

**ON LINGUISTICS AND HITTITE - FRANKE LECTURE JANUARY 17, 2007**  
EXPLORING THE OUTER LIMITS: FROM SENTENCE TO DISCOURSE IN HITTITE

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**Hittite: when and where?**

- 1906: discovery of the central palace and temple archives of the capital Hattusa, 150 km east of Ankara in Central Turkey.
- 1915: Hittite deciphered, classified as Indo-European.
- Oldest IE language, documented from the 17th until the 12th century BC.
- Type: rather rigid SOV language (a language with main word order Subject-Object-Verb)
- Genres: letters, laws, treaties, historical narratives, myths, wisdom literature, historical annals, oracles, vows, magical rituals, festival text, incantations, hymns, administrative texts etc.

**Summary research project**

- *Subject*: Study of the Hittite coordinating and subordinating conjunctions based on their interaction with clause-level *Information Structure* (IS) and *Discourse Structure* (DS).
- *Approach*: multiple-level analysis to achieve a unified account of the conjunctions in relation to IS and DS. Synchronic and diachronic study. Semasiological approach (form-to-function)
- *Key models*: Functional Discourse Grammar (Hengeveld 2002), Rhetorical Structure Theory (Mann & Thompson 1988), Information Structure models of Lambrecht 1994 and Dik 1997, Diachronic Pragmatics (Jacobs and Jucker 1995)

**Integration of Sentential Information Structure and Discourse Structure**

**Information Structure:** partition of information in the clause

Issues in current linguistics: IS and DS need to be integrated in order to gain a better understanding of language production and processing<sup>1</sup>. IS and DS interact in clause or sentence initial position (P1) the site of communicatively important constituents.

Interplay between Topic, Focus (IS notions, often related with P1), conjunctions, contrast and cohesion (belonging to DS)<sup>2</sup>.

**Topic:** piece of information which the clause is about<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hengeveld 2002, Kruijff-Korbayová & Steedman 2003, Tomlin et al. 1997:63ff.

<sup>2</sup> Recent studies illustrating the relation between these areas are Adamiková 2003 (Focus and coordinate adversative constructions in Slovak), Kawamura 2002 (the interaction between the Japanese topic marker *wa* and the conjunction *ga* “but”), Lee 2005 (the correlation between Korean contrastive Topic and Focus and two conjunctions), McCoy 2003 (contrast in Russian), Shbø 2003 (German *aber* as topic particle).

<sup>3</sup> “A referent is interpreted as the topic of a proposition if IN A GIVEN DISCOURSE the proposition is construed as being ABOUT this referent, i.e. as expressing information which is RELEVANT TO and which increases the addressee’s KNOWLEDGE of this referent. ... Topic is a PRAGMATICALLY CONSTRUED SENTENCE RELATION” (Lambrecht 1994: 127).

**Focus:** piece of information that makes the clause informational <sup>4</sup>

Examples of information in P1:

New Discourse Topic, connected with previous Discourse Topic (Topic introducing ‘as for’ or ‘about’ construction). Source: internet:

1. I love dogs and **as for cats** i only like Pandora.
2. Dog domestication is not really a mystery. Selective breeding is basically controlled evolution via artificial selection, and modifies the species over time. We selected the most docile and friendly wolves in the distant past to become companions, repeatedly breeding them (and killing off more aggressive ones) until the sub-species became significantly different from the original wolf stock.

**As for cats**, I don't know; to be honest, I'm not entirely sure they really are domesticated. It seems to me that cats simply view humans as convenient sources of food, and do not have the kind of symbiotic relationship with humanity that dogs do.

Unestablished Topics, no contrast:

3. Sunday I was taking paper and pasting it together and finding a method of how to drop spoons, a fork, a napkin, and a straw into one package. **The napkin feeder** I got. **The straw feeder** we made already. That leaves us the spoon and the fork. (Lambrecht's ex. 4.32, 1994: 160)

And conjunctions added:

New&Contrastive D-Topic (Additive Focus in 3),

4. Pity that you are allergic to cats, they are wonderful animals, **but dogs** I like as well.
5. I will promise not to chase the cats, **but dogs** I can't abide

Hittite has several conjunctions that are intimately connected with P1.

