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Harald Bichlmeier und Velizar Sadovski

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INFORMATION STRUCTURE IN HITTITE AND VEDIC

Rosemarie Lühr, Berlin

In two projects sponsored by the DFG, “Information Structure in Older Indo-European Languages” and “Information Structure in Complex Sentences – Synchronic and Diachronic”, continuous texts of Hittite, Vedic, Greek, and Latin are taken into account. We have developed a basic concept of analysis elements which allows us to evaluate the data of different languages with each other and merge it in a coherent parameter for comparison. All languages are tagged uniformly with EXMARaLDA. The database is ANNIS. As Hittite syntax is a special challenge for the researcher I use a tagged collection of about one thousand isolated sentences as a supplement provided by Susanne Zeilfelder.

However, the possibilities of determining the unmarked basic structure of sentences in a historical corpus are restricted: The explanative potential of standard intonation (Haider 1993: 216) can be used only indirectly wherever we have, for instance, a contrast between orthotone and clitic pronouns. Hittite has a focus particle *-pat* (unfortunately facultative) and an adversative particle *-ma*, sometimes used to mark the contrast focus. But, all things considered, it’s just hints, and therefore hypotheses about the information structural status of linguistic units must to a large degree be supported by semantic designations and functional tests, especially those operating on the textual environment. Although so much research is still to be done about canonical Hittite syntax, information structure is a good point to start with as it marks exactly the interface between syntax and semantics.

Generally, we assume a topic-comment and a focus-background structure. Contrary to the unitary semantic interpretation of focus (Rooth 1992; Krifka 1993; 2007), we assume two kinds of focus, a new information focus and a contrastive focus, because those differ in intonation in German and were probably distinct in certain corpus languages (Kiss 1998; Steube 2001) as well. As for the topic, the theoretical framework is Centering Theory (Speyer 2007). On the one hand, this theory is consistent with the generative sentence analysis within the scope of the government-and-binding-theory, supplemented by functional projections.

On the other hand, the Centering Theory can be applied to the information structure of sentences. It deals with givenness and salience and as an epiphenomenon with the aboutness-quality of topics. The shifting topic also belongs to the aboutness-concept. In the text it changes the perspective towards a new referent.¹ As ‘new aboutness-topic’ it contrasts with the ‘non-new aboutness-topic’ (Frasca-relli & Hinterhölzl 2007). Thus, both a connection with the topic-term of the topic-comment-structure and above all with the subject is possible. Subsequently, the contextual references with the relations *continue*, *retain*, *smooth shift*, and *rough shift* can be identified.

One of the questions of my investigation concerns the connection of information structure with the syntax of complex sentences, especially the distribution of information structural units in main and subordinated clauses. This question is discussed with a different emphasis. For example, in Transformation Grammar of the 1970s it was referred to as “Root Transformations” and “Main clause phenomena”, by which certain transformations were excluded from subordinated clauses. But as it was shown later even complement clauses allow for “root transformations” and topicalizations.² My goal is to confirm this view. In this respect Hittite again is an interesting language, because topicalizations out of subordinated clauses are accepted. As first point examples with topicalization out of preceding and postponed subordinated clauses are discussed (1). The second question concerns the order of the main clause and several subordinated clauses within a complex sentence, for different sequences have an effect on information structure (2). In these cases the order does not always correspond to the logical connections. Here again, the consequence for information structure must be addressed, for the left periphery may be directly affected (3). Finally, as Hittite is the oldest Indo-European language, we want to know whether the way Hittite deals with information structure in complex sentences might be a phenomenon inherited from Indo-European. Therefore, fourthly we use Vedic for comparison (4). We show work in progress. Our statistics is still pending. But anyway we can already see that the accumulation of several subordinated clauses is not only in Hittite, but also in Vedic an infrequent phenomenon.

¹ Reinhart 1981; Steube/Alter/Späth 2004: 25: discourse-topic.

