

Tanulmány

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The imperative and the subjunctive proper: two distinct grammatical moods in Hungarian¹

Abstract

This paper examines various linguistic contexts where the subjunctive proper and/or the imperative mood are licensed in Hungarian. Minimal pairs of contexts, where both moods are grammatical, are also explored in an experimental framework. The paper argues that semantic factors influence the distribution of the imperative and the subjunctive proper in complement clauses and that the imperative and the subjunctive proper need to be treated as separate grammatical moods in Hungarian.

Keywords: imperative, subjunctive proper, grammatical mood, Hungarian

1 Introduction

The subjunctive proper and the imperative are morphologically identical in Hungarian, hence, the status of the subjunctive proper provides a controversial issue, most descriptive grammars do not even recognise it as a formally distinct mood. However, adopting the syntactic criteria given by Pataki (1984) to differentiate the imperative and the subjunctive proper in complement clauses it can be argued that the subjunctive proper comprises an individual mood. The aim of this paper is to examine those linguistic contexts where the subjunctive proper and/or the imperative mood may be used in Hungarian, including comparison of minimal pairs of contexts, where both moods are grammatical. On the basis of a case study and its statistical analysis it is argued that semantic factors influence the selection of the imperative and the subjunctive proper in complement clauses. Further, the results of the experiment to be discussed below provide further evidence in support of the need to differentiate the moods in question.

2 The subjunctive proper and the imperative

2.1 The subjunctive mood

Traditionally the notion of mood is restricted to a category expressed in verbal morphology. However, Palmer (1986) argues that while verbal inflection is an important formal feature of

¹ This paper is a slightly revised and updated version of Tóth (2007).

mood, mood is not only a morphosyntactic category of the verb, but it has certain semantic functions that affect the meaning of the whole sentence. In most Hungarian grammars three grammatical moods are differentiated, the indicative, the conditional and the subjunctive.² Sometimes a further syntactically motivated distinction is made (see Pataki 1984, Kenesei 1992) stating that the subjunctive comprises two morphologically identical moods: the imperative and the subjunctive proper.

The subjunctive proper mood seems to appear only in subordinate clauses in Hungarian,³ which is a striking similarity between Hungarian and several Indo-European languages, and as we will see later it seems to be reasonable to suppose that the matrix predicate governs its use.

Let us consider several examples, which are motivated by the ones to be found in Pataki (1984):⁴

- (1) Olyan hideg van itt, hogy fűtsünk be.
 so cold is here that heat.1PL.IMP PV
 ‘It is so cold here. Let’s heat up the room.’
- (2) *Olyan hideg van itt, hogy be-fűtsünk.
 so cold is here that PV-heat.1PL.SUBJ
 ‘It is so cold here. Let’s heat up the room.’
- (3) Nincs itt olyan hideg, hogy be-fűtsünk.
 NEG here so cold, that PV-heat.1PL.SUBJ
 ‘It is not so cold here that we should heat up the room.’
- (4) *Nincs itt olyan hideg, hogy fűtsünk be.
 NEG here so cold, that heat.1PL.IMP PV
 ‘It is not so cold here that we should heat up the room.’

The use of the imperative in (4) does not seem to be really motivated semantically, since negation in the matrix clause denies the necessity of heating up the room, but (3) is grammatical. Considering (1) and (2) just the opposite can be observed. The difference between (1) and (2) on the one hand and (3) and (4) on the other hand can be easily grasped if

² For a semantically motivated analysis of mood choice in Hungarian complement clauses see Tóth (2008a, 2008b).

