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Foreground and Background in Mbyá Guaraní Clause Chaining

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ABSTRACT

Clause chaining is here characterized by the possibility of long sequences of foreground
clauses with operator dependence. Foreground clauses—those which assert the
"mainline" information of their discourse genre—have "quasi-coordinate" properties. In
the Mbyá dialect of Guaraní, background clauses which occur as part of chains are not
quasi-coordinate, nor do they have operator dependence or occur in long sequences. They
have one of two syntactic functions: peripheral subordination (a type of embedding) or
ad-clausal modification. Clauses within chains can be linked by switch reference or by
adverbial conjunctions such as 'purpose', 'sequence' or 'simultaneity'; those with
adverbial conjunctions always have one of the background functions, but those with
switch reference can have foreground function or either background function. In their
sentential and discourse contexts, the functions of chained clauses manifest distinct
properties in such areas as external distribution, assertion, and scope effects.

1 Introduction

Robert Van Valin (2005:183f) begins his discussion of clause combining by
citing examples from Karl Franklin (1971) of switch reference in clause chains in
Kewa, a language of Papua New Guinea. A clause with switch reference (SR)
contains a marker indicating whether its subject is the same as, or different
from, that of an adjacent (nuclear) clause. *Clause chaining is here characterized by
the possibility of long sequences of foreground clauses with operator dependence.* Such
foreground clauses—sequential event clauses in narrative or, more generally,
clauses which assert the "mainline" information of the given discourse genre—
have many of the properties of coordination. But clause chains and other
sentence constructions commonly also have background clauses. These can be of
two primary syntactic functions: (i) *embedded* within a matrix clause or (ii) *ad-*

clausal, modifying the nuclear clause without being embedded in it (Bickel 1993:24-36, 1998:394). Perhaps all chaining constructions permit background clauses with non-coordinate properties—John Roberts (1988:58) discusses two kinds in the Papuan language Amele. In Mbyá Guaraní, no background clauses have operator dependence, nor can they occur in long sequences. Further, all types of background clauses have non-coordinate properties, although in other respects they may resemble foreground clauses.

In this paper I show some ways these claims can be fleshed out and conclude that in Mbyá Guaraní, the foreground-background distinction is a key dimension of clause chaining.[1]

2 Preliminaries

Mbyá Guaraní is agglutinative, and verbs are inflected for imperative and optative moods, but not for tense, except for an enclitic future marker *va'erã ~ 'rã*.[2] Zero anaphora is often used for subjects and objects, and there is a high degree of word-order flexibility. Basic constituent order is SVO in independent clauses and SOV in all types of dependent clauses. There are other typological characteristics associated with OV order, such as postpositions and markers of clause linkage which are final in dependent clauses.

2.1 Adverbial conjunctions and switch reference marking

The language has around twelve adverbial conjunctions with lexical content and enclitic phonology. These are more or less evenly divided between causal conjunctions such as *aguã* 'purpose' and temporal ones such as *rire* 'sequence' and *jave* 'simultaneity' (Dooley 2006, §21.1.2). Adverbial clauses—those occurring with these conjunctions—account for approximately ten percent of all clauses in the language. Dependent clauses are typically SOV and adverbial conjunctions usually come immediately after the verb as in (1):[3]

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[1]The Mbyá dialect of Guaraní belongs to the Tupí-Guaraní family of the Tupí stock (Rodrigues 1984/85). It is spoken by eight thousand or more people in southern Brazil, as well as a comparable number in eastern Paraguay and a smaller number in northern Argentina. The present study is based on fieldwork that I have carried out since 1975 at or near the Posto Indígena Rio das Cobras, Paraná, Brazil, under the auspices of the Associação Internacional de Lingüística, a Brazilian affiliate of SIL Intl. For a grammatical introduction written in Portuguese, see Dooley (2006). This paper has benefitted from comments by reviewers and various SIL colleagues.

[2]The present paper uses a practical orthography that was developed by the Editora Nhombo'ea Guarani. Mbyá has six vowels: a, ɛ (written e), i, o, u, ɨ (written y), all of which have nasal counterparts. It has fourteen consonants: p, t, k, kʷ (written ku), ʔ (written '), ɲ (written nh before nasal vowels or j before oral vowels), m (written mb before oral vowels), n (written nd before oral vowels), ŋ (written ng), ŋʷ (written ngu or gu), ɾ (written r), tʃ (written x), h, and β (written v). Nasalization occurs regressively throughout a word whose final syllable is nasal, and is also regressive from any of the consonants m, n, and ŋ. Syllables are C or CV, except for contractions, such as *'rã* 'future', which begin with a glottal stop.

[3]Glossing abbreviations follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules with the following additions: ANA 'anaphor', BDY 'constituent boundary', COLL 'collective', concess 'concessive', D1 'deictic 1 (close to speaker)', DIM 'diminutive', DS 'different subject', HSY 'hearsay', INTERR 'interrogative', NPOSSD 'nonpossessed', NSPEC 'nonspecific', OPT 'optative', R 'stem-initial morpheme', RESP 'response', SEQ 'sequence', SIM 'simultaneity', SS 'same subject', v2 'supplementary verb'.

(1) [*ava reve ij-ayvu **rire***] *o-o*
      man with 3-speak SEQ   3-go
      'After he spoke with the man, he left.'

In (1), in the adverbial clause *ava reve ijayvu rire* 'after he spoke with the man', the conjunction *rire* 'sequence' occurs immediately after the verb *ijayvu* 'he spoke'.

Of the dialects of Guaraní, Mbyá is the only one for which long SR chains have been reported (Dooley 1982, 1989, 1999). Clauses with the SR markers *vy* 'same subject (SS)' and *ramo ~ rã* 'different subject (DS)' are roughly twice as common as clauses with adverbial conjunctions as mentioned above.[4] The syntax of SR clauses is the same as that those with adverbial conjunctions, as can be seen by comparing (1) with (2) and (3):

(2) [*ava reve ij-ayvu **vy***] *o-o*
      man with 3-speak SS   3-go
      'As/after/because he$_i$ spoke with the man, he$_i$ left.' or 'He$_i$ spoke with the man, and then he$_i$ left.'

