

The History of Hungarian Complementisers

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The Problem

Four complementisers in Modern Hungarian:
ha 'if', *hogy* 'that', *mert* 'because', *mint* 'than'

Combinations historically:

(1)

	ha	hogy	mert	mint
ha	–	hahogy	–	hamint
hogy	hogyha	–	hogy mert	hogymint
mert	–	merthogy	–	–
mint	mintha	minthogy	–	–

Questions:

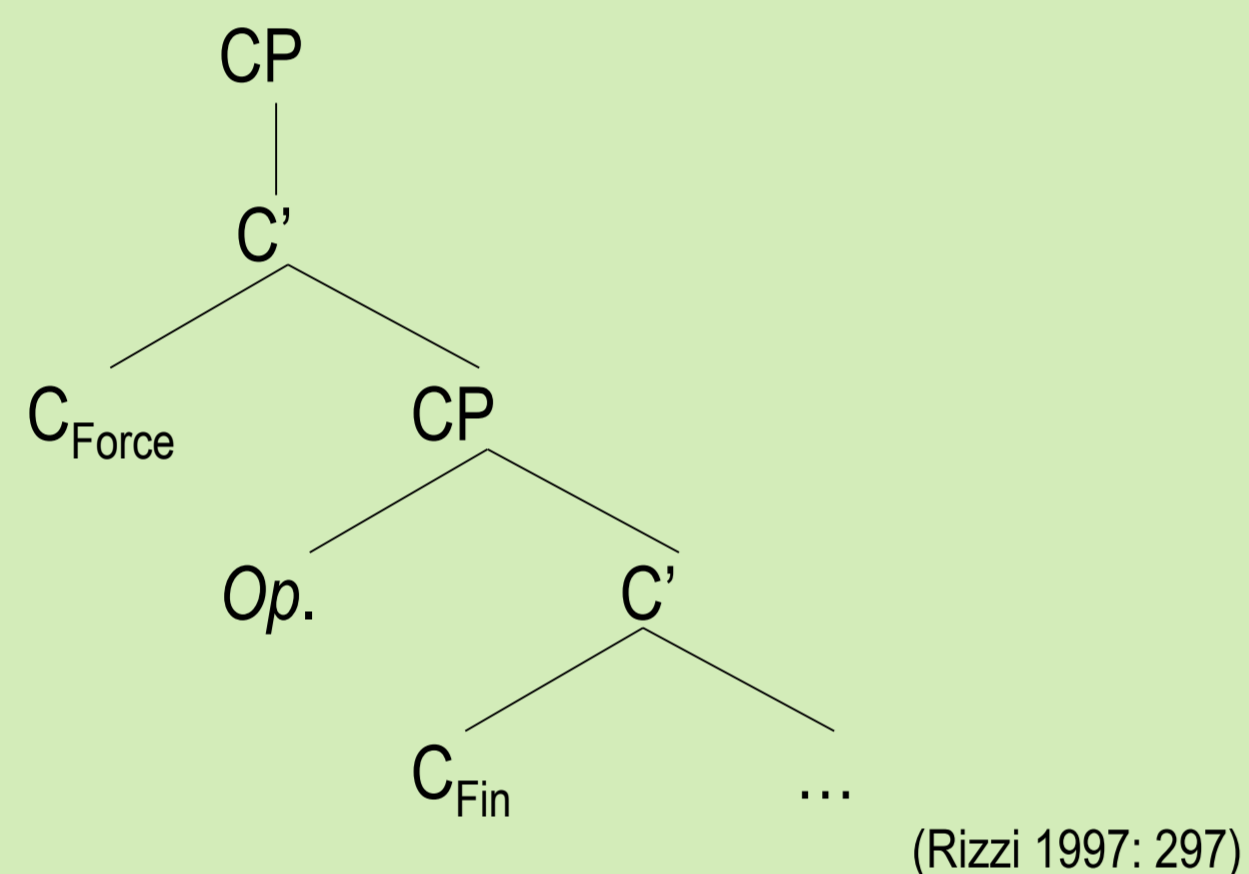
– certain theoretically possible combinations do not exist (e.g. *mert* + *mint*)

– symmetrical pattern: if a combination is possible in the order XY, it is also possible in the order YX

→ **Proposal:** the four C heads were in different stages of development in Old Hungarian, which resulted in fixed underlying order – reverse order possible via movement.