³ A recent study by Dömötör & Varga (2014) showed that the presence of three discourse particles (expressing intensification or emphasis) – *aztán* ‘then’, *ám* ‘really/well’, *nekem* ‘me’ – may license the subjunctive proper in a matrix clause. Consider the example below taken from a contemporary Hungarian tale:

(i) Aztán jól fel-forrald ám a viz-et – szólt le a magas-ból a nap.
 DP_then well PV-boil.2SG.SUBJ DP_really the water-ACC called.2SGPV the sky-LOC the sun.
 ‘“And don’t forget to boil the water thoroughly” called down the sun from the sky.’
 (Berg Judit: Micsoda idő: 23)

⁴ As the issue would become too many-fold to be treated in the present discussion, I make the following restriction on the predicate of the main clause: The predicate of the main clause always will appear in present tense and in the indicative mood, but it may undergo negation. It also must be noted here that until the explicit introduction of the subjunctive proper the label ‘subjunctive’ refers both to the imperative and the subjunctive.

we assume that in (2) and (3) we find occurrences of the subjunctive proper, while in (1) and (4) that of the imperative.⁵ In the following section I will discuss the syntactic criteria offered by Pataki (1984), which provide adequate tools to differentiate the imperative and the subjunctive proper.

2.2 *Predicates licensing the subjunctive proper and/or the imperative*⁶

As we have seen, the main difficulty concerning the status of the subjunctive proper in Hungarian is that its forms cannot be distinguished morphologically from that of the imperative. However, using syntactic evidence at least three groups of predicates can be differentiated depending on which grammatical mood can be licensed in their subordinate clauses.

Group 1: Predicates licensing the imperative

Predicates belonging to the first group require a subordinate clause with an imperative verb form, as in (5):

- (5) Az-t javaslom, hogy olvasd el a könyv-et.
 that-ACC suggest.1SG.IND that read.2SG.IMP PV the book-ACC
 ‘I suggest that you read the book.’

Inversion of the preverb and verb is obligatory in such sentences. If the preverb does not move, the sentence becomes ungrammatical:

- (6) *Az-t javaslom, hogy el-olvasd a könyv-et.
 that-ACC suggest.1SG.IND that PV-read.2SG.IMP the book-ACC
 ‘I suggest that you read the book.’

Another characteristic feature of these predicates is that they allow omission of the complementiser. Thus, (7) is grammatical:

- (7) Az-t javaslom, olvasd el a könyv-et.
 that-ACC suggest.1SG.IND read.2SG.IMP PV the book-ACC
 ‘I suggest that you read the book.’

Predicates licensing the imperative in their subordinate clause are the following:

– **assertives (with a directive meaning):** *mond* ‘tell’, *megmond* ‘tell’, *figyelmeztet* ‘warn’, *üzen* ‘send a message’, *ír* ‘write’, *szól* ‘say’, *kiált* ‘shout’, *felhatalmaz* ‘authorize’, *felkér* ‘request’

– **directives:** *parancsol* ‘order’, *megparancsol* ‘give orders’, *javasol* ‘suggest’, *utasít* ‘instruct’, *felszólít* ‘summon’, *kér* ‘ask’, *megkér* ‘request’, *kíván* ‘demand’, *elrendel* ‘direct’,

⁵ For the rest of the paper I make the following restriction: I will examine only matrix clauses that contain besides the subject only a lexically simple predicate and a referring word at most, thus, analysing matrix sentences with lexically composite predicates lies out of the scope of the present study (see (3)–(6)).

⁶ Szili (2011, 2012) provides a more detailed description of matrix predicates within the framework of speech act theory.

biztat ‘encourage’, *buzdít* ‘prompt’, *követel* ‘seek’, *ajánl* ‘suggest’, *tanácsol* ‘recommend’, *könyörög* ‘implore’, *kényszerít* ‘compel’, *kötelez* ‘oblige’, *meghagy* ‘bid’, *rászorít* ‘force’, *rimáncodik* ‘beseech’

Group 2: Predicates licensing the subjunctive proper

In the case of predicates belonging to the second group, the preverb must remain in situ, and deletion of the complementiser results in an ungrammatical sentence. Consider the following sentences:

- (8) Elkerülhetetlen, hogy le-vizsgálj matek-ból.
 mandatory that PV-take an exam.2SG.SUBJ maths-IN
 ‘It is mandatory that you take an exam in maths.’
- (9) *Elkerülhetetlen, hogy vizsgálj le matek-ból.⁷
 mandatory that take an exam.2SG.SUBJ PV maths-IN
 ‘It is mandatory that you take an exam in maths.’
- (10) *Elkerülhetetlen, le-vizsgálj matek-ból.
 mandatory PV-take an exam..2SG.SUBJ maths-IN
 ‘It is mandatory that you take an exam in maths.’