(3) [*ava reve ij-ayvu **ramo***] *o-o*
      man with 3-speak DS   3-go
      'As/after/because he$_i$ spoke with the man, he$_j$ left.' or 'He$_i$ spoke with the man, and then he$_j$ left.' ('the man' would likely be not necessarily coreferent with 'he$_j$')

In (2) and (3), the SR markers *vy* 'SS' and *ramo* 'DS' occur in the same position as the adverbial conjunction *rire* 'sequence' in (1). For each example, the free translation indicates two kinds of interpretations for the dependent initial clause: the first interpretation reflects an ad-clausal interpretation, the second one a "quasi-coordinate" interpretation (see §2.3). In example (1), however, only the ad-clausal interpretation is possible. Clauses with adverbial conjunctions only occur as background, but SR clauses may be either background or foreground.

In adverbial clauses, it is not uncommon for non-verbal constituents to occur between the verb and the conjunction as in (4):

(4) [*ij-ayvu **ava reve** rire*] *o-o*
      3-speak **man with** SEQ   3-go
      'After he spoke with the man, he left.'

Example (4) differs from (1) only in the position of *ava reve* 'with the man' relative to the verb. Because of this possibility, adverbial conjunctions are analyzed as clausal enclitics rather than verbal suffixes. The same is true for SR markers:

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[4]"The signalling of subject reference can be considered to be the unmarked use of SR in Mbyá, occurring in the vast majority (over ninety-eight percent) of cases; the signalling of other, semantico-pragmatic information is a marked use" which will not be discussed here (Dooley 1989:94).

(5) [*ij-ayvu* **ava** **reve** *vy*] *o-o*
      3-speak **man** **with** SS   3-go
     'As/after/because he$_i$ spoke with the man, he$_i$ left.' or 'He$_i$ spoke with the man, and then he$_i$ left.'

(6) [*ij-ayvu* **ava** **reve** *ramo*] *o-o*
      3-speak **man** **with** DS   3-go
     'As/after/because he$_i$ spoke with the man, he$_j$ left.' or 'He$_i$ spoke with the man, and then he$_j$ left.'

As (4), in (5) and (6) *ava reve* 'with the man' occurs after verb. In this also, SR clauses show the same internal syntax as clauses with adverbial conjunctions.[5]

   As for (2) and (3), clauses (5) and (6) are formally ambiguous between ad-clausal modification and "quasi-coordination." In §2.3 we examine these syntactic functions in more detail.

2.2 Postnuclear and intercalated clauses

Around five percent of adverbial and SR clauses in Mbyá Guaraní are postnuclear, as in (7) and (8):

(7) *o-jevy-pa*   *jevy* [**ava** **vai** **o-juka** **ma**   *rire*]
     3-return-completely again **man** **angry** **3-kill** **already** SEQ
     'They all returned after they had killed the wild man.'

(8) *amboae-kue o-guerovia ete*   *o-kua-py,* [*ij-apu va'e e'ỹ*   *ramo*]
     other-PL   3-believe really 3-be.PL-V2 **3-lie**   REL NEG DS
     'All the others really believed him, since he was not a liar.'

In both (7) and (8) the dependent clause occurs after its nuclear clause, which here is independent.

   The nuclear clause for a postnuclear clause may itself be postnuclear as in (9):

(9) ... **(a)** *o-o*   **(b)** *tape* *py* *o-arõ*   *vy* **(c)** *tape* *py* *kunha*   *va'e o-guero-ayvu aguã*
              3-go   **path** **in** **3-wait** SS   path in woman   REL 3-COM-speak PURP
   '...they went to wait in the path in order to talk with the woman in the path.'

In (9), clause (c) is postnuclear with respect to (b), which in turn is postnuclear with respect to (a). With successive postnuclear clauses as in (9), two levels of dependence seem to be the limit.

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[5]Like adverbs, postpositional phrases, and adverbial clauses, SR clauses can be nominalized by =*gua*: *apy*=*gua* (here=NMLZ) 'someone who lives here', *tekoa py*=*gua* (village in=NMLZ) 'someone who lives in the village', *xe-kyrĩ jave*=*gua* (1SG-small SIM=NMLZ) 'something that happened when I was small', *kyrĩ-'i va'e nha-mo-akỹ rã*=*gua* (small-DIMIN REL 1PL.INCL-CAUS-wet DS=NMLZ) 'what happens when we baptize a child' (Dooley 2006, §19.7).

Postnuclear clauses can also be dependent on a prenuclear clause, but in this case only one postnuclear clause has been found to occur:

(10) **(a)** [*kyrĩ-ve*   *va'e* *jevy*   *o-o*   **(b)** [***poryko*** ***r-arõ*** ***vy***]   *ramo*]
          small-more REL   again   3-go   **pig**   **R-wait** **SS**   DS

      (c) *t-yke'y*   *kuery*   *o-jojai*
          3-older.brother   COLL   3-laugh.at
      'Because/when the younger one went again to guard the pigs, his older brothers laughed at him.'

Example (10) involves center embedding, in which one clause is medial within another: the postnuclear clause (b) 'to guard the pigs' is center-embedded in the prenuclear clause (a) 'because the younger one went again', resulting in the SS and DS markers being juxtaposed. According to Susumu Kuno (1974:118), center embedding and conjunction juxtaposition cause perceptual difficulties. This can be seen in English: it is acceptable to say [***Since*** [***when*** *I was leaving*] *she came in,*] *I decided to stay*, but not ??[***Since*** [***when*** [***as*** *it turned 8 o'clock*] *I was leaving*] *she came in,*] *I decided to stay*. That is, one level of center embedding and conjunction juxtaposition is acceptable in English (and Guarani), but not two. In Guaraní there is a further restriction: juxtaposed conjunctions must be different, whether they are SR markers, adverbial conjunctions or a combination of the two; see also example (20) below.
    Often a sentence has a mixture of SR clauses and adverbial clauses as in (11):

(11) **(a)** *uru*   *yvy'ã*   *re*   *merami*   *o-japukai*   *rã*   *je*
          chicken   ridge   ABL   apparently   3-call.out   DS   HSY

      (b) *ha'e* *katy*   *o-o*   **rire** *je*   **(c)** *ha'e* *py*   *o-vaẽ*   *rã*   *je*
          ANA   toward   3-go   **SEQ**   HSY   ANA   in   3-arrive   DS   HSY

      (d) *j-i-po-i*   *mba'e-ve.*
          NEG-3-be-NEG   thing-more
      'It's said that (a) there seemed to be a rooster crowing on the ridge (b) and (the man) went, (c) but when he arrived there, (d) there was nothing.'