- 6a  $\emptyset$  *tuppuš šakanda šunnaš* ( $\emptyset$  baskets grease:with filled:she) ‘she filled (=caulked) the baskets with grease’
- 6b *nu* DUMU.MEŠŠU *andan zikēt* (*nu* sons=her inside placed:she) ‘**and** she placed her sons in (them)’
- 6c *š-uš* ÍD-*a tarnaš* (*š-uš*=them river:to released:she) **and** she launched them into the river’
- 6d ÍD-š-*a ANA* A.AB.BA KUR <sup>URU</sup> *Zalpuwa pēda[š]* (‘river=*a* to sea country <sub>city</sub>Zalpuwa carried:it) ‘**but** the river carried (them) to the Sea of Zalpuwa’

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<sup>4</sup> “The focus of a proposition is that element of a pragmatically structured proposition which makes the utterance of the sentence expressing the proposition into a piece of information. [...] Like the topic, the focus is an element which stands in a pragmatically construed relation to a proposition. But while the pragmatic relation between a topic and a proposition is assumed to be PREDICTABLE or RECOVERABLE (emphasis mine), the relation between the focus element and the proposition is assumed to be UNPREDICTABLE or NON-RECOVERABLE (emphasis mine) for the addressee at the time of the utterance” (Lambrecht 1994: 217-8). As a result “a constituent in focus can by definition not be omitted without depriving the utterance of some or all of its information value.” (Lambrecht 1994: 224).

- 6e DINGIR.DIDLI-š=a DUMU.MEŠ-uš A.AB.BA-az šarā dāir (gods=a sons sea:from up took:they) ‘**but** the gods took the sons up from the sea’  
 6f šuš šallanuškir (šu=them raised:they) ‘**and** they raised them’.

### How to define P1

*Problem 1: Asyndeton and P1*

Is P1 empty (∅) or not (NP)? 6a: ∅ tuppuš šakanda šunnaš / **tuppuš** šakanda šunnaš

- 7 LÚSAGI 1 NINDA-wageššar LUGAL-i pāi “The cupbearer gives one wageššar-bread to the king”  
**LUGAL-uš** paršiya. “The king brea[ks] (it)”. (KBo 15.36 iii 4-5, MH?/MS?)

Compare with 6c (into the river) and 6d (river subj). If LUGAL-uš in P1 (i.e. *nu* etc. not omitted), do we have a topic switch, which is also marked with *-ma/-a*? What is the difference?

Or: is *nu* etc. omitted, including the object enclitic (with *nu* and *ta* enclitics can be omitted), and LUGAL-uš *not* in initial position?

*Problem 2: nu and P1 in relative clauses*

‘initial position’ (our P1) versus ‘modified initial position’. ‘Modified initial position’ is only preceded by the conjunctions *nu*, *ta* or *su* (or a few sentence adverbs). According to many these positions may be equated<sup>5</sup>.

Preliminary result: there *is* a difference between initial and first position in Old Hittite regarding the placement of the relative pronoun *kui-* in relative clauses.

- kui-* in P1 : ‘conditional’ (conditional paraphrase is possible): “Anyone who **might** do evil, ...”.  
*nu kui-* : the event in a present-tense relative clause will certainly occur: “Anyone who **will** become king after me , ...”.

We have *Epistemic modality*: a modality that connotes how much certainty or evidence a speaker has for the proposition expressed by his or her utterance. English: may, might, must.

*nu kui-*: event will take place

- 8 URRAM ŠERAM **kuiš** ammuk EGIR-*anda* LUGAL-uš kišari  
 In all future, **whoever** becomes king after me, ... (Tel. ii 40)

- 9 išhanašš=a uttar kiššan  
**kuiš** ēšhar jezzi  
*nu kuit* ēšhanašš=pat išhāš tezzi  
 And the matter of the blood (is) as follows:  
**Anyone** who might ‘make blood’,

<sup>5</sup> Boley 1985:6, Luraghi 1990:91, 129; Garrett 1994:45, 49; Melchert 2002:1

**whatever** the lord of the blood says (about him): ( “Let him die”, (then) he must die. But if he says: “Let him pay”, (then) he shall pay.) (Tel. iv 27/19’)

*kui-* in P1: event not certain to take place:

- 10 *kuiš* ŠEŠ.MEŠ-*n=a* NIN.MEŠ-*n=a* *istarna idālu ijazi*  
**Whoever** might do harm amongst the brothers and sisters , ... (Tel. ii 50)
- 11 *kuiš=za* *ḥaššannan ištarna alūanzatar šakki*  
*šumēš=an ḥaššannanza ēptin ...*  
*[ku]iš=an UL=ma uūatezzi ...*  
 Whoever amongst the clan-members might know sorcery, him you must take from the clan ... . But **whoever** might not bring him, ... (Tel. iv 31/23’)

