

From relative proadverb to complementizer: The evolution of the Hungarian *hogy* ‘that’

1. The problem. This talk outlines a grammaticalization path in the course of which a relative pronoun assumes the role of a general complementizer. This process is claimed to have taken place in various Indo-European languages, and its source construction is claimed to have been the correlative sentence (see e.g. Axel-Tober 2017 & Lühr (2008), who argue that the Germanic *dass/that*, Hittite *kuit* and Old Indian *yád* derived from relative pronouns). The initial phase of the hypothesized process, however, is unclear; in the explicative sentence to which e.g. the Germanic *that*-type complementizers can be traced back (*Mary knows that, that Peter is lying*), *that* is already a complementizer base-generated in C rather than a relative pronoun in Spec,CP.

2. The proposal. The present talk analyzes a similar developmental path whose early stages can be reconstructed more completely, that of *hogy* ‘that’, the Hungarian general complementizer cognate with the relative proadverb *hogy* ‘how’. It traces *hogy* back to a canonical correlative construction, documenting the subsequent stages of its evolution from a relative operator binding a variable in a correlative sentence, via a linker introducing an adjunct clause, to a complementizer subordinating a clausal argument to a matrix predicate. The analysis reveals **five stages** in its evolution.

(i) As reconstructed on the basis of Old Hungarian (É. Kiss 2013), and the Ob-Ugric sister languages exempt from major Indo-European influence until the 20th century, the SOV Proto-Ugric and Proto-Hungarian only used non-finite subordination and parataxis. In the Ob-Ugric languages, the first – and until recently, the only – construction of two finite clauses linked in an asymmetric relation is the correlative construction. It consists of a headless relative clause adjoined to a main clause that contains a demonstrative or a definite NP referring back to the relative clause anaphorically (Lipták 2009). The clauses contain relative–demonstrative pairs such as *what..that...*, *who..that...*, *how...so...*, *where...there...*, *when...then...*, etc.

(1) **kol-əpa** kit-l-im, **toy-əpa** mən-äti. (Khanty)
where-ALL send-PRS-OBJ.1SG there-ALL go-IMP.3SG
‘Where I send him, there he shall go.’ (Gulya 1966: 142)

(ii) In Old Hungarian (OH), undergoing a directionality change from SOV to SVO, the default order of the two clauses of the correlative construction came to be reversed:

(2) [IP [IP furiscte musi etety ýmleti **ug**] [CP **hug** ana scilutt-e-t]] (OH)
 bathes washes feeds nurses **so** **how** mother offspring-POSS-ACC
‘She bathes, washes, feeds, nurses him **so as** a mother her offspring.’ (Königsberg Fragm.)

(iii) *Hogy* is argued to have grammaticalized in the context of predicates of communication. The earliest Hungarian documents and Ob-Ugric parallels suggest that verbs of communication took their propositional arguments as independent sentences (direct quotations) in paratactic constructions in Proto-Hungarian. The quoting sentence often contained a cataphor. As argued by Munro (1982), ‘say’ verbs are only weakly transitive crosslinguistically, selecting an object in some languages (e.g. English), and an oblique complement in others. Hungarian was of the latter type, where the cataphor complementing them was the proadverb *úgy* ‘so’:

(3) [IP istèn **ug mond-ot**] [IP Tiztel-l-èd te at’adat & te ań-a-d-at] (OH)
 god so say-PST.INDEF.3SG respect-IMP.2SG your father your mother
‘God **said so**: Respect your father and your mother!’ (München Codex 1416: 21v)

The emergence of finite subordination proceeded parallel with the shift from SOV to SVO (Bacskai-Atkari & Dékány 2014). When the pressure to subordinate propositional arguments as finite clauses reached communicative verbs, the only pattern that Proto-Hungarian had to link two finite clauses in a hypotactic structure was the correlative construction, with a relative pronoun introducing the complement clause. *Úgy* ‘so’, the demonstrative accompanying quoting predicates, called forth the relative pronoun *hogy* ‘how’ as its correlative pair:

