

Annotation of Sign and Gesture Cross-linguistically

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Project aims:

1. Verification of recent claims in the literature that particular structures in sign languages may be less linguisticized than similar structures in spoken languages;
2. Construct an annotation system that allows cross-linguistic and cross-modal comparison.

Research method:

Comparison of reference-establishing and reference-maintaining expressions in 3 conditions:

- Signing: German Sign Language (DGS) and Turkish Sign Language (TİD)
- Co-speech gesture: German and Turkish
- No-speech gesture (pantomime): users of German and Turkish

To carry out this research, we are constructing a corpus of 135 hours of (partly) annotated video data, recorded from 15 participants in each condition.

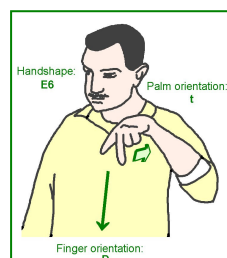
Corpus: MPI Browsable Corpus

Metadata: IMDI

Annotation: ELAN

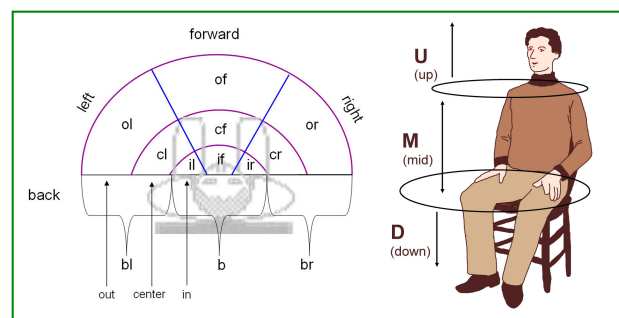
Annotation

1. We distinguish between two levels:
 - *Descriptive level* ("what do we perceive")
 - *Analytic level* ("how should it be interpreted")
2. Conventions of different transcription methods (for sign and gesture) have been chosen and, where necessary, adapted, e.g. into codes using standard fonts. These conventions and codes are combined into a new transcription system.
3. Annotation on the descriptive level uses codes to describe sign parameters (manual and non-manual) and their gestural counterparts, and locations in space.
4. Many tiers are connected in child-parent relations, for easy creation of annotation overviews and to facilitate relational searches of the annotations.



Example of hand configuration code: **E6tD**

Codes for locations in space



Conventionalizing transcription

This transcription system being ready for use for our current purposes, a more transparent and conventionalized system is necessary for the linguistic community. This will avoid over- and misinterpretation, and would facilitate easier and better cross-linguistic and cross-modal comparison.



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