

Making ends meet: the consequences of a shift in sentential negation in Hungarian

Katalin Gugán

Hungarian Research Centre for Linguistics

International Workshop on Negation

7 / 10 / 2021

Introduction

- Focus: two word order variants in negative sentences (a dominant and a marginal pattern)
- Problem: the marginal pattern occurs in diverse functions in Modern Hungarian, two of these: pleonastic negation and emphatic negation
- Aim: to give a diachronic explanation for this
- Claims:
 - there was a change in the expression of negation in the 19th century that is similar to Jespersen's Cycle
 - the diverse functions of the now-marginal pattern emerged in environments that were the extreme contexts of this change (where it proceeded fastest and where it lagged behind)

Outline

1. Negation and verbal modifiers: two word order variants
2. The variants in Old and Middle Hungarian
3. The variants in Modern Hungarian
4. The change
 - 4a. The story of the innovative pattern
 - 4b. The story of the conservative pattern: pleonastic negation and emphatic negation
5. Summary

The VM in neutral and negative sentences in Modern Hungarian

VM category	Neutral sentence: VM – V	Negative sentence: NEG – V – VM
preverbal particle	el -olvas away read	nem olvas el not read away
bare nominal objects	könyvet olvas book read	nem olvas könyvet not read book
bare nominal subjects	vendég érkezett guest arrived	nem érkezett vendég not arrived guest
bare nominal oblique complements	ágyban maradt bed.Loc stay	nem maradt ágyban not stay bed.Loc
predicative nouns	tanár volt teacher was	nem volt tanár not was teacher
predicative adjectives	híres volt famous was	nem volt híres not was famous
bare indefinites	olvasni fog read will	nem fog olvasni not will read

The variants: NEG – V – (XP) – VM and VM – NEG – V

VM category	Neutral sentence: VM – V	Negative sentence: NEG – V – VM	Negative sentence: VM – NEG – V
reverbal particle	el -olvas away read	nem olvas el not read away	el nem olvas away not read
bare nominal objects	könyvet olvas book read	nem olvas könyvet not read book	könyvet nem olvas book not read
bare nominal subjects	vendég érkezett guest arrived	nem érkezett vendég not arrived guest	vendég nem érkezett guest not arrived
bare nominal oblique complements	ágyban maradt bed.Loc stay	nem maradt ágyban not stay bed.Loc	ágyban nem maradt bed.Loc not stay
predicative nouns	tanár volt teacher was	nem volt tanár not was teacher	tanár nem volt teacher not was
predicative adjectives	híres volt famous was	nem volt híres not was famous	híres nem volt famous not was
bare indefinites	olvasni fog read will	nem fog olvasni not will read	olvasni nem fog read not will

Data and corpora

- Dataset: finite negative clauses that also contain a VM
- Narrowing down on verbal particles.

Sources:

- Old Hungarian Corpus, <http://omagyarkorpusz.nytud.hu/en-intro.html> (Simon – Sass 2012)
- Old and Middle Hungarian Corpus of Informal Language Use, tmk.nytud.hu (Novák et al. 2018)
- Hungarian Historical Corpus, <http://www.nytud.hu/hhc/> (Sass 2017)
- Hungarian Gigaword Corpus, <http://clara.nytud.hu/mnsz2-dev/> (Oravecz et al. 2014; via Kalivoda 2021)

The variants: diachronic background

- **VM** – **NEG** – **V**: conservative pattern, inherited from Proto-Ugric;

(1) *de hogy zent attyanak frater Rufinus **megnem** **mondotta** **ala***
(JókK. 51, 1370/1440)

'But as our holy father friar Rufinus had not said'

- **NEG** – **V** – **VM**: innovative pattern, probably a Proto-Hungarian innovation; the two variants coexist ever since Hungarian is documented (=Old Hungarian)

(2) *Es **nem** **nytya** **meg** nekewnk* (JókK. 30, 1370/1440)

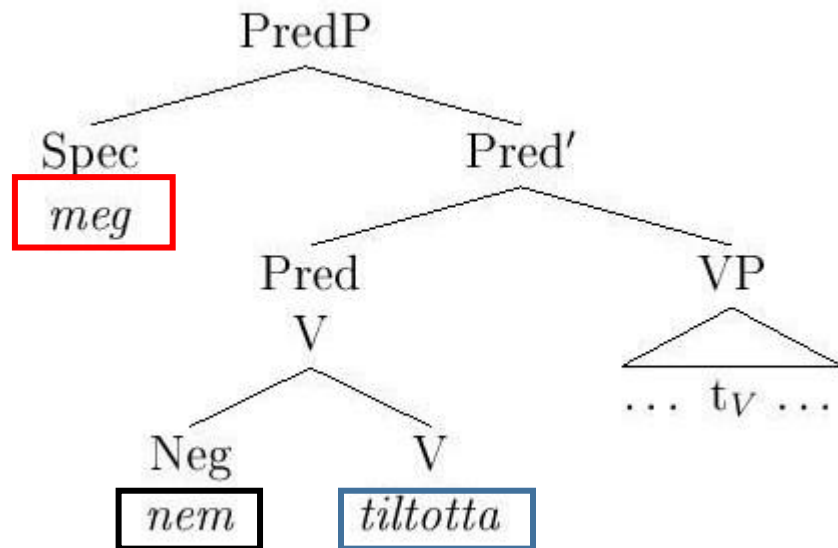
'And he did not open (it) for us.'