Mbyá Guaraní has clause coordination with coordinating conjunctions and with simple juxtaposition as in (12):

(12) *ja-pytu'u*   *rive,*   **(ha'e)**   *nda-ja-karu-i*
       1PL.INCL-pause   without.logic   **and**   NEG-1PL.INCL-eat-NEG
       'We only paused, (and) we didn't eat.'

SR can occur with one of the conjuncts in coordination, and SR clauses themselves can be coordinated. Since these details are not germane to this paper, they are not further discussed here (Dooley 2006, §21.1.1).

2.3 "Quasi-coordination" and syntactic functions of dependent clauses

Martin Haspelmath (1995:12-17) discusses five criteria which differentiate coordination from subordination (table 1):

Table 1: Five properties of "quasi-coordination"

criteria	coordination	subordination
clause-internal word order (intercalation)	coordinate clauses must be continuous and nonoverlapping: *John, **and stumbled**, fell	a non-coordinate clause can be intercalated within the nuclear clause: John, **having stumbled**, fell
temporal iconicity	the clauses occur in the same order as events they narrate: *João fell and stumbled	the clauses can occur in a different order than the events they narrate: João fell after he stumbled
cataphoric reference	the first clause cannot have a pronoun whose "antecedent" is in the second clause: *he_i stumbled and $John_i$ fell	the first clause can have a pronoun whose "antecedent" is in the second clause: After he_i stumbled, $John_i$ fell
focusability	a coordinate clause cannot occur as argument focus: ***It was John stumbled** that he fell	an embedded non-coordinate clause can occur as argument focus: **It was after John stumbled** that he fell
extraction	an interrogative expression cannot be extracted from the second clause to occur in sentence-initial position: ***What** did John stumble and do?	an interrogative expression can be extracted from the second (nuclear) clause to occur in sentence-initial position: **What**, after John stumbled, did he do?

Dependent clauses which have properties of coordination in Table 1 are called *quasi-coordinate* by Mira Bergelson and Andrej Kibrik (1995:391-394). Clauses which lack these properties, however, are not necessarily subordinate in the sense of being embedded in a clause or a phrase (Van Valin 2005:183). Balthasar Bickel (1993, 1998) considers two types of "non-coordination": peripheral subordination (a type of embedding within a clause) and ad-clausal (or adsentential) modification. Following Van Valin's (2005) "layered structure of the clause," as Bickel does, we can illustrate these two types as follows:

(13) (a) **Peripheral subordination:** [Clause [Core *I will arrive*] **before you do**].
     (b) **Ad-clausal modification:**   *Before you arrive,* [Clause *I will*].

In (13) (a), the dependent clause *before you do* is embedded within the matrix clause as a modifier of the clause core *I will arrive* (the core consists of the verbal expression plus arguments (Van Valin 2005:4). In (13) (b), however, *before you arrive* is outside the clause and modifies the clause as a whole. Table 2 presents three of the syntactic functions which dependent clauses may have:[6]

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[6]I prefer the term "ad-clausal (or adsentential) modification" to Bickel's (1993:25) term "adsentential subordination", since subordination commonly means embedding in a matrix clause (Van Valin 2005:183). I also prefer Bergelson and Kibrik's term "quasi-coordination" to Bickel's "sequentialization" or Roberts' (1988) "coordination."

Table 2: Three of the syntactic functions of dependent clauses

Syntactic functions→ Properties ↓	peripheral subordination (a type of embedding):	ad-clausal/adsentential modification:	coordination or "quasi-coordination":
constituency	constituent of matrix clause	constituent of the sentence	constituent of the sentence
distribution	adjoined to VP or "core"	default order is prenuclear	maintains order of events
modification	closely modifies the VP or the "core" of matrix clause	modifies the nuclear clause as a whole	does not modify
intonation	included in the intonation contour of matrix clause	can have its own contour or be included in the contour of the nuclear clause	can have its own contour or be included in the contour of the nuclear clause
assertion	included in the assertion of matrix clause	pragmatically presupposed, orients (gives situational framework for) nuclear clause (and often more)	makes a free assertion (= not included in another clausal assertion)
scope effects	attracts negation and illocutionary force of main verb	outside of negation and illocutionary force of nuclear clause	outside of negation and illocutionary force of other clause
argument focus	can occur as argument focus	cannot occur as argument focus	cannot occur as argument focus

A clause may be ambiguous as to syntactic function if we only consider its internal morphosyntax (Croft 2001:323), but in its syntactic and discourse context, taking intonation also into account, the ambiguity is usually resolved.
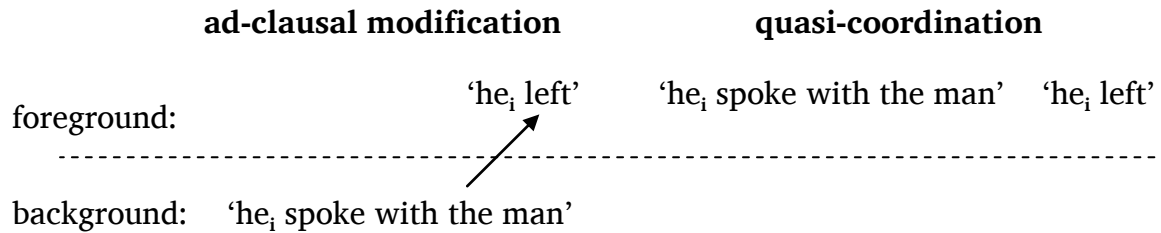
2.4 Foreground and background

In discourse, *foreground* clauses assert "mainline" information of whatever type characterizes the given discourse genre. In narrative specifically, foreground clauses assert sequential events that further the story. "Strictly speaking, only foregrounded clauses are actually narrated. Backgrounded clauses do not themselves narrate, but instead they support, amplify, or comment on the narration" (Hopper 1979:215). In non-narrative genres, foreground might be realized by such clause types as commands or descriptive statements (Hwang, to appear). Foreground in narrative is not restricted to "key" events; in (11) above, for example, all of the events are foreground, since they further the story. The examples in this paper will be largely limited to narrative.

