Frank is like this'), but it also frequently occurs as an adverbial of degree (*ilyen bizonytalan* 'so uncertain') or as a placeholder for an omitted noun (*megesik az ilyen* 'such [things] do happen'). Both pronouns can be anaphoric and cataphoric alike, referring to some element of the context. In a discourse marking function, on the other hand, their usual coreference relations cannot be observed: no coreferent item can be identified either in the vicinity of the given item or in the larger context (cf. Laczkó 2003: 323–324). The discourse markers *így* and *ilyen* both tend to directly precede constituents whose syntactic function is the same as theirs; their primary function, therefore, is to direct the listener's attention to the following constituent (Dér 2010).

2. Subjects, material, and method

The present study involved 15 kindergarten pupils, 15 secondary school students and 15 adults. The first group consisted of 7 girls and 8 boys aged 6 to 7. All had

normal hearing and no speech defect reported, they were all typically developing and monolingual. The interviews were made in their normal kindergarten setting, by their own nurse, with a tape recorder with built-in microphone. The topic of conversation was where and how they had spent their summer vacation, what their usual games or their favourite tales were, etc. (Horváth 2006). A total of 45 minutes' recording was made. The second group of subjects included 9 girls and 6 boys, aged 15–16. They all attended second forms of a secondary school, and were monolingual with unimpeded hearing. Their interviewers were unknown for them but the recordings were made in their usual school setting, with a minidisk recorder (Horváth & Imre 2009). The topics were school, family, plans for the summer, and further education. A total of over an hour of recording was used in the present study. The material of the 15 adults also contained interviews, over one and a half hours in total. These were selected from the BEA Hungarian spoken language database (Gósy 2008). The topics of the interviews were the speakers' job, hobbies, or family. The recordings were made under sound studio circumstances. The speakers, 7 females and 8 males, were 20 to 57 years of age; their average age was 38.9 years.

The rest of the recording data are summarised in Table 1. In the higher age groups, it was not only total speaking time that increased as compared to the lower ones but also – obviously – the number of words was almost twice that of the next younger group. On the other hand, in terms of the number of turns, the tendency is reversed; the reason is that adults talked about the given topic fluently and at length, with hardly any helpful questions required of the interviewer, whereas the kids and young people were more likely to give short answers, prompting the nurse/field worker to ask further questions.

	Duration		# of words		# of turns	
	sum	range	sum	range	sum	range (average)
Kindergarten	44′39″	1′15″–6′14″	2961	52–465	181	4–28 (12.1)
Secondary school	67′28″	2′19″–9′32″	6383	192–1196	294	8–31 (19.6)
Adults	97′24″	2′57″–17′41″	11374	292–2182	75	1–12 (5.0)

Table1. Quantitative data of the sound recordings studied

Discourse marking occurrences of the three items under study here were selected manually from the transcribed interviews, with a parallel consultation of the script and the sound recording. It was only in a few cases that the context and the prosody were insufficient for telling occurrences of the original parts of speech vs. discourse markers apart; these tokens were excluded from further consideration. (With respect to the methods of telling syntactic and pragmatic functions apart, cf. Dér & Markó 2010.)

We have established the number of occurrences of the individual discourse markers as a percentage of the total number of words, speaker by speaker and group by group. Using statistical methods (descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, correlation analysis – SPSS for Windows 16.0), we have characterised the use of discourse markers by the individual age groups.

3. Results

The material contained 344 occurrences of *hát,* 94 occurrences of *így* and 123 occurrences of *ilyen* as discourse markers. Table 2 shows these data broken down by age groups.

	hát	*így*	*ilyen*
Kindergarten	27	25	30
Secondary school	189	50	46
Adults	128	19	47

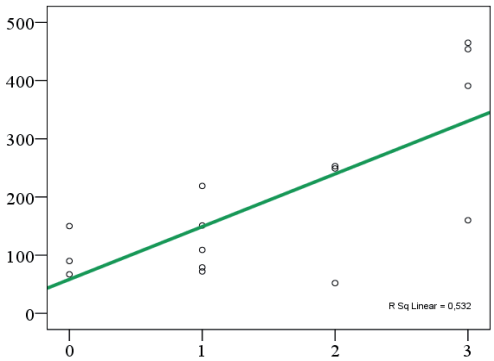
Table 2. Number of occurrences of the three discourse markers in each age group

We have checked how typical the use of these discourse markers was of the speakers belonging to each age group (Table 3). We found that the use of *hát* was the most frequent in all three groups, it occurred at least once in each young person's and adult's speech, and two-thirds of the kindergarten children also used it. The use of *ilyen* also became more frequent with growing age: 40% of the kids used it, and roughly twice as many of the youngsters and of the adults. The trend was the opposite with respect to *így*: it occurred with less then half of the kindergarten pupils and of the adults, whereas 80% of the teenagers included it in their speech. This result is somewhat reminiscent of an earlier one that clearly confirmed a correlation between speaker's age and the use of *így*: analysing the speech production of adults between 20 and 70, it was found that the younger the speaker was the more (s)he used *így* in a discourse marking function (Dér & Markó forthcoming).

	hát	*így*	*ilyen*
Kindergarten	10 (67%)	7 (47%)	6 (40%)
Secondary school	15 (100%)	12 (80%)	12 (80%)
Adults	15 (100%)	6 (40%)	11 (73%)

Table 3. The occurrence of the three discourse markers in the individual speakers' material.

a)



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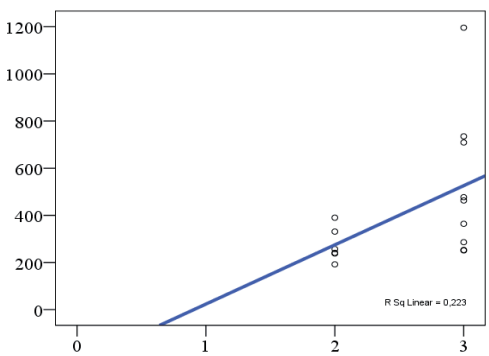

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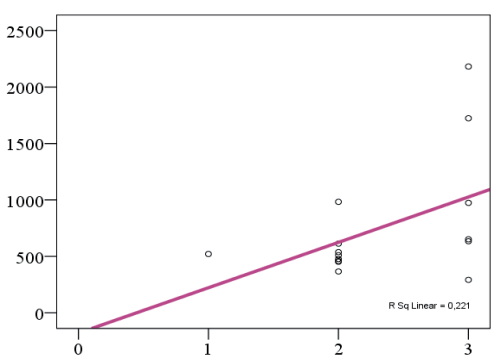

Figure 1. The occurrence of the three discourse markers plotted against the number of words uttered, by age group: (a) 6–7-year-olds, (b) 15–16-year-olds, (c) adults

We also wanted to find out if the occurrence of these discourse markers correlated with the length of speech produced. Figure 1 shows the occurrence of the three discourse markers plotted against the number of words, for each age group separately. In the case of the youngest group, it was confirmed that the more words a subject uttered, the more of the three discourse markers at hand occurred in his/her speech: Pearson's test showed a significant, strong correlation ($r = 0.729$, $p = 0.002$). For the other two groups, statistical analysis showed non-significant, medium correlation (secondary school students: $r = 0.472$, $p = 0.076$; adults: $r = 0.470$, $p = 0.077$). (The trend lines help the reader visualise these trends.) The figures also show that while among kindergarten pupils we found roughly equal numbers using one, two, or three discourse markers, or indeed none, in the older groups (with a single exception) at least two of the three discourse markers occurred in every subject's speech.

We have analysed the frequency of occurrence of the three discourse markers under scrutiny in the productions of speakers in the three age groups. We established frequency of occurrence as per total number of words uttered. The average values by age group are summarised in Table 4. The most frequent of the three discourse markers was *hát*; the second place was taken by *ilyen* with small kids and adults, and by *így* with the secondary school students. All three markers occurred the most often, on average, in the teenagers' speech, but the frequency of *hát* was the most prominent – it occurred roughly three times as often with them as with the other two groups. In the case of *ilyen*, the data for kindergarten pupils came close to that for secondary school students, while the adults' average was but half that much. *Így* as a discourse marker seems to be more frequent in the speech of small children than in the speech of adults; the frequency of occurrence of *hát*, on the other hand, was the same in those two groups.

	hát/# of words	*így*/# of words	*ilyen*/# of words
Kindergarten	0.0116	0.0058	0.0071
Secondary school	0.0356	0.0089	0.0072
Adults	0.0121	0.0012	0.0032

Table 4. Average occurrence of each discourse marker per number of words, in the three age groups

Figure 2 shows the ranges of frequency of occurrence per number of words for the three discourse markers and for the three age groups. The box diagram confirms the marked frequency of *hát* in the secondary school group. It is interesting, on the other hand, that some kindergarten-age subjects used *ilyen* as a discourse marker relatively more often than any of the older subjects.

