The quest for syntactic dependency. Sentential complementation in Sign Language of the Netherlands
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Gloss conventions

a. Graphic representation

Signed language data is represented, where possible, by pictures of the signs.¹ If no pictures of signs are given in the text then these were not available from the sources (this holds mainly for examples from the literature). The following symbols were used:

- An arrow indicates the direction in which the hand(s) move(s).

- An arrow with stripes indicates that the movement is repeated. Note that the number of horizontal stripes does not refer to the number of repetitions.

- A sinus indicates that the hands move in an alternating fashion.

- A cross indicates that the hand(s) is(are) touching the body, approximately on the location marked by the cross.

- These arrows indicate that the thumb and the finger(s) touch each other.

- The hand in bold indicates the final hand configuration of the sign, if this differs from the hand configuration of the beginning (here, the sign starts with a fist and ends with an open hand).

- This arrow besides the head indicates that the head is nodding. This is often used to mark an affirmative sentence.

- This arrow above the head indicates that the head is shaking. This headshake is used in many signed languages to mark negation non-manually. The face often shows a negative expression.

¹ I thank Handicom Harderwijk (the Netherlands) for their kind permission to use their drawing program Sign PS to represent pictures of the signs.
b. Glosses
Under the drawings glosses are given. In the gloss conventions used, I mainly relied on the conventions common in the literature on signed languages.

GLOSS  Glosses are given in small capitals in English irrespective of the signed language.

GLOSS. If more than one gloss is necessary to reflect the signs meaning in English, a period ‘.’ is used between the glosses.

GLOSSleft The subscripts indicate the locations in space where a sign is made.

POINT This gloss is given to a point sign (a sign usually made by the index finger); it is often glossed as INDEX in the literature.

// A double slash indicates a sentence boundary.

, A comma indicates a major constituent boundary, e.g. to distinguish a topic from the matrix clause.

PU Palm(s) up is the gloss that refers to a sign in which the palm(s) of the hand(s) are turned upwards. This is not a lexical sign. It is often used at sentence boundaries.

+ The plus indicates that the preceding sign is repeated once.

[ ] Sometimes, parts of the glosses are put between square brackets to clarify that these signs are part of one clause.

Subscripts used in this study:

signer This location indicates that a sign is made at or towards the location of the signer.

opposite.of. This location indicates that a sign is made at or towards the location that is opposite of the signer.

right These directions indicate that a sign is made at or towards the right or the left of the signer.

left
back front These directions can modify the locations to the right and to the left of the signer. Back means closer to the signer, whereas front means further away from the signer.

neutral space This direction indicates that a sign is made in or towards neutral space, i.e. the space in front of the signer.

c. Non-manual markers
A line above the glosses indicates one of the following non-manual markers. The length of the line indicates the duration of the marker. Note that not all components of these non-manual markers could be reflected in the drawings.²

² It should be kept in mind that, except for the components of the negation marker, not all non-manual and manual components of the non-manual markers are present, or expressed with the same duration in every case. In Meir and Sandler (p.c.) made the same observation in Israeli Sign Language. Therefore, I would rather speak of prosodic or intonational markers than of grammatical markers (cf. among others, Coe 1992 for the opposite opinion). Cf. footnote 8 in chapter 1.

³ This prosody was thought to mark yes/no-questions only, which explains the y/n on top of the line (cf. the following footnote).

⁴ This prosody was thought to mark wh-questions only, which explains the wh on top of the line (see also Vermeerbergen 2002). However, many wh-questions can be found that occur with raised eyebrows and yes/no-questions that occur with furrowed brows. My informants often told me that raised eyebrows are used if the signer expects a short answer from the addressee, and furrowed eyebrows if the signer expects a longer answer like a discussion or an explanation. It is often the case that answers on yes/no-questions are

Non-manual markers

____ neg Negation marker; characteristics: headshake, often accompanied by a negative facial expression.

____ aff Affirmative marker; characteristics: repeated head nods.

____ t Topic, focus, or left-dislocation marker; characteristics: raised eyebrows, lowered and/or stretched chin, wide open eyes (manual characteristic: hold or extension, or a slow retraction of the last sign of the topic/focus/left-dislocation constituent).

____ y/n Polar question marker that accompanies questions on which a short answer is expected, characteristics: raised eyebrows, lowered chin.³

____ wh Content question marker that accompanies questions on which a long answer or discussion is expected; characteristics: wrinkled nose, lowered eyebrows, raised under and upper lip.⁴
Role shift can be compared to direct speech in spoken languages. In signed languages it can be marked by shifting the head and shoulders toward that location in space that is associated with the referent whose role is taken by the signer. In the graphics this is expressed by slightly shifted shoulders and facial expressions.

d. Translations
All translations are in English.

'translation’ A translation between single quotation marks is a free translation.

“translation” A translation between double quotation marks is a literal translation and has the purpose of illustrating the sentence structure.

(word) A word between brackets indicates that this word has no overt realisation in the signed language.

short (yes or no) and on wh-questions somewhat longer. This might be the reason for finding a large amount of raised eyebrows in the context of yes/no-questions and furrowed eyebrows in the context of wh-questions. Nonetheless, there are many wh-questions, in certain discourses of course, to which a short answer is expected and possible. For example, in a context where a rock band is going to play that night, one might come across the following wh-question/short answer pairs: What band is going to play tonight? — Kane. Where? — The pub. What time? — Ten thirty. The reverse is true for yes/no-questions. In a context where the asker is not sure if the addressee is going to the cinema that night, he might asks: Are you still going to see that film tonight? — Well, I think I rather go the pub, because Kane is playing. And I really like this band.