Background clauses provide cohesion, as "linguistic means to signal coherence" (Dooley and Levinsohn 2001:27). They are not required by our characterization of chaining, but commonly occur as adjuncts in it. Whereas all foreground clauses in chaining are coordinate or quasi-coordinate, background clauses can, in principle, realize peripheral subordination, ad-clausal modification, or quasi-coordination. Swahili has a background type which may admit a quasi-coordinate interpretation (Hopper 1979: 213–215). Of Amele,

Roberts (1988:58f) discusses two types of SR background clause with non-quasi-coordinate properties. In Mbyá Guarani, it appears that no background clause type is quasi-coordinate.

In example (2), the ambiguity which is reflected in the free translation was described in terms of the difference between ad-clausal modification or quasi-coordination: '**as/after/because he$_i$ spoke with the man** he$_i$ left' reflects an interpretation of ad-clausal modification, whereas '**he$_i$ spoke with the man** and then he$_i$ left' reflects quasi-coordination. But the two interpretations also differ in regard to their **foreground-background structure**:

	ad-clausal modification	**quasi-coordination**
foreground:	'he$_i$ left'	'he$_i$ spoke with the man' 'he$_i$ left'
background:	'he$_i$ spoke with the man'	

In the first interpretation background modifies foreground, whereas the second interpretation has two foreground clauses with no modification. In information structure, ad-clausal background is *orientational*, providing "the situational and referential framework for the subsequent piece of discourse", which may be anything from a single clause to an entire discourse unit (Bickel 1993:28). In orientation, the dependent proposition is pragmatically presupposed, i.e., easily taken for granted (Lambrecht 1994:52); clause (11) (c) 'when he arrived (there)' is pragmatically presupposed, being easily taken for granted from the preceding clause 'he went (there)'. Often orientation clauses restate what was asserted in the preceding sentence.

In example (2), therefore, there is a formal ambiguity between background and foreground, between presupposition and assertion, and between various other properties in the last two columns of table 2. In the discourse context this ambiguity is often resolved. Each of the background types in Mbyá Guarani chaining has the potential of being realized in ways that foreground cannot be.

2.5 Operator dependence

Van Valin (2005:186, 201–205) uses the term *operator dependence* when a dependent clause inherits from an independent clause its value for an operator such as tense or mood. (*Mood* here refers to the grammaticalization of illocutionary force: declarative, interrogative, imperative, etc.) In Papuan languages and commonly in others, tense or mood is affixed to the independent verb, and the verbs of dependent clauses are less finite. Since Mbyá Guarani has zero marking for past and present, the verbs in a chain often have the same apparent form. In (2), both the verb *ij-ayvu* (3-speak) 'he spoke' and the verb *o-o* (3-go) 'he went' appear to be equally finite. But that is only because zero marking cannot be contrasted with its absence. If the example were in the

future, we would see something different:

(14) [*ava   reve   ij-ayvu   vy*]   *o-o*   **'rã**
       man   with   3-speak   SS   3-go   **FUT**
       'As/after/because he$_i$ speaks with the man, he$_i$ will leave.' or 'He$_i$ will speak
       with the man and then leave.'

In (14), the dependent clause, at least with the quasi-coordinate interpretation, inherits future tense from the independent clause. With the ad-clausal interpretation, that is not as clearly the case; in fact, one possible interpretation is 'Because he$_i$ spoke with the man [in the past], he$_i$ will leave'.
    A similar thing is true of mood. Declarative mood is zero-marked, but other moods are not. Example (15) shows optative mood.
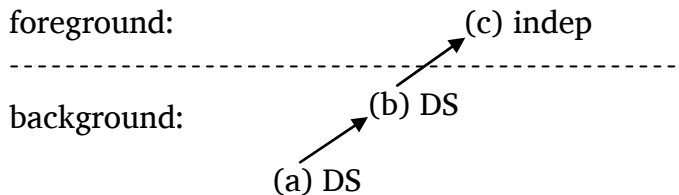
(15) [*ava   reve   ij-ayvu   vy*]   **t-o-o**
       man   with   3-speak   SS   **OPT**-3-go
       'As/after/because he$_i$ speaks with the man, may he$_i$ leave?' or 'May he$_i$
       speak with the man and then leave?'

In (15), when the first clause has quasi-coordinate interpretation, it inherits the optative mood, but optative is not possible with presupposition in the ad-clausal interpretation.
    This means that in Mbyá Guarani ad-clausal background clauses, including those with SR, operator dependence does not hold; such clauses can have tense and mood that is different from the independent clause, as in example (16):

(16) **(a)** *ndee   vaikue   rã*   **(b)**[*kunha-gue   yvoty   nde-r-e   o-mo-mbo   e'ỹ   **va'erã**   ramo*]   *katu*
              2SG   ugly   DS   **woman-pl**   *flower*   *2sg-r-abl*   *3-caus-jump*   *neg*   ***fut***   *ds*   *unobstructed*

   (c) *t-ere-o   e-jau*
       OPT-2SG-go   2SG.IMP-go
   '(a) Since you are ugly, (b) [the women won't throw flowers at you] so (c) go take a bath!'


