

Generations in the DGS Corpus

Evolving Outreach Activities and Cross-Generational Stories on Social Media in a Long-Term Corpus Project



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DGS-Korpus Project

2009-2027 (19 years)

- **Goal:** Creation of a sign language reference corpus
- **Language:** German Sign Language (DGS)
- **Uses:** Linguistic research and cultural heritage

1st Data Collection
2010-2012

2nd Data Collection
2024-2026



DGS Corpus

Public DGS Corpus

Public subset of DGS Corpus

DW-DGS

Digital Dictionary of DGS
Based on corpus evidence

MY DGS

Community Portal
Focus on stories

MY DGS – annotated

Research Portal
Lexically and phonologically annotated data

Outreach Activities

Social Media

- **Project updates** to keep communities informed
- **Participant recruitment** for ongoing data collections

Exhibitions

- **Media station** in Humboldt Forum Berlin long-term exhibit
- **Traveling exhibition** of Hamburg Academy long-term projects with **barrier free access** for deaf people: all written and spoken texts available in DGS

Workshops

- **For deaf communities** interested in languages and deaf cultural heritage
- **For educators** teaching sign language courses
- **For students** of sign language linguistics and sign language interpreting
- **For researchers** in linguistics and lang. technologies

Public Events

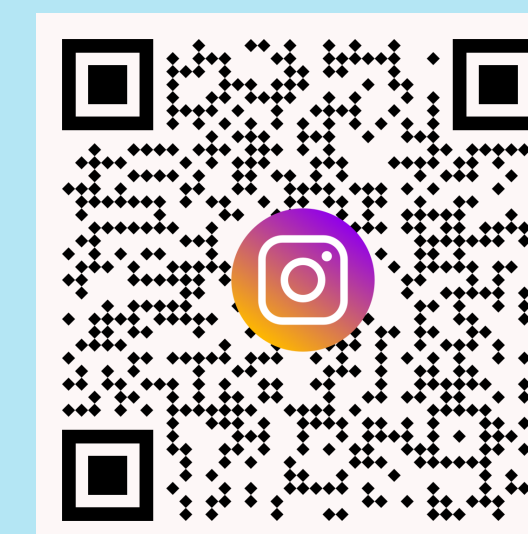
- **University events:** Open house, school visits, *Boys Day*
- **Community event:** *Deaf Culture Days*

Social Media Strategies

- **Purpose:** Communities outreach, recruit participants
- **Design:** Visual materials, DGS video where possible
- **Moving with the times:** regular re-evaluation of communities' preferences

Instagram

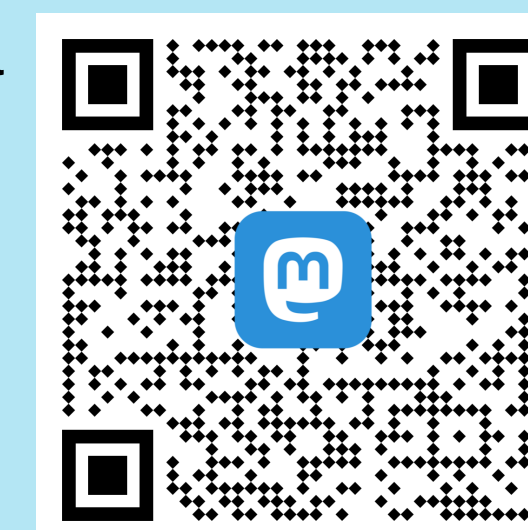
- **Pro:**
 - Focus on images and video
 - Popular with deaf communities
- **Con:**
 - Commercial service, user tracking
 - Gated access requires login



instagram.com/dgskorpusprojekt

Mastodon

- Decentralised open-source social media
- **Pro:**
 - Non-commercial, no tracking
 - Non-gated open access to posts
- **Con:**
 - Limited presence of deaf communities



fediscience.org/@dgskorpusprojekt

Video 1: Heritage



Video 2: Recording Day

Generational Connections in Long-Term Research

- **Side-effect of long project run time:**
 - Whole families are involved in corpus creation
- **Different roles in data collections:**
 - Participants, moderators, contact persons, focus group members
- **Over twelve years between data collection phases:**
 - A new generation of DGS signers has come of age
- **Members of 1st phase involve family in 2nd phase:**
 - Parents motivate their children to join
 - Older brother motivates younger brother
 - Daughter rejoins as moderator and recruits father
- **Families take part in social media campaign:**
 - Chat about their experiences in the DGS Corpus
 - Stress relevance of language preservation and study of language change
 - Encourage viewers to apply to 2nd data collection

Impact

Video 3: Language Change



Video 4: Youth Language

Working with Minority Groups

Deaf Involvement

- **Deaf involvement in entire project life cycle:**
 - From conception through data collection and annotation to publication and outreach
- **Deaf involvement at all levels:**
 - Deaf & hearing researchers, students, translators
 - Deaf moderators, focus group members, communities contacts, participants
- **Recording studio as deaf space:**
 - The recording studio is a DGS-only space during data collection. Moderator and technician are both deaf.