The emergence of the innovative variant(s)

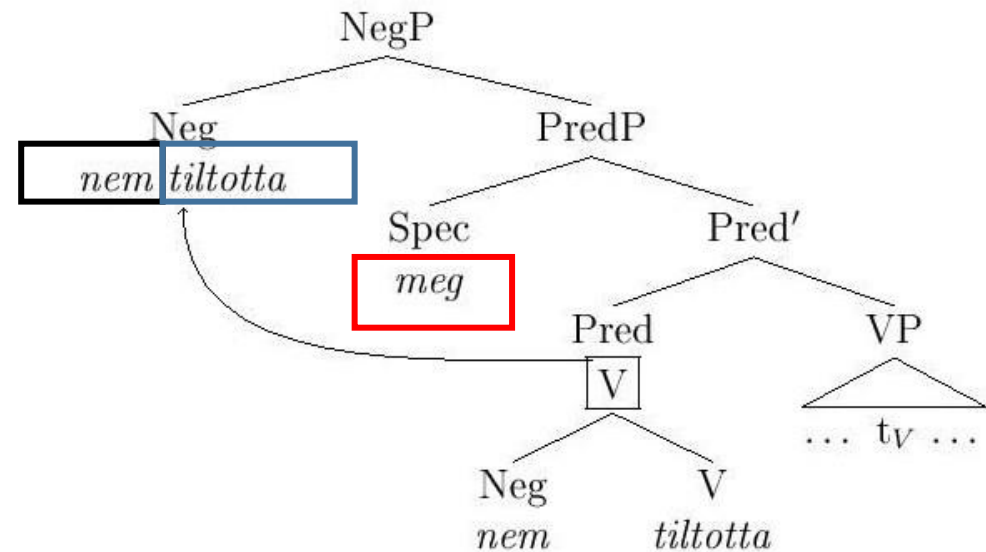
(É. Kiss 2014)

A) first step (Proto-Hungarian)

Conservative pattern: the negative particle is left-adjoined to the verb



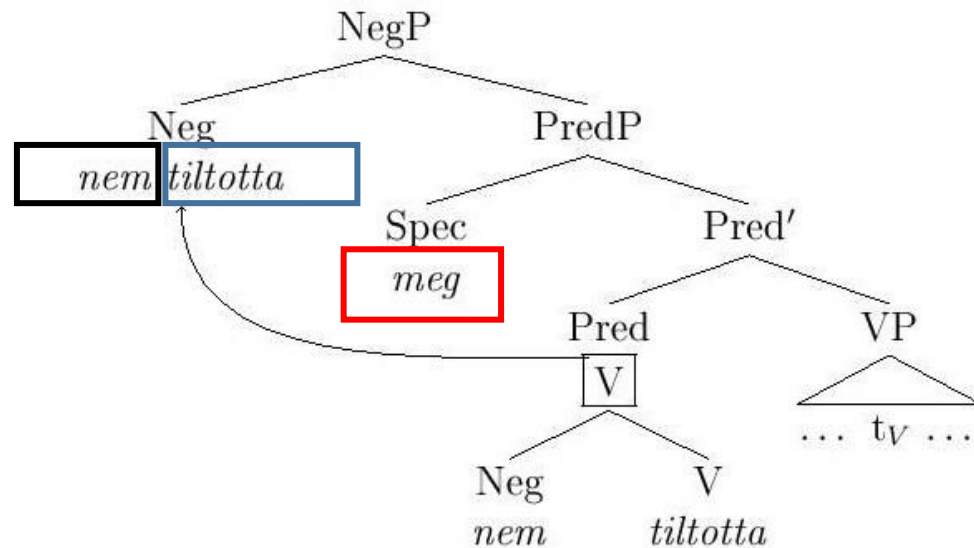
Innovative pattern 1: the NEG+V unit can optionally move to NegP



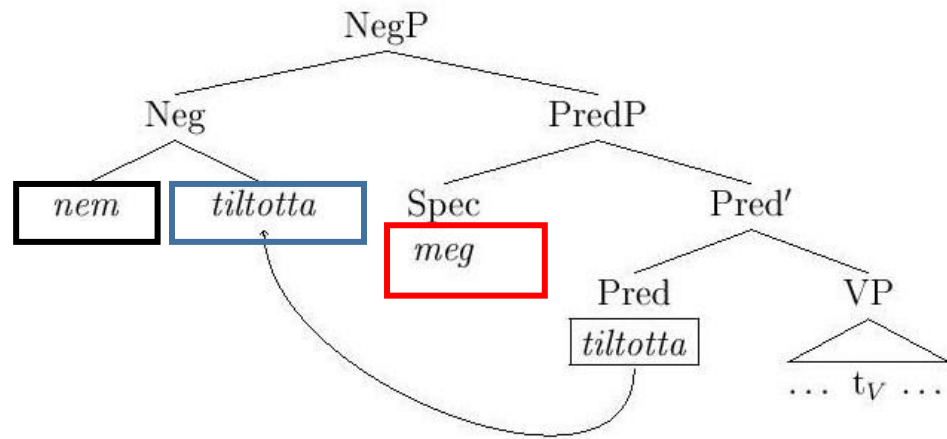
The emergence of the innovative variant(s) (É. Kiss 2014)

