ISCH COST Action IS1006 SignGram

Dear STSM coordinator,

This is to notify that the following STSM:

COST Action number: IS 1006
Title of the Action: Unraveling the grammars of European sign languages: pathways to full citizenship of deaf signers and to the protection of their linguistic heritage
Action short name: SignGram COST Action
Applicant'sName: Carlo Cecchetto
Affiliation: Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca
STSM project title: Ellipsis and variable binding
STSM starting date: 13/05/2013
STSM end date: 18/05/2013
Host institution: CNRS, Institut Jean-Nicod

started and finished in the expected dates.

The main goalof this short STSM was the analysisof two aspects of the grammar of LIS in a comparative perspective. The discussion with Carlo Geraci and other colleagues as well as the elicitation sessions with informants focused on imperatives on the one side, and constituency tests like ellipsis and proform on the other side.
During my STSM I put to the test an observation that emerged during previous data collection on ellipsis, namely the finding that there seems to be a difference in meaning between (1) and (2). English sentence (2) admits both a strict and a sloppy reading. However, LIS sentence (1) admits only the strict reading.

(1) GIANNI SAY IX-3$_{Gianni}$ MARIA KISS. PIERO SAME
(2) Gianni said that he kissed Maria and Piero did, too

Strict reading: Gianni said that Gianni kissed Maria and Piero said that Gianni kissed Maria
Sloppy reading: Gianni said that Gianni kissed Maria and Piero said that Piero kissed Maria

However, a careful investigation of the issue by using a varieties of elicitation contexts hasprovedthe working hypothesis that motivated this STSM partially wrong, since it was possible to identify the presence of the sloppy reading in cases structurally similar to (1). Although the preference for the sloppy/strict reading is modulated by a varieties of factors, including how anaphora is resolvedby the use of space, there is no ban on the presence of the sloppy reading in LIS. This makes LIS not dissimilar from other European sign languages like LCS and LSF, as it has emerged from the work of COST colleagues.Interestingly, the presence of role shift in the antecedent clause strongly favors the sloppy reading, as expected under current semantic approaches to role shift.

The second general issue that was investigated in this STSM was the role of grammatical markers of imperative force in LIS, as compared to similar markers in LSF. As already emerged in previous elicitations, there seem to be at least two bona fide manual signs marking imperative sentences in LIS, the sign glossed as P(alm) U(p) and the sign glossed MOVIMP$_g$.Non manual markers co-occur with these signs and we could elicit a few cases where NMM alone signals imperative force.

We could further establish therole of PU and MOVIMP$_g$as markers of imperativesby confirming that they are incompatible with stative verbs and that, although they can occur in so-called IAD sentences ("eat this and you end up in the hospital"), they cannot occur in the protasis of genuine conditional sentences. An issue that was touched,but requires further research, is the possibility of an overt lexical subject in imperative sentences. Non-command uses of PU and MOVIMP$_g$, not only in IAD, but also as permission, exhortation, authorization etc., are attested but have be further investigated.

Carlo Cecchetto