The Structure of the Left Periphery

(2)



Two C heads (Force and Finiteness)

Operators: in the lower [Spec; CP] position

Movement: ordinary *wh*-movement

(Chomsky 1977; Kennedy and Merchant 2000)

Constraints:

- in Modern Hungarian, the two C heads cannot be filled at the same time (~ Italian)
- Doubly Filled COMP Filter

Positions in Modern Hungarian (cf. Kántor 2008):

hogy in C_{Force}

ha in C_{Fin}

mint in C_{Force}

mert in C_{Force}

- *hogy*, *mint*, and *mert* cannot be preceded by anything

- *ha* can be preceded by a Topic:

(3) Péter *ha* megjön, küldd hozzám.

Peter if arrives send-imp. I-dat.

'If Peter arrives, send him to me.'

The Etymology of Complementisers

Originally, they were pronouns, later becoming operators.

Functional split

→ etymologically related operators:

hogy – *hol* 'where'

ha – *hová* 'where to'

mint – *miként*, *miképpen* 'how'

mert – *miért* 'why'

Split took place in different periods:

- *hogy* and *ha*: before the Old Hungarian period
- *mint* and *mert*: during the Old Hungarian and the Middle Hungarian period

The History of Simplex Complementisers

Development from operators to C heads: reanalysis

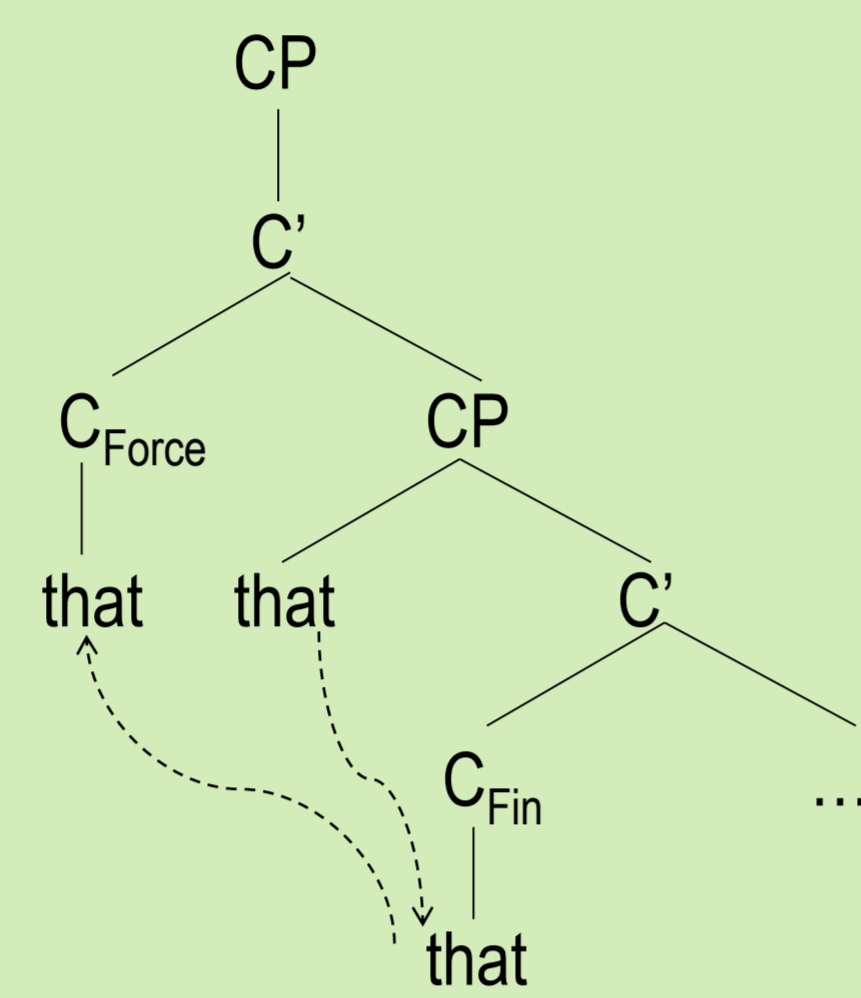
Second stage in reanalysis: from C_{Force} head to C_{Fin} head

The relative cycle as a grammaticalization process: an original determiner becomes first a relative operator, and subsequently the relative operator is reanalysed as a C head.

(Roberts–Roussou 2003: 119; van Gelderen 2009)

e.g. the development of the English *that*:

(4)



the same happened to Hungarian complementisers

hogy and *ha*: C_{Force} heads already at the beginning of the Old Hungarian period

mint and *mert*: becoming first C_{Fin} , then C_{Force} heads during the Old and Middle Hungarian period

→ operator function of *mint* and *mert* preserved in Old Hungarian, alongside the new one (C heads)

→ operator function of *hogy* 'how' and *ha* 'when-Rel.' new: the latter was rare but the former is still possible in Modern Hungarian:

(5) Láttam, hogy úszik a dinnyehéj.

saw-I that/how drifts the melon rind

'I saw that/how the melon rinds were drifting.'