B) second step

Innovative pattern 1: the NEG+V unit can optionally move to NegP

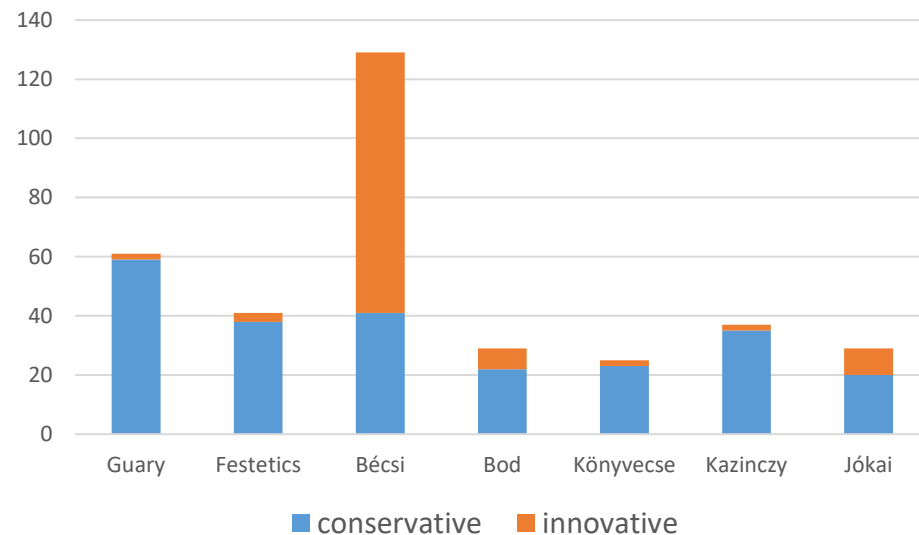


Innovative pattern 2: reanalysis: direct insertion of NEG into NegP



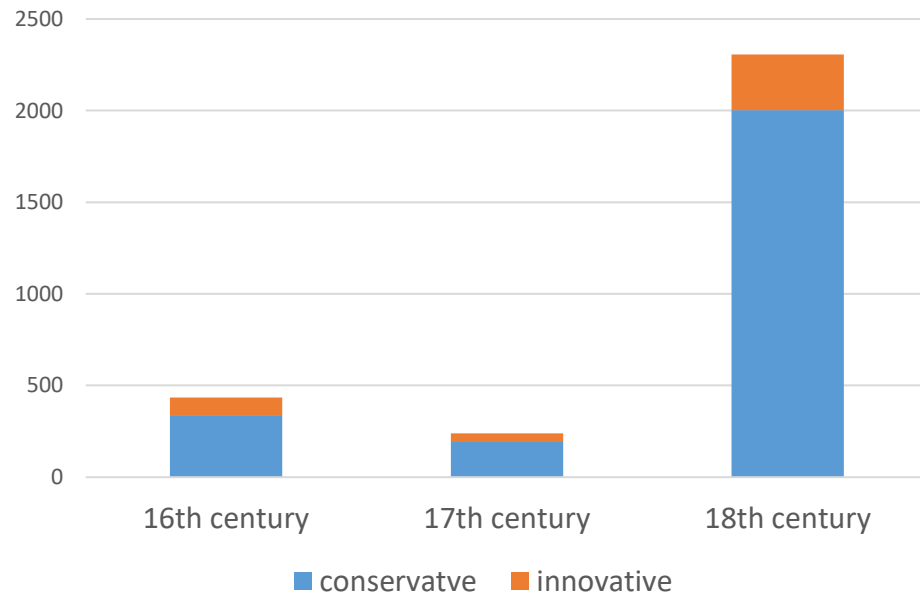
Old Hungarian (896 – 1526)

- Mainly codices, all of which are translations from Latin – yet: cannot be pattern borrowing in the case of preverbal particles
- The analysis of the whole corpus is in progress; preliminary data: a convenience sample



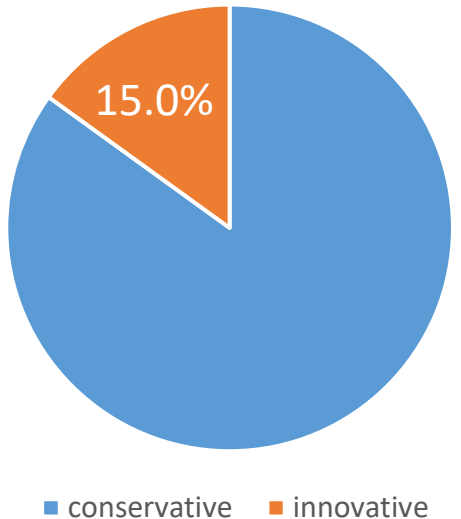
Middle Hungarian (1536 – 1772)

- Many different text types are accessible, here: focus on a near-spoken register (private letters and witness depositions given at witch trials)



The variants in Middle and Modern Hungarian

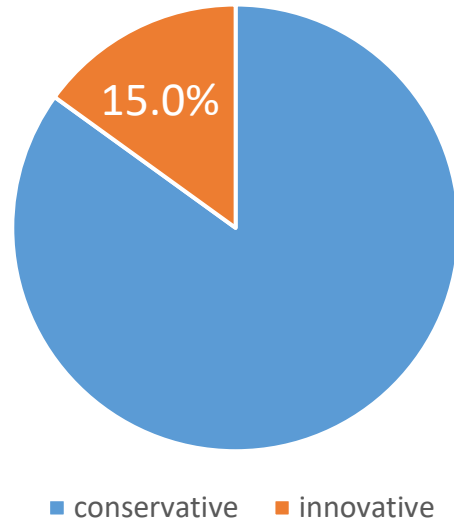
Middle Hungarian



OMHC(ILU), N=2979

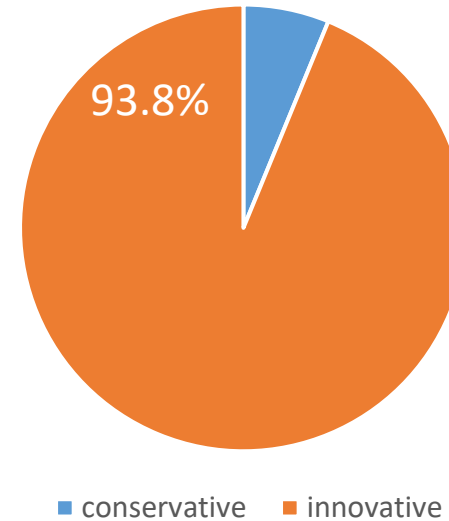
The variants in Middle and Modern Hungarian

