1. This work aims at analyzing some empirical data\(^1\) from Italian Sign Language (LIS) related to its CP domain, in the light of Antisymmetry and the so-called Split-CP. It focuses on the possibility that in LIS too, Topicalization, conditional clauses, relative clauses, along with different kind of interrogative and subordinate clauses are explained with the hypothesis that IP be the complement of a CP placed at its left, following different proposals recently made for other languages both spoken and signed.

1.1. The position of CP

\[(1)\] Giorgio told me THAT he saw you yesterday / G.told me THAT yesterday he saw you  
\[\text{GIORGIO}_{\text{LFT}} \quad \text{LFT}_{\text{SAY}} _1 (\text{Ø}) \quad \text{YESTERDAY} (\text{YOU}_1) \quad \text{VENICE}_{\text{RGT}} \quad 2\text{GO}_{\text{RGT}}.\text{DONE}\]

\[(1')\] a. Giorgio told me (Ø) he saw you yesterday / G.told me (Ø) yesterday he saw you  
\[(1')\] b. Giorgio mi ha detto CHE ieri ti ha visto / G. mi ha detto CHE ti ha visto ieri

\(^1\) I thank Mirko Santoro and Monica Squizzato with all my hearth for being very patient informants and I also thank Guglielmo Cinque for his objections which gave me the opportunity to improve some aspects of the analysis.
The sentences (1), (1’-b) and (2) all display the same order: \([\text{IP}_{\text{MATR}} \ [\text{CP} \ [\text{IP}_{\text{SUB}}]]]\), with the difference that in Italian the CP is always realized overtly (CHE) whereas in LIS and English it is not overtly realized at least in some cases (Ø).

When some overt lexical material appears in LIS, the sign BECAUSE in (2), it is in the same position observed in spoken languages with left CP, as Italian or English.

The sign BECAUSE in (2), though being usually glossed as the NP “reason” (it. *motivo*), has a different function and a different position from that of an NP. For instance, the sign “reason” employed as an NP complement of the verb remember in (3a) appears in the canonic object position \(S O V\) typical of LIS declarative plain sentences and agrees in \(\text{PLACE}\) with the verbal index. On the contrary, the sign “reason” employed as causal marker BECAUSE (2)-(3) does not agree and comes before the verb consistently with the hypothesis that it resides in CP according to the order \([\text{IP}_{\text{MATR}} \ [\text{CP} \ [\text{IP}_{\text{SUB}}]]]\).

1.2. Split-CP: Topicalization

Compare a plain declarative sentence (5) with its counterpart (5’a) whose object is topicalized, marked by the facial expression “raised brows”, moved leftward and separated with an intonational break (,) from the remaining sentence.

(5) I never go home

\hspace{1cm} (I_1) HOME_{\text{LFT}} \ 1GO_{\text{LFT}} \ \text{NEVER}

(3) ...Because I remember it (it. *perché lo ricordo*)

...REASON \(I_1\) REMEMBER \(<\text{ind}>_{\text{X}}\) \hspace{1cm} (no NP-verb agreement)

(3’) a I remember the reason (it. *ricordo il perché*)

\hspace{1cm} I_1 \ \text{REASON}_{\text{CEN}} \ \text{REMEMBER} \ (<\text{ind}>_{\text{CEN}}) \hspace{1cm} (\text{the verbal index does agree in } \text{PLACE} \text{ with the NP})
In both cases (5’a) and (6’a), the moved (topicalized) phrase is marked by a special facial expression, whereas the remaining sentence retains the neuter expression (no special mark) usually employed in declarative sentences, (5)-(6).

In a Split-CP frame (Rizzi, 1997), these data about Topicalization suggest that the CP domain is in the left periphery, since topicated items (marked by the facial expression “raised brows”) usually appear in the Left Periphery of the sentence due to a raising movement into the specifier of TopP.