² Hopper/Thompson 1973; Green 1976. Hopper/Thompson’s “assertion hypothesis” as “semantic/pragmatic condition” for “main clause phenomena” in subordinate clauses is also an issue of now-a-days’ generative research.

1 Topicalization out of subordinated clauses

1.1 Preceding subordinated clauses

Topicalization out of preceding subordinated clauses is often documented:

- (1) CTH 443 (Ritual) III 8f.

ku-u-un *ma-a-ah-ha-an* *ar-ha* *tuh-ša-an-na-ah-hu-un*
 that:Acc.Sg.c as away cut:1.Sg.Pret.Act.
 Û ŠA ŠZI *i-da-a-lu* *ut-tar* *al-wa-an-za-tar*
 also Zi:Gen.Sg.c. evil:Nom.Sg.n. word:Nom.Sg.n sorcery:Nom.Sg.n.
ar-ha *QA-TAM-MA* *tuh-ša-an* *e-eš-tu*
 away the same way cut:Part.pred. be:3.Sg.Imper.Act.

“Just as I cut off this one, in the same way Zi’s evil word (and) sorcery shall be cut off!”

The accusative singular *kun* ‘these’ occupies the discourse functional slot in the left periphery in front of the conjunction *mahhan* ‘as’. This slot is designed for any discourse prominent element, for the topic or the focus. Here, it contains the continuous topic in a retain relation to establish anaphoric reference. The subordinated clause is a modal clause. The conjunction *mahhan* ‘as’ and the adverb *qātamma* – to be read as *apenissan* – ‘as well’ in the main clause function as correlatives.

1.2 Postponed subordinated clauses

Though the canonical sentence order is adverbial clause – main clause in Hittite, complex sentences like the following are documented:

- (2) KUB XXXI 47 (CTH 209: Letter), Vs. 11’–13’

nu-mu DINGIR^{LM}-YA *wa-ar-ri-iš-ši-iš-ta*
 and=me god:Nom.Sg.c.=my come to one’s aid:3.Sg.Pret.Act.
am-me-el-za *A-NA QA-AQ-QA-RI-YA* GIM-an EGIR-an *ar-ha-ha-ri*
 my=PtcI. threshold:Loc.Sg.=my as soon as backward stand:1.Sg.Pret.Med.

“My god came to my aid as soon as I stood behind my threshold.” (Corpus Zeilfelder Nr. 403)

In this example the main clause is preponed for religious reasons: the god’s help should respectfully be mentioned first. In the adverbial clause the topicalization of *am-me-el-za A-NA QA-AQ-QA-RI-YA* “at my threshold” makes clear that the subordinated clause has its own information structure, too. ‘At my threshold’ is part of the new information focus of this clause and surely stressed, as is clearly shown by the use of the redundant orthotone *ammel* beside the enclitic =*mi* (written -YA). It precedes the conjunction GIM-an ‘as soon as’.

Another example for a postponed subordinated clause is (3):

- (3) CTH 86.1: Edict of Hattusilis III, I 3–5

(a) ^DUTU^{ŠI} ^{mD}SIN.^DU-aš-ša *ha-an-ni-tal-wa-eš-šir*
 majesty:Nom.Sg.c. Armadatta:Nom.Sg.c.=and litigate:3.Pl.Pret.Act.

- (b) HUL-*eš-šir-ma-at* *ki-e-da-ni*
 become angry:3.Sg.Pret.Act.=but=Ptcl.=it this:Loc.Sg.c.
me-mi-ya-ni KUR UGU^{TIM} *ku-it*
 matter:Loc.Sg.c. land:Acc.Sg.n. upper:Acc.Sg.n. because
A-NA^{mD}SIN.^DU *AŠ-ŠUM MU-IR-DU-UT-TIM* *pi-eš-ta*
 Armadatta:Dat.Sg.c. for administration give:3.Sg.Pret.Act.