(4) [_{FocP}[_{FocP} **v**g mond zenth Gergel doctor] [_{CP} **ho**g az őrđog ez föld-et kerengi]]
 so say.INDEF.3SG Saint Gregory doctor as the devil this earth-ACC circles
 ‘So says doctor St Gregory **as/that** the devil is circling this earth.’ (Bod C. 1500:9r)

(iv) Whereas the reported proposition is still an adjunct clause eliciting no O-V agreement at stage (iii), at stage (iv) it gets integrated into the main clause as an object, which is evidenced

(5) [_{IP} **Parantsoll-y-ad**_i [_{VP} *t*_i [_{CP} **ho**g az én két fiaim űll-ye-nec a te országod-bā]]]
 command-IMP-**OBJ**.2SG that the my two sons sit-SUBJ-3PL the your country-in

Whereas *mond* has become obligatorily transitive by now, some Vs of communication, e.g. *ír* ‘write’, can still take their propositional complement either as an object clause triggering O-V agreement, or as an adjunct clause without agreement. Extraction is only allowed from clauses eliciting agreement on the matrix verb, in evidence of their argument status:

(6) János **ki-vel**_i *ír-t /ír-t-a, hogy összevesz-ett *t*_i?
 John who-with write-PST.3SG/write-PST-**OBJ**.3SG that fell_out-PST.3SG
 ‘Who did John write that he fell out with?’

(v) At stage (v), a demonstrative coindexed with the object clause appeared in the matrix VP, picking up the lexical case assigned by the matrix verb (7a), and/or representing the subordinate clause in the topic or focus slot of the matrix sentence (7b):

(7)a. tanič meg mynket **ar-ra**_i [**ho**g mi le-ğ-øn az engedelmesseg]_i
 teach.IMP.2SG PRT us that-ALL that what be-SUBJ-3SG the obedience
 ‘Instruct us **in [that]** what the perfect obedience shall be.’ (Simor C. early 16th c.: 7)

b. [_{FocP}[_{FocP} **AZ-T**_i mont-a [_{VP} isten *t*_i]] [_{CP}[*c*’ hogy gýarapoggýatok es sokassulýatok]]_i]
 that-ACC said-**OBJ**.2SG god that increase.IMP.2PL and multiply.IMP.2PL
 ‘God said **that that** you shall increase and multiply.’ (Sándor C. 1500-1525: 17r)

When the proleptic pronoun is spelled out, the subordinate clause acts as an extraction island. Depending on whether the clause is analyzed as a complement to the demonstrative or as an adjunct coindexed with it, its islandhood is derived from the Complex NP Constraint or the Condition on Extraction Domains, respectively.

The evolutionary path outlined above is presumably not specific to Hungarian; the grammaticalization of *that*-type complementizers in Germanic must have proceeded similarly. The difference between the initial categories of the Hungarian *hogy* and the Germanic *that/dass* stems from a difference in the selectional properties of Hungarian and Germanic verbs of saying. Whereas in Hungarian they were intransitive, optionally complemented by a manner adverb, in Germanic they were transitive; hence *that/dass* started out as the relative pronominal counterpart of a demonstrative object, whereas *hogy* was originally the relative proadverbial counterpart of a demonstrative manner adverb. This initial difference in their developmental paths disappeared when the relative pronoun and the relative proadverb both ceased to bind variables with semantic features and came to be reanalyzed as complementizers base-generated in C. In Hungarian, complement clauses developed a pronominal associate which made it possible for them to be represented in the focus or topic slot of the main clause, and to satisfy the morphological case requirement of the matrix predicate. In English, by contrast, the disappearance of morphological cases and the rigidity of word order led to the redundancy and the eventual disappearance of the pronominal associate (while German represents an inbetween case between Hungarian and English).

References:

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