

Handout

From quotative to causation – the history of Hungarian *mondván* 'saying'

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Supplementary materials to the poster

A short overview	p 1–3
Cited sources	p 3
Studied periods of Hungarian	p 4
References	p 4

A short overview

As it is a well-known, the verbs of utterance (*verbs of saying, verba dicendi*) and their derivatives belong to the most frequent elements of languages. One of their typical function is to introduce a direct or indirect quotation. The verb of utterance + quotation structure shows a high level of variability in different languages and can serve as a source of grammaticalization processes. In my poster lecture, I present the history of such a structure in Hungarian, focusing on the element *mondván* 'saying', 'having said'.

The word *mondván* is the more archaic form of the adverbial participle (converb) of the most frequent Hungarian verb of utterance, *mond* 'say, tell'. (In contemporary language use, the suffix -vÁn is not a productive one, instead, -va is used.)

This element has had a long history from the 14th century until today. The first written records of the form *mondván* are from Old Hungarian: the word appeared in the first Hungarian extant book approximately 50 times. (This book consists of Saint Francis's legends and was translated from Latin into Hungarian after 1370. Its extant copy is from around 1440.) The text proves that the form *mondván* does not only appear with a non-clausal adverbial adjunct (1), but it is regularly attested in quoting structures as well (2a–b).

- (1)
- | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| <i>gyicséret-et</i> | <i>Isten-nek</i> | <i>mond-ván,</i> | <i>vele</i> | <i>vé-vén</i> |
| praise-acc | God-dat | say-adv.ptcp | he.ins | take-adv.ptcp |
| <i>fráter</i> | <i>Leó-t</i> | | | |
| brother | Leo-acc | | | |

'Saying praises to God, taking Brother Leo with him.'

(JókaiC 39)

- (2)a.
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>megcsókol-ja vala</i> | <i>láb-ait,</i> | <i>mond-ván</i> | <i>könyvezésvel:</i> |
| kiss-prs3sg aux.pst | foot-poss.Pl.acc | say-adv.ptcp | crying-ins |

<i>Isten, légy</i>	<i>kegyelmes</i>	<i>nekem,</i>	<i>bínes-nek!</i>
God be.imp2sg	merciful	I.dat	sinner-dat

'He kissed his feet, **saying** while crying: God, have mercy on me, a sinner'

(JókaiC 41)

- b. *üvölt-setek, mond-ván:* *Atyámfia-i, tolvaj-ok,*
 shout-imp.2pl say-adv.ptcp brother-pl thief-pl
- | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>jöjj-etek</i> | <i>hozzánk,</i> | <i>mert</i> | <i>barát-ok</i> | <i>vagy-onk</i> |
| come.imp-2pl | we.all | because | friend-pl | be-1pl |

'**Shout, saying:** Brethren, thieves, come to us, for we are friends'

(JókaiC 105)

The poster discusses the quotative role and the grammaticalization processes of the quotative function. First the quotative role is described, then the discourse marker function marking direct quotes is explored.

This latter function was already present in Old Hungarian, exemplified by (3) from the middle of the 15th century. Function change is clearly marked by the fact that the adverbial participle *mondván* is connected to the main verb *mondja* '(he) says', formed from the same stem (as a translation from *Vulgata*).

- (3) *Ez-t mond-ja sereg-eknek ur-a, Isten-e, mond-ván:*
 this-acc say-prs.1sg army-pl.dat lord-poss God-poss say-adv.ptcp
- | | | |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Igaz</i> | <i>ítélet-et</i> | <i>ítél-jetek</i> |
| true | judgement-acc | judge-imp.2pl |

'The Lord, the God of the Armies **says, saying:** Pass a true judgement'

(BécsiC 303)

In the 20–21th centuries *mondván* got a new discourse marker function with the meaning 'giving the reason'.

- (4) *Észak-Korea betilt-otta a szűk farmer-t,*
 North-Korea prohibit-pst3sg the tight jeans-acc
- | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| <i>mond-ván</i> | <i>az</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>hanyagló</i> | <i>nyugati</i> | <i>divat</i> | <i>saját-ja</i> |
| say-adv.ptcp | that | the | decadent | western | fashion | own-poss |

'North Korea **banned** skinny jeans **saying [giving the reason]** that belongs to the decadent western fashion.'

(<https://liner.hu/eszak-korea-tiltas-farmer/>, 2021.)

This sentence shows the output of a language change that started about 600 years ago. *Mondván* in its new discourse marker function marks indirect causation: it signals that the current speaker justifies somebody's action by linking it to the actor's words. (Nevertheless, the actor can be a metaphorical one as well, and their words may be interpreted as a

paraphrase of the actor's words.) In this role, *mondván* serves as a connective as well (although not a prototypical conjunction).

This new function emerged as the result of reanalysis and inference fixing, as shown below (Section 4). Today the 'general' quotative role of the word *mondván* is diminishing. The form is becoming an isolated element in the linguistic system: although adverbial participles ending in *-ván* have become archaic and sporadic, in the function exemplified in (4), this form was preserved.

Nevertheless, the new function did not displace the former quotative one completely (regarding processes of grammaticalization, such parallels are considered common), as Example (5) shows:

- (5) *az alkudozás-i folyamat-nak ezen pontjá-n – 85 millió-nál –*
the bargaining-adj process-dat this point-sup 85 million-ade
„megmakacsol-ta” magá-t, mondván, en-nél
put his foot down-pst3sg himself-acc say-adv.ptcp this-ade
több-et egyetlen eurócent-tel sem hajlandó ad-ni
more-acc one Eurocent-ins no willing give-inf
Ronaldó-ért.
Ronaldo-cau

(MNSz)

'he put his foot down at this point of bargaining – at 85 million Euro – **saying** he was not willing to give one Eurocent more for Ronaldo'

However, this kind of use is far rarer in contemporary texts, than the usage as a discourse marker exemplified in (4).

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Studied periods of the Hungarian language history

Old Hungarian:	1055–1533.
Middle Hungarian:	1533–1722.
New Hungarian:	1722–1920.
Latest Hungarian:	1920–

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