

Constituency and configurationality in Hittite

Silvia Luraghi & Guglielmo Inglese (Università degli Studi di Pavia)

In our presentation we discuss the morphosyntactic properties of various types of constituent in Hittite. Hittite is a left branching language, in which dependents consistently precede their head with few exceptions. On the NP level, one finds the orders AN and GN with the exception of the universal quantifiers *humant-* and *dapiant-* ‘all’, ‘every’, of the genitive of matter, and of the genitive of the indefinite pronoun *kuelqa*, which show the order NA and NG respectively (Hoffner & Melchert 2008: 254-255, 271-273). Elsewhere, the order NA is exceptional, possibly connected with contrasted adjectives (Francia 2001: 86).

Demonstratives and numerals likewise precede their head (Hoffner & Melchert 2008: 283, 165). Dependencies are mostly marked on the dependent, with double marking within possessive NPs in Old Hittite only (Luraghi 1989, *forthc.*), as in (1).

- (1) *labarnaš* LUGAL-*aš* NINDA=*šan*
labarna.GEN king.GEN bread=3SG.POSS.ACC
“The bread of the Labarna, the king.” (KUB 36.100 rev. 5–6)

Agreement within NPs concerns gender and case, and, to a lesser extent, number (Hoffner & Melchert 2008:239-241). Adpositions are consistently postposed to the noun, and show the order NPostp as in *inani* (illness.DAT) *peran* ‘because of illness’.

Discontinuity within constituents can be of two types: (a) brought about by rules of enclitic placement or (b) involving some other, non-enclitic item. Type (a) is connected to Wackernagel’s Law concerning the placement of P2 enclitics: as all pronominal clitics except Old Hittite possessives are placed in P2 and can take any word in initial position as their host, enclitic objects are most often separated from the verb. In addition, when a complex constituent occurs in initial position, it is split by P2 enclitics, either pronominal or of different types (conjunctions, particles; Luraghi 2017). Outside initial position, discontinuous NPs are infrequent, and mostly confined to cases in which an enclitic, typically the focalizing particle =*pat*, is attached to the first word in a phrase (*kappin*=*pat* (small.ACC=FOC) DUMU-*an* ‘a small boy’ [KBo 6.29 i 7], *tagnaš*=*pat* (earth.GEN=FOC) ^DUTU-*un* ‘Sun-god of earth’ [KBo 11.10 iii 23]; cf. Hart 1971: 102).

Type (b) discontinuity may occur in various other case. In the first place, the placement of the indefinite pronoun *kuiški* may be a cause of constituent discontinuity (cf. Huggard 2015), as in (2), in which the pronoun *kuiški* interrupts the postpositional phrase DINGIR-LIM-*ni* *peran* ‘before a deity’.

- (2) *naššu* DINGIR-LIM-*ni* *kuiški* *peran* *wašti*
or god.DAT INDF.NOM before sin.PRS.3SG
“Or if someone sins before a deity.” (KUB 1.16 iii 60)

On the while, cases of hyperbaton with heavy items are exceptional (Lühr 2016), but NP fronting for pragmatic purposes may split nominal constituents, as in (3) (but note that *maḥḥan* is a conjunction and, if not initial, takes second position; Sideltsev & Molina 2015: 25).

- (3) *tuel*=*ma*=*an*=*kan* *maḥḥan* *maniyahḥanteš* *IŠTU* *ZÍD*.D[A]
2SG.GEN=PTC=3SG.ACC=PTC how agent.NOM.PL with flour
arḥa *dayaer*
away take.PST.3PL
“How your agents stole her away together with the flour.” (HKM 36 obv. 44–46)

On the VP level, OV order is consistent, but fronting of the object NP is frequent for discourse reasons given the fact that information structure heavily influences the order of NPs in Hittite (Molina & Sideltsev 2014, Lühr 2015), and frequently the object can be separated from the verb by heavy elements, not only by clitics or conjunctions, such as ^{URU}*Kašepūra* in (4) (from Molina 2015: 751).

- (4) *namma apūn* **ÉRIN**^{MEŠ} ^{URU}*Kašepūra* EGIR-*an=pat tiya*
 then DEM.ACC troop K. back=FOC bring.IMP.2SG
 “Furthermore station those troops behind Kasepura.” (HKM 24 obv. 53–54)

Verb fronting, also conditioned by discourse factors, can also separate the finite verb from the direct object, as in (5) (on this passage, see Luraghi 2017: 279-280).

- (5) *ḫarkanzi=ma=an* ^D*Ḫantašepēš* *anduhšaš* *ḫaršarr=a*
 hold.PRS.3PL=PTC=PTC H.NOM.PL man.GEN head.NOM.PL=CONJ
GIŠSUKUR^{HIA}=*ya*
 spear(PL)=CONJ
 “The H. divinities hold human heads as well as spears.” (KBo 17.1 i 22–24).

The data in (4) and (5) seem to cast doubts on the relevance of the VP in Hittite. Remarkably, the fact that the VP apparently does not form a constituent is consistent with the occurrence of P2 clitics, rather than verb-hosted clitics, and of null referential direct objects (Inglese, Rizzo & Pflugmacher 2019). These are properties of non-configurational languages, along with possible discontinuity within NPs and PPs (see Baker 2001).

Based on this and other data we explore evidence for degrees of configurationality in the nominal and in the verbal domain in Hittite, and show how continuity and discontinuity as well as word order variation within constituents arise through the interaction of morphosyntactic, prosodic, and pragmatic factors.

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