Topic precedes interrogative clauses:

(6’) b. To that student, have you ever signed?

y/n question

STUDENT THATLFT , 2SIGNLFT NEVER?

1.3. Split-CP: if clauses and interrogative clauses

If (you) go to Venice, (I) go to Rome

cond.expr.

(YOU2) VENICE\_LFT 2GO\_LFT (I1) ROME\_RGT 1GO\_RGT

The if clause must be at the left of the matrix clause and must be marked by a special “doubtful” facial expression (7) whereas the matrix clause retains a neuter expression.
Inverting the *if* clause with the matrix clause yields agrammaticality in LIS (7b) as it does in American Sign Language, an SVO language, and in Nederlandse Sign Language (NGT, Nederlandse GebarenTaal) which is similar to LIS in having an SOV word order and a postverbal negation.

(7') b. (I) go to Rome if (you) go to Venice

\[(I_1) \text{ROME}_{RGT} \text{GO}_{RGT} (YOU_2) \text{VENICE}_{LFT} \text{GO}_{LFT}\]

For ASL and NGT, Pfau (2006) proposes the hypothesis that *if* clauses reside in a layer of the CP domain, in the left periphery of the matrix clause: this projection is placed at the left of InterP, the interrogative phrase where the author suggests that all interrogative clauses raise.

(8) If it rains in the evening will the party be cancelled?

\[
\text{EVENING} \quad \text{RAIN} \quad \text{PARTY \ CANCELLED} \quad \text{(Pfau 2006, (26a))}
\]

Although further research is expected, LIS data seem consistent with this theory:

(9) If it rains in the evening, will (you) come to (me)?

\[
\text{EVENING} \quad \text{RAIN} \quad \text{COME}_1 ?
\]

It must be remembered that also polar questions *are* preceded by Topicalizations, thus following the layer hierarchy in the CP domain suggested by Pfau.

1.4. Correlative clauses

(10) A boy that called left

a. BOY\textsubscript{i} \textit{prorel} \textsubscript{i} CALL (HE\textsubscript{i}) LEAVE DONE

\[(\text{Cecchetto, Geraci and Zucchi, 2004})\]

b. BOY\textsubscript{i} CALL \textit{prorel} \textsubscript{i} (HE\textsubscript{i}) LEAVE DONE

\[(\text{Cecchetto, Geraci and Zucchi, 2004})\]
In relative clauses like (10), the sign glossed as prorel can appear close to the noun or at the end of the clause. Cecchetto, Geraci e Zucchi (2004) suggest that these clauses are correlative clauses similar to those observed in Hindi, and that LIS prorel is the counterpart of the Hindi relative jo found in (11) which moves rightwards into [Spec, CP]:

(11) the girl which is standing is tall
    jo larKii khaRii hai vo larKii lambii hai
    (lit.: which girl standing is, that girl tall is)

Cinque (2005a) proposes a unitary theory for the different relative clauses according to which the head-noun is merged twice both inside and outside the relative clause: the internal head is a quantified NP and the different kinds of relative clauses are derived through a sequence of leftward raisings in the frame of a strict Spec-Head-Compl structure.

In other words the difference between correlative clauses and external-headed relative clauses simply reflects a mere difference of raising. Indeed, in all relative clauses the internal head, i.e. the quantified NP, raises leftwards into [Spec, CP]: only at this point the derivation diverges.

The structure is presented below, omitting the description of the different AGREements visible in the verbal morphology of LIS.

\footnote{For an application of this model to Hindi correlative and external-headed relative clauses, to which LIS sentences are compared here, see Ramaglia (2005).}
In external-headed relative clauses, the external NP raises higher than CP (probably to check definiteness) takes scope over the internal head which is identified and cancelled, so that the clause is realized as an external-headed relative clause, for instance in English

*The boy which calls/called or in Italian* Il ragazzo che chiama / ha chiamato.