Now, it is obvious that there is syntactic evidence to make a distinction between the imperative and the subjunctive proper mood, even if the verb forms are identical. It seems to be the case that these two properties help us in identifying the mood of the embedded verb.

Predicates licensing the subjunctive are the following:

– **rational evaluation predicates:**

– **qualitative:** *fontos* ‘important’, *hasztalan* ‘useless’, *felesleges* ‘needless’, *értelmetlen* ‘senseless’, *alkalmas* ‘suitable’, *alkalmatlan* ‘unsuitable’, *távol áll tőle* ‘wouldn’t dream of’, *idegen tőle* ‘be averse to’, *tűrhetetlen* ‘insupportable’, *butaságnak tart* ‘think it nonsense’, *megérdemel* ‘deserve’

⁷ It must be noted here that the inner structure of the subordinate clause may also influence the order of the verb and the preverb, i.e. if the focus position is filled in the subordinate clause, inversion of the verb and the preverb is also triggered. Consider the example below (capitals signal stress):

- (i) Elkerülhetetlen, hogy a NAGYMAMA utazzon el.
 necessary that the grandmother leave.SUBJPV
 ‘It is necessary for the grandmother to leave.’

In (i), *grandmother* is in focus, since it receives stress, and the sentence could be continued as ‘and not the grandfather’. The semantic function of the focus is identifying through exclusion. However, if *grandmother* is not in focus position, inversion does not occur, it would make the sentence ungrammatical. Negation of the subordinate predicate has the same effect. In what follows I will deliberately use examples containing neutral affirmative subordinate clauses.

Here I disagree with Molnár (1995), since she argues that the above mentioned two criteria for identifying the subjunctive can be refuted by citing examples where the focus position is filled in the subordinate clause, resulting in the inversion of the preverb and verb.

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– **deontic:**

- **positive:** *kell* ‘must’, *szükséges* ‘necessary’, *nélkülözhetetlen* ‘essential’, *elkerülhetetlen* ‘inescapable’, *elengedhetetlen* ‘indispensable’, *kötelesség* ‘duty’, *feladat* ‘task’
- **negative:** *szükségtelen* ‘unnecessary’, *megengedhetetlen* ‘inadmissible’, *szó sem lehet róla/szóba sem jöhet* ‘it is out of the question’

– **epistemics expressing remote possibility:** *lehetetlen* ‘impossible’, *valószínűtlen* ‘not likely’, *nem tudja elhinni* ‘can’t believe’, *kizárt* ‘out of the question’, *elképzelhetetlen* ‘unimaginable’, *kétséges* ‘doubtful’, *hihetetlen* ‘unbelievable’

– **permissives:**

- **positive:** *megenged* ‘allow’, *hagy* ‘let’, *lehetővé tesz* ‘render sg possible’, *beleegyezik* ‘consent’, *lehetőség/alkalom van rá* ‘have an opportunity’, *alkalmat ad* ‘provide an opportunity’, *megbíz vmivel* ‘trust’, *elvár* ‘expect’, *joga van rá* ‘have the right to’, *nincs ellene kifogása* ‘have no objections against’
- **negative:** *megtilt* ‘forbid’, *akadályoz* ‘inhibit’, *megakadályoz* ‘prevent’, *lehetetlenné tesz* ‘make sg impossible’, *gátol* ‘hinder’, *visszatart* ‘keep back’, *óv* ‘protect’, *megóv* ‘safeguard’, *lebeszél* ‘dissuade’, *óva int* ‘warn’, *int* ‘caution’, *kímél* ‘save’, *megkímél* ‘spare’, *véd* ‘protect’, *oltalmaz* ‘shield’, *tiltakozik ellene* ‘protest’, *mentesít* ‘exempt’, *ellenez* ‘object’