This distinction in semantics seems to disappear in Middle-Hittite:

- 12a *kuiš=kan kūš=ša* NIŠ DINGIR.MEŠ *šarrezzi*  
 “Anyone who might transgress also these oaths” (KBo 6.34 i 34, MH/NS)
- 12b *n=ašta kuiš kūš* NIŠ DINGIR-LIM *šarrezzi* (KBo 6.34 ii 46, MH/NS)

But: throughout Hittite, also in NH, certain Focused constituents (Additive Focus) are usually restricted to first position, and only rarely occur in initial position..

- 13 His father, who was the king of the Hittites, was a heroic king, and he held the enemy countries under control. And (then) he became a god. Now, his son who sat on the throne of his father,  
*nu=ua apāš+ya karū* <sup>LÚ</sup>KAL-*anza ēšta*  
*nu=uar=an irmaliḫattat*  
*nu=ua=za apāš+ya* DINGIR-LIM-*iš kišat*  
**he too** was already a strong man. He became ill, and **he too** became a god.  
 (KBo 3.4+ i 11-13, NH)

There was still a semantic difference between initial and first position in Old Hittite, which was lost in later Hittite. Although there remained a difference between initial and first position, the nature of the difference had changed: semantics were lost in case of epistemic modality, while syntax remained (for example, IS).

!! De-subjectification, loss of epistemic modality (contrary the claims of Traugott).

### Function of constituents in P1

Current views: in (mod) P1 we find:

- newly established topics (Luraghi 1990: 91)
- constituents that carry contrastive Focus (Luraghi 1990: 100)

However:

- Contrastive Focus constituents occur in preverbal position (Goedegebuure 2003)

14 *mān* <sup>d</sup>UTU-Št<sup>ma</sup> *lahḫi ukila ūL pāimi* [...] *nu tuzzin lahḫi apāš pēḫutezzi* (*nu* army campaign:on **he** lead:will)  
 “If I, My Majesty, myself do not go on campaign, [then the prince or [great] lor[d] that I appoint as commander in the army,] **he** shall lead the army on campaign (i.e. *he* shall do it)”. (KUB 13.20 obv. 16-18, MH/NS)

- Non-contrastive New Focus arguments occur in (modified) Initial position if it is the only Focus in the clause (Goedegebuure fc)<sup>6</sup>

15 “Go (and) search for the Stormgod!”... Thus (said) the father of the Stormgod:  
*nu=war=an kuwapi paimi san(a)hmi* (*nu*-QUOT-him **where** go:I search:I)  
 ‘ “**Where** shall I go (and) search for him?” ’ (KUB 33.24 + 28 i 47, OH/NS)

So: re-evaluation of the communicative function of constituents in P1 is necessary.

### Meaning/function of the coordinating conjunctions

Contrasting views can also be noted regarding **the function of the coordinating conjunctions**. For *-ma/-a* “but, while, however”

- focus marker (Garrett 1994:38)
- topic marker (Rieken 2000:414)
- an adversative conjunction indicating discontinuity (Luraghi 1990:50)
- an adversative conjunction indicating difference with the preceding context (Meacham 2001)
- a complementary correlative conjunction (Melchert 2002:4, explicitly rejecting the other proposals).

For *nu*, *ta*, *šu* and asyndeton, seemingly used to the exclusion of other elements in P1 (*if* P1 is only initial position):

- asyndeton, *ta*, *šu*, *nu* are syntactically and pragmatically equivalent, but *ta* only with non-past, and *šu* only with past (Weitenberg 1992)
- *ta* different from asyndeton, *šu*, *nu* (Rieken 1999)

### What will this research contribute?

*Hittite:*

- The major contributors to discourse cohesion, the conjunctions, are not well understood. The outcome of this research will be of fundamental importance for our understanding of Hittite texts.
- The contradictory views concerning the conjunctions are most likely the result of an isolated approach. By treating the conjunctions as part of a larger phenomenon such an unwelcome outcome will be avoided.

*Linguistics:*

- Processes of change: unidirectionality of subjectification seems to be challenged.

<sup>6</sup> Focus structure in Hittite DECL and INTER are the same, unlike in English where Q-words are clause initial.

- Testing ground for discourse-functional theories aiming at the integration of IS and DS
- Adding a diachronic dimension to the integrated study of IS and DS.

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