Dependency Structure
of Binary Conjunctions
(of the IF..., THEN... Type)

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The Problem:

What is the syntactic link (under a dependency description) between the components of a binary conjunction of the type

IF — THEN or BOTH — AND?

(1) If [he] stays, then I leave.

In (1), the dependencies are more or less obvious for all lexical units—except THEN.
The “Traditional” Solution:

IF → THEN
BOTH ← AND

However, this description contradicts the definition of the Surface-Syntactic Relation [SSyntRel].
Definition of SSyntRel consists of three groups of criteria:

A—presence of a SSyntRel between $L_1$ and $L_2$
B—direction of the SSyntRel between $L_1$ and $L_2$
C—type of the SSyntRel between $L_1$ and $L_2$

Here, only Criterion A is relevant.
**Criterion A**

[PRESENCE of a syntactic dependency between two lexemes in an utterance]:

prosodic unity of and linear arrangement in the configuration \( L_1 \rightarrow \text{synt} \rightarrow L_2 \)

In a given utterance, the lexemes \( L_1 \) and \( L_2 \) can have a direct Synt-dependency link (= they can form a configuration \( L_1 \rightarrow \text{synt} \rightarrow L_2 \)), if and only if both Conditions 1 and 2 are simultaneously satisfied:

**Condition 1**

(a) General case

\( L_1 \) and \( L_2 \) can form a phrase of \( L \), such as

\( N \rightarrow V, V \rightarrow N, \text{ADJ} \rightarrow N, \text{PREP} \rightarrow N, \text{ADV} \rightarrow \text{ADJ}, \text{etc.} \)

(b) Special case

\( L_1 \) and \( L_2 \) cannot form a phrase, but the lexemes \( L_1 \), \( L_2 \) and configurations of lexemes of the set \( \{L_i\} \) appearing in the same utterance can, such that the following are also phrases of \( L \):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(i) } & L_1 \rightarrow \{L_{q,1}\} \quad L_2 \rightarrow \{L_{q,2}\}; \\
\text{(ii) } & L_1 \rightarrow \{L_{q,1}\} \quad \text{and} \quad L_2 \rightarrow \{L_{q,2}\}.
\end{align*}
\]

**Condition 2**

The linear position of one of the lexemes \( L_1 \) and \( L_2 \) in the utterance under consideration must be specified with respect to the other.

Example: \( \text{one} \rightarrow \text{of} \rightarrow \text{them} \).

Condition 1b: \( \text{“*one} \rightarrow \text{of}” \) is not a phrase, but \( \text{“of them”} \) and \( \text{“one of them”} \) are, with the heads \( \text{“one”} \) and \( \text{“of”} \), respectively.

Condition 2: \( \text{“of (them)”} \) is linearly positioned with respect to \( \text{“one”} \).
—The expression *IF THEN is not a phrase of English.

—IF$_{l_2}$ forms a phrase with the subordinate clause Y$_{(l_1-2)}$ and THEN$_{l_1}$, with the superordinate clause X$_{(l_1-1)}$.

—IF$_{l_2}$ subordinates the Main Verb of Y$_{(l_1-2)}$ and is itself subordinated to the Main Verb$_1$ of X$_{(l_1-1)}$:
  
  \[ \text{MV}(X_{(l_1-1)}) \rightarrow \text{IF}_{l_2} \rightarrow \text{MV}(Y_{(l_1-2)}) \]

thus corresponding to Case (b) of Condition 1 of Criterion A.

—THEN is subordinated to the Main Verb of X$_{(l_1-1)}$.

As a result, we have the following SSynt-structure for a subordinating binary conjunction:

\[
\text{IF} \rightarrow Y, \text{THEN} \rightarrow X.
\]

V1-MAIN$\rightarrow$IF$\rightarrow$V1-SUBORD. It underlies the dependency V1-MAIN$\rightarrow$IF (I’ll leave$\rightarrow$IF...), which by itself does not form a phrase. This dependency satisfies Case (b) and the linear position of IF is controlled by V1 (IF follows or precedes V1).
# Binary conjunctions of English

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<th>Coordinating</th>
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<td>'NO SOONER…, THAN2…’</td>
<td>'EITHER… OR…’</td>
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<td>'THE3…, THE2…’</td>
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1. According to meaning: subordinating vs. coordinating
2. According to form: (a) the number of components—single, etc.; (b) the structure of components: simple (all components are monolexemic) vs. complex (at least one component is plurilexemic).
3. Example for [10]:
   Čto–to u nego s mašinoj: to li motor gloxnet, to li šina spustilas’, ‘something to him [happened] with car: weather engine stalls or tire became flat
   to li eščë čto
   or else something
'NO SOONER – THAN$^2$:

deep binary subordinating conjunction, consisting of the surface subordinating conjunction 'NO SOONER' and the particle THAN$^2$ (THAN$^1$ is a comparative conjunction).

\[ \text{No}_\text{sooner} \rightarrow \text{had I arrived than the kids rushed towards me.} \]
• Five of the English binary conjunctions—’NO SOONER Y, THAN\textsuperscript{2} X’; ’THE\textsuperscript{3} Y, THE\textsuperscript{2} X’; ’BOTH X AND Y’; ’EITHER X OR Y’ and ’NEITHER X NOR Y’—are idioms: they are non-compositional.

• The conjunctions NOT SO MUCH X, AS Y and NOT ONLY X, BUT ALSO Y are formulæmes (a subtype of cliché; Mel’čuk 2015a)—compositional, but completely fixed expressions.

• And the binary conjunction IF Y, THEN X is a collocation, although of an unusual type: there is no direct syntactic link between the base and the collocate.

1. IF THEN means the same as IF; THEN is empty; the whole thing is compositional.
2. EITHER OR: OR is inclusive disjunction; EITHER OR is exclusive (strict) disjunction; EITHER OR is non-compositional.
3. BOTH AND: AND is conjunction; BOTH AND is conjunction out of two: how could we obtain this by a rule? ; BOTH AND is non-compositional.
Discontinuous Idioms: A New Type

Binary conjunctions opened the door on idioms that form phrases only with their actantial variables—there is no direct syntactic link between two of their components.

Examples

\[\text{NOTHING} \rightarrow \text{IF} \quad \text{X} \quad \not\rightarrow \quad \text{'extremely X'}\]

Russian

\[\text{PRI} \quad \text{VSEM} \leftarrow \text{X-e 'despite X', lit. 'with all X'}\]

1. Pri ego uma on s etim legko spravistsja
   With his intelligence he with this easily will manage
   ‘Because of his intelligence, he will easily manage this’.

1. Pri vsem ego uma on s etim ne spravistsja
   With all his intelligence he with this not will manage
   In spite of his intelligence, he will not manage this’.
1. JM: The presentation ends abruptly. Don’t you want to add a slide with some sort of conclusion/recap? Or just a nice word for your audience?

2. IM: Then there will be 13 (THIRTEEN!) slides. If you wish, you could add a slide on your behalf ... Or you could say that that si typical Melēuk!