In correlative clauses, on the contrary, the internal head takes scope over the external one (since this does not raise) and identifies it: the external head is thus cancelled and the clause is realized as a relative clause with a quantified internal head, that is as a correlative clause.

(12) jo larkii khaRii hai vo larkii lambii hai  
    (jo larkii is the quantified internal NP)

    a. **BOY prorel CALL (HE) LEAVE DONE**  
        (**BOY prorel** is the quantified int. NP)

The postnominal position of the quantifier in LIS (12a) and (10a) is consistent with the raising of the NP due to the pied-piping movements proposed by Cinque (2000).
In LIS, indeed, the sign order related to the NP is N-A-Num-Dem / N-A-Num-Q (Bertone, 2007). This order matches that of Standard Arabian discussed by Cinque (2000): comparing different spoken languages, he suggests that the different orders can be derived from one and the same Spec-Head-Compl structure through an NP raising followed by various successive remnant movements (pied-piping) in the projections inside the DP.

Thus different sequences can be explained, as the following in LIS:

(13) BOY TALL
   a. BOY THAT
   b. BOY TALL THAT
   c. BOY TALL TEN THOSE      (not all LIS nouns show overt agr. in the plural)
   d. BOY ALL
   e. BOY WHICH-interrog.

In this frame, also the following sequence can be analyzed:

(13) f. BOY prorel

where the NP is quantified by the postnominal sign prorel found in the sentence (12a), reported here as (14):

(14) BOY PROREL CALL (HE) LEAVE DONE

In the sentence (10b), here reported as (15), the sign prorel appears after the verb, instead, and would require prorel to move rightwards as observed by Cecchetto, Geraci and Zucchi (2004).

(15) BOY₁ CALL prorel₁ (HEₑ) LEAVE DONE

If the sign prorel in (12a) is analyzed as a quantifier, the sequence BOY CALL looks like a whole constituent, which behaves similarly to the sequences Noun-Adjective according to the usual pied-pipe movements found in the DP of LIS: BOY TALL THAT, BOY TALL FIFTEEN, BOY TALL WHICH...
Indeed, according to the judgement of the informants a construction similar to (15) can be employed even with adjectives: just compare the plain declarative sentence (16) with its counterpart (16a) which displays the sign *prorel*, instead, and is still grammatical although having a slightly difference in the meaning.

(16) I (have) bought a/the red pen

\[ \text{PEN}_{\text{RGT}} \text{ RED I BUY} \]

a. I (have) bought the pen (that) red

\[ \text{PEN}_{\text{RGT}} \text{ RED prorel}_{\text{RGT}} \text{ I BUY} \]

This leads to think that two different structures are involved: (12a) is a correlative with a sequence noun-quantifier-verb whereas in (12b) and (14) the verb behaves as an adjective. More research is needed, still some support for this hypothesis is found in the fact that the morphology of LIS does not distinguish past participle verbs from adjectives so that PEN BREAK means both «the pen has/is broken» and «the broken pen» depending only on the context.

1.5. External-headed relative clauses

In LIS, besides correlative clauses, also external-headed restrictive relative clauses exist: the external head-noun is signed before the time adverbs and, although being often marked as a topic, does not bear the facial expression “half-closed eyes” which only marks its relative clause (Brunelli, 2006) and the adjectives derived from relative clauses (Bertone, 2007).

(17) Tomorrow I will read the book which (my) father bought yesterday

\[ \text{top.expr. raised brows} \]

\[ \text{restr.expr. “half-closed eyes”} \]

\[ \text{BOOK THAT}_{\text{LFT}} \text{ YESTERDAY FATHER}_{\text{RGT}} \text{ BUY TOMORROW I; READ}_{\text{LFT}} \]

(lit.: the book which (my) father bought yesterday, tomorrow I (will) read)

Still, topicalization is not always necessary, and in such cases only the restrictive facial expression appears which leaves outside the external head.
On some occasion also pronouns can be used: leaving apart, for the purpose of the present work, the indexes coarticulated with two hands, it is worth focusing on the position of the pronoun inside the relative clause.

