THE EMERGENCE OF THE ADVERSATIVE CONJUNCTION *BUT* IN BRAZILIAN SIGN LANGUAGE: GRAMMATICALIZATION PATH FROM GESTURE TO GRAMMAR UNIT

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 ADVERSATIVE CLAUSES

- Adversative coordination is always a binary construction connected by conjunction BUT (and its counterparts in other languages) or by juxtaposition.

- Adversative clauses and conjunction BUT are described as carrying semantic values of semantic opposition and denial of expectation (Lakoff 1971); contrast (clash) of two conjuncts (Sweetser 1990); and semantic values related to rectification, contrast and negation (Anscombre & Ducrot 1977; Neves 1984, 2000; Jasinskaja 2012; Winterstein 2012)

1.2 GRAMMATICALIZATION OF CONJUNCTIONS

- Meillet (1915: 15-17) states that the disappearance or renewal of conjunctions is triggered by repetition, which leads to the weakening of their expressive value, and to the loss of "phonetic volume", and he refers to this process as 'grammaticalization'.

- The grammaticalization of conjunctions is discussed by Hopper & Traugott (2003: 184), who point out that, in spoken languages, conjunctions grammaticalized notably from sources like nouns, verbs and adverbs.

1.3 GRAMMATICALIZATION IN SIGN LANGUAGE

- Pfau & Steinbach (2011) found evidence for the grammaticalization of complementizers in German Sign Language (DGS). They argue for a Noun-to-Complementizer chain, where the noun REASON has developed into a complementizer introducing adverbial clauses.

- Wilcox (2004: 48) proposes that gestures can enter the grammatical system through grammaticalization in two different routes, where in the first route, "a gesture that is not a conventional unit in the relevant linguistic system […] becomes incorporated into a signed language as a lexical item acquiring over time a grammatical function".

2. GOAL

- The aim of this paper is to present a first description of the grammaticalization of the adversative conjunction BUT from a gesture in Brazilian Sign Language – Libras.

3. METHODOLOGY

- For this research, we utilize naturalistic data extracted from the Libras Corpus of Federal University of Santa Catarina (www.corpuslibras.ufsc.br).

- The results are based on the analysis of 53 sentences with BUT extracted from the total amount of 15 videos. All the data have been annotated in ELAN and analyzed with the help of a deaf student and a Libras interpreter.
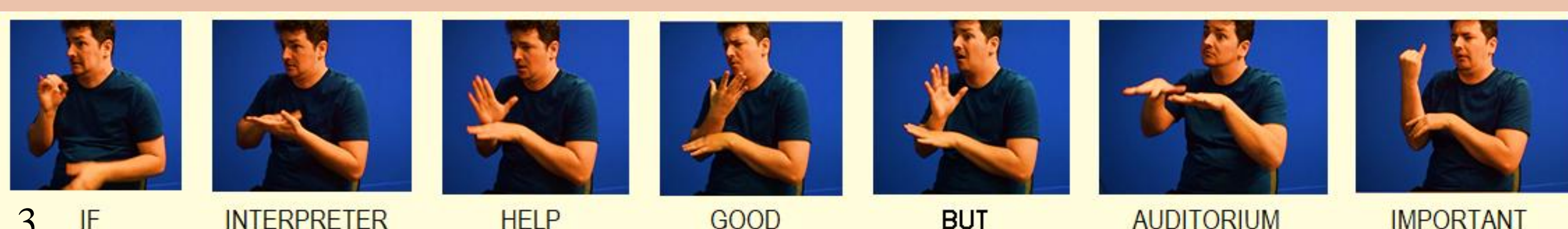
Variants of BUT in Brazilian Sign Language

Figure 1: BUT1   Figure 2: BUT1'   Figure 3: BUT2   Figure 4: BUT3

4. RESULTS

BUT 1/BUT 1'	21
BUT 2	20
JUXTAPOSITION	12
TOTAL	53

1. IX1 BARRIER HAVE PROBLEM DEFECT SEE 'WAIT' WORRY HOW RESOLVE

   'I see a problem and/so I'm worry about how to resolve this"

2. LIBRAS1 IX₁ NO-USE LIBRAS2 IX₁ NO-USE BUT1 IX₁ KNOW

   'I don't use these different signs for Libras **but** I know them.'

3. IF   INTERPRETER   HELP   GOOD   BUT   AUDITORIUM   IMPORTANT

'(In the school) if it has an interpreter it helps, it's good, but it's more important in conferences at auditorium'

Contrast between the use of emblem "WAIT/STOP" and BUT

	EMBLEM 'WAIT/STOP'	BUT
NMM	No NMM associated	Eyebrow raise; squinted eyes
MOUTHING	No mouthing associated	'mas'; 'm'
CONTEXT	Turn-taking; sequence of events	Connecting sentences with adversative meaning

5. DISCUSSION

- Adversative clauses convey meaning related in a broad sense to contrast (Lakoff 1971). We assume that contrast can only be present in comparison. So adversative clauses are better understood as conveying meaning of contrastive comparison.

- Kendon (2004: 248-249): open hand prone (OHP) gestures "all share the semantic theme of stopping and interrupting a line of action [physical, communicative action or mental activity] that is in progress".

- Kendon (2004: 251): vertical palm (VP) gestures are used to signal the moment of self-interruption, which allows someone to reorganize the formulation of one's proposal. So OHP gestures are also used as a discursive element associated with the discourse flow, as in (1).

- The semantic value of adversative clauses can be related to the idea of "barrier/obstacle": the information presented in the second conjunct is meant to deny (part of) the presupposition that can be assumed from the first conjunct. The second conjunct offers a barrier to the expected conclusion from the first conjunct. Therefore, the semantic match between emblem "STOP/WAIT" and the adversative meaning provides evidence for the grammaticalization of BUT in Libras, as in (2) and (3).

- The grammaticalization path suggested below represents the grammaticalization of BUT following Wilcox's (2004: 48) proposal for the first route of grammaticalization in SL from gesture to grammatical unit, without having a lexical intermediate step.

Grammaticalization path of BUT in Brazilian Sign Language

open hand prone gesture > emblem ('*stop*'/'*wait*') > adversative conjunction