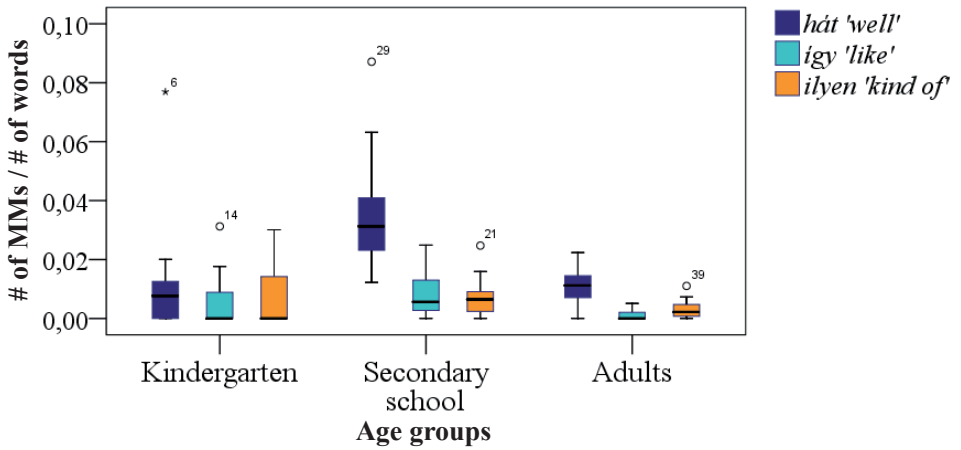

Figure 2. Frequency of occurrence of the three discourse markers per number of words: medians and ranges of the data in the three age groups

We used one-way ANOVA to see whether there were any statistically significant differences between the individual groups with respect to the discourse markers studied here. In the case of *hát*, the test gave a significant result [$p < 0.001$, $F(2, 42) = 10.443$], and Tukey's post hoc test also confirmed that there were significant differences between any two age groups ($p = 0.001$ everywhere). For *így*, between-group variance was also confirmed [$p = 0.016$, $F(2, 42) = 4.537$], but the post hoc test gave significant results only for secondary school students vs. adults ($p = 0.013$). With respect to *ilyen*, the three groups did not differ significantly.

In addition to quantitative analyses, we also performed qualitative ones: we studied the positions of these items and the roles they played in the texts.

In our corpus, *hát* always occurred utterance unit initially (in grammatical terms: in a clause initial position). On the basis of our analysis of the data, we established eight groups of functions that *hát* can fulfil: their proportions (in each age group) are shown in Figure 3 below. All eight functions were attested in the adults' recordings; we found 6 of these with secondary school students and 3 with kindergarten pupils. Thus, the trend of functional diversification with growing age can be seen clearly.

The role in which the discourse marker *hát* occurred the most often in all three age groups is known in the literature as a general 'marker of response' (cf. Schiffrin 1987 with respect to English *well*, and e.g. Németh 1998 with respect to Hungarian *hát*). Although this function seems to be the most dominant in the case of small children (81.5%, vs. 73.5% for youngsters and 24.2% for adults) if we consider percentages of all occurrences, note that the results are quite different if we look at what percentage of turns began with *hát*: 47.3% of secondary school students' turns, 41.3% of adults' turns, and a mere 12.2% of small children's turns began by that discourse marker. (See Table 1 for the number of turns themselves.)