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foreground:                              (c) indep
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background:                      (b) DS

                        (a) DS
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In its narrative context, example (16) was spoken to a young man by the mother of several girls ('the women') who were choosing their future husbands by throwing flowers at them. The mother thinks that since the young man is ugly the daughters won't throw their flowers at him, hence her imperative, 'Go take a bath!', which essentially means 'Get lost!'. Clause (b) 'the women won't throw flowers at you' is future and declarative whereas the independent clause (c) 'go

take a bath!' is present and imperative. The enclitic particle *katu* 'unobstructed' has been moved from its normal postverbal position in the independent clause to serve as a "spacer," signalling a major break in information structure (Dooley and Levinsohn 2001:73f and Dooley 2006, §24.4.3.2), here between background orientation and foreground. This helps to signal that clause (b) is ad-clausal orientation (reason), as (a) is also.

Example (17) shows the same kind of independent tense marking in a background clause, but with peripheral subordination instead of ad-clausal modification:

(17) *rei*   *tuja* *o-i-kuaa* *pota*   *ma*   [*ha'e* *va'e* *pyavy-ve*   *t-a'y* **va'erã** *rã*]
     rich.man old   3-3-know   try.hard   already   ANA   REL   night-same   3-son   FUT   DS
     'The old rich man watched closely to see whether (his daughter) would have a son that night.'

foreground: (a) indep

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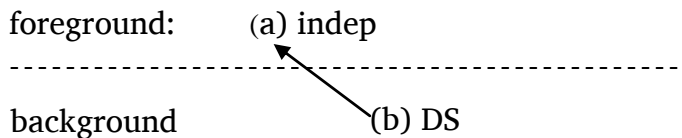
background   (b) DS

The bracketed SR clause here is background peripheral subordination, according to criteria of table 2, and is of a type which can be called *perceived event*.

Example (18) has peripheral subordination of a different type, *concomitant action*:

(18) **E-ma'ẽ**   *eme*   **ke** [*xe-r-okẽ*   *a-i-pe'a*   *jave*]*!*
     2SG.IMP-look NEG.IMP **IMP** 1SG-R-door 1SG-3-open SIM
     'Don't look when I open my door!'

In (18), the imperative mood marked in the nuclear clause is not attracted to the background clause.

We have seen, then, that although foreground clauses in Mbyá Guarani have operator dependence, background clauses in ad-clausal modification or peripheral subordination do not. This is similar to what happens in Papuan languages. In Amele, "In an SR medial clause chain the tense/mood operator is marked only on the final clause in the chain but the scope of the operator applies to all the clauses in the chain.... In contrast, subordinate clauses can be marked independently for tense and mood...." (Roberts 1988:51). However, the two "subordinate"—apparently ad-clausal—background types which Roberts (1988:58f) cites in Amele—conditional and apprehensional—have an adverbial morpheme. In Mbyá Guarani, SR background clauses are often identical with foreground clauses in their internal form.

3 Further types of background

Thus far, we have observed orientation background in the ad-clausal modification function and, in the peripheral modification function, the two types of perceived event and concomitant action. It is not unusual for clause chains to occur with more than one type of background:

(19) **(a)** *Kunhataĩ   i-porã   va'e   o-u   vy   ma*
          maiden   3-pretty REL   3-come SS   **BDY**

   (b) *"Mba'exa ta   xe-ngana?" he'i   ng-uu   pe   ramo*
           what.sort about.to 1SG-win   3.say   3.REFL-father DAT   DS

   (c) [*"Peva'e" he'i*   **(d)** [*Pyxaĩ re   o-ma'ẽ   vy*]   *ramo*]
           that   3.say   name ABL   3-look SS   DS

   (e) *kunhataĩ o-u   vy*   **(f)** *o-i-kuavã   Pyxaĩ ramo*
           maiden   3-come SS   3-3-embrace name DS

   (g) *t-yke'y   kuery i-vai   gu-yvy   pe*
           3-older.brother COLL   3-angry 3.REFL-younger.brother DAT
   '(a) When the pretty maiden arrived (b) and asked her father, "Who will win me (to be his wife)?" (c) and he said, "That one," (d) looking at Pyxaĩ, (e) the maiden came (f) and embraced Pyxaĩ (g) and his older brothers got very angry at him.'

Clause (a) is orientation, repeating the last clause of the preceding sentence. In example (19) as in (16), there is an enclitic particle *ma* 'boundary' as a spacer between this background orientation and foreground:

foreground: (b) DS   (c) DS   (e) SS   (f) DS   (g) indep
----
background: (a) SS   (d) SS
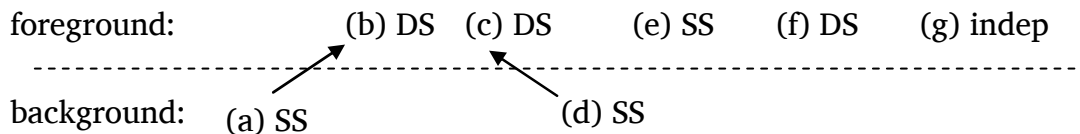
The postnuclear clause (d) 'looking at Pyxaĩ' is another example of concomitant action in peripheral subordination, since it directly modifies the predication of its matrix clause (c) 'he said, "That one"'.

   Example (20), from which (9) was excerpted, shows two types of peripheral subordination:

(20) **(a)** *ha'e o-o   jave*
          ANA 3-go SIM

   (b) [[*t-yke'y   kuery o-exa gu-yvy*
   3-older.brother COLL   3-see 3.REFL-younger.brother

   (c) [*o-jekuaa   ramo*]   *rire*] *je*
          3-appear   DS   SEQ   HSY

   (d) *kuaray mbyte   rai-'i   jave*   **(e)** *o-o*
          sun   middle almost-DIM SIM   3-go

   (f) *tape py o-arõ   vy*   **(g)** *tape py kunha   va'e o-guero-ayvu aguã.*
          path in 3-wait SS   path in woman REL 3-COM-speak PURP
'(b) [[After his older brothers saw their younger brother (c) [appearing]]
(a) when he left, (d) when it was almost midday (e) they went (f) [to wait
in the path (g) [to talk with the woman in the path]].'

