

The evolution of functional left peripheries in Hungarian syntax. Ed. by Katalin É. Kiss. (Oxford Studies in Diachronic & Historical Linguistics.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. 263. ISBN 9780198709855. £ 48.75.

Reviewed by István Kenesei, Research Institute for Linguistics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences & Anikó Lipták, Leiden University Centre for Linguistics, Leiden University

This is the first English language book on Hungarian diachronic syntax in the generative framework. It summarizes the outstanding achievements of a four-year OTKA (Hungarian Scientific Research Fund) project on diachronic syntax of Hungarian, carried out at the Research Institute for Linguistics under the leadership of Katalin É. Kiss. The book is a somewhat more concise version of the Hungarian publication É. Kiss (2014), adapted to an international readership.

The book provides an empirical overview of the syntactic changes in Hungarian covering the following five major areas: basic sentence structure, DP structure, quantification, PP structure and subordination. The book's title is slightly misleading as the volume is not explicitly about the functional left periphery in all the above areas, but rather about the development of functional material (in the left periphery or elsewhere) that is closely linked to historical change and grammaticalization. The diachronic data studied are texts originating between the end of the 12th century and the end of the 16th century, from the second half of the Old Hungarian period (which roughly correspond to six centuries between c. 900 and 1500) and the beginning of the Middle Hungarian era that followed it. In this period, the most important documents comprise 47 hand-written codices (Old Hungarian) and printed books in various genres (Middle Hungarian). These texts were annotated and entered into a corpus built for the project (currently available for the Hungarian speaking audience at <http://oldhungariancorpus.nytud.hu>). The building of the corpus itself was a massive undertaking, the details of which (the process of digitalization, problems of character recognition, text encoding, annotation, etc.) are documented by Eszter Simon in the appendix to the volume.

The five chapters detailing historical change in Hungarian share the same methodology. The reconstruction of the Proto-Hungarian language (with no surviving documents) is based on the J-curve method (Croft 2000): new constructions first spread slowly, then fast, then slowly again, while old constructions are ousted following the reverse pattern. Using the backward extension of these curves, as well as comparisons with the Ob-Ugric sister languages Khanti and Mansi, the research established several features of Proto-Hungarian and Old/Middle Hungarian.

The following gives a brief summary of the contents of the chapters. Chapter 1 by Katalin É. Kiss argues that Hungarian has changed from an SOV to an SVO language, a change that went hand in hand with the disappearance of unmarked objects and the appearance of the modern Hungarian left periphery. Possibly, rightward dislocated phrases came to be reanalyzed as base-generated arguments, bringing about the reanalysis of preverbal elements as A-bar constituents, resulting in a Topic – Focus – V – X order (rather than, strictly speaking, SVO). The change must have taken place before the start of the Old Hungarian period as the 50 clauses of the first Old Hungarian document already utilize every clausal functional projection that is attested in Modern Hungarian. Although the head final nature of Proto-Hungarian is argued for on the basis of evidence that VP, TP, and CP were all head final in that period, the role of Tense is however neglected throughout in the change from SOV to the Old Hungarian structure. Note that there is precious little on this topic even in the highly relevant chapter on finite and nonfinite subordination apart from an important, though rather brief, observation, claiming that “Old

Hungarian was not an OV language any more, yet auxiliaries strictly followed the main verb, which means that VP was not head final, but TP/AspP still was.” (fn. 17, p. 182)

The paper also provides a detailed account of the development of object agreement, which is descended from topic-verb agreement in Proto-Hungarian, where the subject was a primary topic, the object a focus or a secondary topic, which triggered agreement only in the latter case (an instance of differential object agreement). By the 12th century, agreement with the primary topic generalized as subject agreement and agreement with the secondary topic as object agreement. Modern Hungarian shows relics of an earlier *inverse agreement constraint*, requiring the agreeing object to be lower on the animacy hierarchy than the agreeing subject. In cases where this constraint is violated, the verb does not show definiteness agreement — the case with 3rd person subjects and 1st/2nd person objects for example, cf. (1), an hitherto puzzling fact of Hungarian syntax as 1/2 persons, since event participants are definite.