Middle Hungarian



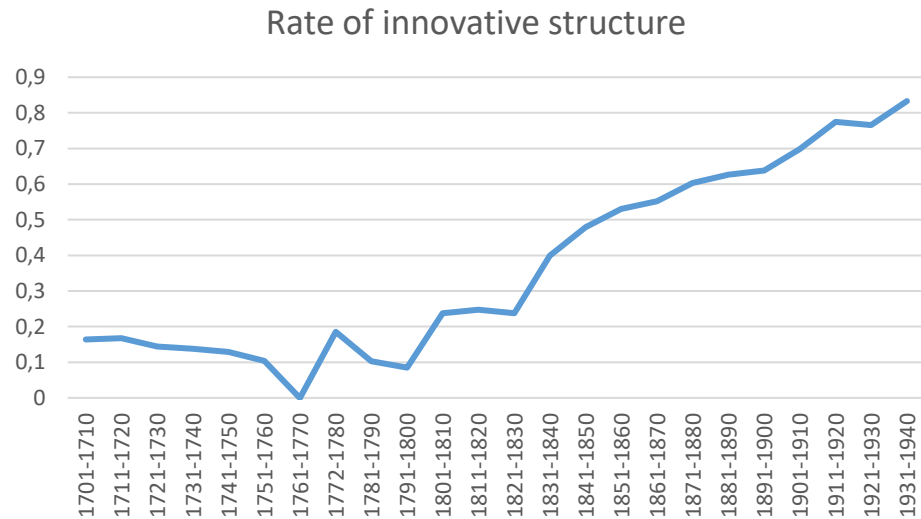
OMHC(ILU), N=2979

Modern Hungarian

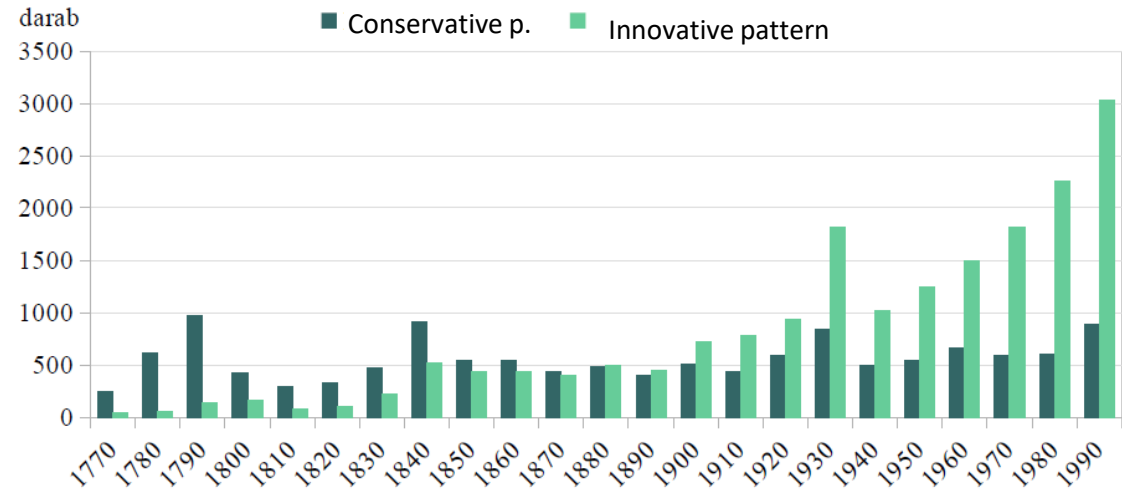


Kalivoda (2018, 2021); N=983055

The change



The ratio of the preverbal particle *meg* in the innovative pattern (Gugán 2017)



The number of preverbal particles appearing in the conservative and in the innovative negative pattern (Kalivoda 2021: 88)

The story of the innovative pattern

NEG – V – VM in Middle Hungarian

Hypothesis: this pattern was pragmatically marked prior to the change – emphatic negation?

- a) Q1: Distribution?
Much less frequent (15.0%)
- b) Q2: Co-occurrence patterns with **emphatic particles** (*csak* 'only', *bizony* 'indeed', *ugyan* '≈and yet', *is* 'too') ?

(3) *oda hivatta az hazához hogy ne haragugyek reajo csak nem bikélt megh*

(Witch Trial 133., 1722)

'She called her to her house so that she would not be angry at her, and still she did not reconcile.'

← More frequent with these (the only variant with one of these)

The story of the innovative pattern

NEG – V – VM in Middle Hungarian

Hypothesis: this pattern was pragmatically marked prior to the change – emphatic negation?

c) Q3: Availability in all-new sentences?

i) Emphatic negation requires a(n explicit or implicit) context proposition of opposite polarity (Piñón 1991);

ii) Pragmatic evolution pathway: new markers of emphatic negation emerge in explicitly discourse-old context; last phase: discourse-new (Larrivée 2020)

← Almost excluded from all-new sentences

d) Q4: Main Clause Phenomenon? („their restricted distribution is a natural consequence of their emphatic function, since many embedded structures cannot be made emphatic”, Hooper and Thompson 1973: 472)

← Excluded or nearly excluded from some environments (*until*-clauses and conditional clauses, respectively), somewhat more frequent in other contexts (main clauses, reason clauses)

The story of the innovative pattern: a tentative suggestion

- A pragmatically marked negative pattern gained frequency, lost its special functional load, and became the standard way of expressing negation (II Jespersen's Cycle)
- There is no grammaticalizing negative element, the change affects the distribution of patterns/structures (→← Jespersen's Cycle)
- ? Unifying the structural and the functional account: frequency change and loss of pragmatic load connected to structural reanalysis? (The emergence of the innovative variants, second step)
 - Tempting, but difficult to verify.

Interim conclusions: a Jespersen cycle-like cycle

*I/a. Proto-Finno-Ugric:

NegAux+V_{non-fin}

*I/b. Proto-Ugric:

NegPart+V_{fin}

*II. Proto-Hungarian:

[reinforcement with a pronoun]

nëme (indefinite pronoun) + *NegPart* + *V_{fin}*

III. Proto-H/OldH:

word order with V-modifiers:

nëm + V_{fin}
VM – NEG – V

IV. Proto-H/Old H: optional mvt to (newly emerging) NegP (position of main stress):

[reinforcement through prosody]