Two Complementisers in One Left Periphery

Proposal: *hogy* and *ha* developed into C heads earlier → in Old Hungarian, they are C_{Force} heads ↔ *mint* and *mert* are later developments and are either in the lower [Spec; CP] or in C_{Fin}

→ development of *hogymint*, *hamint*, and *hogy mert*:

(6) édességet érze nagyobb **hogy mint** annak előtte

sweetness-Acc. felt-(s)he greater that than that-Dat. before-Poss.1.Sg.

'(s)he felt sweetness even more than before' (LázK. 140)

(7) **ha mint** csak el aludtak volna lelküket Istennek meg adák

if than only PREVERB slept-they be-Cond. SOULS-Poss.3.Pl. God-Dat. PREVERB gave-they

'as if they had only fallen asleep, they gave their souls to God' (SándK. 28)

(8) **Dehogy mert** szent Ferenc igen szereti vala őtet tisztaságáért

but.that because Saint Francis well liked-he be-Past. him for.purity-Poss.3.Sg.

'but because Saint Francis liked him well for his purity' (JókK. 46)

other C_{Force} +operator combinations in the period with *hogy* and *ha*, e.g. *hogy ki* 'that who', *ha mi* 'if what'

→ *hogy* and *ha* had to be C_{Force} heads

Movement and Complex Complementisers

Proposal: the underlying order changes when the C_{Fin} head moves up to be adjoined to the C_{Force} head, cf. Kayne's Linear Correspondence Axiom (Kayne 1994)

→ development of *minthogy*, *mintha*, *merthogy*, *hogyha*, and *hahogy*

(9) semmi nagyobb nem mondhatik: **mint hogy** legyen Istennek anyja

nothing greater not say+Pass.Cond.3.Sg. than that be-Subj.3.Sg. God-Dat. mother-Poss.3.Sg.

'nothing can be said to be greater than that she be the mother of God' (TihK. 143)

(10) És kimenének szokásuk szerint **mint ha** az imádságra mennének

and out.went-they custom-Poss.3.Pl. according than if the prayer-Subl. go-Cond.3.Pl.

'and they went out according to their custom, as if they had been going for prayer' (GuaryK. 113–114)

(11) **Mert hogy** bizonynal voltvolna Krisztusnak tökéletes tanítványa

because that definitely was-3.Sg.be-Cond. Christ-Dat. perfect student-Poss.3.Sg.

'because he was a perfect student of Christ' (JókK. 20–21)

(12) víg orcával elmegyén vala, **hogyha** ingyen nem hallanája

happy face-Instr. away.went-3.Sg.be-Past. that.if absolutely not hear-Cond.3.Sg.

'(s)he went away with a happy face, as if (s)he had absolutely not heard it' (VirgK. 81)

(13) **hahogy** annak leírásában túl nem járok a kellő rövidegben

if.that that-Dat. description-Poss.1.Sg.Iness. OVER not go-I the appropriate length-Iness.

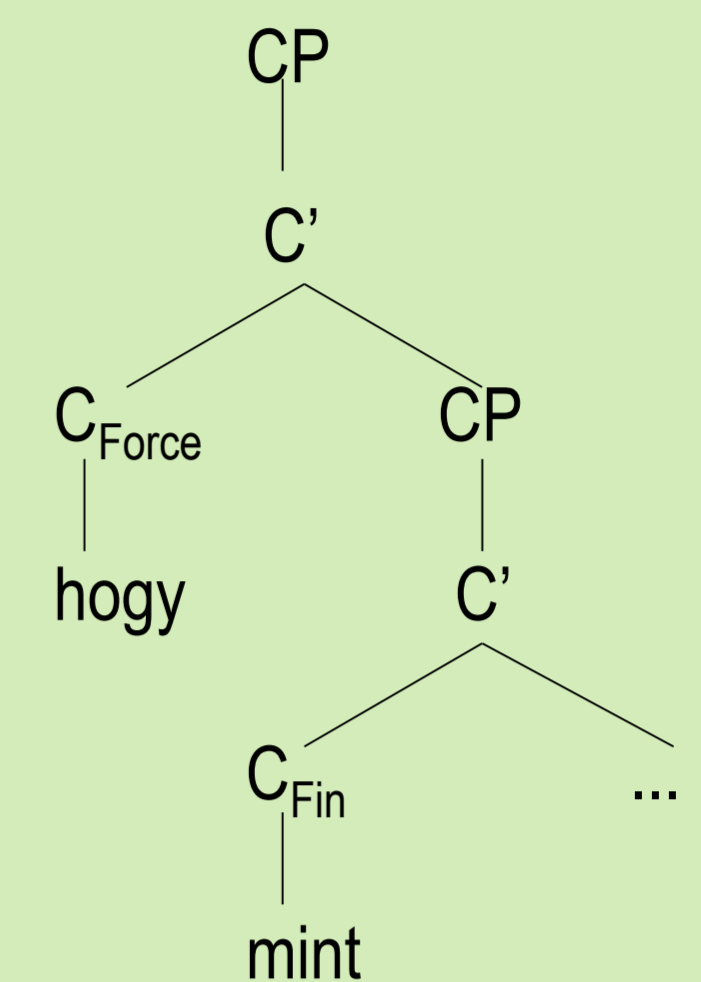
'if I do not exceed the appropriate length in the description thereof' (Ferenc Molnár, 1788)