Here is an example taken from the corpus (with the speaker's age indicated in parentheses after each example to follow):

(1) Interviewer: *és mi az ami különös vagy mi tetszik benne?* 'and what is special in it or what do you like in it?'
Subject: ***hát*** *szerintem a gyerekekkel való fog* [foglalkozás] *tehát hogy gyerekekkel foglalkozhatom* '**well** I think it is dealing with children, that is, the fact that I can deal with children' (31)

Both in the material of secondary school students and in that of adults, it happened a number of times that the speaker began his/her response by *hát* only after (s)he had repeated (part of) the question, as in (2):

(2) Interviewer: *mit tervezel a nyárra?* 'What do you plan for the summer?'
Subject: *a nyárra?* ***hát*** *azt terveztem hogy biztosan meglátogatom a nagyszüleimet* 'for the summer? **well** I plan to go and see my grandparents, sure' (15)

The second most frequently occurring function, both for kindergarten pupils and for adults, was the speech planning function. In the adults' material, 21.9% of the occurrences suggest that *hát* served to resolve a speech-planning disharmony, to gain time; this proportion was 11.1% with small children and 3.7% with young people. For instance:

(3) *pont azt kell használni ami hat* [pause] *ja és* ***hát*** *fee* ***hát*** *ez ez ez* ***hát*** *ma nincs más ni ne nem nem lehet bocsánat hogy bele belezörejedek ööö hatni kell* 'you have to use exactly what is effective [pause] yeah and **well** up **well** this this this **well** there's nothing else even today no no no sorry to have got got mixed up er one must be effective' (20)

(4) *hát Káposztásmegyerer* [Káposztásmegyeren] *lakunk anyával anyu* [pause] *ööö* ***hát*** *hogy mondjam projekt menedzsment tanácsadó* 'well Káposztásmegyer is where we live with mother mom is [pause] er **well** how to put it a project management advisor' (15)

(5) *az ilyen ilyen* ***hát*** *úgy így ilye fe- fölül így fö- hátra lehetett húzni* 'the such such **well** so thus such up up so up you could pull it back' (6)

The third function that occurred in all three age groups was the indication of a conclusion: in 8.6% in the case of adults, 2.1% in the case of secondary school students, and 7.4% in the case of small kids (but the latter percentage covers a mere 2 occurrences). We found the simplest cases in the material of kindergarten pupils:

(6) *az is jó meg így tornázunk így táncolok úgyhogy futkározok edzek* [pause] ***hát*** *ennyi* 'that's good too and so we do exercises so I dance so that I run around, I do training [pause] **well** that's it' (7)

With older speakers, *hát* sometimes introduced whole utterance units of a summarising nature:

(7) *és azt gondolom hogy a diákok egy jó része szeretheti meert mert hogy visszajönnek öööö szakszemináriumokra* ***hát*** *ez az én egyetemre kerülésemnek a története* 'I think that many of the students may like it because because they come back er for special seminars **well** this is the story of my getting to the university' (28)

The second most frequent set of cases (9.0%) of secondary school students, and the third most frequent set (18.8%) of adults, was the set of examples in which *hát* introduced an excuse or explanation, an amendment or addition or self-correction (see the similar results in Németh 1996). The example in (8) is one of making an excuse; that in (9) contains self-correction and offers a more precise formulation; and that in (10) can be interpreted either as an amendment or as an addition.

(8) *de hogy ezeket mind meg kellett élni ahhoz hogy most* [pause] *a mostani* [pause] *gondolkodásom tát* [tehát] *jó* ***hát*** *ez nem egy olyan nagy út* 'but that these all had to be lived through so that now [pause] my present [pause] thinking so fine **well** this is not that big for a progress' (20)

(9) *meg ilyen régi, rég* ***hát*** *nem régies de inkább olyan hangzású, mint* [pause] *nem ilyen rockosabb stílusú* 'and such old old **well** not old-fashioned but rather sounding like [pause] not kinda more rock-like style' (16)

(10) *hát sportoltam, de most abbahagytam* ***hát*** *igazából kétéves korom óta úsztam* 'well I did sports but now I gave up **well** really I'd been swimming since I was two' (15)

The role of simply carrying on with the message was fulfilled by *hát* in 6.9% of the cases with the secondary school students, and in 11.7% with the adults. A separate group was that of the cases where *hát* introduced a new topic (4.8 and 3.9%), as in (11):

(11) *hát nem tudom lehet hogy csak unatkozott volna nem tudom mindegy de* ***hát*** *apukám ilyen vállalkozószerűség* 'well I don't know maybe he would just be bored I don't know never mind but **well** my dad is sort of entrepreneur like' (15)

Cases where the function of *hát* was emphasising something only occurred with adults (in 8.6%):

