Temporal Clauses in Italian Sign Language

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BACKGROUND
Subordination is a key structural property of human language. In LIS, adjunct subordinated structures, like If-clauses, display typical yes/no prosody on the antecedent of the conditional, hence leaving a bi-clausal analysis hard to exclude [1]. In addition to that, center embedding of sentential complements is generally avoided, except if they are strongly marked at the morphological level [4].

GOALS
We investigate LIS temporal clauses showing that these are genuine cases of adjunct subordination structures, rather than juxtaposed or coordinated structures.

DATA
Data are from two LIS native signers. The baseline for temporal clauses is (1a). The main properties are: i) raised eyebrow non-manual marking (NMM) on the first part; ii) temporal markers (BEFORE, AFTER and MOMENT PI) prosodically belong to the second part of the construction; iii) Before-clauses contain the negation NOT-YET; iv) when-clauses contain the pronominal marker PI which is also used to mark relative clauses. v) inversion of the two members of the construction is not allowed.

(1) a. BOSS STOCK SELL NOT-YET BEFORE SECRETARY STAMP BUY
   ‘The secretary bought the stamps before the boss sold the stocks’
   b. *BEFORE SECRETARY STAMP BUY BOSS STOCK SELL NOT-YET
      ‘Before the boss sold the stocks, the secretary bought the stamps’

Syntactically, we show that these are genuine cases of adjunct subordination. Evidence for this comes from asymmetric extraction. In subordinated constructions extraction from the matrix clause should be possible, but extraction from the subordinate adjunct should not be possible because it would violate the adjunct island constraint [5]. The data in (2) show that temporal clauses are sensitive to the adjunct island constraint, and that the second member of the construction behaves as the matrix clause.

(2) a. BOSS STOCK SELL NOT-YET BEFORE ___ STAMP BUY WHO?
   ‘Who bought the stamps before the boss sold the stocks?’
   b. *___ STOCK SELL NOT-YET BEFORE SECRETARY STAMP BUY WHO?
      Int. mean.: ‘Who is s.t. before selling the stocks the secretary bought the stamp?’
Semantically, we show that temporal markers contain a comparative component. In this case, evidence comes from: iconic mapping of time instants in signing space, gradient interpretation of the temporal markers and anaphoric properties of the temporal markers, which are similar to those of comparative markers in LIS [2].

**ANALYSIS**

We analyze temporal clauses as the result of a relativization process, which is visible in *when*-clauses headed by MOMENT PI. Following [3], we propose that the relevant syntactic projection hosting the temporal marker also includes a degree phrase. In the surface structure, the relativized temporal clause sits as a complement of the degree-phrase left-adjoined to the matrix clause (Figure 1). The LF structure is derived by reconstruction of the topicalized temporal clause into its original position.

**REFERENCES**