(18) The man who I “signed” (spoke in LIS) to yesterday is engaged with my sister

\[ \text{MAN YESTERDAY} \quad \text{SIGN} \quad \text{THAT-THAT} \quad \text{SISTER-I ENGAGED TOGETHER} \]

\[ \quad <\text{ind.}>_{\text{MID}} \quad <\text{ind.}>_{\text{MID}} \]

In the frame of Cinque’s hypothesis (2005a) this kind of external-headed relative clause is simply derived by raising the external head leftwards and higher than the [Spec; CP] occupied by the internal head observed in correlative clauses at par. 1.5: thus, the external head takes scope over the internal one, which in turns is identifid and cancelled. An external-headed relative clause results, indeed.

It is important to note that the raising of the external head is related to the need to check the feature of definitness (see structure at paragraph 1.5): indeed, in (17) the NP “MAN” which is not accompanied by any over determiner, is still interpreted as definite: the man with whom...

The behaviour of the external-headed relative clauses, too, is thus consistent with a rigid Spec-Head-Compl structure.

The reduplicated pronoun THAT-THAT (=he-he), if overtly realized, appear at the end of the clause, differently from the unmarked SOV order of, for instance, I HE SIGN: it must be taken into account that the reduplicated pronoun displayed inside the relative clause is the same employed for focalized objects (par. 1.8)

However, despite being displaceed from its canonical position, its agreement in PLACE with the verb is retained (in this case in a central position between the speaker and the listener/seer).

1.6. *Wh*-interrogative sentences

As observed by many authors *wh*-particles, too, are sentence-final in LIS. *Wh*-interrogative clauses are marked by a special facial expression “knitted brows”: differently from other facial expressions (like Topic or Conditional ones), its extension varies as observed by Cecchetto, Geraci and Zucchi (2004).
(19) Which book did Paolo steal?

\[
\text{wh quest} \quad \text{PAOLO STEAL BOOK-WHICH} \quad (\text{Cecchetto, Geraci and Zucchi, 2004})
\]

(20) What did Gianni eat?

\[
\text{wh quest} \quad \text{GIANNI EAT WHAT} \quad (\text{Cecchetto, Geraci and Zucchi, 2004})
\]

If subordinate clauses are also present, the non-manual mark correctly spreads only on the interrogative clause:

(21) Who said that Paolo arrived later on?

\[
\text{wh quest} \quad \text{PAOLO ARRIVE AFTER SAY WHO} \quad (\text{Cecchetto, Geraci and Zucchi, 2004})
\]

This reflects the fact that the subordinate clause PAOLO ARRIVE AFTER is a different constituent from the matrix interrogative clause SAYWHO.

The sign order is inverted with respect to an unmarked declarative sentence as for instance:

(22) Marco says that Paolo arrived later on

\[
\text{MARCO SAY PAOLO ARRIVE AFTER}
\]

It must be noted that a sentence like (22a) is partially accepted only with a Topic expression:

\[
\text{top.expr.} \quad \text{?? PAOLO ARRIVE AFTER MARCO SAY}
\]

whereas (22b) is judged as ungrammatical regardless of the facial expression and the PLACE agreements between the verb and its arguments (not reported here):

(22) b. Marco says that Paolo arrived later on

\[
*\text{MARCO PAOLO ARRIVE AFTER SAY}
\]

On the other hand, for the interrogative clause (21), the hypothesis of a mere raising of the \textit{wh}- sign into [Spec; CP] is not sufficient to account for this multiple inversion (matrix
clause verb after the subordinate clause, *wh-* after everything else): it is not possible either with a right [Spec; CP] theory or with a left [Spec, CP] theory; a remnant movement must be posited, instead.