(12) *és akkor megkapta ez a kislány* ***hát*** *ő volt a leg* [pause] *rendesebben aki hordta a készülékeket* 'and then this girl got it **well** she was the most [pause] decent in carrying the sets' (45)

It was similarly only in this age group that *hát* had the function of introducing a question (2.3%); obviously, due to the role of speakers as interviewees, this function involved rhetorical questions, as in (13):

(13) *és akkor kisgyerekekről beszélünk* ***hát*** *ki az aki jó fiúként mondjuk harmadik osztályban?* 'and then we're talking about small kids **well** who is well-behaved as a boy say in the third form?' (33)

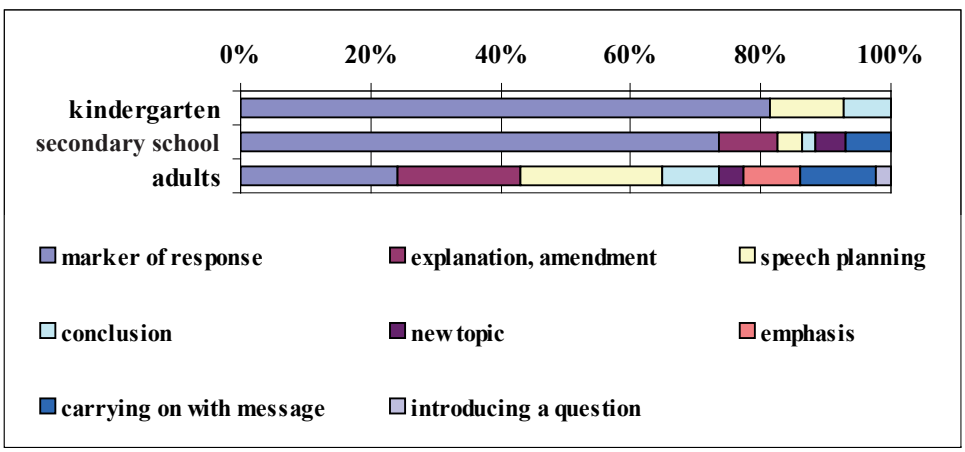

Figure 3. The functions of *hát* in the three age groups

The function of *így* did not change spectacularly with growing age since its role in all age groups is to draw the listener's attention to the constituent that follows. Where we found changes (diversification) was the part-of-speech affiliation of the following word (cf. Figure 4 below). While with kindergarten pupils *így* introduced a verb in 64.0% of the cases, with secondary school students this percentage went down to 30.0% and with adults to 5.3%. Examples:

(14) *van olyan hogy rádé- bekapcsoljuk a rádiót azt közbe* ***így*** *táncolook* 'it happens that the ray we turn on the radio and then **like** I keep dancing' (6)

(15) *igazából márr szaknyelvet is tanulok és akkor **így** gondolom használni fogom* 'in fact already I learn language for special purposes too and then **like** I think I'll also use it' (16)

That is: with growing age, the discourse marking use of *így* got increasingly further away from its original syntactic (adverbial) role. Accordingly, we found *így* emphasising a noun or a noun phrase in 26.0 and 31.6% with teenagers and adults, respectively, cf. (16); this function was not found with kindergarten kids at all. In these cases, the nominal typically fulfilled an adverbial role, that is, its function was the same as that of *így*:

(16) *ez az aktív pihenés az amit előtérbe helyezünk **így** a családon belül is* 'this active relaxation is what we prefer **like** within the family, too' (31)

A similar increase of frequency was found in the case of adverbs (kindergarten: 8.0%, secondary school: 10.0%, adults: 26.3%) where, again two identical (adverbial) items occurred next to one another. In (17), even the type of adverb is identical: both *így* and *gyakorlatilag* 'practically' are adverbs of regard/manner:

(17) *de egyébként meg tehát öööö **így** gyakorlatilag alánk volt adva a a a kész programtervezet* 'but otherwise so er **like** practically we had the the the full draft program ready-made for us' (33)

With respect to the other parts of speech, there was no significant change with growing age. On the other hand, it is conspicuous that – just like in the case of *hát* – the proportion of occurrences of *így* having to do with speech planning increased. With children, it was 4.0% (the single example belonging here can be read in (5) above), with youngsters, 8.0%, and with adults, 21.1% – for instance:

(18) *tehát hogy **így*** [pause] *hogy tényleg **így** hogy a világban két lábbal járó és és öööö* [pause] *két szemmel néző* [pause] *értelmiségi em embereknek is nehéz néha* 'thus that **like** [pause] that really **like** that for those walking on two feet in the world and and er [pause] watching it with both eyes [pause] for intellectual pea people too, it is difficult sometimes' (33)

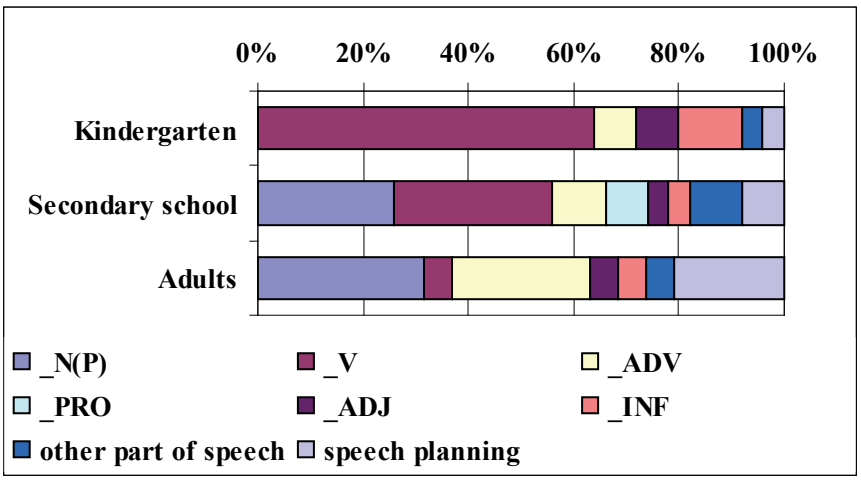

Figure 4. The functions of *így* in the three age groups

In the case of *ilyen*, too, we found no significant difference between teenagers and adults in terms of function or context/position (Figure 5); in these two groups, *ilyen* preceding an adverb was the most frequent (58.7% and 57.4%), for instance:

(19) *Budapesten lakunk a nyolcadik kerületbe de szerencsére* ***ilyen*** *normálisabb részen* 'we live in Budapest in the eighth district but luckily in a **kinda** more decent part' (15)

Although one of the original (syntactic) roles of *ilyen* is an adverb of degree before an adjective, in the discourse marking function seen here there is no adverbial meaning involved, merely an emphasis on the attribute. This is often disambiguated by prosody, given that *ilyen* as an adverb of degree can be stressed whereas as a discourse marker it cannot (similarly to the syntactic vs. pragmatic uses of *így*, cf. Dér & Markó 2010). Another clue can be that discourse-marking *ilyen* can precede an adjective in the comparative (as in (19)), whereas in its degree adverb guise this would lead to ungrammaticality.

Conversely, in early language use, the most dominant type was where *ilyen* served to bridge a speech-planning gap, to gain time: 48.3%. This function was found in 14.8% with adults and with 4.3% with teenagers. Examples coming from the youngest group of speakers include those in (5) above and in (20) below:

(20) *meg* [pause] *a legmélyebb víz szélén van egy* ***ilyen*** *mi is? egy* ***ilyen*** *vi- víz ami így lejtős és on- onnan beleugrátam* 'and [pause] at the side of the deepest water there's a **kinda** what? A **kinda** wa water that is sloping and from from there I kept jumping in' (6)

(21) *van egy hús ami nem is magyar hanem román és nem jut eszembe a neve hogy hogy hívják de* ***ilyen*** *kis* ***ilyen*** *hurkaszerű kis hús* 'there's a sort of meat that is not even Hungarian but Romanian and I don't recall its name what it is called but **kinda** small **kinda** sausage-like little meat' (16)

Roughly equally often in the three age groups, the pragmatic function of *ilyen* may also be to make the following noun more salient: 20.6% in the kindergarten group, 30.4% in the secondary school group, and 25.5% in the adult group. For instance:

(22) *tehát kicsit a gyerekek szájából* ***ilyen*** *csalódottságot éreztem* 'so a little from the kids' mouths I felt **kinda** disappointment coming' (50)