- (1) János {lát / * lát-ja} engem / minket / téged / titeket.
 János see-3SG / see-DEF OBJ.3SG me / us / you-ACC / you-PL-ACC
 ‘János sees me / us / you.’

The second chapter, by Barbara Egedi, describes the emerging DP layer in Old Hungarian noun phrases; statistical data amply supports her claims. She shows that the definite article is a language-internal development, and before its existence definiteness was marked by possessive morphology. The definite article was present already in the first codices, but was absent in noun phrases with demonstratives and possessives, its role being to mark referential identification when it was not marked otherwise. Egedi also details the history of the modern determiner doubling construction (that *az/ez* demonstratives must be followed by the definite article, as in *ez a fej* ‘this the head, i.e., this head’). She claims that the demonstrative started out adjoined to the DP (before it became a specifier), demonstrated by the fact that additive *is* ‘also’ and interrogative *-e* could intervene between the demonstrative and the determiner, cf. examples (24)-(25), p. 73. It is unfortunate that perhaps the most important piece of evidence for such non-adjacency, the intervention of a modal verb and a conjunction, meant to be exemplified in (26a-b), is not presented, most probably due to an oversight. The examples featuring the phonetically light *is* and *-e* particles between demonstrative and determiner provide no hard evidence, as these particles could assume their position late in the derivation, at PF. The missing example is shown here as copied from Egedi’s chapter in É. Kiss (2014:118) under (2), and supplemented with our own glosses and translation. The demonstrative and the non-adjacent definite noun phrase are italicized.

- (2) *Ezt* kell azért *az álorcát* levonni (Péter Pázmány)
 this.ACC must CONJ the mask.ACC remove.INF
 ‘Therefore this mask must be removed.’

The third paper by Ágnes Bende-Farkas covers the ground of clausal and nominal syntax when describing the development of quantification – a truly exciting area as Modern Hungarian seems to be unique in exhibiting evidence for overt quantifier raising. The paper deals extensively with the distribution of *minden* ‘every, everything, everyone’, as well as the floating quantifier *mind* ‘all’, and shows that they started life along different paths. It would have been helpful if the author had called attention to the third meaning of *minden*, unexpected on the basis of Modern Hungarian, at its first mention on p. 83, rather than in a footnote on p. 90, and referred the reader to example (13) illustrating this use. Following the tradition of Hungarian historical linguistics, the author claims that *minden* was an adjective/adverb meaning ‘entire(ly)’ and argues that it later developed into a determiner via type-shifting, while floating

mind was an adverb. The latter claim, however, is most likely incorrect as a general claim, as the author shows that *mind* could adjoin to DPs, something adverbs never do. Concerning quantifier raising, the paper states that Old Hungarian *minden* was not inherently distributive, unlike now, and thus there was no evidence for a distributive phrase (DistP). According to Bende-Farkas there was a “plain” quantifier phrase instead in the left periphery. It would have been instructive if this position had been also shown to be different from that of focus, since the position of the preverb with respect to the verb seems to suggest that it was.

Veronika Hegedűs in chapter 4 offers a well-written history of the grammaticalization of prepositions and particles, a pretty dynamic domain of syntax with substantial changes in the Old Hungarian period. It is shown that prepositions could derive from nouns (these were originally marked as possessed nouns); or from phrasal adjuncts modifying a prepositional phrase, which were reanalyzed as higher functional heads. Verbal particles are shown to derive from adpositions via semantic bleaching, or via N+P combinations that were reanalyzed as a single head. The author shows that the changes affecting prepositional material were moreover cyclical, and in line with findings in other languages.

