



ISCH COST Action IS1006 SignGram



STSM final report

Istanbul, April 30th, 2014.

Dear STSM coordinator,

This is to notify that the following STSM:

Beneficiary: Emre Hakgüder, Bogazici University.

Host: Carlo Geraci, Institut Jean-Nicod.

Period: from March 10th, 2014 to April 4th, 2014.

Place: Paris (France)

Reference code: COST-STSM-ECOST-STSM-IS1006-100314-041480

started and finished in the expected dates.

Text of report

The main goal of this STSM was to understand question embedding strategies in Italian Sign Language (LIS) with the aim of providing a linguistic comparative ground to a sign language, namely Turkish Sign Language (TID) which is currently in the process of being linguistically described.

During the STSM which took four weeks, Carlo Geraci and I had three scheduled meetings and a number of informal discussions during which we mostly debated the syntax of embedding in a broader scope, i.e. complexity in LIS in general in the light of the two articles suggested by Carlo Geraci which were (co-)authored by him (Cecchetto et al. 2009, Geraci & Aristodemo 2014).



During my time in Paris, Carlo Geraci and I conducted one data elicitation session with a native LIS signer with the aim of eliciting two types of complex sentences as shown in the following examples:

- (1) I know where John put the pencil.
- (2) I asked Mary where John put the pencil.

KNOW-type verbs as illustrated with an English example in (1) subcategorize for a [+wh] complement which shows overt movement of the wh- item to the left periphery of the embedded clause. ASK-type verbs too, as exemplified in (2) subcategorize for a [+wh] complement with wh-left-dislocation in the embedded clause.

Although English does not make a morphosyntactic distinction between these two structures, it has been shown in the literature for Spanish that ASK-type verbs and KNOW-type verbs vary in terms of their morphosyntax, i.e. the types of complements that they take (Suner, 1993). Suner calls the complements that KNOW-type verbs subcategorize for 'semi/pseudo questions' and the other type 'true/genuine indirect questions. She bases her argumentation on the theory of Groenendijk and Stokhof (1982, 1984) that KNOW-type verbs are extensional (they only care for the answer of a question, therefore KNOW-type verbs can take either a wh-complement or a that-complement) while ASK-type verbs are intensional (they only care for what the question is and cannot take a that-complement). While KNOW-type verbs' wh-complement entails its corresponding that- counterpart semantically, ASK-type verbs' does not. LIS data acquired during this STSM shows a clear distinction between wh-complements of ASK-type verbs and wh-complements of KNOW-type verbs: wh-complements of ASK type verbs can only be signed with role shift. This observation has yet to be elaborated in order to come to a generalization.

Despite the apparent word order variation between the constituents of matrix sentences with ASK-type verbs and KNOW-type verbs in TID, it is too early to put forth a syntactic account at this point. The implications and the outcome of these observations made in the two languages in question is subject to further discussion with Carlo Geraci and my advisors, Meltem Kelepir and Asli Göksel.

I was also granted the opportunity to give a talk at Institut Jean-Nicod about the main research areas in TID linguistics with a focus on the known history of the language and its syntax.

Question embedding constitutes a significant proportion of complexity in both sign languages and spoken languages. Therefore, this ongoing work on embedded questions is significant to understanding complexity. With the help of the academic experience I gained thanks to the linguistic environment provided by this STSM, I will continue my research on TID embedded clauses with pace and confidence.

The discussions that I had during this mission were quite productive and paved the ground for future work for exploring analogies and differences regarding complexity and specifically question embedding in LIS and TID in a comparative fashion after the STSM was over.

All the best,
Emre Hakgüder

SELECTED REFERENCES

Cecchetto, C., Geraci, C. and Zucchi, S. (2009). Another way to mark syntactic dependencies. The case for right peripheral specifiers in sign languages. *Language*, 85(2), 278-320.

Groenendijk, J & M. Stokhof. (1982). Semantic Analysis of Wh-Complements. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 5, 175-233.

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Suner, M. (1993). About indirect questions and semi-questions. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 16:45-77.