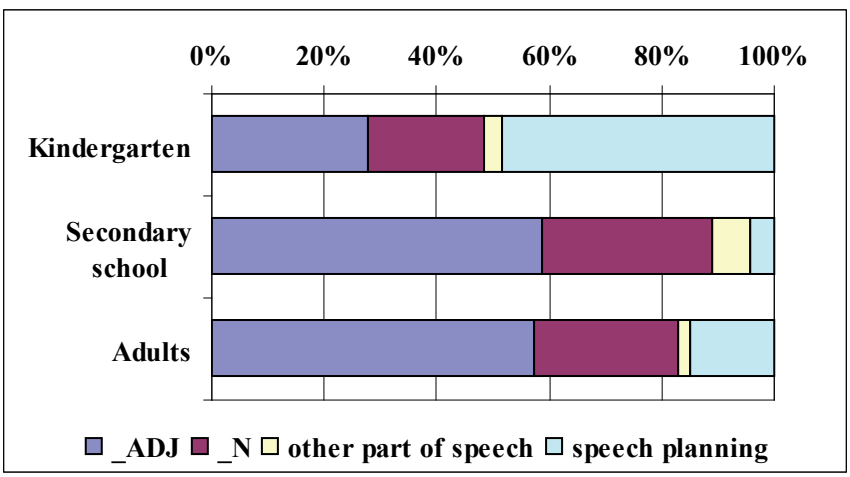

Figure 5. The functions of *ilyen* in the three age groups

In the case of *ilyen*, then – as opposed to the case of *így* – the speech-planning role lost ground as the speakers' age grew, but – similarly to the case of *így* – the clearly pragmatic emphasising role gained ground at the same time.

4. Conclusions

In this paper, occurrences of three Hungarian discourse markers were investigated in interviews involving small children, teenagers, and adults, both with qualitative and with quantitative methods. In the case of *hát* 'well', our hypothesis was clearly confirmed in

that we found functional diversification in parallel with growing age. Also, we found that this item was extremely frequent in the speech of secondary school students, whereas in the case of adults, the more diverse (more numerous) functions were represented by a lower number of tokens each. In the cases of *így* 'like' and *ilyen* 'kind of', we found a functional shift rather than functional diversification: the most clearly pragmatic function (drawing the listener's attention to the following item) kept getting stronger with growing age. Two opposite tendencies in the case of these two items (both going back to demonstrative pronouns) were that *így* was less and less used for overcoming speech planning difficulties, whereas *ilyen* was more and more used as a hesitation marker. The extensive use of *ilyen* found with small children suggests that at least some of them already have a strategy for a surface concealment of planning disharmonies, for playing for time. In the case of adults, the strategy most often employed for that purpose is the use of filled pauses (Gósy 2003), but it is a lot less frequent in the speech of kindergarten pupils. Horváth (2009) attested an average of 1.58 filled pauses per minute in the speech of 6–7-year-old children, whereas with adults she found 3.82 (a significant difference). "In the speech of kindergarten pupils, filled pauses are not only much rarer than in that of adults: in one fifth of the 6–7-year-olds we have studied, they are not even present" (*ibid.* 135). It is likely, therefore, that children who do employ some strategy for keeping up the apparent fluency of their speech still prefer the use of certain words of depleted meaning to the use of filled pauses, whereas that tendency turns upside down later on.

A common property of the linguistic items analysed in this paper is that all three of them are afflicted by heavy stigmatisation. The superstition "never start a sentence with *hát*" is very widespread (cf. Domonkosi 2007, Schirm 2008). The *Handbook of language cultivation* (Grétsy & Kovalovszky 1980) cites *így* (along with *hát* and other items) as "speech stuffing" to be avoided (*ibid*. 323), and all three items are also mentioned by Pestessy (2006) as "harmful" ones. In all likelihood, such stigmatisation is based on the fact that earlier on, with no empirical data at hand, it was easier to see these items as superfluous, functionless "padding material". More recent papers (cited above) have proved, however – and their unanimous conclusion has also been confirmed by the present investigation – that these words cannot be avoided in discourse (even in uses that depart from the original ones) as they provide the listener with information concerning the speaker, his/her attitude to his/her own message, the speech planning process, etc. In other words, they have important pragmatic functions to serve.

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