– **purposives:**

- **positive:** *rászánja magát* ‘make up one’s mind’, *törekszik* ‘strive’, *igyekszik* ‘endeavour’, *vállalkozik* ‘undertake’, *tesz róla* ‘take care/see’, *hajlandó* ‘willing’, *elszánja magát* ‘make up one’s mind’, *az a célja* ‘his aim is’, *az a szándéka* ‘his intention is’, *azon van* ‘be after’
- **negative:** *fél* ‘be afraid’, *letesz* ‘give up’, *visszariad* ‘shrink from sg’, *irtózik* ‘dread’, *képtelen vmire* ‘not capable’, *letesz/lemond vmiről* ‘give up the idea’, *tartózkodik vmitől* ‘refrain’

– **volitives:** *vágyik* ‘long for’, *vágyakozik* ‘yearn for’, *áhítozik* ‘desire’, *ácsingózik* ‘crave’, *szomjazik* ‘be eager for’

Group 3: Predicates licensing both moods

Predicates comprising the third group allow a subordinate clause both with an imperative or a subjunctive proper verb form. This is illustrated in (11a) and (11b):

(11) a. Ragaszkodom hozzá, *(hogy) meg-írd a lecké-t.
 insist.1SG on that PV-write.2SG.SUBJ the homework-ACC
 ‘I insist on your doing the homework.’

b. Ragaszkodom hozzá, (hogy) írd meg a lecké-t.
 insist.1SG on that write.2SG.SUBJ PV the homework-ACC
 ‘I insist on your doing the homework.’

Here, the deletion of the complementiser is allowed only in the imperative clause, thus, in (11b).⁸

Predicates governing both the imperative and the subjunctive are the following:

akar ‘want’, *kíván* ‘wish’, *óhajt* ‘desire’, *szeretné* ‘long’, *vár* ‘look forward’, *drukkol* ‘keep fingers crossed’, *ragaszkodik hozzá* ‘insist’, *gondoskodik róla* ‘ensure’, *meggyőz* ‘convince’, *szorgalmaz* ‘urge’, *rávesz* ‘persuade’, *rábeszél* ‘exhort’

Now the specific factors determining the mood of the subordinate clause need to be identified. In what follows I will argue that semantic factors are indispensable if we want to find a reasonable explanation for mood choice in subordinate clauses.⁹

3 The experiment

3.1 Overview

The experiment I am reporting on below has been aimed at exploring various characteristics of the predicates licensing both the imperative and the subjunctive proper in their subordinate clauses in Hungarian. With the help of the experiment I wanted to show that the distribution of the imperative and the subjunctive proper in subordinate clauses is indeed determined by semantic features.

The starting point of the analysis was the assumption that grammatical contrasts and distributions are meaningful, since language is economic, there are no superfluous structures, thus, every grammatical difference signals at least a slight difference in meaning. Accordingly, when we examine two sentences that differ from each other only in the mood of the subordinate clause, then we can expect some kind of meaning difference between the given sentences. Consider the following pair of sentences:

- (12) a. Mónika szül-e-i azon voltak, hogy lány-uk utazzon el
 Mónika parent-POSS-PL did their best that daughter-POSS travel.3SG.IMP PV
 néhány nap-ra pihenni.
 several day-for rest.INF
 ‘Mónika’s parents did their best to convince their daughter to go on a holiday.’
- b. Mónika szül-e-i azon voltak, hogy lány-uk el-utazzon
 Mónika parent-POSS-PL did their best that daughter-POSS PV-travel.3SG.SUBJ
 néhány nap-ra pihenni.
 several day-for rest.INF
 ‘Mónika’s parents did their best to convince their daughter to go on a holiday.’

⁸ Molnár (1995), citing Klemm (1931) suggests that there may be a difference in meaning if the mood of the embedded clause is changed, with respect to the actuality or generality of the act in question.

⁹ There is no clear borderline between semantics and pragmatics; it is a matter of opinion what belongs to the areas in question. For that reason it is possible that other researchers would say that certain characteristics that I judged to be semantic are rather pragmatic in nature.

