

Why Include Recurrent Constructed Action (CA) in a Dictionary?

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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) \rightarrow 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)

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3546821	daskorpus_ber_02	Kommentar, allgerrein B	CR CR	Freie Konversation	
3476260	daskorpus.ber.02	Kommentar, allgerrein, B	CA	Freie Konversation	
3495597	daskorpus.ber.02	Kommentar, allgerrein B	CA	Freie Konversation	
3522418	daskorpus ber 02	Kommentar allgerrein	CA	Fraie Konversation	
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3560325	daskorpus ber 04	Kommentar Token B	CA	Erfahrungen als Gehörloser	
3560334	daskorpus_ber_04	Kommentar Token B	CA	Erfahrungen als Gehörloser	
3660338	daskorpus.ber.04	Kommentar Token B	CA	Erfahrungen als Gehörloser	
3560342	daskorpus.ber.04	Kommentar, Token, B	CA	Erfahrungen als Gehörloser	
3277550	daskorpus ber 06	Kommentar allgerrein B	CA	Erfahrungen als Gehörloser	
3278655	daskorpus ber 06	Kommenter allgerrein	CA	Erfehrungen als Gehörloser	
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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 \rightarrow "recurrent gestures" are located between spontaneous gestures and emblems (Bressem & Müller 2014)

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This publication has been produced in the context of the joint research funding of the German Federal Government and Federal States in the Academies' Programme, with funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. The Academies' Programme is coordinated by the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities