Relative Clause Constructions in Turkish Sign Language (Türk İşaret Dili - TİD)

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Okan Kubus, IDGS, Universität Hamburg

INTRODUCTION
• Goal: description of Relative Clause (RC) Constructions in Turkish Sign Language (Türk İşaret Dili - TİD)
• Current literature suggests two types of RC-constructions in sign languages
• Use of specific non-manual elements: raised eyebrows and/or tensed upper lip

THREE RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. What type of RC-constructions does appear in TİD?
   - Are RCs subordinate Head Nouns?
     - Are Head Nouns phonemically expressed independently or incorporated into RC?
     - Do Head Nouns occur inside or outside of RC?
2. Do relative pronouns/relativizers appear in TİD?
3. Which linguistic elements lead to different relativization strategies?

METHODOLOGY
Participants & Data collection
• 14 participants: 7 F, 7 M; Mean Age = 33.43
• 4 native, 8 near-native and 2 non-native (fluent) signers
• Naturalistic data: monologues in various discourse modes

Annotation and Transcription
• development of TİD corpus (based on 4 film hours)
• monologues (in different discourse modes)
• transcribed using iLex (Hanke 2002),

Syntactic Classification of Relative Clauses (Chung & Wu 2006)

ANALYSIS and RESULT

RC Types
1. Stand-alone IHRcs
2. Stand-alone EHRCs
3. Subordinate Head-internal RCs

Relative Pronouns
• co-occur with raised eyebrows and optional mouthing /o/ (i.e. with open lip)
• different from pronominal-like pointing
• not obligatory, i.e. optional (44 % of RCs)

Occurrence of Prosodic Properties
If referent: animate
If referent: inanimate

Subject Constraints (in Terms of Animacy)

Relativization strategies

Participants with Relative Pronoun
• IHRC with Relative Pronoun

Participants without Relative Pronoun
• Free RC-constructions

Relative locations (Head Nouns are associated with loci)

CONCLUSION
1. Issues:
   - Use of referential loci
   - Discourse modes and their effects on relativization strategies
   - Discourse chunks (not limit to sentence level)


REFERENCES

DISCUSSION