As Prileszky (1974) observes, (12a) would be used in a situation where the parents explicitly demanded that the person referred to by the embedded subject should carry out the act described by the embedded clause, i.e. the utterance expresses strong manipulation.¹⁰ As opposed to that, in (12b) the subjunctive proper signals that the parents tried to persuade their daughter in an indirect way, for instance via giving her a traveller's cheque. I will call this latter case weak manipulation.¹¹

The hypothesis can also be supported with data from other languages. Givón (1994) states the tendency that the subjunctive in various languages often surfaces in complements of predicates expressing weak, but intended manipulation, preference, or epistemic uncertainty. Givón (1994) also claims that for instance in Spanish in those cases where both the subjunctive and the infinitive are grammatical in the complement clause the subjunctive expresses weak manipulation, while the infinitive signals stronger manipulation. According to Givón (1994) this is an implicational universal.

Weak and strong manipulation can be characterised by the properties shown in Table 1. The groups of predicates mentioned in Section 2.2 can be clearly placed on a scale based on different degrees of deontic force (see Figure 1).¹² Predicates licensing only the imperative will appear at one end point of the scale, predicates allowing only the subjunctive proper at the other end, while those licensing both moods occupy an intermediate position between the two endpoints according to our hypothesis. Here mood alternation can be observed.

strong manipulation	weak manipulation
future oriented (posterior)	
non-implicative ¹³	
strong deontic force	weak deontic force
directly manipulative	indirectly manipulative
the outcome is always possible	the outcome is not always possible

Table 1: Weak and strong manipulation

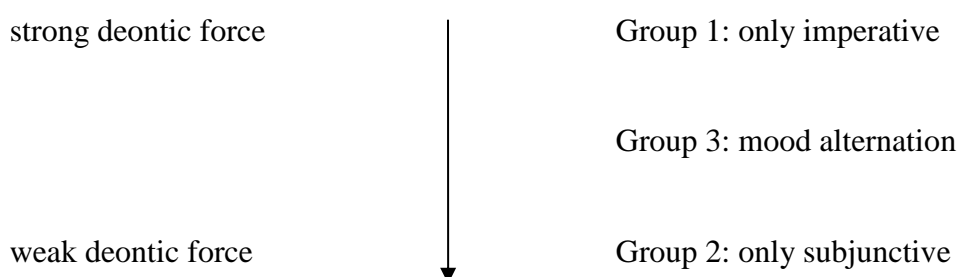


Figure 1: Scale of deontic force

¹⁰ Farkas (1992) does not differentiate the imperative and the subjunctive proper, but she notes that the order of the preverb and the verb is sensitive to the imperative meaning contributed by the matrix predicate.

¹¹ Prileszky (1974) used the terms 'imperative feature' and 'purpose feature', respectively, to distinguish the cases described above.

¹² 'deontic force' is meant to be related to the situation as a whole, and not only to the agent of the embedded clause.

¹³ This property means that the sentence does not imply that the event described by the embedded clause has happened (see Karttunen 1971).

In matrix imperatives and in purpose clauses the same features are present, and the distribution of moods follows the same pattern. Hence, by verifying the hypothesis we would gain a unified treatment of the imperative and the subjunctive proper both in matrix and complement clauses.

The existence of the meaning difference pointed out above can be further supported by the fact that in the case of embedded predicates where the lexical meaning of the predicate is less compatible with strong manipulation (for instance *meggyógyul* ‘recover’, *kiszabadul* ‘be released’), the imperative is unacceptable in the complement clause, while the subjunctive proper is grammatical:

- (13) a. Az-t akarta, hogy a férj-e ki-szabaduljon
 that-ACC wanted.3SG that the husband-POSS PV-be released.3SG.SUBJ
 a börtön-ből.
 the prison-from
 ‘She wanted her husband to be released from prison.’
- b. ??Az-t akarta, hogy a férj-e szabaduljon ki
 that-ACC wanted.3SG that the husband-POSS be released.3SG.IMP PV
 a börtön-ből.
 the prison-from
 ‘She wanted her husband to be released from prison.’