foreground: (e) indep

- -

background: (b) SEQ   (d) SIM   (f) SS

                    (a) SIM   (c) DS   (g) PURP
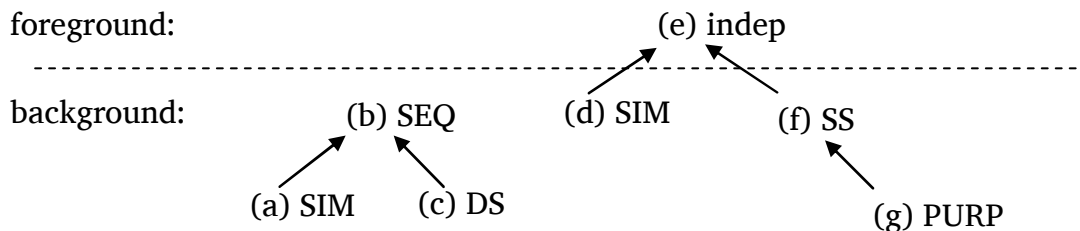
This chain has just one foreground clause, (e) 'they went', which is preceded by
two juxtaposed temporal orientations: (a)—(c) 'after his older brothers saw their
younger brother leaving' (ending with *rire* 'sequence'), and (d) 'when it was
almost midday' (ending with *jave* 'simultaneity'). In between these two
orientations, which are in some sense semantically parallel, the enclitic particle
je 'hearsay' occurs as a spacer. There are three postnuclear clauses: (c)
'appearing' is a perceived event and the two *purpose* clauses (f) and (g). Both of
these background types typically occur in postnuclear position, being peripheral
subordination rather than the ad-clausal orientation that occurs in (a), (b) and
(d). Another example of the purpose type of peripheral subordination is found in
(10) (b).

   Example (20) shows something that we have already observed, that adverbial
clauses with lexical conjunctions ('sequence', 'simultaneity', 'purpose', etc.)
occur along with SR clauses in chaining. Moreover, clauses with adverbial
conjunctions are always background, whereas SR clauses may be background or
foreground.[7]

   Yet another peripheral subordination background type occurs in (21):

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[7]In addition to their use as clause subordinators, both SR markers and adverbial conjunctions frequently occur in
sentence-initial connectives. In that construction, which we will not examine here, the markers generally signal a more
abstract discourse connection (Dooley 1986, 1992).

(21) *guyrapa, hu'y   guive ogue-reko katu-pa*   [*o-kyje   vy*]
    bow   arrow also 3-have   unobstructed-completely 3-be.afraid SS
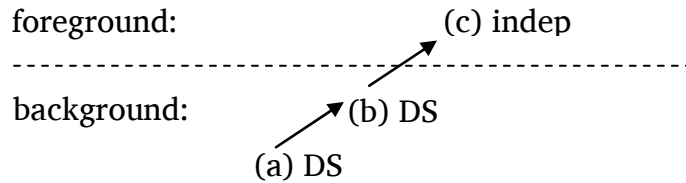   '...they got their bows and arrows all ready **because they were afraid.**'

This is *reason* background, which is typically postnuclear. According to the criteria of table 2, it is peripheral subordination.
    Example (22) has a sequence of two prenuclear background clauses:

(22) **(a)** *... xe-r-u-a   py re-vaẽ   rã* **(b)** *i-vai   ramo ma*
        1SG-R-father-NOM in 2SG-arrive DS   3-angry DS   BDY

  (c) *e-mombe'u   eme   a-ju-a-gue.*
      2SG.IMP-tell NEG.IMP 1SG-come-NOM-PAST
  '(b)...if my father is angry (a) when you get to his place, (c) don't tell him that I came.'

<pre>
        foreground: (c) indep
                                           ↗
        ------------------------------------/---------------------
        background: ↗(b) DS
                         (a) DS
</pre>

Both (a) and (b) are orientational, but whereas (a) has temporal and locational orientation, (b) is *conditional*. Clause (a) is background primarily for (b) and only indirectly for (c). Just as peripheral subordination background tends to be postnuclear, orientation—including condition—tends to be prenuclear.

4 Tests for quasi-coordination

§2.3 provided five tests for quasi-coordination from Haspelmath (1995:12-17). Here we apply those tests to clause types which we have identified as background. One additional test is given: concession.

4.1 Intercalation

Whereas in Papuan languages of SR clauses cannot occur intercalated within the nuclear clause (Roberts 1988:54f), in Mbyá Guaraní it is not uncommon for an adverbial or SR clause to occur between the subject and predicate of the nuclear clause, as in (23) and (24):

(23) *ha'e va'e-kue jagua je* [***Vera o-o roxaro py jave***] *o-o h-exe-ve*
    ANA   REL-PAST dog   HSY **name 3-go field in** SIM 3-go 3-with-more
    'That dog, it is said, when Verá goes to the field, goes with him.' (Verá is a masculine name.)

(24) *xe-r-o*   [***oky   rã***] *o-tyky-pa*
      1SG-R-house **rain DS** 3-drip-completely
      'My house, when it rains, leaks completely.'

In (23), 'when Verá goes to the field' occurs between the subject 'that dog' and the predicate 'goes with him'; in (24), 'when it rains' occurs between the subject 'my house' and the predicate 'leaks completely'. This positioning has the same "spacer" function as enclitic particles in previous examples; here, the subject is signalled as a marked topic.

   The only clauses which can occur intercalated in the way we see in (23) and (24) are background clauses of ad-clausal modification and orientation. Extraction obeys the same restriction (§4.5).

4.2 Temporal iconicity

In (7), repeated below, we observed that with the adverbial conjunction *rire* 'sequence', clause ordering can be different from the temporal order of events:

(7) *o-jevy-pa*   *jevy* [***ava vai   o-juka ma   rire***]
      3-return-completely again **man angry 3-kill already SEQ**
      'They all returned after they had killed the wild man.'

The order of these clauses makes no difference to their temporal interpretation:

(7') [***ava   vai   o-juka   ma   rire***] *o-jevy-pa*   *jevy*
       man   angry 3-kill   already   SEQ   3-return-completely again
       'After they had killed the wild man they all returned.'