NEG – V – VM

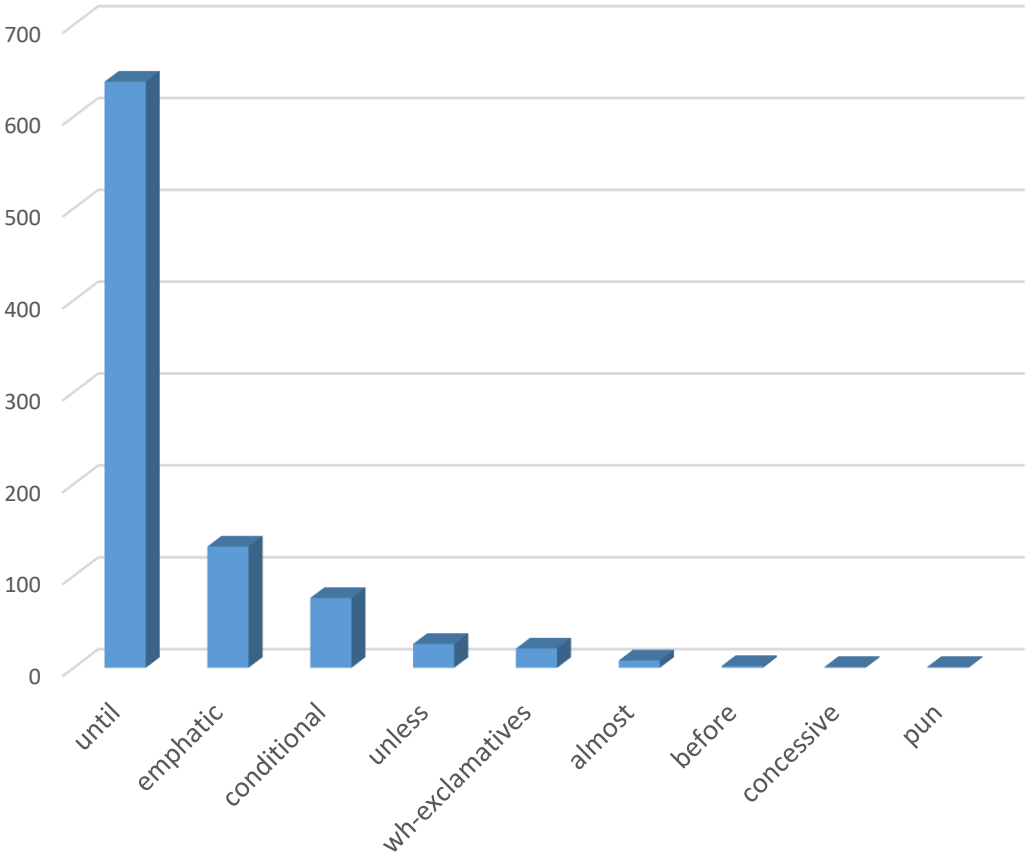
V. Frequency change during NewH: *NEG – V – VM* becomes the neutral pattern

(VI. Newly emerging emphatic pattern: a few slides later)

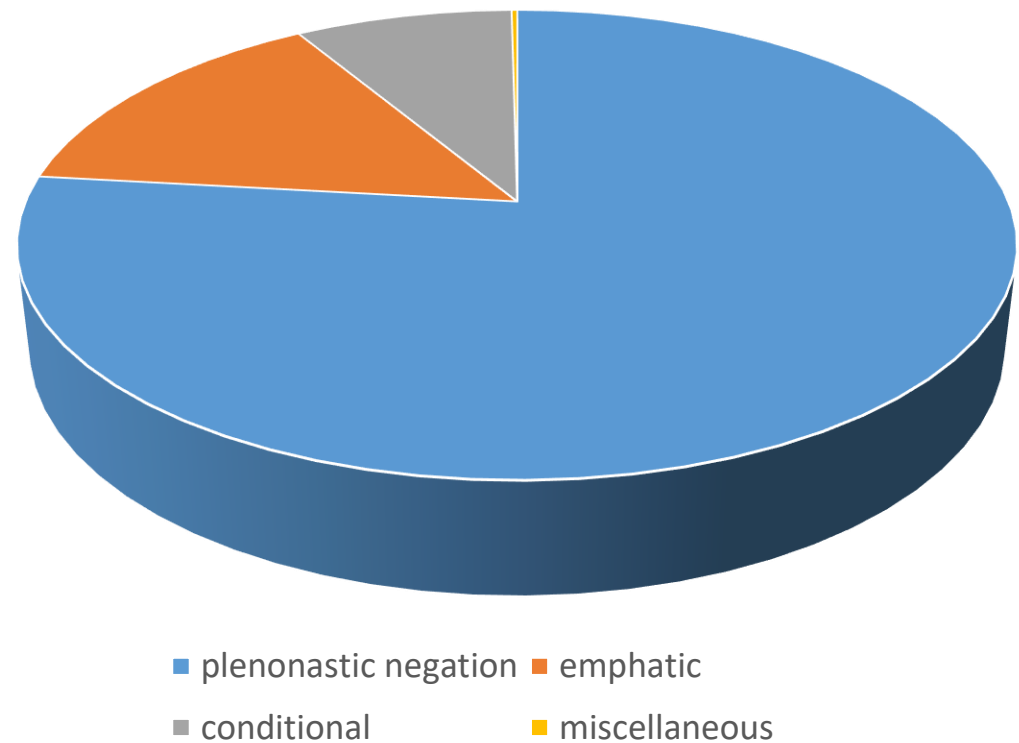
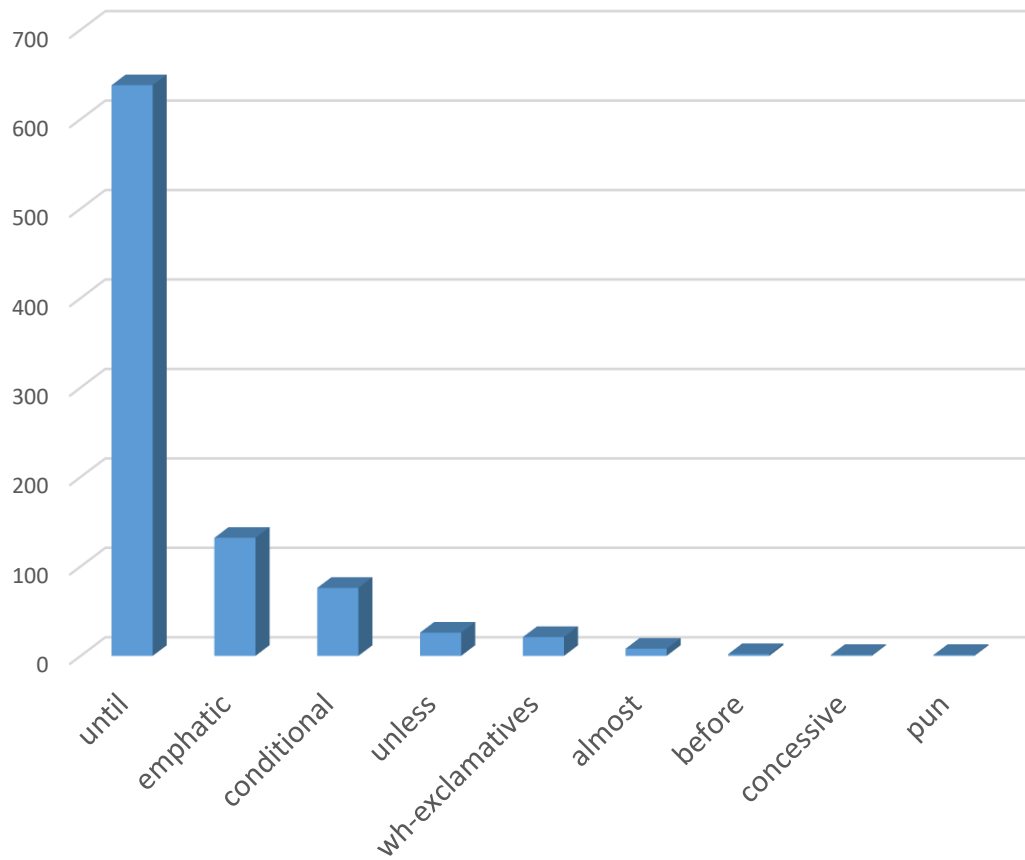
The winner doesn't take it all: the story of the conservative pattern VM – NEG – V