“The majesty and Armadatta litigated, but angry they became in this matter because the upper land had been given to Armadatta for administration.” (Corpus Zeilfelder Nr. 2012)

In (b) the finite verb HUL-*eš-šir* ‘they got angry’ occurs at the top of the sentence and not, as usual, at the end. As the verb is followed by the contrastive partikel *-ma* ‘but’ the German information structural unit “intonational topic” (Jacobs 1997) is comparable. It is to be supposed that Hittite, too, has such a special intonation, if deviations from the unmarked word order occur. As the postponed subordinated clause, a causal one, reveals, this clause has also a discourse functional slot. The accusative singular KUR UGU^{TIM} ‘the upper country’ is topicalized. It is the new information focus, while ^{mD}SIN.^DU ‘Armadatta’ is given and holds the retain-relation. Thus, the subordinated clause has again its own information structure.

2 The order of main and subordinated clauses

The next example concerns the order of two subordinated clauses within a complex sentence. The context of (4) refers to a sort of magic contest, where both parties try to lure (hitt. *huitt-* ‘draw, pull’ [sumerographic spelling SUD]) the gods on their side:

- (4) KUB LIV 1 (zu CTH 509: Prayer to the Weathergod), I 42–44
A-NA^{URU}*Li-ip-ra-aš-ša-ya-wa* *ku-wa-pi* EGIR-*pa* SUD-*ir*
 Liprassa:Loc.Sg.c.=and=Quote when back draw:3.Pl.Pret.Act.
ú-uk-ma-kán ZI-*za* *pa-ra-a* *ka-ni-iš-šu-un* DINGIR^{MES}
 I=but=Ptcl. soul:Abl.Sg.c. forward revere:1.Sg.Pret.Act. god:Acc.Pl.c.
ku-it *a-ri-ya-še-eš-na-az-za* EGIR-*pa* SUD-*ir*
 because oracle:Abl.Sg.n.=but back draw:3.Pl.Pret.Act.

“When they ‘drew’ them (i. e. the gods) back to Liprašša, because I fervently revered the gods, they ‘drew’ (them) back by an oracle.” (Corpus Zeilfelder Nr. 903)

In (4) the order is temporal clause – causal clause. The temporal clause is a *frame-setting*-adjunct. Those adverbials appear at the top of the sentence. Hence, the event chronology is observed. The temporal clause as well as the causal clause has topicalized elements and therefore an own information structure yet again. In the temporal clause, *A-NA*^{URU}*Li-ip-ra-aš-ša* ‘into the town Liprašša’ is the new information focus, and in the causal clause, a contrastive topic in connection with a contrastive particle and an emphasizing particle, *ú-uk-ma* ‘but I’, appear at the top, followed by a part of the verbal phrase: ZI-*za pa-ra-a*

ka-ni-iš-šu-un ‘revered fervently’, while the accusative object DINGIR^{MEŠ} ‘gods’ is situated in front of the conjunction *ku-it* ‘because’.

Another sentence order appears in (5), a relative clause appears in front of a modal clause. The subject of the relative clause is topicalized. Here, also cor-relatives come out:

- (5) CTH 293,1,48–50
- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| ^{TUG} <i>pár-na-aš</i> | LIBIR.RA- <i>ma-wa</i> | <i>ku-iš</i> |
| tapestry:Nom.Sg.c. | old:Nom.Sg.c.=but=Quote | which:Nom.Sg.c. |
| <i>nu-wa-mu</i> | <i>ma-ši-wa-an</i> | <i>ZI-an-za</i> |
| and=Quote=me | how much | wish:Nom.Sg.c. |
| <i>nu-wa-za</i> | <i>a-pí-ni-iš-ša-an</i> | <i>da-aš-ki-nu-un</i> |
| now=Quote=Ptcl | so much | take:1.Sg.Pret.Act.Iter. |
- “Old tapestry which (was left there) I took as many as I wished.”³

The discourse functional slot in the left periphery is occupied by a contrastive topic: ^{TUG}*pár-na-aš* LIBIR.RA-*ma-wa* ‘old tapestry’.