The acceptability of the imperative is again questionable when the matrix subject and the subject of the complement clause are co-referential:

- (14) a. Peti azon van, hogy meg-nézzé a film-et.
 Peti does his best that PV-watch.3SG.SUBJ the movie-ACC
 ‘Peti is doing his best to watch the movie.’
- b. *Peti azon van, hogy nézzé meg a film-et.
 Peti does his best that watch.3SG.IMP PV the movie-ACC
 ‘Peti is doing his best to watch the movie.’

Matrix negation may also influence the distribution of moods:

- (15) a. Nem akarta, hogy el-kísérjék a mozi-ba.
 NEG wanted.3SG that PV-accompany.3PL.SUBJ the cinema-to
 ‘She did not want to be accompanied to the cinema.’
- b. *Nem akarta, hogy kísérjék el a mozi-ba.
 NEG wanted.3SG that accompany.3PL.IMP PV the cinema-to
 ‘She did not want to be accompanied to the cinema.’

The same phenomenon can be observed when the matrix predicate has an inherent negative meaning:

- (16) a. Ellenezte, hogy meg-vegyem a könyv-et.
 opposed.3SG that PV-buy.1SG.SUBJ the book-ACC
 ‘He opposed my buying the book.’
- b. *Ellenezte, hogy vegyem meg a könyvet.
 opposed .3SG that buy.1SG.IMP PV the book-ACC
 ‘He opposed my buying the book.’

Keeping in mind the assumption that mood choice is meaningful I wanted to prove the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis

In the case of a Group 3 matrix predicate the imperative is licensed in the complement clause when strong manipulation is present, while the subjunctive proper appears when weak manipulation is expressed by the clause.

In order to verify this hypothesis I carried out the experiment presented below.

3.2 Materials and methods

There were 55 participants in the experiment, all young adults and native speakers of Hungarian; their average age was 21.5. The subjects were randomly selected, in a way to make sure that the possible dialectal differences were not statistically significant. Thus, the subjects represented different dialectal regions; they did not come from the same part of the country.

The subjects’ task was to fill in a multiple choice test that was aimed at exploring the supposed meaning difference between imperative and subjunctive proper clauses embedded under the same matrix predicate. To achieve that, subjects had to choose between sentences that differed from each other only in the mood of the embedded clause depending on the context. The pairs of sentences were always presented in a given situation, and the task was to mark the sentence that fitted the situation described better in the opinion of the subject. However, it was allowed to select both sentences if the subjects did not find any remarkable difference between them. The sentences of the test contained verbs with preverbs, in that way relying on the more reliable syntactic criterion differentiating the imperative and the subjunctive proper.

For instance, the situations corresponding to example sentences (12a) and (12b) are the following:

- (a) Seeing that their daughter, Mónika has been in such a stress for a long time her parents kept on pestering her with going on holiday.¹⁴
- (b) Mónika has been working too much lately, so her parents thought that she should go on holiday, and gave her a traveller’s cheque.¹⁵

The test consisted of 6 similar pairs of situations, i.e. there were 12 situations in total. Each situation was separated from its pair, and they were also ordered randomly with respect to the

¹⁴ Here, the expected answer is the one containing a reported request, i.e. the one expressing strong manipulation: (12a).

¹⁵ Here, the expected answer is the one expressing weak manipulation: (12b).

expected answers. Among the situations some distractors were hidden, too, in order to prevent the subjects from answering in a routine fashion.

The subjects had to fill in the test on the spot, they had only 10 minutes to do so. With the time limit I tried to ensure that the subjects could rely on their intuitions only, in that way they did not have time to search for certain patterns or regularities in the test.