- Modern Hungarian: a sample of 2*1000 items with the preverbal particle *meg* in a VM – NEG – V pattern from MNSZ (via Kalivoda 2021)
 - First round: filtering out irrelevant data (homonymous conjunction, accent marker-less *még* 'yet', poetry, archaic data [e.g. citations from the Bible])
 - Second round: filtering out data in which the string does not instantiate the VM – NEG – V pattern
 - a) participial constructions: head-final because of other syntactic requirements (attributes)
 - (4) **Meg** **nem** **erősített** sajtójelentések szerint [...] 'According to unconfirmed [literally: PV-not-confirmed] press reports'
 - b) the VM is a contrastive topic
 - (5) *ugyan én kidolgoztam a tételeket, de meg már nem tanultam* 'Although I worked out the theorems, but as for learning, I did not learn them.'
- N = 905

The story of the conservative pattern: types



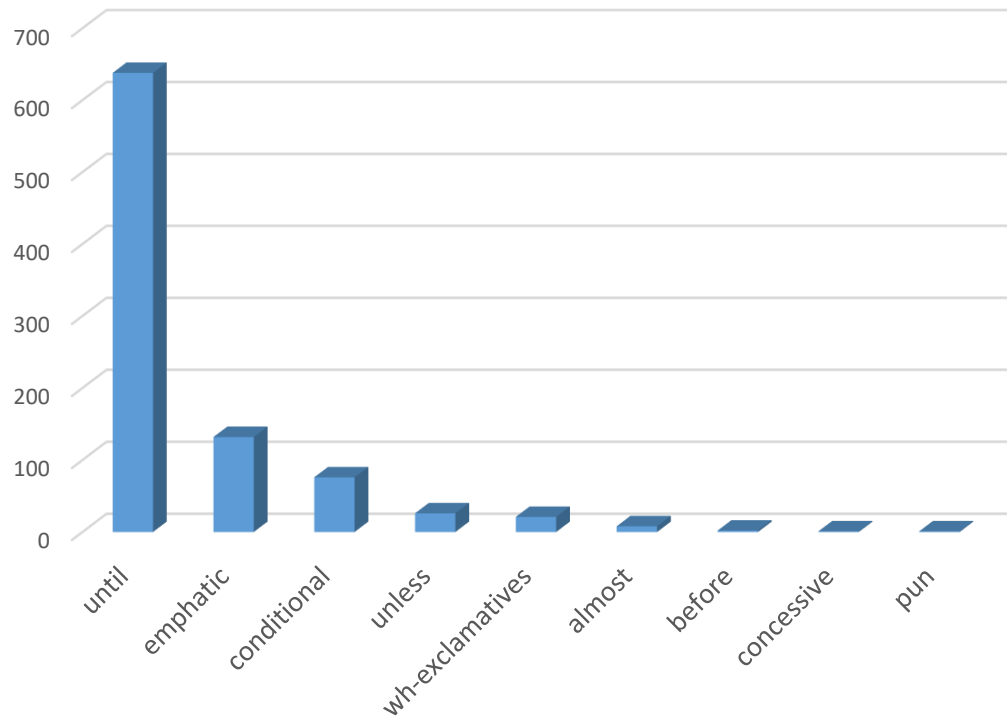
The story of the conservative pattern: types