Also the reverse order is to be found, modal clause – relative clause:

- (6) CTH 443 (Ritual), II 13–16
- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>ki-e</i> | <i>ma-a-ah-ha-an</i> | <i>har-kán-zi</i> | |
| this:Nom.Pl.c | as | perish:3.Pl.Pres.Act. | |
| ^f <i>Zi-ša</i> | <i>BE-LAM</i> | <i>QA-DU</i> | <i>DAM-ŠU</i> |
| Zi:Nom.Sg.c.=and | lord:Acc.Sg.c. | with | wife:Instr.Sg.c.=his |
| <i>DUMU</i> ^{MEŠ} - <i>ŠU</i> | <i>ku-it</i> | <i>iš-ši-iš-ta</i> | |
| son:Instr.Pl.c.=his | which:Acc.Sg.n. | do:3.Sg.Pret.Act. | |
| <i>nu</i> | <i>ŠA</i> ^f <i>ZI</i> | <i>al-wa-an-za-tar-še-it</i> | <i>i-da-a-lu</i> |
| now | Zi:Gen.Sg.c | sorcery:Nom.Sg.n.=her | evil:Nom.Pl.n |
| <i>ud-da-a-ar-še-it</i> | <i>QA-TAM-MA</i> | <i>har-ak-du</i> | |
| word:Nom.Pl.n=her | in the same way | perish:3.Sg.Imper.Act. | |
- “Just as they perish, what Zi did to the lord and his wife and sons, now Zi’s sorcery (and) her evil words shall perish as well!” (Corpus Zeilfelder Nr. 850)

An aboutness topic, *ki* ‘this’, is added before the modal clause, in order to establish a *continue* relation. The relative clause as well offers evidence for topicalization. The subject *Zi*, the accusative object *BE-LAM* ‘lord’ and the sociative adverbial *QA-DU* *DAM-ŠU* *DUMU*^{MEŠ}-*ŠU* “with his wife and his sons” appear in front of the relative pronoun. The verb follows.

Also the combination of a conditional clause and a modal clause is recognized:

- (7) CTH 106: Ulmitešub-Treaty, Vs. 9’f.
- | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>nu-uš-ši-kán</i> | <i>ma-a-an</i> | <i>wa-aš-túl</i> | <i>a-aš-zi</i> |
| and=him=Ptcl | if | sin:Nom.Sg.c. | remain:3.Sg.Pres.Act. |

³ *mašiwán* / *apeniššant-* are considered as correlatives, here. However, the generalizing relative clause can also be determined as a conditional clause.

nu GIM-*an* A-NA LUGAL KUR ^{URU}*Hat-ti*
and as king:Dat.Sg.c. land:Gen.Sg.n. Hatti:Gen.Sg.c.

ZI-*an-za* *na-an* QA-TAM-MA *i-ya-ad-du*
soul:Nom.Sg.c. now=him the same way treat:3.Sg.Imper.Act.

“Now if a sin remains on him the king of Hatti shall treat him as he (i. e. the king) pleases.”
(Zeilfelder 2002: 534)

Even three subordinated clauses emerge at the left, in (8) a conditional clause, a temporal clause and a generalizing relative clause:

(8) CTH 291.I.a: Laws, tablet I, II 5–7

ták-ku DUMU.MUNUS LÚ-*ni* *ta-ra-an-za*
if girl:Nom.Sg.c. man:Dat.Sg.c. promise:Part.Nom.Sg.c.

ta-ma-i-ša-an *pít-te-nu-uz-zi*
other:Nom.Sg.c.=her:Acc.Sg.c. abduct:3.Sg.Pres.Act.

ku-uš-ša-an *pít-te-nu-uz-zi-ma*
as soon as abduct:3.Sg.Pres.Act.=but

nu *ha-an-te-iz-zi-ya-aš* LÚ-*aš* *ku-it* *ku-it*
now first:Nom.Sg.c. man:Nom.Sg.c. which:Acc.Sg.n. which:Acc.Sg.c.

pí-eš-ta *ta-aš-še* *šar-ni-ik-zi*
give:3.Sg.Pret.Act. then=he=him refund:3.Sg.Pres.Act.