The last chapter by Júlia Bácskai-Atkári and Éva Dékány provides an exhaustive characterization of non-finite clauses that served as the primary means of subordination in the Proto-Hungarian period, and a description of the complementizer system in the Old/Middle Hungarian period. It follows from the nature of the two sections that the one on nonfinite clauses is concerned more with the evolution of the Tense-*v*-V system, while the section on finite subordination, with that of the CP system. In the excellent introduction to non-finite clauses the reader learns about the obsolete gerund, as well as eight distinct types of adjectival and adverbial participles, some of which have lost their original functions, or the ability to agree, or have become fully obsolete. It is pointed out that PRO and overt subjects were not in complementary distribution and that nominative case on the subject did not depend on there being subject agreement on the participles; this has repercussions for theories of structural case. In the second part of the chapter the discussion remains narrowly limited to the development of complementizers (and relative pronouns), but with crystal clear results: it is shown that complementizers developed from A-bar moved material (*hogy* from ‘how’, *ha* from ‘when’, *mint* from ‘how’ and *mert* from ‘why’), and grammaticalized as lower or higher C heads, the combinations of which gave rise to a variety of attested symmetrical combinations through the centuries (*hogyha/hahogy*, *mintha/hamint*, *hogymint/minthogy*, etc). Working through all attested combinations and their history, Bácskai-Atkári and Dékány aptly show that Hungarian developed a split CP system in subordinate clauses and lower complementizers could be reanalyzed as higher ones.

While the book is almost typo-free, there are some inconsistencies in the glosses that are unfortunate for the non-Hungarian readership. The glosses of the paradigm of (synchronic) pronominal objects on pp. 22-23 (see also example (1) above copied from the book) are far from transparent: *engem*, the 1sg object pronoun is glossed ‘me’, *téged* (2sg) as ‘you-ACC’, while neither carry the accusative *-t* ending. *Minket* (1pl), *őt* (3sg) and *őket* (3pl) are glossed ‘us/him/them’, respectively, even though they all have accusative *-t* at the end, just like *titeket* (3pl) which is glossed ‘you-PL-ACC’. For a clearer overview of the individual morphemes, the reader should consult page 24, where the 1sg, 2sg object pronouns are glossed morpheme by morpheme and page 60, where the same is present in connection with the possessive affix that appeared in some of them (a relic of a once productive definiteness marking). Let us add here that while the book is full of interesting data and analyses, the nonnative reader would have been better served by a more extensive hyphenation of the morphemes of the Hungarian examples, corresponding to that of the glosses, as well as in the several tables and tree diagrams showing the development of complex conjunctions. Finally, some of the chapters are not

consistent enough in distinguishing functional labels, such as Spec, and categorial ones, e.g. DP, in the tree diagrams.

Even though the goal of the book is to provide a descriptive overview of the historic changes, it would have been helpful for theoretically oriented readers if the book had provided a summary of all principles of syntactic change that proved useful in the analysis. The economy principles of structural change in van Gelderen (2008), i.e., that adjuncts become specifiers, specifiers heads, lower heads higher heads, are occasionally referred to as active in the diachrony of Hungarian, but there is no reflection on the choice concerning these principles: were these the only ones that were in line with the findings? Or were they the only ones that were considered? And if so, why?

Despite the minor shortcomings mentioned above, this book is a landmark in the Hungarian generative tradition: it offers an informed view on the development of certain aspects of Hungarian syntax and will provide a lasting impetus for future studies on language change in Hungarian and the Finno-Ugric family of languages.

References

- Croft, William. 2000. *Explaining language change: an evolutionary approach*. London and New York: Longman.
- É. Kiss, Katalin (ed.), 2014. *Magyar generatív történeti mondattan*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Gelderen, Elly van 2008. Linguistic cycles and Economy Principles. The role of Universal Grammar in language change. In: Thórhallur Eythórsson (ed.): *Grammatical Change and Linguistic Theory. The Rosendal Papers*. (Linguistik Aktuell 113.) 245–264. John Benjamins, Amsterdam.

Research Institute for Linguistics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Pf. 360, 1394 Budapest,
Hungary
istvan.kenesei@nytud.mta.hu

Leiden University Centre for Linguistics, Leiden University, P.O. Box 9515, 2300 RA
Leiden, The Netherlands
A.Liptak@hum.leidenuniv.nl