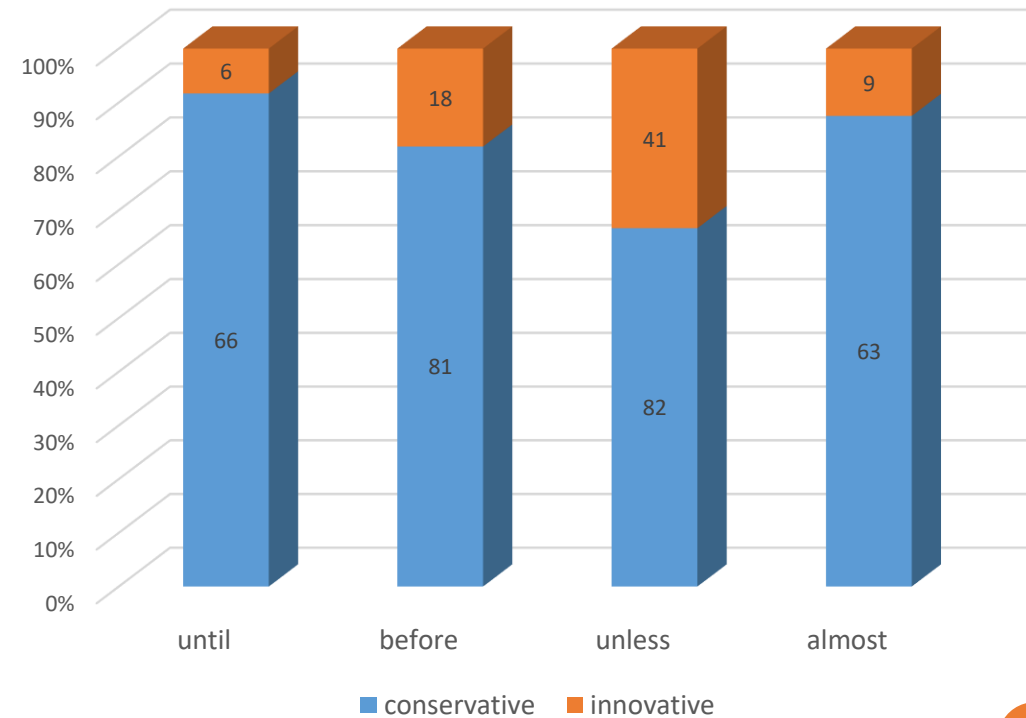
(Triggers of Pleonastic Negation: Jin – Koenig 2019)

Two sides of the same coin

Types of VM – NEG – V in different environments



Different environments with the two negative patterns



The story of the conservative pattern 1: Pleonastic Negation

- *until*-clauses: (the bulk of the data with 70.5%)

(6) *Ne álljanak föl míg meg nem lesz az összefogás!!!*
'Don't stand up until there will be [literally: PV – NOT – be] cooperation!'

- *unless*-clauses (exceptive conditionals as PN: Huszár 2021)

(7) *De koporsót minden halottnak muszáj csináltatni, hacsak még jobban meg nem változik a világ.*
'But each corpse needs a coffin unless the world changes [literally: PV – NOT – CHANGE] even more.'

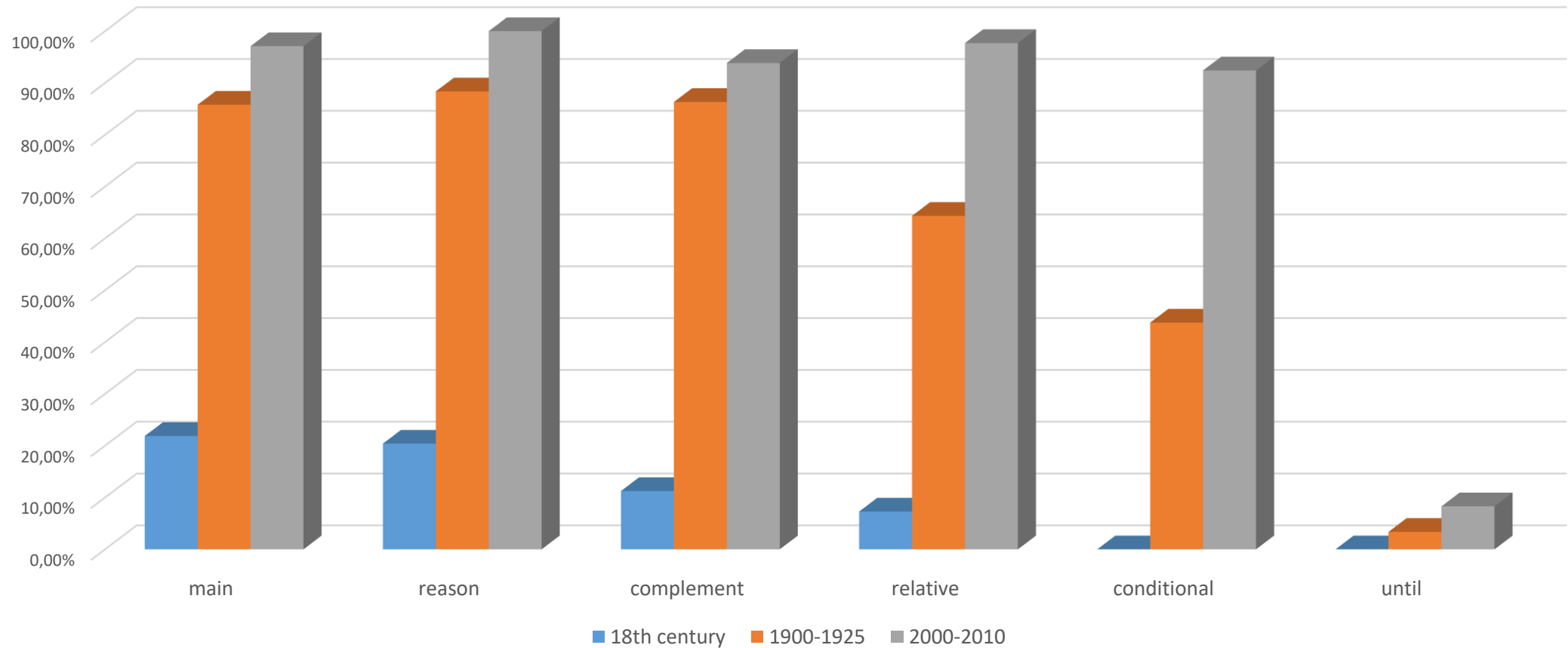
- *wh*-exclamatives (Halm – Huszár 2021)

(8) *Egyesek mit meg nem engednek maguknak!*
'Some people allow themselves so much / virtually anything!' [literally: what PV – NOT – allow]

- 'almost'-constructions (cf. Halm 2019)

(9) *tegnapelőtt kis híja, meg nem sebesültem.*
'The day before yesterday I almost got wounded.'
[literally: little was missing [that], PV – NOT – wounded]

A closer look on how change affects different clause types



The story of the conservative pattern: types

- *until*-clauses: pleonastic negation (optional; does not contribute to the polarity of the proposition; does not license negative pronouns)
- no variation prior to the change, i.e. no instances of the innovative pattern in this clause type – suggestion: incompatible with the pragmatic function that the innovative variant had then (emphatic negation)
- It was left out from the change for the very same reason → in time, speakers associated this pattern with pleonastic negation

The story of the conservative pattern: an unexpected twist

- Emphatic negation

(10) *Hogy esett, ezt **meg nem mondjuk**, de tény, hogy [...]*

‘How this happened, we are absolutely unable to tell
[literally: this PV – NOT – tell], but it is a fact that [...]’