“If a girl (is) promised to a man, (and if) another one abducts her, but as soon as he abducts (her), whatever the first man payed, he has to refund to him.” (Corpus Zeilfelder Nr. 488)

The accumulation of subordinated clauses at the left in (4) to (8) indicates that the place for these clauses is really sentence beginning.

3 Deviation from the logical sentence order

It is therefore not surprising that sometimes the logical connections are not taken into account. Here also information structure has to be respected. In (9) a causal clause appears at the left, it is followed by a temporal clause. In fact, the causal clause justifies the content of the temporal clause: “As soon as they delivered Pattiya to the deity because she stayed above in the palace”. But the chronological order is correct: Firstly, Pattiya stayed above in the palace, secondly, she was therefore delivered to the deity, thirdly, she was penalized with a penalty. The sentence order is a result of the position of the aboutness topic at the top of the sentence. While it appears as ponominal accusative in the temporal clause, in the causal clause it is the noun *Pattiya* in the nominative and thus subject, the preferred function of an aboutness topic.

(9) KUB XXII 7 (CTH 566: An Oracle Text on the Intrigues at the Hittite Court), Vs. 44f.

^f*Pát-ti-ya-aš-wa-kán* *ku-it* I-NA É.GAL^{LIM} *ša-ra-a*
ša-ra-a Pattiya:Nom.Sg.c.=Quote=Ptcl. because palace:Loc.Sg.n. up

iš-ta-ta-a-it *nu-wa-ra-an* A-NA DINGIR^{LIM} *ku-wa-pí*
linger:3.Sg.Pret.Act. and=Quote=her:Acc.Sg. god:Dat.Sg.c. when

pí-an-zi *nu-wa-aš-ši-ša-an* *sar-ni-ik-zi-el* 2
 give:3.Pl.Pres.Act. then=Quote=her:Dat.Sg.=Ptcl fine:Acc.Sg.n. 2
 MUNUS^{MEŠ} *an-da* *ti-ya-an-du* *wa-aš-ši-ya-an-du-ma-wa-ra-aš*
 woman:Acc.Pl.C. inside put:3.Pl.Imper.Act. dress:3.Pl.Imper.Act.=but=Ptcl=them
IŠ-TU *TÚG*^{HIA} *É.GAL*^{LIM}
 robe:Instr.Pl.c. palace:Gen.Sg.n.

“Because Pattiya lingered around up in the palace, as soon as they hand her over to the deity then they impose two women as a fine to her, but they shall be dressed with palace robes.” (Zeilfelder 2002: 528)

A similar case is the next sentence: The aboutness topic ^{LÚ}KÚR ‘enemy’ is topicalized out of a preceding causal clause and a temporal clause, in which this topic is a pronominal accusative in a retain relation, appears subsequently:

(10) Mšt. 75/74, lower edge 12–17

na-aš-ta ^{LÚ}KÚR QA-TAM-MA *ku-it* KUR-*e* *an-da*
 and=Ptcl enemy:Nom.Sg.c. so because land:Loc.Sg.n. inside
lam-mar *lam-mar* *i-at-ta-ri*
 time:Loc.Sg.n. time:Acc.Sg.n. march:3.Sg.Pres.Med.
ma-a-na-an *ha-an-da-a-ši*
 if=him notice:2.Sg.Pres.Act.
ku-wa-pi-ki *ma-a-na-an* *wa-al-ah-ši*
 somewhere if=him attack:2.Sg.Pres.Act.

