

Background

- Constructed Action (CA) = discourse element, showing the actions or state of a referent (e.g., Emmorey 1999, Ferrara & Johnston 2014)
- 'Lexicon' = linguistic knowledge consisting of chunks of structure (Lepic 2019)
- Chunks of structure = recurring form-meaning constructions
- Lexicography: describing recurrent use of a word or sign (c.f. Atkins & Rundell 2008)
- In the past: distinction between lexicalised, partly lexicalised and productive signs (e.g., Schembri & Johnston 1999) → which signs should be described in a dictionary and which should not
- CA often considered as gestural (e.g., Emmorey 1999, Ferrara & Johnston 2014) = productive signs → no dictionary entry
- Observation: certain uses of CA seem to recur in the DGS corpus
- Research question: Are there certain CA's that could be described within a dictionary, because they are used across different signers and different elicitation tasks?

Data

- DGS corpus (664.000 tokens annotated, as of August 2022), 330 persons filmed in 13 regions across Germany, 20 elicitation tasks (e.g., retellings, free conversation, discussions; c.f. Schulder et al. 2021)
- Annotation with iLex = annotation tool and lexical database (searchable using SQL queries)
- In this study focus on tasks with little to no influence of stimuli e.g., *Free Conversation and Experiences of Deaf Individuals* → no retellings
- CA not part of basic annotation
- Two ways to find CA within the corpus:
 - SQL queries searching for mentions of CA in the annotator comments
 - SQL queries searching for handshape-meaning pairings within \$PROD (type for productive signs, at least handshape and rough meaning annotated; c.f. Konrad et al. 2022)

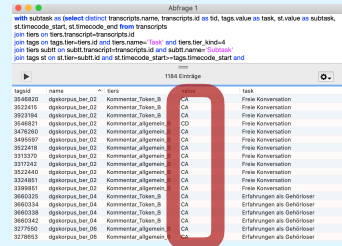


Fig. 1: Query searching for comments on CA

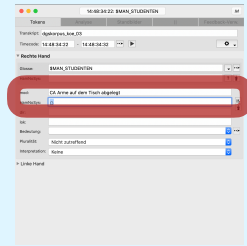


Fig. 2: window of a \$PROD token

Findings



Fig. 3: 'hold a child's hand'

3A, 3C: a child is held by the hand
 3B: two children are held by the hand
 10 tokens by 6 signers (as of August 2022, annotation ongoing)



Fig.4: 'overwhelmed, as if paralysed'

a person is in an overwhelming situation and does not know how to react
 14 tokens by 11 signers (as of August 2022, annotation ongoing)



Fig.5: 'sit still, arms on table'

sitting still (especially in school) with hands visibly on the table
 18 tokens by 8 signers (as of August 2022, annotation ongoing)

Conclusion

- certain recurrent CA can be attested across different signers and elicitation tasks
- form and meaning are similar
- sign of conventionalisation
- recurrent CA qualify for description in a dictionary

Future Discussion

- the location of candidates on a continuum (productive - conventionalised) e.g., in comparison to signs motivated by manipulator classifier constructions
- comparison to gestures → "recurrent gestures" are located between spontaneous gestures and emblems (Bressem & Müller 2014)

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