Yet, the remnant movement cannot be a Topic movement, since in LIS and other sign languages Topicalization is marked by a specific non-manual component. According to informants, Topicalization with a *wh-* question *is* possible but the constituent moved in TopP must be marked by its own facial expression accompanied by the typical intonational break.

(23) That Paolo arrived later on, who said (this) to you?

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{top.exp} & \quad \text{wh quest} \\
\text{PAOLO ARRIVE AFTER} & , \text{SAY WHO}
\end{align*}
\]

Still, such a construction, is not compulsory and (21) is well-formed even without any topicalization, therefore a different projection must be involved. Moreover, whatever this remnant movement be, it seems that the topicalization can cooccur with it:

(24) As for the LIS exam, who said that Paolo arrived later on?

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{top.exp} & \quad \text{wh quest} \\
\text{EXAM LIS} & , \text{PAOLO ARRIVE AFTER} \quad \text{SAY WHO}
\end{align*}
\]

Proposal: the subordinate clause undergoes a raising into GP, the GroundPhrase occupied by background information already given in the discourse, but not central for it, differently from the Topic which is dedicated to given information also central for the speech.

The remnant movement in GP was posited for independent reasons and even in spoken languages to account for the inversion in French (Kayne & Pollock 2001) and for the *wh*-final interrogative clauses of some dialects, especially the bellunese variety of veneto (Poletto&Pollock 2004) and has thus the advantage of explaining some phenomena of LIS without resorting to ad-hoc hypotheses.

The information stored in GP can be omitted because it is given and not necessary so that, with the proper context (21) might be reduced to:
(25) Who said it? (that Paolo arrived later on)

     (PAOLO ARRIVE AFTER) SAY WHO.

The GP projection is open also to some material of the matrix clause namely because the decision on what must be questioned and what is known enough to be omitted depends on the context; sentences like (20), reported here as (26) are possible in a context in which Gianni has already been introduced and can be omitted:

(26) What did he (Gianni) eat?

     (GIANNI) EAT WHAT

Likewise (26a) was judged consistent with a situation in which it has already been said that Gianni has eaten and one must just ask what has been eaten.

(26) a. What? (did Gianni eat)

     (GIANNI EAT) WHAT or even (GIANNI EAT DONE) WHAT

In an unmarked situation, on the contrary, (26b) can be uttered

(26) b. What did Gianni eat?

     GIANNI EAT WHAT

Yet, the inversion of verb and \textit{wh}- must be explained. The Indopakistani Sign Language displays a similar phenomenon. Aboh, Pfau and Zeshan (2005) noted that this language usually employs only a general interrogative sign which they glossed as G-WH and which means 	extit{what, when, where}....

They suggest that this sign be in fact a \textit{typing-clause morpheme} located in Inter\textsuperscript{0} and that the rest of the sentence, containing a phonetically null \textit{wh}-, raise to [Spec; InterP]: in this way one can account for the fact that under Spec-Head agreement the \textit{wh}- facial expression spreads over the remnant too and one can also explain why the interrogative sign is sentence-final.
Indeed, in LIS the sign glossed as WHAT holds also for *when*, *how much* and in some varieties even for *where*: only the labial non-manual component coarticulated with the sign can help to disambiguate the meaning. In other words, it would be a general interrogative like the G-WH studied by Aboh, Pfau & Zeshan. Therefore, the structure of (26b) is:

```
InterP
  Spec
    Inter°
      Inter'
        G-WH
          FinP
            Gianni <what> eat
```

The G-WH (usually realized as WHAT) would sit in Inter° while the rest of the sentence would undergo a remnant movement to [Spec; InterP] together with a silent-*wh*. Under Spec-Head agreement the non-manual component (facial expression *wh*) spreads over the whole sentence.