“Because the enemy could march into the land at any moment, if you detect him, you could attack him somewhere.” (Corpus Zeilfelder Nr. 993)

However, there are obvious reasons for these illogical sentence orders. Primarily, in Hittite the rule holds that in subordinated clauses nesting is forbidden. The second point refers to information structure again; cf. (11):

(11) Bronze tablet Bo 86/299 11 74–77:

ú-uq-qa *ma-ah-ha-an* ^{mD}LAMMA-*an* *pa-ah-ha-aš-hi*
 I=but how Kurunta:Acc.Sg.c. protect:1.Sg.Pres.Act.
nu-uš-ši-kán *ma-a-an* *wa-ak-ši-ya-zi* *ku-it-ki*
 so=him if lack:3.Sg.Pres.Act. something:Nom.Sg.n.
na-an-kán *an-da* *šar-ni-en-ki-iš-ki-mi*
 and=him therein reimburse:1.Sg.Pres.Act.Iter.
ma-a-an-na A-NA NUMUN ^{mD}LAMMA *na-ak-ki-iš-zi*
 if=also descendant:Dat.Sg.n. Kurunta:Gen.Sg.c. distress:3.Sg.Pres.Act.
ku-it-ki *na-an-kán* DUMU-YA
 something:Nom.Sg.n. then=him son=my
 DUMU.DUMU- YA QA-TAM-MA *an-da* *šar-ni-in-ki-iš-ki-id-du*
 grandson=my likewise therein reimburse:3.Sg.Imper.Act.Iter.

“Just how I protect Kurunta and, if something is lost to him, I reimburse him therein each time, likewise, if for Kuruntas descendant something becomes troublesome, then my son, my grandson shall reimburse him therein each time.”

According to Zeilfelder (2002: 533), the pre-positioning of the modal clause comes from topicalization of the personal pronoun *uk*: Due to the ban on nesting, the pronoun could not have been moved out of the modal clause to the top of the sentence if the logical sequence conditional clause – main clause – modal clause would be given. Since the modal clause generally describes a comparison with the content of the main clause, it would have to be situated *da-aš-ki-nu-un* at the right of the correlating main clause. These findings point rather to a coordinating than a subordinating sentence processing in Hittite.

4 The Vedic evidence

Now we will pass to the Vedic evidence. As in Hittite topicalization out of a subordinated clause is documented. The subordinated clause appears at the beginning of a sentence:

(12) RV 4,16,8

apó *yád* *ádrim* *puruhūta*
waters:Acc.Pl.f. when rock:Acc.Sg.m. much-invoked:Voc.Sg.m.

dārdar *āvīr* *bhuvat*
cleft:2.Sg.Inj.Pres.Act. visible:Adv. be:3.Sg.Inj.Aor.Act.

saramā *pūrvyám* *te*
Saramā:Nom.Sg.f. first:Adv. you:Dat.Sg.

“When you, much-invoked, the waters (winning) the cleft rock, Saramā appeared to you first”⁴ (literally: “the waters (winning) when you, much-invoked, cleft the rock ...”)

The topicalized word *apó* ‘waters’ points to a Vedic myth: *Vṛtra* stole all the water in the world. Indra slew the huge serpent and brought water back to earth. Therefore, *apó* is ‘given inactive’. The subordinated clause is a *frame setting* adjunct.

Also topicalizations out of subordinated clauses, standing at the end of a sentence, emerge:

(13) RV 4.30.13

utá *śuṣṇasya* *dhṛṣṇuyā* *prá mṛkṣo abhí*
also Śuṣṇa:Gen.Sg.m. boldly:Adv. seize:2.Sg.Inj.Aor.

védanam / *púro* *yád* *asya*
property:Acc.Sg.n. fortresses:Acc.Pl.f. when he:Acc.Sg.m.

*sampīṇák*⁵
crush:2.Sg.Inj.Pres.

“You also boldly seize the property of Śuṣṇa, when you crush his fortresses” (literally: “... his fortresses when you crush”)

⁴ “Als/während du, Vielgerufener, die Wasser (gewinnend) den Fels spaltest, erscheint dir die Saramā als erstes.” (Hoffmann 1967: 211, 270: “erwähnende Beschreibung”).