- Previous claim: conservative pattern associated with PN that is (supposedly) incompatible with emphatic negation → ?
- Suggestion: this is a result of structural reanalysis that probably took place during the last phase of the spread of the innovative pattern

The story of the conservative pattern: an unexpected twist

- É. Kiss (2014)'s analysis of the (then-)neutral negative pattern of Old Hungarian: VM in Spec, PredP; V in head of PredP; NEG left-adjoined to V, deriving VM – NEG - V
- Piñón (1991)'s analysis of emphatic negation in Modern Hungarian: the preverb occupies the focus position before the negated verb, resulting in a VM – NEG – V pattern

Q: How can these two analyses be connected?

Proposal:

- Speaker 1: conservative grammar
'VM – NEG – V: default expression of negation, NEG: unstressed
- Speaker 2: innovative grammar
'NEG – V – VM: default expression of negation, NEG: stressed
- Speaker 2 encountering Speaker 1 production:
 - a) if in an environment licensing PN → interprets it as PN
 - b) if not, parses it on the basis of an available pattern:
stressed element before the negated verb in NegP: focus →
reanalysis of structure and a concomitant emergence of a new function

The story of the conservative pattern: a forking path

- Association with pleonastic negation due to being left out from a Jespersen's Cycle-like change
- Association with emphatic negation due to reanalysis when the rate of conservative speakers and the rate of utterances with this pattern in non-PN environments dropped significantly
- Outcome: the formerly neutral negative pattern cannot be interpreted as such anymore: VM – NEG – V is either emphatic negation or pleonastic negation.
- Outlier: conditionals (archaic??)

Summary

The two variants (VM – NEG – V and NEG – V – VM) basically swapped functions due to a series of changes

A) The innovative pattern NEG – V – VM gained frequency and lost its special function (probably emphatic negation), a Jespersen's Cycle-like development

B) *until*-clauses and PN-environments were left out of this change because of semantic incompatibility → association of the conservative pattern with PN

C) instances of the conservative pattern in non-PN environments reanalysed as emphatic negation with the VM in Focus position

Acknowledgements

- NKFI grant FK 135186
- Bolyai János Research Fellowship
- Members of the “Frontline” Research Excellence Programme (NKFI 129921) for their comments and suggestions

References

- É. Kiss, Katalin 2014. The evolution of functional left peripheries in the Hungarian sentence. In: É. Kiss, Katalin ed., The evolution of functional left peripheries in Hungarian syntax. OUP, Oxford. 9–55.
- Gugán, Katalin 2017. A magyar tagadó mondatok szórendje és a konstansráta-hipotézis. In: É. Kiss Katalin – Hegedűs Attila – Pintér Lilla (szerk.): Nyelvelmélet és diakronia 3. PPKE BTK Elméleti Nyelvészeti Tanszék – Magyar Nyelvészeti Tanszék. Budapest – Piliscsaba. 91–110.
- Halm, Tamás 2019. Szinte és majdnem: diakrón formális szemantikai elemzés. In: Balogné Bérces Katalin – Hegedűs Attila – Pintér Lilla szerk., Nyelvelmélet és diakronia 4. PPKE BTK Elméleti Nyelvészeti Tanszék – Magyar Nyelvészeti Tanszék, Budapest–Piliscsaba. 137–152.
- Hooper, Joan B. – Thompson, Sandra A. 1973. Linguistic Inquiry 4 (4): 465–497.
- Huszár, Anna – Halm, Tamás 2020. *The syntax of expletive negation in exclamatives: Evidence from Hungarian*. <https://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/005584>
- Huszár, Anna 2021. Negation in Hungarian Exeptive Conditionals. MA Thesis.
- Kalivoda, Ágnes 2018. Az igekötős igék szintaxisa korpuszvezérelt megközelítésben. In: Scheibl György (szerk.): LingDok 17. Nyelvészdoktoranduszok dolgozatai. Szegedi Tudományegyetem Nyelvtudományi Doktori Iskola. Szeged. 159–176.
- Kalivoda, Ágnes 2021. Igekötős szerkezetek a magyarban. Doktori (PhD) értekezés. https://github.com/kagnes/phd_thesis
- Novák, Attila–Gugán, Katalin–Varga, Mónika–Dömötör, Adrienne 2018. Creation of an annotated corpus of Old and Middle Hungarian court records and private correspondence. Language Resources and Evaluation: 1–28.
- Oravecz Csaba, Váradi Tamás, Sass Bálint: [The Hungarian Gigaword Corpus](#). In: *Proceedings of LREC 2014*, 2014.
- Piñón, Christopher 1991. Presupposition and the syntax of negation in Hungarian. In: Dobrin, Lise M.–Nichols, Lynn–Rodriguez, Rosa M. (eds.): Papers from the 27th Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society 1991. Chicago Linguistic Society. 246–262.
- Sass, Bálint 2017. Keresés korpuszban: a kibővített Magyar történeti szövegtár új keresőfelülete. In: Sinkovics Balázs (szerk): A nyelvtörténeti kutatások újabb eredményei IX. SZTE Magyar Nyelvészeti Tanszék. Szeged.
- Simon, Eszter – Sass, Bálint 2012. Nyelvtechnológia és kulturális örökség, avagy korpuszépítés ómagyar kódexekből. In: Általános Nyelvészeti Tanulmányok XXIV. 243–264.