Adding to this movement an extraction of background material to GP, yields parts of sentence which are external to InterP and therefore not marked by any facial expression.
The structure of (26) would be:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{GP} \\
&\quad \text{Spec} \\
&\quad \quad \text{Gianni} \\
&\quad \quad \quad \text{InterP} \\
&\quad \quad \quad \quad \text{Spec} \\
&\quad \quad \quad \quad t_{\text{Gianni}} <\text{what}> \text{eat} \\
&\quad \quad \quad \quad \text{Inter°} \\
&\quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \text{G-WH} \\
&\quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \text{FinP} \\
&\quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \text{Gianni} <\text{what}> \text{eat}
\end{align*}
\]

Still, this theory does not apply perfectly to more “specific” interrogative *wh*-signs which in LIS have their own phonetical forms to express WHO, WHICH, HOW, HOW MANY, WHY.

In such cases IndSL allows for the use of compound signs such as FACE G-WH, TIME G-WH, NUMBER G-WH to build more specific interrogatives *who, when,…:* to account for this phenomenon it has been suggested that [Spec; InterP] hosts the sign FACE, TIME or NUMBER after this has raised thorough [Spec; FocP]. Yet, it is not clear how the whole sentence can be marked by the *wh*- facial expression since in this case that the remnant material can not enter a Spec-Head relation with the generic interrogative G-WH.

In particular, LIS sentences like (21) here repeated as (27) can not be explained because a specific *wh*-sign WHO appear instead of the general interrogative, the verb is “inverted” with respect to the interrogative sign and yet the facial expression spreads over the whole interrogative clause (SAY WHO?) as if the sequence VERB+WH were one constituent despite the inversion.
Who said that Paolo arrived later on?

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{dom. wh} \\
\text{PAOLO ARRIVE AFTER SAY WHO}
\end{array}
\]

However, it must be noted that \textit{wh}- signs are widely accepted to undergo some processes of focalization and for this reason Pfau suggests that \textit{FocP} plays a role in the compound interrogatives of IndSL.

In addition to this, Pfau (2006b) also compares IndSL data with informations about NGT and even spoken languages, observing that \textit{wh-} features and \textit{interrogative} features are realized independently from each other; he notes that in some languages \textit{wh}-questions can be built without any \textit{wh-sign} i.e. he proves that the \textit{wh-sign} (or the \textit{wh-word}) \textit{per se} is not a prerequisite to build \textit{wh-interrogative} clauses.

\textit{Proposal:} there is a specific projection, whose head encodes the \textit{wh}-features, which is higher than \textit{InterP} but lower than \textit{GP}. The \textit{wh-sign} raises into \textit{[Spec; FocP]} and is overtaken by a remnant movement towards \textit{[Spec; InterP]} which yields the sequence SAY WHO.

Subsequently \textit{InterP}, containing \textit{FocP}, raises to the projection reserved to \textit{wh-features}: here the whole interrogative sequence gets the \textit{wh-} facial expression and becomes a \textit{wh-interrogative} clause.

Indeed a projection \textit{WhP} related to \textit{wh} contexts was suggested by Hoekstra (1993) in order to explain the sequences of three complementizers of some Dutch varieties.

Also Poletto&Pollock (2004) and Poletto (2006) suggested the existence of one or more projections related to \textit{wh-features} in their analyses of some romance varieties with final-\textit{wh} similar to LIS final \textit{wh-signs}. The theory is based on the distinction among \textit{clitic-wh}, \textit{weak-wh} and \textit{strong-wh} (but see Bertone 2007 for an analysis of LIS strong, weak and clitics pronouns) and has the advantage of explaining final-\textit{wh} interrogative and double-\textit{wh} interrogative clauses within one and the same framework.

Still, it involves the raising of some lexical material into a Topic projection, which is not observed in LIS where Topics are usually marked by a specific non manual component.

However, the presence of a specific projection for \textit{WHs} is suggested in LIS by the fact that the facade expression marking \textit{wh}-questions is very different from that displayed on polar questions.
The structure of sentences like (25) and of wh questions in general can be posited to be as follows:

In this way [Spec; WhP] hosts the whole sequence SAY WHO which gets the wh-non-manual component (wh-facial express.) as a whole constituent.