3.3 Results

The results of the test are shown in Table 2, rows 1-6 represent those situations where the subjunctive proper, while rows 7-12 those where the imperative was expected. The frequency of the imperative and the subjunctive proper clauses in the case of each situation was compared with the help of the chi-square test.¹⁶

The result of the chi-square test is: $\chi^2(11) = 51.418$, $p < 0.01$, i.e. the null hypothesis has to be rejected, the distributions of the variables are different.

		subjunctive proper	imperative
expected: subjunctive proper	1.	22	37
	2.	27	40
	3.	40	13
	4.	34	25
	5.	25	34
	6.	31	23
expected: imperative	7.	16	40
	8.	16	42
	9.	26	29
	10.	27	36
	11.	17	37
	12.	19	41

Table 2: Results

The same method was applied to the results gained by taking into consideration only those situations where the subjunctive proper or the imperative was expected (Table 2: rows 1-6, 7-12, respectively).

In the case of the situations where the subjunctive proper was assumed to be preferred the calculated value is $\chi^2(5) = 24.616$, $p < 0.05$, so the null hypothesis has to be rejected again, the distributions of the variables are significantly different.

The result of the chi-square test for the situations where the imperative was expected shows that there is no significant difference between the frequencies of the subjunctive proper and the imperative; the variables are homogeneous, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Accordingly, there is a significant difference between the frequencies of the subjunctive proper and the imperative in the case of the complete set of data, i.e. considering all situations together, the ones expecting the subjunctive proper and the ones where the imperative is assumed to be preferred. The same observation holds for the situations where the subjunctive proper is expected,

¹⁶ On statistics in linguistics see Butler (1985), Vargha (2000).

i.e. in the case of the situations where weak manipulation is involved. However, there is no such difference if we consider only the situations where strong manipulation is present, i.e. in the case of the situations where the imperative is expected. What does that mean exactly?

4 Discussion

From the fact that the distributions are not homogeneous when we consider all the data we can conclude that the distribution of the subjunctive proper and the imperative is different to a remarkable extent, hence the moods in question fulfil different roles in subordinate clauses. This statement is further supported by the results of the tests relying only on the situations where a given mood is expected, since in the case of the subjunctive proper we get inhomogeneous distributions, while in the case of the imperative the distributions are homogeneous. This shows that the distribution of moods depends on the relevant situation; in other words, it is influenced by certain semantic features.

If we examine the data thoroughly we can see that in the case of the situations where, according to the hypothesis, the imperative was assumed to be preferred the results fulfil this expectation; in each of these situations (Table 2, rows 7-12) the frequency of the imperative in the complement clauses was greater than that of the subjunctive proper.

If we consider the data about situations where the subjunctive proper was expected (Table 2, rows 1-6) we find some problematic examples: it is clear that in three cases (situations 1, 2, 5) the frequency of the imperative is more prominent than that of the subjunctive proper, which contradicts the hypothesis (see Figure 2). However, I suggest that the unfavourable imbalance between the frequencies is not enough in itself to refute the hypothesis. Let us have a closer look at the situations in question. In the problematic situations the following predicates are present (in the same order): *rávesz valamire* ‘persuade’, *azt akarja, hogy* ‘want’, and *azt kívánja, hogy* ‘wish’, while in the situations fulfilling the expectations *gondoskodik róla, hogy* ‘ensure’, *azt szeretné, hogy* ‘long for’, *azon van, hogy* ‘do one’s best’ appear (again in the same order).

