

Approaches to Hungarian

Past and future

The current issue of the journal is the first in a line of thematic issues that are based on papers from the International Conference on the Structure of Hungarian (ICSH) conference series.

ICSH is a major biennial international conference forum for linguistic research that makes a contribution to our understanding of the structure of Hungarian and general linguistic theory. The conference series provides a platform for presentations on any synchronic or diachronic aspect of Hungarian syntax and morphology, phonology and phonetics, semantics and pragmatics, as well as their interfaces and psycholinguistic aspects, studied from theoretically or empirically oriented angles, whether alone or in a cross-linguistic perspective. The first event in the series, titled *The Structure of Hungarian: Contemporary Approaches*, was organized in 1992 in Bloomington by Csaba Pléh, who at the time was the holder of the György Ránki Chair in Hungarian Studies at Indiana University. Two years later the *Second Conference on the Structure of Hungarian*, convened by István Kenesei, was held in Szeged, Hungary. Ever since these first two events in the series, the conference has essentially been held every two years alternately outside and inside Hungary: ICSH₃ in 1996 in Amsterdam, ICSH₄ in 1998 in Pécs, ICSH₅ in 2001 in Budapest (at the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, to honour institute director Ferenc Kiefer's seventieth birthday), ICSH₆ in 2002 in Düsseldorf, ICSH₇ in 2005 in Veszprém, ICSH₈ in 2007 in New York, ICSH₉ in 2009 in Debrecen, ICSH₁₀ in 2011 in Lund, ICSH₁₁ in 2013 in Piliscsaba, ICSH₁₂ in 2015 in Leiden, and ICSH₁₃ in 2017 in Budapest.

Traditionally, a selection of the papers presented at ICSH was published in the book series *Approaches to Hungarian* (AtoH), launched under the editorship of István Kenesei in 1985. The first three volumes (ed. Kenesei 1985, 1987, 1990) contained solicited contributions devoted to descriptive and theoretical issues in the formal linguistic study of Hungarian. While the entire first volume was dedicated to syntax, the second and third volumes also extended to questions of morphology, morphophonology, segmental phonology and intonation. It is volume four, co-edited by István Kenesei and Csaba Pléh (1992), that marks the beginning of the marriage of *Approaches* to the ICSH series: it was this volume that collected papers from the first installment of the conference in Bloomington. Vol-

ume five (ed. Kenesei, 1995) was based on ICSH₂, volume six (ed. de Groot & Kenesei, 1998) on ICSH₃, volume seven (ed. Alberti & Kenesei, 2000) on ICSH₄, volume eight (ed. Kenesei & Siptár, 2002) on ICSH₅, volume nine (ed. Piñón & Siptár, 2005) on ICSH₆, volume ten (ed. Piñón & Szentgyörgyi, 2008) on ICSH₇, volume eleven (ed. den Dikken & Vago, 2009) on ICSH₈, volume twelve (ed. Laczkó & Ringen, 2011) on ICSH₉, volume thirteen (ed. Brandtler, Molnár & Platzack, 2013) on ICSH₁₀, volume fourteen (ed. É. Kiss, Surányi & Dékány, 2015) on ICSH₁₁, volume fifteen (ed. van der Hulst & Lipták, 2017) on ICSH₁₂, and volume sixteen (ed. Hegedűs & Vogel, 2020) on ICSH₁₃. The title, produced originally by the University of Szeged (vols. 1–5) and its university press (JATEPress, vols. 6–7), was taken over in 2002 by Akadémiai Kiadó (vols. 8–10), and subsequently from 2009 to 2020 by John Benjamins (vols. 11–16), under the general editorship of István Kenesei.

Commencing from this year, following the general changes in the publishing and academic landscape, this book series model is supplanted by a series of thematic journal issues: *AtoH* continues its life in the form of a series of special collections finding new home in the *Journal of Uralic Linguistics* (JUL). The current issue, duly titled *Approaches to Hungarian 17*, is the first one in line. It contains a selection of papers presented at ICSH 14, which was generously hosted in June 2019 by the University of Potsdam. (Exceptionally, an additional collection of papers from that conference is contained in issue 2 of *Acta Linguistica Academica* Vol. 69.)

While the space constraints that come with this new format inevitably impose a more stringent limit on the number of papers that can be accommodated in a single collection than before, it is hoped that the selected papers that make up these thematic issues of *JUL* will merit, and indeed receive, special attention both from the scholarly community studying Hungarian and the Uralic language family, and also from a broader readership interested in empirically and theoretically informed research into the structure of natural language at large. In the service of that objective, *JUL*'s thematic series of *Approaches to Hungarian* issues will strive to uphold and reaffirm the *Approaches* book series' long-standing commitment to maintaining the highest standards of scientific quality. Imposing those standards in taking diligent care of the submitted manuscripts, including the selection of anonymous expert referees, will be the joint responsibility of a varying team of special issue co-editors, including one or two invited guest editors and one of the two editors-in-chief. In view of the fact that quality academic publications are inconceivable without giving careful attention to perfecting final author manuscripts, it is a privilege to be able to trust copy-editing of the series to the hands of our eminent senior colleague, Péter Siptár.

The *Approaches* series, as much today as during the thirty years since the time it got associated with the ICSH conference, is the product of inspired research carried out by an intellectually receptive and responsive community of linguists. This constantly evolving community, with members residing and working in many different countries in several continents, share a special interest in what can be learnt about, and indeed from, systematic linguistic patterns unearthed from the Hungarian language, and how this can inform linguistic theory, or in the relevant cases, how it can further the study of other Uralic and non-Uralic languages. It is this – either explicitly or implicitly – comparative linguistic perspective that has made Hungarian not only the best studied member of the Uralic family, but also one of the most deeply explored non-Indo-European languages, yielding a number of findings that have exerted significant influence on the development of prominent linguistic theories as well as key linguistic typologies.

The laudable impactfulness of this research is likely due to a combination of many factors, several of which are no less relevant today than three decades ago. While this is not the place to attempt to take full inventory of these, at least two seem to be beyond reasonable doubt. One is a readiness to equitably engage with and judiciously build on the results of other researchers' work on Hungarian and other languages, whether issuing criticism or adducing independent support. Another, and perhaps more significant, attribute complementing this is an openness to lessons from, and an ambition to contribute to, the vast body of knowledge commonly referred to as general linguistics. In its present renewed form of recurrent thematic issues of the *Journal of Uralic Linguistics*, it continues to be the objective of the *Approaches* series to serve as a highly visible forum for such work of the highest calibre and thus a standard point of reference for anyone interested in the linguistics of the Hungarian language.

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