⁵ “Auch des Śuṣṇa Besitz reiẖt du kühn an dich, als du seine Burgen zerschmetterst.” (Hoffmann 1967: 185; Hettrich 1988: 378).

The Vedic myth of Śuṣṇa is well known, too. Indra destroyed 99 citadels of this demon, which is why topicalized *pūro* again is ‘given inactive’.

We can state now that topicalizations out of subordinated clauses are in accordance with the Hittite data. But as for accumulation of two or more subordinated clauses behind each other, as can be discovered in Hittite, we do not find parallel sentences in Vedic. Only accumulations of concessive conditionals occur (Hettrich 1988: 375–385). An example for a so-called universal concessive conditional is (14):

(14) RV 8,10,6

<i>yád</i>	<i>antáríkṣe</i>	<i>pátathaḥ</i>	<i>purubhujā</i>
whether	firmament:Loc.Sg.n.	fly:2.Pl.Ind.Pres.	lords of riches:Voc.Dual.m.
<i>yád</i>	<i>vemé</i>	<i>ródasī</i>	<i>ánu</i>
whether	either= this:Acc.Dual.f.	both worlds:Acc.Dual.f.	along
<i>yád</i>	<i>vā</i>	<i>svadhābhir</i>	<i>adhitiṣṭhatho</i>
whether	or=Pfx.	by your own power:Instr.Pl.f.	ascend:2.Dual.Ind.Pres.
<i>rátham</i>	<i>áta</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>yātam</i>
car:Acc.Sg.m.	thence	Pfx.	come over here:2.Dual.Imp.Pres.
			<i>aśvinā</i>
			Aśvins:Voc.Dual.m.

“Lords of great riches, whether you fly through the firmament or speed through heaven and earth, or with your godlike natures stand upon your cars, come thence, O Aśvins, hitherward.”

So it has to be noted, firstly, that in those sentences the subordinated sequences are homogenous and not a combination of different clauses as in Hittite. Secondly, as Hettrich (1988: 380) detected, in Vedic complex sentences like (14) positioning of the conjunction at the very beginning of the sentence is virtually without exception.

Thus different once again from Hittite, no topicalization occurs in the case of more than one subordinated clause at the left.

5 Summary

Summarizing our findings, we firstly stated that Hittite has a discourse functional slot in the left periphery not only in main sentences but also in subordinated sentences. This slot can be filled by topic- or focus-elements. The filling of this slot is independent of the position of the subordinated clause. Subordinated sentences with a filled discourse functional slot may precede or follow the main clause. Secondly we examined complex sentences with more than one subordinated clause. We found two or three subordinated clauses behind each other to the left of the main clause. It is important to note that these subordinated sentences are different from one another. Possible combinations are a temporal clause and a causal clause, a relative clause and modal clause, a modal clause and a relative clause, a conditional clause and a modal clause and even a conditional clause, a temporal clause and a generalizing relative clause.

Sometimes the logical order of the sentences is not observed. The reason for this is that the speaker has to move the whole subordinated sentence to the left, if he wants to topicalize out of a subordinated sentence standing not at the sentence beginning. Nesting of adverbial clauses generally does not exist. This points to a more coordinating than a subordinating sentence processing. In order to find out whether these data are inherited from Indo-European we took Vedic for comparison. As for topicalization out of subordinated sentences this language corresponds to Hittite only in one point. Vedic allows for topicalization out of a subordinated sentence standing at the left or at the right of the main clause. Therefore, this phenomenon is Indo-European heritage. But the accumulation of different subordinated sentences at the left is without parallel in Vedic. Here, Hittite seems to be more modern, though the sequences of the subordinated clauses do not always follow the logical order. Information structure is here the crucial factor. In using statistical methods, our corpus comparison approach yields verifiable results.

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