If some background material is present, it is extracted to GP as suggested above “getting it out” of the spreading of the wh facial expression and placing it before the interrogative portion of the clause (the content of InterP raised to [Spec; WhP] together
with the FocP below). Thus, also marked sentences can be derived, like for instance (28) reported by Cecchetto, Zucchi and Geraci where the *wh* sign has not moved: the *wh- is just not focalized and as a consequence it has not raised into FocP so that the whole sentence, with unchanged order, has raised:

\[
\text{wh quest.}
\]

(28) WHO ARRIVE *(who arrived!?)

Whereas unmarked interrogative clauses display the inversion due to Focus

\[
\text{wh quest.}
\]

(28) a. ARRIVE WHO *(who arrived?)

**1.7. Focus**

In some declarative sentences the focalized object appears sentence-finally, differently from the SOV order which is typic of LIS: for instance the informants have judged the following sentence as grammatical:

(29) I spoke (in LIS) to him / to that

(I) \text{1SIGN}_{\text{SIN}} \text{THAT-THAT}_{\text{SIN}}

Where the unmarked order would be:

(29) a. I spoke (in LIS) to him

(I) \text{HE}_{\text{LFT}} \text{1SIGN}_{\text{LFT}}

One can guess that the focalized item raises into [Spec; FocP] and is outrun by a remnant movement, possibly in GP.

In external-headed restrictive clauses too, the pronoun (if any) appears at the end of the clause and it often displays the reduplicated form typical of focus.

Likewise, it is often assumed that in interrogative clauses *wh* words/signs must check also focus features somehow and in LIS *whs* appear sentence finally, indeed.
2. Conclusion

Different phenomena related to LIS left periphery have been analyzed (topicalization, conditionals, correlative clauses, position of the head in external-headed relative clauses, some kinds of *wh* questions) in the light of different theories proposed for both signed and spoken languages. Such phenomena have been found to be largely consistent with a Spec-Head-Compl structure of the CP domain in LIS, according to the theory of Antisymmetry (Kayne, 1994) and the so-called split-CP (Rizzi, 1997).

Apparenty there are few exceptions like some interrogative clauses (those containing *wh* signs) and some phenomena inside external-headed relative clauses (position of the pronoun, if any, inside the relative clause): these structures display some relations with focalization processes.

Thus, the sentence-final position of these items must be probably related to the way Focus works in LIS, rather than in a Compl-Head-Spec structure.

A slight change to Aboh, Pfau and Zeshan’s proposal (2005) and Pfau’s theory (2006b), allows for the hypothesis that the variations in the extension of *wh* facial expression be related to the extraction of background material into GP.

In addition to this, it is suggested that *wh*-questions involve the presence of a projection WhP associated with *wh*-features, consistently with the observation that many languages build *wh*-interrogative clauses regardless of the presence of overt *wh*-material and that many languages (both signed and spoken) realize *wh*-features independently from interrogative features and focus-features. This “captures” the intuition that *wh*-questions are derived by “superimposing” these features in different layers of the CP domain.

This is also consistent with the fact that at least in LIS, *wh*-questions are marked by a different facial expression from that observed on polar questions and with the fact that such non-manual component can not spread over the whole interrogative clause, although the sign order proves the presence of raising.

The assumptions made here to explain the behaviour of LIS have some “pendant” with the hypotheses made for other languages (both signed and spoken) proving that Italian Sign Language is a real language consistent with the general principles of Generative Grammar.

Yet some issues remain open:

- analyzing more deeply the consequences of the above proposal as for other languages
- defining the status of wh-signs in LIS (strong, weak o clitics see Bertone 2007)
- analyzing Topics with respect to the Poletto&Pollock’s (2004) and Poletto’s (2006) proposal
- start studying Focus phenomena in LIS.

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