The DGS-Korpus approach to including frequent sign combinations in a corpus-based electronic sign language dictionary

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Dict.

- Preliminary entries, final version to be published in 2023
- Corpus-based and Largely Corpus-bound
  - Corpus collected 2010-2012, size: 576,400 tokens lemmatised to date
  - Type of data: natural and near natural conversations of 330 signers across Germany

Monolingual in General Design

Clear focus on description of German Sign Language (DGS), including information on:
- form variants
- grammatical properties of signs
- regional distribution and differences in use across age groups
- division of senses based on analyses of corpus data
- definition/explanation of meaning, usage information
- example sentences taken directly from the corpus
- synonyms and antonyms (cross-referenced)
- collocational patterns

Some Features of a Bilingual Dictionary

- German translational equivalents included
- Bidirectional access:
  - access by entry number/micon
  - planned: search by sign form

Additional Features

- Multilanguage used for description: German
- Access by topics
- Playful access by graphical display

Design Decision: a Dictionary without Glosses

- Rationale: glosses invite inadequate inferences from gloss word to sign
- Signs should not be represented by words; instead they are represented by micons

Within the query results three different types of sign combinations can be found:
- phrase-like structures
- collocational patterns
- loan compounds and compound-like compositions

Collocational Patterns

- Combinations of frequent neighbours
- Meaning of combination can usually be inferred from individual meanings of both partners
  - Theory: One partner, the collocator, is usually less predictable and more restricted as to combinability, it is defined and understood completely only through the base (comp. Svensén 2006, 161-162).
- Practice: In our dictionary we also include some selected frequent free combinations in the collocational patterns slot when they are chunks that are useful for clarifying the meaning of the respective sense or its typical usage to the learner.
- Collocational patterns are specific to a sense and therefore addressed as information to the sense.

Phrases

- DGS-specific combinations of signs that as a whole have a separate meaning, usually not inferable from the meanings of the individual parts of the phrase or surpassing their combined meanings (principle of idiomaticity)
- One mouthed word or mouth gesture often stretches across both partners
- The combined meaning of the signs is not transparent. Thus it is represented as a separate sense in the entry.

Phrase #10 combines a lexical variant 262 or 420 ‘warm’ with 440. The combined meaning is not inferable from the meanings of the individual parts of the phrase or surpassing their combined meanings (principle of idiomaticity)

Phrasal combinations often co-occurs with signs indicating activities, e.g. ‘to sign’, ‘to drive’, ‘to play’

Collocated loans and compound-like compositions

- Sign combinations that mirror the sequence and structure of German compounds; the German compound is usually simultaneously mouthed
- Individual signs of the combination strongly correspond to individual parts of the mouthing but several different variants may be used for each element
- Loan compounds are dominated by the German compound visible in the mouthing
- A selection of compounds and compound-like combinations found in the corpus are documented as run-ons in the entry.

Reference


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