Conclusions

Default word order: C_{Force} + C_{Fin}

→ gives *hogy* + *mint* / *mert* and *ha* + *mint*

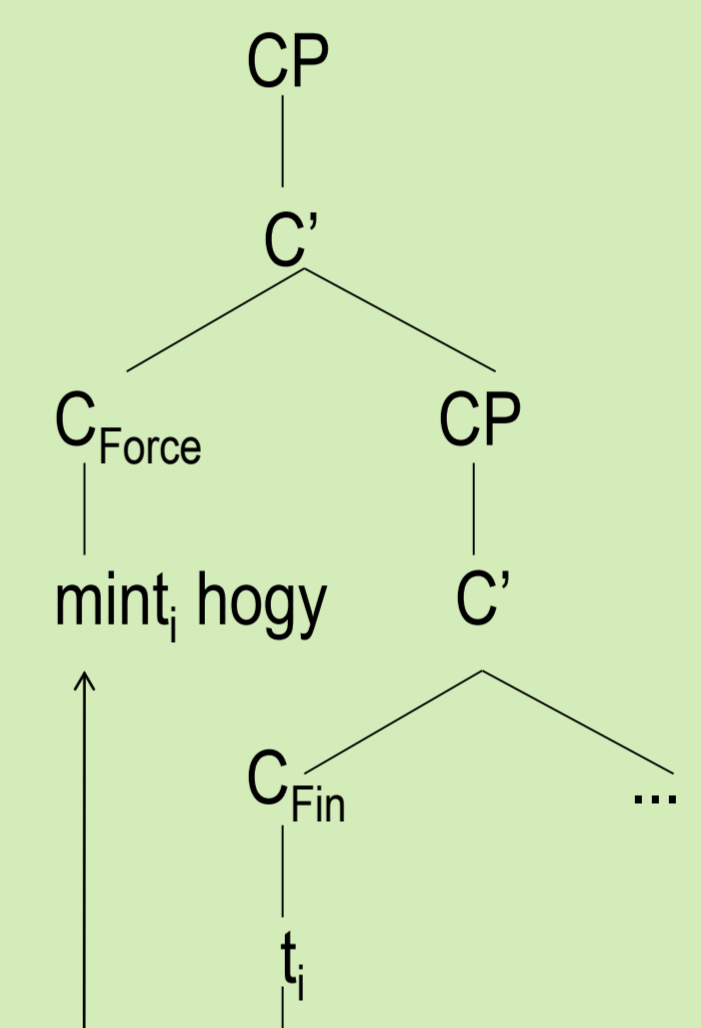
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Movement: if the C_{Fin} head moves up to the C_{Force} head, adjunction will happen in the reverse order (cf. Kayne's Linear Correspondence Axiom)

→ gives *mint* / *mert* + *hogy* and *mint* + *ha*

(15)



Movement ultimately leads to **complex complementisers** that are base-generated as a complex C_{Force} .

Advantages:

- the orders XY and YX are just variations of one another – the original meaning is always the same
- explains the diachronic difference: the ones with the reverse word order survive into Modern Hungarian ↔ the ones with the default word order have disappeared from the language

change in the constraint: Old and Middle Hungarian allowed the two C heads to be filled simultaneously, Modern Hungarian does not

→ configurations having two separate C heads overtly had to disappear

→ complex C heads could remain

- explains why certain configurations (i.e. *mint* + *mert*) are impossible: two C_{Fin} heads not allowed

The case of *hogy* 'that' and *ha* 'if':

- *hogyha*: *hogy* in this case moved from C_{Fin} (← new operator *hogy* 'how-Rel.' developed into a C head) – *hogyha* is first used in conditional comparatives, just like *mintha* 'than.if'

- *hahogy*: later (rare) development, when *ha* changed from C_{Force} to C_{Fin} – prohibition on two C heads making movement necessary but no development into a proper complex C head

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