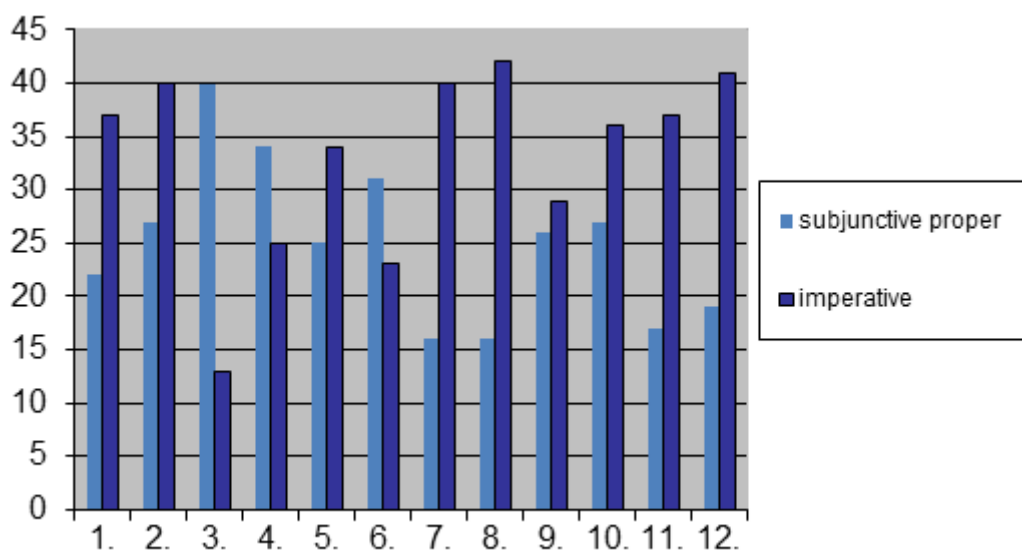


Figure 2: The frequency of the subjunctive proper and the imperative

It would be worth testing the grammaticality of the sentences involved in the experiment. Obviously, if some speakers find certain sentences unacceptable, then this may influence the results. (There were 51 situations in total where both of the sentences were marked as acceptable; this is only 7.7 per cent of the answers received.)

Table 3 represents the proportion of the imperative and the subjunctive proper as the individual subjects in the test selected them. For instance, there were five subjects who selected 7 imperative and 5 subjunctive proper sentences. On the basis of the data we can state that certain individual differences can be observed with respect to the choice of mood, since 12 subjects marked imperative sentences in more than 75 per cent of the situations, whereas only 3 speakers selected subjunctive proper sentences in the same proportion. Accordingly, the number of speakers preferring the imperative to the subjunctive proper in their idiolect seems to be remarkably high. It is also possible that the three problematic situations are not composed in an unambiguous way; the imperfection of the test itself may also have had an effect upon the results. However, in order to prove that further experiments should be carried out. Hence, it would be interesting to repeat the experiment on a larger sample and to compare the results with the ones achieved now.

		number of imperative sentences selected											Total:
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
number of subjunctive proper sentences	1										3		3
	3								3				3
	4							6	1	1		1	9
	5						5	3	1				9
	6					4	3	5	1	1			14
	7				5	2	1						8
	8			2	1	1	2						6
	9							1					1
	10	1	1										2
	Total:	1	1	2	6	7	11	15	6	2	3	1	55

Table 3: Proportions¹⁷

5 Summary

To sum it up, we can conclude that the results of the experiment strengthened our hypothesis. It has been shown that there is a systematic difference in the distribution of the imperative and the subjunctive proper in complement clauses. Speakers clearly prefer the imperative in complement clauses expressing strong manipulation, whereas in the case of the subjunctive proper there is only a tendency, the subjunctive proper seems to be the preferred option in clauses with weak manipulation. However, this finding does not refute our starting hypothesis; we only need an auxiliary hypothesis.¹⁸ Namely, we have to suppose that the distribution of the imperative is not as restricted as that of the subjunctive proper. This is a

¹⁷ In Table 3 the rows labelled as ‘subjunctive proper 2/11/12’ and the column of ‘imperative 1’ are missing, since these particular distributions have not appeared among the subjects.

¹⁸ This remark is due to an anonymous reviewer of this paper.

reasonable assumption, since the imperative appears not only in complement clauses, but in matrix sentences, too.¹⁹

Overall, the analysis of the experimental data supported the starting hypothesis, thus it was proved that the distribution of the imperative and the subjunctive proper in Hungarian complement clauses is determined by semantic factors. The statistical analysis partly confirmed that the imperative is licensed in clauses expressing strong manipulation, while the subjunctive proper in clauses designating weak manipulation. The present discussion can be regarded as a pilot study to further research on the distribution of moods in Hungarian. Nevertheless, I think that the results of this analysis provide another argument in favour of the treatment of the subjunctive proper as an independent mood.

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¹⁹ For a detailed analysis of the structure of imperative sentences in Hungarian see Varga (2013).

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