Whereas in (7') the dependent clause 'after they had killed the wild man' is unambiguously interpreted as ad-clausal modification and orientation, in (7') the same clause can be interpreted as that but is more likely to be interpreted as peripheral subordination and temporal modification. If there is an intonation break as in (7"), however, making this clause clause a "tail" or afterthought expression, the interpretation of ad-clausal modification and orientation becomes more likely:

(7") *o-jevy-pa*   *jevy,* [***ava vai   o-juka ma   rire***]
       3-return-completely again **man angry 3-kill already SEQ**
       'They all returned, after they had killed the wild man.'

   Similar comments can be made about SR clauses, as in (25), (25') and (25"):

(25) *o-o-ve*   *jevy* [*o-karu-pa*   *ma*   *vy*]
      3-go-more again **3-eat-completely already ss**
      'He went off again after he finished eating.'

(25') [*o-karu-pa*   *ma*   *vy*] *o-o-ve*   *jevy*
       3-eat-completely   already ss   3-go-more   again
       'After he finished eating he went off again.'

(25") *o-o-ve*   *jevy*, [*o-karu-pa*   *ma*   *vy*]
       3-go-more again **3-eat-completely already ss**
       'He went off again, after he finished eating.'

Of the types of peripheral subordination that we earlier encountered—perceived event in (17) and (20), concomitant action in (18) and (19), reason in (21), and purpose in (10) and (20)—the default postnuclear position does not conflict with temporal iconicity: purpose clauses are future with respect to the nuclear clause, while the other three types are simultaneous with it. However, these are all embedded in the matrix clause as peripheral subordination, so that they can occur in prenuclear position as argument focus (§4.4) as in (26):

(26) [*t-embi-'u*   *ere-jogua*   *aguã e'ỹ*] *ri*   *ty'y*   *ere-reko?*
     NPOSSD-NOM-eat   2SG-buy   PURP NEG RESP   surprise 2SG-have
     'Isn't it in order to buy food that you have [money]?'

Here, the content of the focused purpose clause 'buy food' is future in relation to the independent clause 'you have [money]', which is in the present. Therefore, they can violate temporal iconicity just as temporal modification does in in (7') and (25').

All types of clauses with peripheral subordination can occur as argument focus and violate temporal iconicity. In (7") and (25") we saw that ad-clausal modification (orientation) clauses can also violate temporal iconicity. That is, temporal iconicity can be violated by all types of background clauses.

4.3 Cataphoric reference

In (27), the anaphoric pronoun *ha'e* in the first clause has its antecedent in the second clause: *guyvy* 'their younger brother':

(27) **(a)** *ha'e*$_i$ *o-o* *jave*   **(b)** *t-yke'y*   *kuery o-exa* **gu-yvy**$_i$**...**
          ANA 3-go SIM   3-older.brother COLL 3-see **3.REFL-younger.brother**
       'While **he**$_i$ was going, his older brothers saw **their younger brother**$_i$...'

In (28) (a), there are two zero cataphoric references:

(28) **(a)** *Ø_i o-mo-ngarai-pa Ø_i*   *ma*   *vy* **(b)** *huvixa_i o-mbo-joja* **gu-a'y**   **kuery_i**
         3-CAUS-baptized-completely already SS   leader   3-CAUS-lean   **3.REFL-son** COLL
     'After **he**_i had baptized **all of them**_j, **the leader**_i gathered **his**_i **followers**_j' (lit., 'his_i
     sons_j').

In (28), both the subject 'the leader' and the object 'his sons/followers' are
cataphoric "antecedents". So both in (27) with an adverbial conjunction and in
(28) with a SR marker there is cataphoric reference; this does not happen in
coordinate or quasi-coordinate clauses (Haspelmath 1995:14). Both of the (a)
clauses are background, specifically ad-clausal temporal orientation, whose
content is presupposed from the preceding context.

4.4 Focusability

In (26) we observed a peripherally subordinate clause in argument focus. Mbyá
Guaraní has several *focalizers*, which follow expressions with argument focus and
attact the nuclear accent of the utterance (Dooley 2006, §§21.2.1.10, 24.4.3.1).
Among these is the element *mae* (*ma-ae*) ('already-exactly') 'only', which is often
followed—as here—by an enclitic particle serving as spacer:

(29) **(a)** [*xe-r-u*   *o-vaẽ*   *ma*   *rire*] **mae**   *'rã*   **(b)** *a-guata*
         1SG-R-father 3-arrive   already SEQ   **already.exactly** FUT   1SG-travel
     'It will only be after my father arrives that I will travel.'

(30) **(a)** [*a-pyrõ*   *rai-'i*   *ma*   *ramo*] **mae**   *ma*
         1SG-step almost-DIM already DS   **already.exactly** BDY

    (b) *o-nha*   *o-o-vy*   *jai*   *re*
         3-run   3-go-V2   underbrush   ABL

     'It was only after I had almost stepped on (the snake) that he went off to the
     underbrush.'

Both in (29) with *rire* 'sequence' and in (30) with *ramo* 'DS' the focalizer *mae*
makes it clear that the dependent clause is argument focus.
    According to Haspelmath (1995:15), subordinate (embedded) but not
coordinate clauses may occur in argument focus. This is because an expression
in argument focus needs to be part of potential focus domain of the main clause
(Van Valin 2005:275). In (29) and (30), the (a) clauses are formally ambiguous
between peripheral subordination and ad-clausal modification (orientation)
(§2.3). It is as peripheral subordination that they occur in argument focus ('I will
travel [**after my father arrives**]'), rather than as ad-clausal modification
('[**After my father arrives**], I will travel').

4.5 Extraction

As John Ross (1967) observes in his "coordinate structure constraint," "coordinate structures severely restrict the possibility of extraction"—the occurence in initial position of an interrogative expression whose *in situ* position is within a noninitial clause (Haspelmath 1995:16). Examples of extraction include (31) and (32):

(31) *Mba'e pa* [***ava o-u   ramo***] *ja-j-apo   'rã?*
    what Q   **man 3-COME DS**   1 + 2-3-make FUT
    'What, when the man comes, will we do?'