Data Ethics

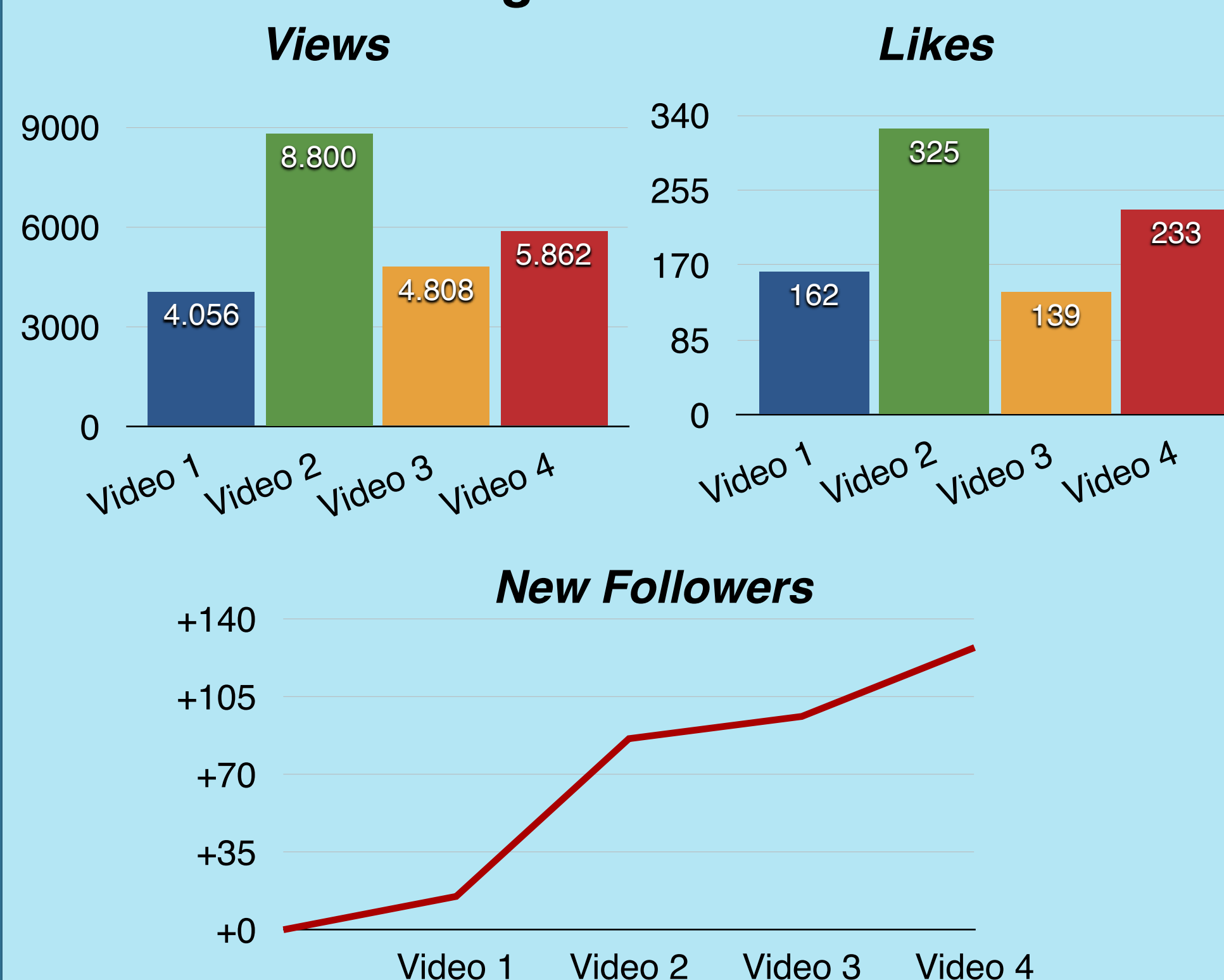
- **Informed consent:** all information concerning use and handling of data is presented in DGS and German text
- **Control over use:** fine-grained choices for data use scenarios (education, heritage, external research)
- **Ethics principles:**
 - Standards of **sign language research community**
 - **FAIR** (Findable, Accessible Interoperable, Reusable)
 - **CARE** (Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, Ethics)

Campaign Results

Cross generational Stories on Social Media

- **Particularly popular** social media campaign
- **Several applications** for 2nd data collection campaign
- **Important factors:** DGS content, unusual, relatable

Instagram Statistics



Data Collection Phases

	1st Data Collection Phase	2nd Data Collection Phase
Duration	2010-2012	2024-2026
Participants	330	78
Regions	13	13
Genders	male, female	male, female, non-binary
Cohorts (age groups)	18-30 (4th cohort) 31-45 (3rd cohort) 46-60 (2nd cohort) 60+ (1st cohort)	18-30 (5th cohort)

- **Session format:**
 - Dyadic discourse, i.e. dialogue between two participants
- **Age in dyad:**
 - Most participant pairs from same cohort
 - Some pairs from different cohorts to capture cross-generational interaction
 - In second data collection phase, cross-generational interaction achieved by including some participants from cohorts 2–4