(32) *Mava'e tu   * [***nha-vaẽ   ramo***] *nhane-mo-ngaru 'rã?*
    who   brusqueness **1 + 2-arrive DS**   1 + 2-CAUS-eat   FUT
    'Who, when we arrive, will feed us?'

In both (31) and (32) the initial interrogative expression is extracted from the final nuclear clause. Following this expression, which is argument focus, occur an enclitic particle in spacer position (*pa* 'question particle' or *tu* 'brusqueness') and a SR clause. This SR clause—'when the man comes' in (31) and 'when we arrive' (32) is background but formally ambiguous between embedding (peripheral subordination) and ad-clausal modification (orientation). They are here interpreted as ad-clausal modification (orientation) since, in the context, their content is presupposed. This is a form of intercalation (§4.1).

4.6 Concession

According to William Croft (2001:344), "coordinate constructions do not indicate concessive relations." In Mbyá Guaraní, concessive relations can be indicated with the adverbial conjunctions *teĩ* (with actions) or *va'eri* (with states) as in example (33), or with SR markers followed by the concessive particle *jepe* as (34) in and (35):

(33) [***nd-a-i-kuaa   porã-i   va'eri***] *a-mombe'u 'rã ta'vy*
    NEG-1SG-3-know well-NEG CONCESS 1SG-tell   FUT brusqueness
    'Although I don't know it very well, I'll tell it.'

(34) [***peẽ kuery ore-r-eve   nda-pe-o-i   vy jepe***]
    2PL COLL 1PL.EXCL-R-with NEG-2PL-go-NEG SS CONCESS

    pend-exarai eme   ke ore-re
    2PL-forget   NEG.IMP IMP 1PL.EXCL-ABL
    'Even though you (pl.) don't go (with us), don't forget us.'

(35) [*pe-raa   nhuã   my pe-mbo-'a   rã   jepe*]   *xe-vy   ha'eve-pa   rei*
    2PL-take trap   in 2PL-CAUS-fall DS   CONCESS 1SG-DAT good-completely   uniformly
    'Even though you take (my son) and put him in jail, it will be perfectly fine with me.'

Dependent clauses of *concession*, which can occur postnuclear as well, are a type of ad-clausal modification according to criteria of table 2. They are similar to condition, hence can be considered as another subtype of orientation.

5 Long sequences

According to our characterization of clause chaining, foreground clauses will at times occur in long sequences, sometimes including adjunct background clauses. Example (19) has a sequence of five foreground clauses. In Amele, "it is not unusual to find up to twenty clauses in a text linked by clause-chaining" (Roberts 1988:48), but in Mbyá Guarani it is unusual to find more than eight. This seems to be a stylistic rather than grammatical limit. Chaining in Panare or Eñepa has an even more stringent limit: "chains of four or more medial clauses are nonexistent in the corpus" (Payne 1991:248).

Background clauses are, in my data, limited to sequences of one or two. Sequences of two occur in examples (10) (prenuclear + postnuclear), (16) (prenuclear + prenuclear), and (20) (postnuclear + prenuclear and postnuclear + postnuclear). In these sequences, all the prenuclear background clauses are ad-clausal modification (orientation) and all the postnuclear ones are peripheral modification. Background clauses do not occur in sequences longer than two.

This difference seems to be based, in part, on the fact that each addition background clause, whether in peripheral subordination or ad-clausal modification, increases the structural depth of the sentence, presumably adding to the processing cost. Figure 1 is for ad-clausal modification (cf. Van Valin 2005:193):
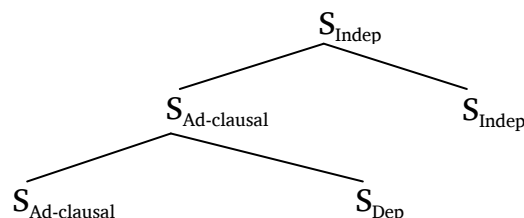

Figure 1: Ad-clausal modification

Coordination or quasi-coordination (figure 2), however, simply extends a flat structure without increasing structural depth (Roberts 1997:183):
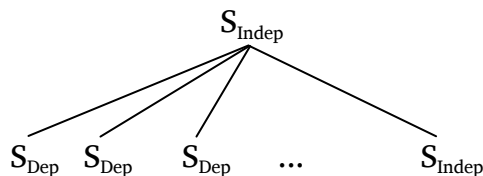
Figure 2: Coordination or "quasi-coordination"

For chaining constructions, "the possibility of long sequences" should go beyond what is possible with non-quasi-coordinate clauses: sequences of three or more foreground clauses should occur.[8]

6 Concluding remarks

In this paper I have sketched evidence indicating that in Mbyá Guaraní, the foreground-background distinction is a key dimension of clause chaining. In the first place, chaining is characterized by two properties of foreground clauses—operator dependence and the possibility of long sequences—while background clauses are simply possible as adjuncts and have neither of those properties. Further, whereas foreground clauses exhibit quasi-coordinate properties, background clauses, of whatever type they may be, fail to exhibit some of these properties in certain contexts. The major background types are as follows:

(i)   peripheral subordination (a type of embedding): purpose, reason, perceived event, concomitant action, temporal modification; postnuclear order is default

(ii) ad-clausal modification (non-embedding): orientation (temporal, situational, conditional, concessive, etc.); prenuclear order is default

Chaining in Mbyá Guarani commonly uses clauses with SR marking and others with adverbial conjunctions, with no apparent difference in internal syntax. But whereas SR clauses can occur as either foreground or background, clauses with adverbial conjunctions only occur as background.

In internal morphosyntax, SR clauses do not distinguish between foreground and background or the two background functions, nor do clauses with adverbial conjunctions distinguish between the two background functions. However, in their sentential and discourse contexts, chained clauses manifest distinct properties in such areas as external distribution, assertion, and scope effects which commonly indicate their function.

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[8]Nedjalkov (1995:109) requires that "converbs" of the narrative (coordinative) type be able to express "three or more completed actions in succession that advance the narration."

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